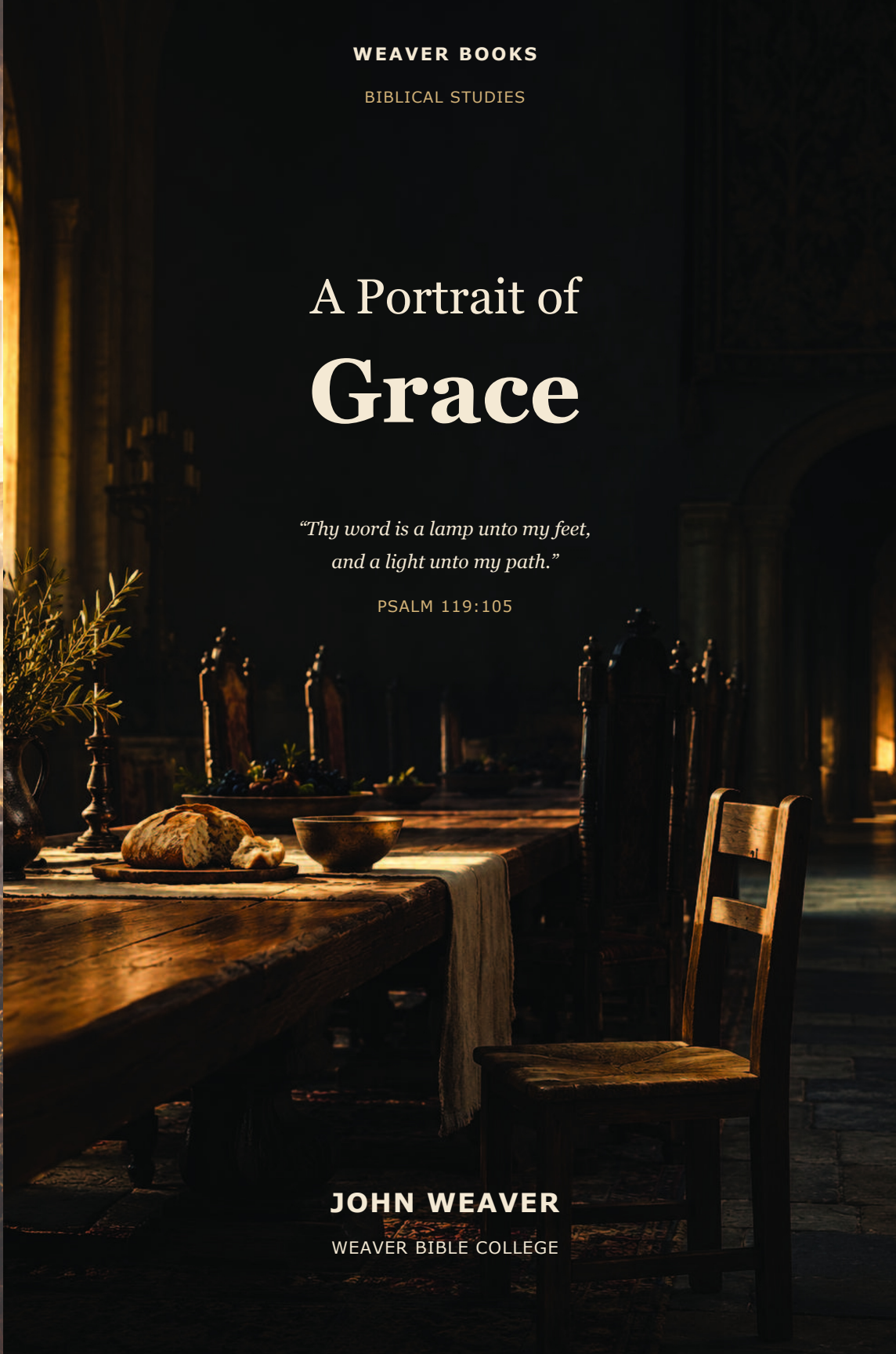
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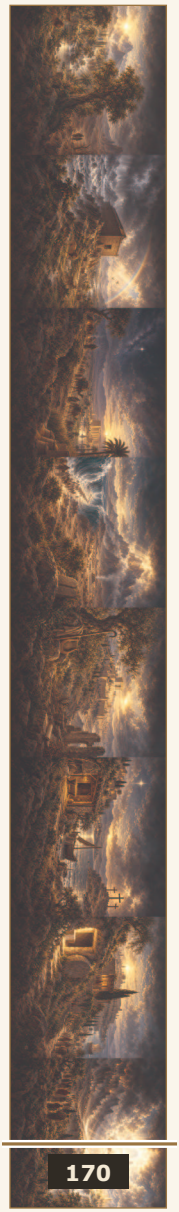
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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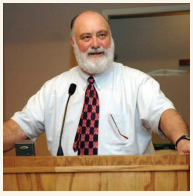
But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.

EPHESIANS 2:4

David's kindness to Mephibosheth provides a vivid setting for considering grace. John Weaver examines covenant mercy, restoration, and the gifts received through another's merit. These messages trace the account toward the believer's standing in Christ, emphasizing that salvation and belonging are gifts of God's purpose rather than achievements of the recipient.

"The only reason that God has mercy upon us is because of the merits of another—the merits of Jesus Christ."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

Mephibosheth, A Portrait of Grace

Part One

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Samuel 9:1-13 (KJV)

Introduction: A Picture Worth a Thousand Words

> And David said, Is there any yet that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, who is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. Then king David sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. And when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was

> coming to David, he fell on his face and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant.
>
> And David said unto him, Fear not, for I will surely show 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. And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertain to Saul and all his house. 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. 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.
>
> And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micah, 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 feet.

