

Introduction

Remember the late radio personality Paul Harvey? I loved to listen to his news broadcasts in his distinctive style. But he also had a radio program where he would tell a story about someone and fill you in with details you may not have known and at the end he would reveal who the person was he was talking about and say... "And now you know the rest of the story!"

This is kind of like that tonight. Here we see two people that we've already met in some of our previous studies but we are given some later details that come to light. The two personalities we've met are **Mephibosheth**, the son of Jonathan and **Ziba** who was Jonathan's servant.

Read 2 Samuel 16:1-4

I. WE'VE PREVIOUSLY SEEN DAVID'S COVENANT WITH HIS FRIEND JONATHAN!

1 Samuel 20:14-17 14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: 15 But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies. 17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

II. WE'VE PREVIOUSLY SEEN JONATHAN'S DEATH IN THE BATTLE THAT KILLED SAUL AND MADE DAVID KING!

1 Samuel 31:1-2 1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

III. WE'VE SEEN THE FIRST MENTION OF JONATHAN'S SON, MEPHIBOSHETH AND HOW HE BECAME LAME IN HIS FEET!

2 Samuel 4:4 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 Jezreel, 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.

IV. WE'VE SEEN HOW MEPHIBOSHETH WAS REMEMBERED BY DAVID ACCORDING TO HIS COVENANT WITH JONATHAN!

2 Samuel 9:1 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?

2 Samuel 9:5-13 5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. 6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! 7 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. 8 And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am? 9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. 10 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 alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11 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. 12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. 13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

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ZIBA'S BETRAYAL AND SLANDER
2 SAMUEL 16:1-4

We saw how this was a wonderful, true story of David's love for his friend Jonathan and his keeping of his covenant with him by his care for Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son.

It is often used as a picture of the unworthy, incapable unbeliever finding grace in the eyes of our covenant-keeping God.

However, that is not the end of the story. Today we look at 2 Samuel 16 here and see that there is betrayal and slander in the air!

V. ZIBA'S BETRAYAL AND SLANDER! (2 Samuel 16:1-4)

We saw in the last Chapter how David has fled from Jerusalem with his family and friends. He is on the run from his son, Absalom who has betrayed him and stolen the throne of Israel by stealing the hearts of the men of Israel.

Absalom has moved into Jerusalem and has taken possession of the throne. (*2 Samuel 15:37*)

And here in the first verse of *2 Samuel 16*, we see Ziba, the one David had made to be the servant of Mephibosheth to keep all of the property and wealth of Jonathan that was returned to his son.

Here he is, meeting up with David and his entourage, with food, donkeys, wine and a story. (*Vs 1*)

David asked what these provisions were for. Ziba says in so many words, "*I brought them for you and your people.*" (*Vs 2*)

David asked the obvious question, "*Where is Mephibosheth?*" (*Vs 3*) Ziba betrayed Mephibosheth here by slandering him before David by telling David that Mephibosheth is plotting to take over the throne!

Was this true? No! It was an outright lie plain and simple! How is a feeble, weak, guy who is lame in his feet and can't even take care of himself going to plot to take over Israel from David or Absalom?

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But David apparently bought the story even though it was NOT true!

The question we might ask is "WHY?" What caused Ziba to turn on Mephibosheth?

Think about the sinfulness of men's hearts for a minute!

Let's go back to Ziba's being called into service for Mephibosheth!

2 Samuel 9:9-10, 12 9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. 10 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 alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants...12 ...And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.

A. Think Of Ziba's Damaged Pride!

Ziba went from serving the glorious King Saul! (Think about that and the **pride** that went with it!) He went from that to having Him and ALL 15 of his sons and ALL 20 of his servants serving a lame guy! Oh the **humiliation** that had to bring! They did all the work, and the lame guy got all the fruits of their labors!

Can you see what that might do to Ziba's **pride**? (To go from working for a king one day to having the next king tell you you've got to work for this lame guy who was the old king's grandson...oh the unfairness of it all!)

B. Think Of Ziba's Dominating Envy!

Do you think that Ziba's menial job that he, his family, and his servants were given to do for Mephibosheth with Mephibosheth getting all the fruit from it ever caused Ziba to envy Mephibosheth—who, by the way was eating at the King's table! Oh the injustice of it all!

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C. Think Of Ziba's Seizing This Opportunity!

If he could bring down Mephibosheth in David's eyes he might get a *"two-for"*!

He was counting on David buying the story like he did and the results that came from that! I'll talk about that in a moment!

But I'm also sure that **he was counting on Mephibosheth not being around very long to counter his betrayal and slander!**

1. He and his family and servants abandoned this lame guy to fend for himself!

How was that going to work out for Mephibosheth?
They probably expected it would finish him off!

(Also, where did all the stuff he brought to David come from? Think about it! They were servants! It all had to belong to Mephibosheth! So add theft on top of their betrayal and slander!)

2. Now, if that didn't finish Mephibosheth off, he was probably counting on Absalom to kill him to keep him from trying to plot to take over the kingdom!

Now I know that we're not told specifically what was going through Ziba's mind or the intentions he had, but you've got to admit that it doesn't take a genius to understand how Ziba's mind got him to this point!

VI. DAVID'S ANGER AGAINST MEPHIBOSHETH!

David has only heard one side of the story! Mephibosheth is not there to defend himself and tell his side! And yet David plays right into Ziba's hands and lets his anger get the best of him!

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Let me let you in on a truth that will help you if you'll take heed to it!

There are ALWAYS two sides to every story like this! And most of the time I've found there are three sides in a lot of stories!

What I mean by that, is that often the TRUTH is somewhere in the middle of it all! That wasn't the case here! But often it is!

So, David gets angry and gives Ziba ALL that pertained to Mephibosheth. In our day, Ziba would have said *"Cha-Ching!"*

Although he is not in a real position to make a ruling (after all he is a displaced king on the run), he rules that all the property and wealth of Saul's house now belonged now to Ziba, not Mephibosheth.

This expressed faith on David's part that he would return to the throne and be able to make such a ruling!

But it also fills our hearts with sorrow and disappointment that David would make such an unjust judgment by hearing only one side!

David's thinking doesn't appear to be very clear here while he's got his mind on fleeing from Absalom!

I'm sure he was thinking, *"How could Mephibosheth, after receiving the grace of David and the grace of God, be so ungrateful and evil?"*

And you know, when David returns to the throne, he's got in mind that he will deal with Mephibosheth! Right?

VII. AND NOW THE REST OF THE STORY!

The story cannot and does not end here!
Fast forward to **2 Samuel 19:24-30**.

Absalom is killed in battle, the people accept David back and he returns as king to Jerusalem.

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Verse 24

Now, does that sound like someone who was plotting a rebellion?
From the day David left, to the day he returned, Mephibosheth was in mourning.

Verse 25

Mephibosheth was one of the first to go see David when he returned.
But the question is begged, why didn't he go with David?
We can sense some anger in David's question.

Verse 26-28

Basically, Ziba told him, *"I'm going to take supplies for David on your behalf. You stay here!"*

But it is Mephibosheth's word against Ziba's.
But look at the evidence. Who are you going to believe? I believe Mephibosheth, don't you?

Verse 29

David seems to be confused about who to believe, so he says, *"I will just split the land between you and Ziba."*

Verse 30

Here we see the love Mephibosheth had for David.
He was in mourning when David was gone, not taking care of his feet or even keeping up with grooming.

When offered the land and riches of this world, he responds, *"No, it is enough just to have you back home."*

There's no better picture of the New Testament believer than this.
We sing, *"This world is not my home. I'm just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me to heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore."*

AND NOW YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY!