



Have Mercy

2 Samuel 9-10

Two Episodes of David's Mercy

1. Chapter 10: Hanun
2. Chapter 9: Mephibosheth

They serve as foils to one another.



2 Samuel 10:1-2a

1 Now it happened afterwards that the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son became king in his place. **2** Then David said, “I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me.”



“Nahash” “king of the Ammonites”

- He was defeated in battle by Saul in 1 Samuel 11, and David apparently had maintained the treaty and accepted tribute.
- Out of respect for the passing of a head of state, David sends a delegation, with the express purpose to “show kindness” to the heir to the throne.



2 Samuel 10:2b-5

2 So David sent some of his servants to console him concerning his father. But when David's servants came to the land of the Ammonites, **3** the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David is honoring your father because he has sent consolers to you? Has David not sent his servants to you in order to search the city, to spy it out and overthrow it?" **4** So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips, and sent them away. **5** When they told it to David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow, and then return."

David's Intentions are Honorable

- But they are either rebuffed or misunderstood by “the princes of the Ammonites.”
- These influential men convinced the new Ammonite king that David has sent the diplomatic entourage with ulterior, hostile motives.



Hanun Believes the False Report

- Rather than treating David's men with great respect, he humiliated them egregiously and sent them back.
- Hanun's treatment of the men would have desecrated the men's bodies, their clothes, and their national mission.



Desecration #1: Their Beards

1. Except for the performance of certain religious rituals or to express profound emotional distress, Israelite men always wore beards.

• **Leviticus 19:27** –

“You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard.”



Beards are a Big Deal

- According to Middle East tradition no greater indignity could have been put upon them.
- The beard was considered a symbol of manhood, and, in some places, of freedom—slaves were compelled to shave their beards in token of servitude.
- It was considered so disgraceful to have a beard cut off, that some ancient men preferred death to such a punishment.



Desecration #2: Their Clothes

2. The removal of the extremities of a garment made that garment unacceptable by Torah standards and symbolically desecrated the Law, itself.

• **Numbers 15:38-39** –

“Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner. And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after.”

Desecration #3: Their Bodies

3. Of course, by cutting “off their garments in the middle, at their hips” Hanun dishonored and humiliated the men by forcibly exposing their nakedness to public view.



David Shepherds his Flock

- Notice that David's first reaction to minister first to the needs of his victimized men before tending to the Ammonites.
- He orders to the delegation to stay at Jericho until their beards grow back.
- This permitted the men to avoid further humiliation by having to appear in disgrace before their families back in Jerusalem.



2 Samuel 10:6-8

6 Now when the sons of Ammon saw that they had become odious to David, the sons of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and the Arameans of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men. **7** When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men. **8** The sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, while the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the field.



Soldiers for Hire

- The Ammonites anticipate an armed response from David and hire mercenaries from Beth-rehob, Zobah, Maacah, and Tob.
- According to 1 Chronicles 19:6, Hanun paid one thousand talents (75,000 pounds) of silver to gain their services.



A Common Practice

- **1 Kings 15** – King Asa of Judah pays Benhadad of Syria to fight against Israel
- **2 Kings 16** – King Ahaz of Judah pays Tiglath-pileser of Assyria to fight against Israel
- **2 Chronicles 25** – King Amaziah of Judah hires 100,00 warriors from Israel to fight against Edom



A Little Foreshadowing

- This military campaign gives us the historical context and sets the stage for David and Bathsheba in the next chapter (It's even possible that it happened during this particular time).
“When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men.”



Joab Finds Himself in a Tight Spot

- Instead of a massive group of Arameans still north of them, about to join forces with the Ammonites, the Arameans had arrived earlier and moved their forces 20 miles to the south.
- And now, the entire Israelite army is trapped between two formidable fighting forces.



2 Samuel 10:9-12

9 Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him in front and in the rear, he selected from all the choice men of Israel, and arrayed them against the Arameans. **10** But the remainder of the people he placed in the hand of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the sons of Ammon. **11** He said, “If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come to help you. **12** Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what is good in His sight.”

Joab's Strategy

- He divides the Israelite troops, putting the “choice men” of Israel up against the greater threat and the remainder of the force against the weaker enemy.
- Joab commands the elite force while his brother, Abishai, leads the secondary force with the agreement that one side will come to the aid of the other if they are overwhelmed.



The Plan is Risky at Best

- And everyone involved knows it.
- But Joab has little choice, and he encourages the men to do 3 things:
 1. “Be strong”
 2. Fight “for the sake of our people”
 3. Fight “for the cities of our God”



Joab's Final Statement

“may the Lord do what is good in
His sight”

To Joab and Israel, this is a holy
war—a tangible expression of
Israel's commitment to the Lord.



2 Samuel 10:13-14

13 So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Arameans, and they fled before him. **14** When the sons of Ammon saw that the Arameans fled, they also fled before Abishai and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the sons of Ammon and came to Jerusalem.



