

**Regarding the *Abundant Life Academy Bible Curriculum*: We ask that you call us at 888-393-2954 and request the latest version from our Academics Instructor . If you are a parent and would like to speak to us about your child, then you may call Ron, who is the author of the commentary below, at 888-393-2954 or you may fill out our [get help now form](#) then Ron or another ALA team member will contact you shortly.**

### **Dead Dogs**

#### **2 Samuel 4:4 and Chapter 9**

The setting for our story began in chapters 18-20 of I Samuel, where 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 his close friend, Jonathan, were separated. Before David left, he and Jonathan plotted to meet each other and I Samuel 20: 40-42 gives an account of a secret meeting between the two:

Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy (I have to wonder if maybe that was Mephibosheth) and said, "Go, carry them back to town." 20:41 After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together--but David wept the most. 20:42 Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

**The setting for our story is about keeping a promise.** David made an oath before Jonathan and the Lord that their friendship would last forever. David, which means "beloved", and this "beloved" would be a covenant (promise) keeper.

Now Look at 2 Samuel 4:4 (Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.)

I noticed something unusual in Chapter 9: You know how important NAMES are in scripture. In this passage every name is mentioned at least 2 times no matter how seemingly insignificant. That told me that every detail is important here; it says PAY CLOSE ATTENTION We read in chapter 9!:

1 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 (army, fight, strength in Israel). 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 (sale or salesman) son of Ammiel (God is my Redeemer) in Lo Debar( not a pasture, a desert)."

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 (which means, who is like God?) , 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.

David vowed to keep his promise: Is there anyone left of the house of Saul? Where is Jonathan's family? And there is someone, Mephibosheth; his name means "a shameful thing." He became "a shameful thing" after his nurse tripped and dropped him during a fear-filled flight and so he became an invalid, a social and physical outcast. There were no disability acts, no handicap parking for your horse or chariot, no special ed classes or physical therapy.

From the time of his accident the child had been living in Lodebar (which means 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 took away your rights to the throne. He took away what should have been yours." Mephibosheth had been fed lies by those around him and so 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.

That's the way it is for so many in the world. Mephibosheth is a picture 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. YOU certainly had nothing to do with your plight: 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?

**That's Mephibosheth's sorry condition; being totally misled and not having a clue about what he could really have.**

**How bad did Mephibosheth have it? When He comes to David, we have to give him a little bit of credit: He does realize his position before the King; he bows down to pay him honor. He replies to his name in verse 6 with 2 words: Your servant. (actually in the Hebrew, just 1: SLAVE). He says literally: I am a SLAVE. He actually has been a slave already but not a very good one. He has been a slave to his past accident, to the lies that were told him about David, about what would happen to him if he would ever be found by David and his Mighty Men.**

**But what kind of servant or slave could he possibly be to David? He couldn't walk. What good is a lame servant? A lame person can't serve others; you have to at least be able to walk to even be a decent servant. But moreover, let's be real, what would he know about serving a king even if he could. He has been raised in a shack in the desert.**

**Mephibosheth knew he couldn't be much good to anyone, because he drops himself several grades below a slave in verse 8: "What is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me?" He says I am a DEAD DOG. I'm nothing more than a stinking dead animal. If you were walking on the roadway and came upon a dead dog, you would cross over to the other side; you wouldn't want to get near it. It was unclean ceremonially in the first place, but you wouldn't want to get near it because of the stench, the ugliness, the worthlessness. Mephibosheth is saying: I know who I am, I'm no good, I have no skills, no family, no heritage left, no health, no wealth. I'm just a stinkin' dead dog; Why would you, the King of Israel even notice me? Dead dogs are what they are: dead!**

**So David says to Mephibosheth, you're right. You're worthless; it's about time you realized it. No, Heavens, No! He actually SAYS nothing to him. He DOES something: He calls Ziba (which means strength in Israel) and SHOWS something to Mephibosheth through his words to Ziba: "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family."**