Joab's Army Attacks

- And the Arameans “fled before him.”
- That success portended disaster for the Ammonites, who realizing their hopes of victory were dashed, fled into the city.
- The Israelites, who had not wanted this battle in the first place, make no effort to lay siege to the city and return to Jerusalem.



2 Samuel 10:15-19

15 When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. **16** And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the River, and they came to Helam; and Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer led them. **17** Now when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Arameans arrayed themselves to meet David and fought against him. **18** But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed 700 charioteers of the Arameans and 40,000 horsemen and struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there. **19** When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Arameans feared to help the sons of Ammon anymore.

Arameans Make a Preemptive Strike

- Hadadezer returns to bolster the Aramean forces.
- David (appropriately) takes his army across the Jordan to deal with the threat.
- The Arameans' best efforts again prove futile, and once again, they “fled before Israel, losing 700 charioteers, 40,000 horsemen, and Shobach, their commander.



Don't Mess With Israel

“When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them.”

David's victory expanded Israel's influence, fulfilled the Torah promise, and Israel gained more sources of tribute.





In Chapter 9

- David fulfills the pledge of familial support he made to Saul in 1 Samuel 24:21-22 –

“So now swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants after me and that you will not destroy my name from my father’s household.’

David swore to Saul...”



By the Way...

**This is Unheard
of in the
Ancient World!**



And So...

What Does
This Tell Us
About David?



Chuck Swindoll says of this story:

“It is, in my personal opinion, the greatest illustration of grace in all the Old Testament.”



2 Samuel 9:1-3

1 Then David said, “Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” **2**

Now 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.” **3** The 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.”

David Begins a Search

- For someone to whom he could “show kindness for Jonathan’s sake.”
- Ziba, a well-to-do “servant of the house of Saul” who apparently managed the former king’s royal estate, was called in and questioned by David.
- This probably occurs sometime in the middle of David’s reign.

A “Repeated” Question

- **v. 1:** “Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him *kindness* for Jonathan’s sake?”
- **v. 3:** “Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the *kindness* of God?”

Kindness = טוֹן (checed)



2 Samuel 9:4-10

4 So 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.” 5 Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. 6 Mephibosheth, 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!” 7 David 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.” 8 Again he prostrated himself and said, “What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?” 9 Then 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. 10 You 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.

“There is still a son of Jonathan”

- Apparently living with a wife and son in a self-imposed exile “in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.”
- Machir, mentioned here for the first time, was a wealthy and powerful individual who will later prove to be one of David’s most loyal supporters during Absalom’s rebellion.



ISRAEL

IN THE TIME OF KING DAVID

● Lo-debar

River
Jordan

● Jerusalem

Dead
Sea

0 10 miles

0 10 km



“Mephibosheth”

- Called “Merib-baal” in 1 Chr. 8:34; 9:40
- “crippled in both feet”
- 2 Samuel 4:4 –

“Now Jonathan, Saul’s son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.”

Why is Mephibosheth Still Alive?

- As a crippled person, Mephibosheth posed no threat to David's throne.
- He was unable to go to war, and he would have been unfit to bear anointed status.
- Leviticus 21:17 –
“Speak to Aaron, saying, ‘No man of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect shall approach to offer the food of his God.’”



David Honors Mephibosheth

- And Mephibosheth properly honors David.
- The king issues three decrees that change Mephibosheth's fortunes forever:
 1. David restores "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house."
 2. David gives Mephibosheth the privilege to eat at his "table regularly" (always).
 3. David provides Mephibosheth with a large contingent of servants and material wealth.

Mephibosheth's Response

- Was one of abject humility.
- After bowing down once again before David, he called himself “your servant” and “a dead dog.”
- There are parallels here to David, himself.



From the Mouth of David

• 2 Samuel 7:18 –

“Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?”

• 1 Samuel 24:14 –

“After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog...”



2 Samuel 9:11-13

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



Ziba

- Ziba accepts his assignment, but we will see more of him later.
- Mephibosheth and his family, including a young son named Mica, were relocated back in Benjamite territory near Jerusalem.



Before We Leave Mephibosheth

- We should see ourselves in him.
- Mephibosheth had fallen
- He was crippled as a result
- He was hiding in a barren place
- He was fearful of the king



David, a Type of Christ

- David took the initiative to seek out Mephibosheth in spite of his unloveliness, bring him into his house and presence, and adopt him as his own son.
- He also shared his bounty and fellowship with this undeserving one for the rest of his life because of Jonathan, as God has done with us for the sake of Christ.



Check This Out:

- **Grace for Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9:13 (ESV) –**

“So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king’s table.”

- **And Grace for Us in Psalm 23:6 –**

“Surely goodness and lovingkindness (*cheched*) will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Next Week:
“But David stayed at Jerusalem...”