**Fortunately, for Mephibosheth, he didn't stay in ignorance and poverty forever. The man, David, the beloved, the man that scripture tells us is a man after God's own heart, show him extravagant KINDNESS. What a word! The word is the same that is used hundreds of times and is translated MERCY. That's what David wants to bring to this outcast, who SHOULD be his enemy; but because of His promise, his covenant with this father, Jonathan, his desire is to show him mercy, kindness, goodness. Is it any wonder that David is called a man whose heart is like that of God!?! David is a striking picture of God's Grace.**

**We have to learn the same lessons that Mephibosheth had to learn. When GRACE, God's grace enters the picture, everything is different, transformed, turned upside down.**

**The first thing to learn is: When you are down - you are never out. Mephibosheth was born with the potential to run, walk, and play just like every other five year old. As royalty, the world should have been his oyster but this was taken from him in an instant when he was dropped and made "lame in both feet." But he wasn't finished. God's grace was waiting to pick him up. And God has a way of restoring lives that appear to be lost.**

**Lesson 2: When you are restricted - you are never condemned. There is potential in all of our lives to lose in a moment that which we have been given. I say this to my wife often; "there, but by the grace of God go I". We have to be so thankful for what we have because circumstances change in an instant. But even if they do, even if we become restricted, even if we can't do the things we want to do or have to do, it NEVER changes our standing in grace before God. We are not condemned nor abandoned by God's saving grace because our environment or circumstances have changed.**

**Thirdly, When you are limited - you are never sentenced. The Bible tells us that Mephibosheth was "at the house of Makir, son of Ammiel in Lo Debar." 'Makir' means 'sold' and 'Ammiel' means 'God is my redeemer' and Lo Debar is "desert". So we find Mephibosheth residing in a desert place, and he first bought the lies that were fed to him. But then is invited into a place of grace and not abandonment by the BELOVED DAVID. He was redeemed by God's Grace.**

**If your conviction is that of Jesus as your Savior, Redeemer and Helper you will never loose out. You're not in a desert place. Let's make sure we live as a child of a King, and press on to live in the fullness of life that God intended. You have all of the pleasures and perks of sitting at the King's table. God has not sentenced you to a life of spiritual poverty, of not being able to walk with God. He is here. He is near and he commands you to walk with Him, to follow him. Live in His royal presence.**

**Lastly, when you are defined - you are never defeated. Mephibosheth had become so accustomed to thinking, acting, living and believing a certain way. Think about your own life for a minute - think about how you do certain things at specific times, how you order the same meal at your favorite restaurant, how you wear a certain shirt or shoes because it makes a statement about you. Think about how you react a certain way when certain things happen. Think about some life ruts you can get into: negative thinking, being judgmental about things that you may not like. See, you do it too! We all have these routines and habits that tend to make up our day to day lives. You become so accustomed to doing things a certain way. Many of those ways may be defeating your potential. You may be dead ending yourself. But that never has to happen. You do not have to be defeated, not if you are in Christ, not if you are a recipient of God's grace.**

**Notice, David called **Mephibosheth** by his own name, and restored to him all the privileges that had belonged to his father. Your heavenly Father does the same: He calls you by name, it's very personal. Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44) and "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). Thus, Mephibosheth was brought before David so that he might receive covenant (promised) grace from David.**

**It's just the way God is: He calls you, just like he called Mephibosheth. He draws you, pulls you into His kingdom; it has nothing to do with who you are or where you've been. It's only because He is just LOADED with grace and He has promised to be your God.**

**If you are hiding out, even if you have heard His call many times and never came, I urge you to come today and trust in him. David said to Mephibosheth, "Don't be afraid!" and He tells you the same: "Fear not," and you can trust him, for God cannot lie. He is not man that he should lie. The familiar hymn says "It is grace**

**that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved." God will remove your fear and give you life. He gives you dignity and He will oppose all your enemies. He will spare you because he did not spare his own Son.**

**If you have already trusted in Christ and are saved, I say to you: Enjoy! Enjoy this great salvation. Rest in the wonderful knowledge that no enemy can conquer the new Jerusalem where God's throne is.**

**May God help us to pay attention to his word and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, that we may be saved. Amen.**