Each of us has heard the old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. One gains more information and understanding from a picture, if he understands that picture, than from a two-hour lecture—unless, of course, one is able to draw pictures with his words. For the Bible says in Proverbs 25 and verse 11, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

What I want you to do today is examine 2 Samuel chapter 9 with me and allow me to show you a portrait of grace in the life of Mephibosheth. I can assure you that some hearing my voice have never even heard of Mephibosheth, and certainly many have never considered the portrait of grace given to us in his life. In all probability, if you have read 2 Samuel chapter 9 before, you did not remember his name, and perhaps you did not even know how to pronounce it. Sometimes, when a name is difficult, we read something else and keep going. But Mephibosheth is very important.

I want you to understand and see the portrait God has given us of His marvelous grace in his life.

Salvation is of the Lord: Three New Testament Illustrations

Certainly, each of us understands that salvation is the work of God and the work of God alone. Jonah 2 verse 9 proclaims, “Salvation is of the Lord.” Wherever you turn in your Bible, that truth stands out clearly. There are only three illustrations of salvation in the New Testament, and each proves dogmatically and conclusively that salvation is of the Lord.

First, in 2 Corinthians 5, the Bible gives us the picture of creation: “For we are a new creation in Christ Jesus.” Who created the world? God. Did God have any help in creating the world? No. He spoke the world into existence and created it out of nothing. The Bible also tells us that God has shined in our hearts to give us the knowledge of His Son Jesus Christ. Just as God sovereignly and powerfully created the world, so He creates us in Christ Jesus.

The second is the illustration of birth in John chapter 3. Jesus Christ said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that a man must be born again.” You must be born from above. How many of you had anything to do with your first birth, with your physical birth?

Raise your hand if you helped in your conception and birth in any way. Very obviously, you did not. You were conceived and born at the pleasure of your parents. You had nothing to do with it. When Christ says you must be born again, the Greek word is anothen: you must be born from above. Here is the illustration of birth: we must be birthed by the power of God. The third illustration, found in Ephesians chapter 2, is resurrection: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins.” Have you ever seen a dead man resurrect himself? Obviously no. If a dead man is raised, it must be by a power that is outside of him, because he is dead and has no power inside of him.

Therefore, when you talk about creation, birth, and resurrection, those three illustrations demonstrate conclusively that salvation is the work of God alone. The interesting thing is that those same three

illustrations of salvation are also given to us in the Old Testament. For instance, creation is referred to in Psalm 102, verses 18 through 20, and Isaiah 43, verses 1 and 7. God created us. Birth is found in Ezekiel chapter 16, and resurrection is found in Ezekiel chapter 37. It does not matter whether you go to the Old Testament or to the New Testament. When one turns to the Bible, he finds this one truth is dogmatic, emphatic, and unequivocable: salvation is of the Lord.

As clear as these illustrations are, God was pleased to give us a very beautiful portrait of His marvelous grace in the life of Mephibosheth. Today, consider only one point: the initiation of grace, or the origin of grace. In 2 Samuel chapter 9, verse 1, David said, “Is there not yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” David was the king, and David is typical of our great God and Savior. Even Jesus Christ is referred to in Scripture as the greater David. This whole chapter deals with the exaltation and salvation of Mephibosheth. Understand that Mephibosheth’s exaltation began at the hands of another.

Salvation Begins with the King

The Initiation of Grace: Mephibosheth's Exaltation Began with David

Mephibosheth had absolutely nothing to do with his exaltation or his salvation. In fact, he was totally and completely unaware of David's desire. Mephibosheth was unable to do anything; he was powerless. And if you really want the full truth, technically and legally speaking, he was not only unaware and unable to do anything, but he was also an enemy of David.

David ascended to the throne of Israel, and he desired to show mercy to a member of Saul's household. May I remind you of a central truth? Whenever a king ascended to the throne, what was the normal standard operating procedure? He destroyed the former king's family and friends. He killed them because he did not want any sedition or insurrection. He normally killed all of the former king's family.

Jehu, King Jehu, destroyed all the family they had. Athaliah, who was a wicked, ungodly woman who stole the throne, not only killed

her enemies, she even killed all of her grandchildren except Joash, so that she could have the throne. The only reason she did not kill Joash was that his aunt took him and hid him in the temple. That is where he stayed until he was crowned king later on, and then Athaliah was put to death. This is normal, standard operating procedure: when one king ascends to the throne, he immediately gets rid of the former king's family and friends.

The first sub-point is this: the salvation and exaltation of Mephibosheth began with David the king. Mephibosheth did not originate, initiate, or even deserve the king's mercy. Likewise, our salvation began with the determination and purpose of the King of kings, the sovereign God of heaven and earth. We did not initiate or originate our salvation. We had nothing to do with it, any more than Mephibosheth had to do with his salvation.

Let me show you how salvation initially is of God. Look in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1, verse 4. In fact, let me read verse 3 so that you can see the context: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

God's Eternal Decree of Salvation

Now, this is something that God the Father has done. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. What has God the Father done? Look in verse 4: “According as he hath chosen us in him”—that is, in Christ—“before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

When did God decree salvation? Before the foundation of the world, in eternity past. When did He choose us to salvation? Before the foundation of the world, in eternity past. How many of us could have had anything to do with our salvation? We were not even around. The world did not even exist. And yet God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Do you realize that our salvation was conceived in the mind of the sovereign God before the world ever began? There could be no salvation apart from God. He is the originator, the initiator, and the source of our salvation.

Paul reminds Timothy of this truth in 2 Timothy chapter 1. He begins with verse 8, though verse 9 is the verse he wants us to see: “Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner. But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.” We are talking about God and the power of God. Now look what God has done: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Why did God choose to save? I am going to answer this several times: Because He willed to save. He chose us, the Bible says, not according to our works. It was not one thing that we did or did not do. He saved us, the Bible says, according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

You see, salvation was not some second thought with God. It was not something that caught God by surprise. He did not say, “Oh my, men have sinned; now what am I going to do?” Salvation was predetermined, planned, and purposed by God before the world ever began.

James 1:18 says, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” Did you hear what he said? Of his own will begat He us. Why did He beget us? Because He willed to do it. Just like Mephibosheth’s salvation originated with the will of David, so likewise, our salvation originates with the will of God.

In Ephesians 1:11, the Bible says, “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Look at that again: “Being predestinated according to the purpose of him.” We are talking about God's purpose. Notice this phrase: He “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

God's Will as the Sole Cause of Salvation

The beginning of salvation is the will of God. It originates with God. It is solely and completely and absolutely His determination and His purpose. Do you realize this? Stop and think about it. If God had not

purposed, planned, and decreed salvation, how many would be saved? None. Let me ask it another way: How many deserve to be saved? None. God, then, would have been absolutely just had He not decreed salvation. But He did decree salvation, and that decree is based upon the will of God. The will of God is the single and absolute cause for salvation.

Now listen carefully: there is nothing above God to rule Him, and there is nothing outside of God that can be an impulsive cause to Him. People talk about salvation and say, “God saw that we needed to be saved, and therefore He decreed salvation.” Listen, that is an external cause outside of God. If there is an external cause that manipulates God, then God is not God. That external cause is God. There is nothing above God, and there is nothing outside of God. If you try to postulate that there is, it makes God no God at all.

God is infinitely exalted above us. God is unique. Do you know what the word unique means? One of a kind. One of a kind. People sometimes say, “I want you to explain God.” I cannot explain God. I cannot even tell you what you can compare Him to. There is nothing to compare Him to. He is absolutely and totally unique.

We are in subjection to God, and our wills are constantly being bombarded by external causes. I remember when I was a teenager, chomping at the bits, saying, “I can’t wait until I get out of my father’s house so I can do what I want to do.”

When you got out of your father's house, you found out that you did not get to do what you wanted to do; you got to do what you had to do. I might want to do things sometimes, but I have a wife to consider. I have children and grandchildren. There are so many things that influence me. I am not a free individual. My will is not free.

My will is not independent, and neither is yours. Yours is influenced by your lusts, your desires, and everything. But God is uninfluenced. There is nothing above God and there is nothing outside of God that can influence Him.

If you try to say that something outside of God moved God to decree salvation, then you have admitted there is something prior to God or above God. Whatever that would be, would be God, because a

cause always precedes the effect, and the cause is always greater than the effect. You would be un-Godding God. You would be destroying the Godhood of God. You would be saying that there is something more excellent than God Himself.

Salvation is based upon the will of God. There is absolutely nothing that can move God except His own will. He is free. He is independent. He and He alone is God. Therefore, salvation is based upon God's will. In that salvation, and in that decree, and in that purpose, God was absolutely free in choosing a people to eternal life and glory. There was nothing above God and there was nothing outside of God that moved Him.

Romans 9:15 shows that there is nothing superior to God, especially when it relates to salvation. God is absolutely free and independent. This passage quotes from the Old Testament and records what God said to Moses: “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Is God obligated to have mercy on anybody? No. Is He obligated to have compassion on anybody? No. The fact that God does is based solely, totally, and completely upon His own will.

In Ephesians 1:11, we read, “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” What does God do? God works everything, including salvation, after the purpose of His own will.

Notice something. This Scripture does not say that God works after the counsel of His own heart. It does not say that God works after the counsel of His own mind. It says that God works everything after the counsel of His own will. It does not even say that He works everything according to the will of His counsel. No, no, no. He works everything after the counsel of His own will.

God is unique. God is absolutely free and independent. There is nothing that influences God. God does as He pleases, only as He pleases, and always as He pleases, because He is God. Our thoughts and our wills are affected by numerous things; not so with God.

Daniel 4:35 says, “He, God, doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can

stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" God does according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and no one can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest thou?

The Bible says in Psalm 115:3, "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." Everything that God does is according to His will.

God is infinite in wisdom, yet His will regulates the operation of that wisdom. God is also merciful, but it is His will that determines to whom He will be merciful and when He will be merciful. God is inflexibly just, but it is His will that determines and decides whether justice shall be put forth, and when, in what measure, and in what degree it shall be put forth. The Bible says in Exodus 34:7 concerning God—now listen to this.

"Who will by no means clear the guilty?" Can God clear the guilty? He has done so in our case, has He not? He has done so millions of times in the lives of other people. But here is an instance when God will in no way clear the guilty. So there is a time He wills not to clear the guilty. Everything is based upon the will of God.

Why did God decree salvation? The answer is, because He willed to decree salvation. Sovereignty characterizes the whole being of God. God is sovereign in all of His attributes. He is sovereign in the exercise of His power. His power is exercised as He wills, when He wills, and where He wills. You will find that on every page of Scripture.

The Sovereignty of God Defined

He does as He wills, whenever He wills, wherever He wills, and only as He wills. No one can thwart Him. No one can hinder Him. No one can stop Him. He is obligated to none and is absolutely free from all external compulsions.

When you talk about the sovereignty of God, you mean that God is God indeed. He is God in fact. It means the Godhood of God, the supremacy of God, and the absoluteness of God. Do you realize the God of modern-day America is a figment of the imagination? He is not the God of the Scripture. If you ask most professing Christians to

describe God, they may not say it in these words, but in their minds they think somehow He is a doting old grandfather in heaven somewhere with a long beard, who does not enjoy sin and does not enjoy the indiscretions of youth, but leniently winks at them, understanding that

After all, everyone must sow his wild oats. That is not the God of the Bible. God is absolutely sovereign. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, who does according to His will in the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, and that none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest thou? He is the Almighty, the Possessor of heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will. He is the governor among the nations, the one who sets up kingdoms and brings down kingdoms. God is the one who is in absolute control.

Thank God George Bush is not in control, and thank God a lot of others are not in control. God is in control. He puts one up and takes down another. To say that God is God is to say that He is the only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and God of Gods. That is the sovereignty of God. God is God, and everything in Scripture, the Bible tells us, is based upon the will of God.

Old Testament Promises of the Everlasting Covenant

Let us look at a number of Scriptures that deal with salvation. Isaiah 55:3 says, “Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” Who is going to make the everlasting covenant? God. God said, I will do it.

Jeremiah 32:40 says, “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” Each of these passages relates to salvation or the new covenant that we have in Jesus Christ. Note the words, “I will make an everlasting covenant.” If it is an everlasting covenant, only God can make it, for He alone is everlasting.

“I will do this,” says God. Look in Ezekiel chapter 16. These are Old Testament verses now talking about the New Testament, or the

new covenant of Jesus Christ. Notice Ezekiel 16:60: “Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.” God said, “I will do it.”

Again, in Ezekiel 37:26, God says, “Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.” In every one of these instances, it was God.

May I remind you, even concerning the Abrahamic covenant, when God found Abraham, where was he? He was an idolater in Ur of the Chaldees. God brought him out. God made a covenant with him. I do not understand how Romans 9:15 can be misunderstood when the sovereign God said, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

The picture I am trying to show you is this: David has ascended to the throne. David does not owe Mephibosheth one thing. Mephibosheth is an enemy, and yet David purposes and designs to show grace to him. The salvation and exaltation Mephibosheth experienced were due only to David’s purpose and determination. Our salvation and exaltation are due only to the purpose of the sovereign God of heaven and earth. Had God not decreed to save, there would not be any salvation. Period.

Go back to 2 Samuel 9:1. This is the second sub-point. We are still talking about the initiation of grace—the source, or origination, of grace and salvation. Notice: “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?”

Mephibosheth's Salvation Due to the Merits of Another

The salvation and exaltation of Mephibosheth was due to the merits of another. Why did David want to show mercy to Mephibosheth? For Jonathan's sake. David and Jonathan had entered into a covenant, and David was now going to show mercy to Mephibosheth,

Jonathan's son, only because of that covenant. He would show him mercy for Jonathan's sake. Mephibosheth was, by birth and by practice, an enemy of David.

He was of Saul's lineage and would have had a claim to the throne through Saul, who was the first king of Israel. But David and Jonathan had entered into a covenant. Notice how many times their covenantal agreement is mentioned. In 1 Samuel 18:3 we read, “Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.” Jonathan and David made a covenant.

Again, in 1 Samuel 20:8: “Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?” David was reminding Jonathan, “You've brought me into a covenant with you before the Lord.” Verse 16 says, “So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies.”

Notice again that he speaks about the covenant. Then, in 1 Samuel 23:18: “And they two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.”

I hope you're beginning to see the picture, the portrait. Mephibosheth's exaltation and salvation began with the purpose and the determination of the king. Secondly, Mephibosheth's exaltation and salvation was due to the merits of another. David is going to have compassion and mercy upon Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake. This is a picture, a beautiful portrait.

The Eternal Covenant and Christ's Fulfillment

Hebrews 13:20 says, “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.” God the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead, the Bible says, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

It is called an everlasting or an eternal covenant, which means this covenant was entered into in eternity past. It was entered into before the world ever began. The everlasting or the eternal covenant

is the covenant that was entered into between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. In that covenant, God the Father gave to God the Son a people. God the Son agreed to become their substitute, their sacrifice, their propitiation, and God the Spirit then agreed to regenerate and convert those for whom Christ suffered and died.

Ephesians 3:11 gives us another Scripture that relates to that eternal covenant, although it is not called the eternal covenant. We see the same truth given to us in different words: “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” According to the eternal purpose, singular, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here it is called the eternal purpose, and in Hebrews 13 it was called the eternal covenant, but that covenant and the purpose are one and the same.

The eternal covenant, or the eternal purpose, is the agreement that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit entered into before the world ever began respecting the salvation of His people. In that covenant, Jesus Christ agreed to become our head, our federal representative, our substitute, and our sacrifice, thus redeeming us from the penalty, pollution, and condemnation of sin. This is the eternal purpose, or this eternal covenant.

Look in Luke 22 and verse 22. Here we find a word that we need to pick up on before turning to the book of Acts. Luke 22, verse 22: “And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!”

Now watch what that verse says. The Son of man, who is Jesus Christ, goeth as it was determined. So you have to ask this question: determined by whom? When was it determined? What was determined?

Let me tell you something before I show you these other passages. In that eternal purpose which God the Father purposed in Christ Jesus before the world ever began, everything concerning the life and death and sacrifice of His Son, down to the nth degree, down to the minutest detail, was all determined beforehand. There was nothing left to chance, nothing left to accident, nothing left to man.

It was all predetermined and predestined by the Sovereign God of Heaven and Earth.

Look in Acts 2 to begin with, Acts 2 and verse 22. Verse 23 is the one that I really want, but I am going to read verse 22 just to show you that Jesus Christ is in the context. Peter is preaching: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

Notice the words, "Him, being delivered" by what? The determinate counsel. In other words, God determined beforehand the sufferings of Christ, the death of Christ, and everything concerning it. Now look in Acts 4, beginning with verse 26. Watch carefully.

"The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, are you watching, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Isn't that interesting? Everything about Jesus Christ, all of His work, everything was predetermined beforehand. Why? Because here was this eternal purpose, this eternal covenant that was entered into between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

In John chapter 6, beginning with verse 37, our Lord says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Then, in verse 38, He says, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

Three things can clearly be seen in this passage. First, Christ has received a certain charge or commission from the Father: "I came not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me." Secondly, He solemnly undertook to execute that charge; in other words, He

sought to fulfill it. “I didn’t come to do my own will. I came to do His will.” Thirdly, the end contemplated was the actual bestowment of blessings upon those who had been given to Him. He says, “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose” how much?

Nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. Verses 37 and 39 tell us that God the Father had given to God the Son a people. How many people were given to Christ? The Bible tells us it is an innumerable number, a number which no man can number.

John 17, the high-priestly prayer of our Lord, makes this clear. In verse 6, our Lord says, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.” In verse 9, He says, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

Verse 11 says, “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” Verse 12 continues, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.” In verse 24, Christ says, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

In all of these verses, Christ said, “You gave me a people. You gave them to me. I came to be their substitute, to redeem them.” Galatians 4:4–5 says, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Jesus Christ came into this world and was made under the law.

What did He have to do? He had to render to that law perfection. Jesus Christ is the only one who has ever obeyed the law of God personally, perfectly, and perpetually. He said in John 8:29, “I do

always those things that please him." Jesus Christ kept God's law perfectly; therefore, He had no sins of His own. He was the sinless Son of God, the sinless substitute, and therefore He became our sacrifice. That is why the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." In Matthew 20:28, Jesus Christ says, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

When Jesus Christ came as our substitute, the just was given for the unjust, the righteous for the unrighteous, the godly for the ungodly, and the obedient for the disobedient. In other words, it is because of this covenant that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost entered into before the foundation of the world that we have mercy.

Do you know why God has mercy upon anybody? Because of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the perfect, sinless Son of God and the perfect sacrifice. David said, "Is there any left yet of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Jonathan and I had a covenant, and because of that covenant, I am willing to show mercy. God the Father is willing to show mercy because of the covenant with Jesus Christ.

When He saves us, it is because of the merits of another. No sinner, especially no convicted sinner, ever prays, "Father, save me because I have done good all my life, worked hard, and tried to be a good man." What a convicted sinner prays is this: "Have mercy upon me, a sinner, and save me for Christ's sake." In other words, have mercy upon me because of the merits of another, because of the covenant that You entered into with Your Son.

David and Jonathan: did you know the word David actually means Beloved? Jonathan means Jehovah has given. Put David and Jonathan together: Jehovah has given His Beloved. This is a wonderful portrait of grace, a beautiful picture.

Each of us can probably quote 1 John 4:10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Jehovah has given His Beloved. Our salvation began with the purpose and decree of the sovereign God of

heaven and earth before the world ever began. There are two quick applications.

Applications: Salvation is of the Lord

The first one is this: I hope you understand more fully Jonah 2:9: “Salvation is of the Lord.” Truly it is. Without His eternal decree, eternal purpose, and eternal covenant, there would be no salvation. If we are saved by the grace of God, who gets all the honor, glory, and praise? He does. Without Him, there is no salvation.

Secondly, the clear teaching of Scripture is simple. It was God the Father who ordained salvation. It was God the Son who purchased salvation. It is God the Holy Spirit who applies salvation. This truth is beautifully set forth in Ephesians 1:1–14. It is a doxology, and we are not going to read it now. It is the longest sentence in the Greek New Testament. In that passage, salvation is ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Without the Godhead, there is no salvation. God the Father ordained it, God the Son purchased it, and God the Holy Spirit applies it. In everything, God gets all the glory.

God gave us a beautiful picture when David determined and purposed to show mercy to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake. God had mercy upon us for Christ's sake. We owe everything to the Sovereign God of heaven and earth. Salvation is of the Lord.

Father, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ that You would speak to our hearts and help us. Build us up in the most holy faith, and above all, help us to give Thee the honor, praise, and glory for Thy so great salvation. Without Thee, Lord, there would be nothing. We are thankful that, before the foundation of the world, You decreed to save; God the Son determined to undertake to be our surety; and God the Holy Spirit undertook to apply that salvation. We offer Thee praise and glory in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In whose name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

A Portrait of Grace

Part Two of Two

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Samuel 9:1-11 (KJV)

Introduction and Review

And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, who is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. Then king David sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. And 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. And David said unto him, Fear not, for I will surely show 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. And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertain to Saul and to all his house. 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. 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.

"And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah, and all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, and he did eat continually at the king's table, and was lame on both his feet."

The salvation and exaltation of Mephibosheth began with David the king. This was the divine side of grace. Mephibosheth certainly was not seeking out King David. He was not seeking to be exalted or saved in any sense of the word. The decree, the origination, the source, and the initiation of grace began with the king. I developed this from Scripture, showing that salvation began with our great God and King, because the Bible tells us that He gave the decree before the foundation of the world.

Secondly, the salvation and exaltation of Mephibosheth was due to the merits of another. David said, "Is there any left of the house of Saul that I may show him mercy for Jonathan's sake?" David and Jonathan had entered into a covenant together. Scripture speaks in Hebrews 13 and verse 20 of the eternal covenant made between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The only reason that God has mercy upon us is because of the merits of another—the merits of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was not only made of a woman and made under the law; He is the only one who has ever obeyed the law of God personally, perfectly, and perpetually. He rendered unto God a perfect obedience to that law. He was given as our sacrifice, our substitutionary atonement. He was the sinless Son of God, and thus He died in our stead. God has mercy upon us because of Jesus Christ. We have mercy because of the merits of another.

The Recipient of Grace

Mephibosheth as the Recipient of Grace

Mephibosheth, in his condition, his status, and ultimately his end, portrays the sinner. We have used the term picture-perfect, and certainly in the life of Mephibosheth we have a perfect picture of each one of us. Mephibosheth is the picture-perfect representation of a sinner. In 2 Samuel chapter 9, particularly in verses 2 through 13, the recipient of grace is Mephibosheth. He was, by nature and by lineage, an enemy of David.

He had forfeited everything by virtue of the fact that he belonged to the house and lineage of Saul. Saul had been killed, his kingdom had been taken from him, and David had now been elevated to the throne. It was the standard operating procedure that when a new king came to the throne, he immediately killed all the former king's family and friends. He did so to prevent any insurrection and any sedition.

David had ascended to the throne, and by virtue of the fact that he was now king, everything that Saul had belonged to David. It was David's by virtue of two very important facts. First, it fell to David by right of inheritance through his wife. David had married Michal, who was the daughter of Saul. The Bible tells us in Numbers chapter 27 and verse 8 that if a man dies and has no sons, then everything goes to his daughter. Saul's daughter was married to David; therefore, by virtue of the very fact that he married Saul's daughter, he now owned everything that Saul had.

Also, Ish-bosheth, another son of Saul, was in rebellion, and God killed him, and everything was transferred over to David. By virtue

of these two facts, David now owned everything that Saul and his family formerly possessed.

David did not owe Mephibosheth anything. Everything that Saul and his family had legally, lawfully, and rightfully belonged to David. So the very fact that David now wanted to have mercy upon Mephibosheth was pure grace.

After David asked in verse 1 whether any remained of the house of Saul to whom he might show kindness for Jonathan's sake, there was, in verse 2, of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. When he was called unto David, the king said unto him, “Art thou Ziba?” And he said, “Thy servant is he.” Ziba was the last servant of King Saul.

In verse 3, the king asked, “Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him?” Ziba answered that Jonathan had yet a son who was lame on his feet. Through Ziba, David discovered that a descendant of Jonathan was still alive: Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was five years old at his father's death when Jonathan and Saul, along with some of the others, were killed on Mount Gilboa.

Mephibosheth was only five. Remember also that during the preceding years David had been driven from the land through the wickedness of King Saul. Mephibosheth had been born, but David did not know him; David did not even know that he existed. David had been on the run until that particular time, until God made him king over Judah. He was king over Judah seven years before he became king over all Israel.

Second Samuel 4:4 says, “And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame on 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.” This is a passage to hold, because it will be referred to several times.

After Saul and Jonathan died, Saul had another son named Ish-bosheth, who ascended the throne. Literally, Mephibosheth would have had a greater claim to the throne through Jonathan, because Jonathan was supposed to be next in line. Saul said so

himself on several occasions. Undoubtedly, Mephibosheth's lameness kept him from contesting the throne. May I also point out that this lameness, in all probability, saved his life, because Ish-bosheth was killed.

And then the kingdom was delivered over to David. So here he is, lame on both feet. By the way, the word Mephibosheth literally means “exterminating the idol.” You are going to see in this passage how God exterminates the idol through the grace and mercy of God.

The Fall of Mephibosheth and Humanity

How does Mephibosheth represent the sinner? How does Mephibosheth give us a picture-perfect representation of the sinner? Let me show you. First of all, he was involved in a fall. The Bible tells you there in 2 Samuel chapter 4 and verse 4 that he was involved in a fall. In fact, he fell and became lame. The very fact that he was involved in a fall is very, very significant, because the fall of man is extremely significant. When you talk about the fall of man, you have to understand that man is not now as God made him originally.

We have been plunged into a sea of sin and misery. We have been ruined. We are wretched, rebellious, and wicked. God created Adam, and He created man with original knowledge, original righteousness, holiness, and dominion. We have lost all those characteristics by virtue of the fall. In fact, hold 2 Samuel 9, but turn to the book of Isaiah chapter 1. Let me show you a picture of what man is now since the fall. Notice Isaiah chapter 1, beginning with verse 5.

Here is the picture of man since the fall. God says in Isaiah 1:5, “Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.”

The corruption and depravity of man is pictured here from head to toe. Man lost everything in the fall. If you would turn right over to the book of Romans chapter 3, you will see how the Apostle Paul tells us about man since the fall. The words are different, but certainly the same truth. Notice Romans chapter 3, beginning with verse 10. The

Apostle Paul writes, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

There is none righteous. There is none that understands. There is none that seeks after God. They are all going out of the way. There is none good. No, not one. In other words, man is now totally different from when God originally made him. Like Mephibosheth, we have fallen from our first estate.

J. C. Philpot said, “...as no heart can sufficiently conceive, so no tongue can adequately express the state of wretchedness and ruin into which sin has cast guilty, miserable man.” In separating him from God, sin severed him from the only source of happiness and holiness. It has ruined him body and soul. The body is filled with sickness and disease, and sin has defaced and destroyed the image of God in which man was created. It has made him love sin and hate God.

That is exactly what happened in the Fall. Just as Mephibosheth was involved in a fall, likewise we have been involved in a fall. Very obviously, we are not now what we once were.

Secondly, note that Mephibosheth was involved in a fall by the hands of another. Second Samuel chapter 4 and verse 4 says: “And Jonathan Saul's son had a son that was lame on 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. As she made haste to flee, he fell and became lame. He not only was involved in a fall; he fell at the hands of another. His nurse was carrying him. She dropped him, and he became lame.

The same is exactly true of each of us. Each of us was involved in a fall at the hands of another. We fell through our federal head and representative, Adam.

Federal Headship and Imputation

Here is what God did. Instead of placing each member of Adam’s race on probation separately and successively, it pleased God to put the whole of His descendants upon formal trial once and for all in the person of their head. All of us have seen fields of corn. As you

look at each field of corn, you will notice that it is made up of innumerable stalks. Each stalk stands alone, and each stalk has its own root system. God did not deal with us as a field of corn. He did not deal with us individually and separately. If you look at the tree outside, you will find that it has multitudinous branches, but only one root system. God dealt with us as a tree. He dealt with us through our root, Adam, our federal head and representative; and what the root did, the branches did. In other words, when the root died, basically the branches died as well.

Thomas Manton put it like this: “We saw the forbidden fruit with Adam’s eyes, we gathered it with Adam’s hands, we ate it with Adam’s mouth, and we were ruined by those things as though we had been there and consented to his acts.” That is basically what happened.

Romans 5:12 says, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” It is only by one man that sin entered the world. It is only by one man that death entered the world. Yet death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. Now notice what the Bible says very specifically: “for all have sinned.” When you look in the Greek, the phrase “for all have sinned” is an aorist passive. The latter part of verse 12 is extremely significant.

An aorist means it happened once and for all. It is over; it is done. When did all of us fall? When did all of us die? The answer is in Adam, because what he did, we did.

Romans 5:15 says, “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” There is a comparison and contrast between Adam and Christ. Where Adam failed, Christ succeeded; where Adam sinned, Christ did not sin.

Romans 5:16 says, “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.” Verse 17 says, “For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive

abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Verse 19 says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Romans chapter 5 is teaching imputation. Imputation is a legal act whereby something is charged to someone's account.

All of you understand imputation. A woman may see a beautiful dress in a store and want it, but not have the money. She may use her credit card or a charge account and say, "Charge it to my husband's account." She does not say "impute," but that is what imputation is: something charged to one's account.

Here is the first example of imputation in Scripture: the sins of Adam are imputed to his posterity. You may say, "I do not like imputation. I do not like the fact that what Adam did was imputed to me." But if you had been in Adam's stead—if you had been Adam—you would have done exactly the same thing he did. Exactly the same. Yet when you say you do not like imputation, consider what follows.

If you don't like imputation, then you don't like salvation, because the only salvation that exists is salvation by imputation. There are only three illustrations of imputation in the Bible. First, Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity. Secondly, the believer's sins are imputed to Christ. Thirdly, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers. Thus, imputation is unto condemnation on the one hand, and unto salvation and justification on the other. Just like Mephibosheth, we were involved in a fall.

He fell at the hands of another, and likewise, we fell at the hands of another—our federal head and representative, Adam. Mephibosheth was not only involved in the fall; he was crippled in the fall. He lost all his ability when he fell. He could not function or walk. A. A. Hodge, the great Presbyterian theologian and author, said this concerning Adam's fall: "The three main elements involved in the consequences entailed by the sin of Adam upon his posterity are these. First, the guilt or just penal responsibility of Adam's first sin or apostatizing act which is imputed or judicially charged upon his descendants whereby every child is born into the world in a state

of antenatal forfeiture or condemnation." In other words, we are born sinners.

Secondly, there is the entire depravity of our nature, involving a sinful innate disposition inevitably leading to actual transgression. We are not only born sinners; we like to sin. Our sinful nature motivates us to sin. Thirdly, there is the entire inability of the soul to change its own nature or to do anything spiritually good in obedience to divine law. There are three consequences involved in the fall: first, we were made sinners; secondly, we now love sin; and thirdly, we have lost our ability. We cannot do anything to please God.

We became totally depraved. That is what God was speaking about in Isaiah 1, verses 5 and 6, from the top of the head to the sole of the foot. From the bottom of the foot to the top of the head, that encompasses everything. Our mind became corrupted, our will became enslaved to sin, and everything about us became absolutely perverted.

There is another picture of a cripple in John 5, the cripple our Lord found by the pool of Siloam. When the angel would come down and trouble the water, the Lord asked him, “Wilt thou be made whole?” He said, “I have no man to help me into the pool. But while I am trying to get there, another steps in in front of me.” In other words, he was absolutely helpless. He had no ability.

The biggest effect of the fall upon man is not just that we are totally depraved. We are. But total depravity equals loss of ability. We can do absolutely nothing in and of ourselves to rectify or remedy our problem or our situation. We are absolutely, totally helpless and hopeless.

Total Inability of the Sinner

Now let us look in Romans chapter 8 and take the time to go through Scripture so that we understand this point. Beginning with verse 6: “For to be carnally minded or fleshly minded is death; but to be spiritually minded, that is, in reference to God, is life and peace.” Now he tells us why to be carnally minded is death. Verse 7 says, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.” Enmity is a strong

word for hatred. The carnal mind is extreme hatred against God. "For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Wait a minute. Man by nature is not subject to the law of God. His mind is not. It is so corrupted and perverse that it cannot be subject to God's law.

Verse 8 is the conclusion from verses 6 and 7: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." What is the next word? Cannot. Based upon Romans 8:6–8, how many who are born in the flesh have the ability to please God? None. How many are born in enmity against God? All of us.

Isn't it amazing that our parents never had to teach us to sin? We simply do it. Nobody ever had to teach us how to lie; we do it normally and naturally. Nobody had to teach us how to lust or covet. That is in us by nature. We prefer our lusts and desires to the law of God by nature. Therefore, there is not one thing any man can do, in and of himself, to please God. They that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Turn to the book of John, and let us begin chapter 3. I want to take you through the book of John and show you several verses. As we look at these verses, remember this simple truth: there is a vast difference between the words may and can.

May is a term of permission. Can is a term of ability. So if Hobie asked me, "Pastor, can I play the piano?" my response would be, "You may, if you have the ability." Or I might give him permission, but that does not mean he has the ability to play it. Permission and ability are two totally different things.

Now look at John 3, verse 3. In fact, let us read verse 1 so that we can see the context: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." Here was a very erudite man. "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Did you hear what our Lord said? Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Here we are out on the street of

Waycross, witnessing to people and telling them about Christ and the kingdom of Christ. How many of those individuals we witness to, who are unregenerate and unconverted, can really see and understand what we are talking about by nature? Not one. They cannot.

Our Lord said, “Except a man be born from above.” The word again is anothen in the Greek, which means literally from above. Except a man be born from above, he cannot even see the kingdom of God. Now look down at verse 5: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” If a man cannot see it apart from being regenerated, our Lord says he cannot even enter it.

Apart from being regenerated, how many can see or enter the Kingdom of God by nature? None. Not one.

Ephesians 4:18 gives the understanding of what our Lord meant when He said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”: “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart.” Why are men alienated from God? Because they are blind and ignorant; they cannot see or understand. This is the condition of man by nature.

First Corinthians 2:14 says, “The natural man”—man by nature, the way we are born—“receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, their foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Why do you think the world makes fun of Christ and Christians and the Word of God? Why do you think the political leaders of the day mock the Scriptures? The answer is because they're foolishness unto them. They can't see. They don't understand. They do not have the ability. Neither can he know them. Why? They're spiritually discerned. Man by nature does not have the ability to discern the things of God in and of himself.

So our Lord says in John chapter 3, verse 3 and verse 5, "Without Him, no man can see the Kingdom of God. No man can enter into the Kingdom of God." And in John 6 and verse 44, Jesus says, "No

man can come to Me except the Father who has sent Me, draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Now watch that carefully. Our Lord says, no man can come to Me. Did our Lord say that no man may come? No, He didn't say that. Sinners are invited. What He said is no man can come. No man has the ability to come to Me, except the Father who has sent Me, draw him. In other words, sinners may be invited to come to Christ, and they may be responsible to come to Christ, but they do not have the ability in and of themselves to come to Christ. It must be supernaturally done by the drawing of the Father.

So now look what our Lord has said. No man can see, no man can enter, and no man can come. In John 8 and verse 43, our Lord tells these religious leaders, "Why do you not understand my speech? Even because you cannot hear my words."

I have no earthly idea how many sermons I've preached in 43 years, 44, whatever it is. I don't know how many people I've counseled. I never took notes or recorded numbers. But I can tell you one thing: I've wasted a lot of breath toward a lot of people who never heard anything that I said, because they could not hear. You don't have the ability to hear.

Our Lord says, “He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.” If you had been regenerated, you would hear His words. But you do not hear because you are not of God; God has never worked in your life.

Our Lord said that man cannot see, enter, come, hear, or believe. In John 12, beginning with verse 39, we read: “Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.” Therefore, they could not believe.

How many of you have heard preachers all your life say, “You can come to Christ; you can believe”? What did our Lord say? You cannot come, you cannot see, you cannot enter, you cannot hear, and you cannot believe. It is not in man to do that. Man does not have the ability. Why? Because faith is the gift of God. Man cannot believe in

and of himself. He may be responsible to believe; he may be accountable to believe, but faith is God's gift.

Paul makes this statement in 2 Thessalonians 3:2: “And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.” Notice what he said: all men have not faith. Faith is not inherent in all men. It is not there by nature. I have heard people try to explain this by saying, “All men have faith; you just have to exercise it.”

Here is a chair. You sit down, and when you sit down, you have faith that the chair will hold you up. That may be a good illustration of human faith in objects, but there is a vast difference between human faith in objects and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, they cannot believe. Why? All men have not faith. It is not in man by nature.

That is why everyone in this room can quote Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” So, by grace are you saved through faith. This is how Mephibosheth is a perfect picture of a sinner.

He was involved in a fall; he fell at the hands of another and was crippled in a fall. Now let me show you how the picture goes even further. Go back in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 9, and look in verse 4.

Mephibosheth's Location and Redemption

After Ziba reveals that Mephibosheth is alive and is the son of Jonathan, verse 4 says, “...and the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.” That is where David found him and from where he was sent to bring him back. Interestingly, the word Machir means sold. Lo-debar means place of no pasture. Where was Mephibosheth found? Sold in the place of no pasture—a slave, barren and desolate.

Is that not what the Bible teaches concerning us? Did not our Lord say, He who committed sin is the servant or the slave of sin? Of course. And what does the Bible say in Ephesians 2? By man, by nature, we were without God and having no hope in the world.

Mephibosheth is the perfect picture of a sinner: the place of no pasture, sold into slavery, absolutely helpless.

This to me is so exciting. When you look at Mephibosheth, you think all hope is gone: sold, in a place of no pasture, and lame. And yet when you go back to verse 4, there is a ray of hope. When the king asked, "Where is he?" Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir," who happened to be the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. The name Ammiel means "my kinsman is God." Do you remember reading in the Old Testament about the kinsman-redeemer? When someone was sold into slavery, the kinsman-redeemer could redeem his loved one out of slavery. The Lord Jesus Christ happens to be our kinsman-redeemer. David here is a picture of that kinsman-redeemer, in that he rescued Mephibosheth from slavery and the place of no pasture.

In fact, you know what the Bible says concerning God's great salvation in our lives? In Colossians 1 and verse 13, He said this: "...who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." What did God do? God took us out of the kingdom of darkness. He took us out of bondage and slavery and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, just like David took Mephibosheth out of the house of slavery and no pasture and transplanted him into the palace where David was himself.

Look back in 2 Samuel 9 and verse 6. You can see this picture, and I could develop it a hundred times, but look in verse 6. When Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he fell on his face and did him reverence.

When God comes to us in convicting and converting grace as sinners, what do we do? We fall on our face. We submit to Him. We humble ourselves. We acknowledge that He and He alone is the King, the Lord, and the Savior.

That is exactly what happened. David said, "Mephibosheth." All he said was his name. "Mephibosheth." I hope you remember John chapter 10. What did our Lord say? "I know my sheep, and I call them by name, and they follow me." David called his name, and notice what happened: he answered, "Behold thy servant."

You remember that passage in Acts chapter 9, when Saul was knocked flat on his face and said, “Who art thou, Lord?” The word Lord means boss, owner, master, sovereign. Saul said, “I don’t know who you are, but whoever you are, you’re Lord.” Then our Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.” Is it not hard to kick against the bricks? Saul of Tarsus then said, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

Restoration and Exaltation

The same thing happened here: “Mephibosheth, behold thy servant.” This picture is perfect. David said unto him, “Fear not, for I will surely show 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.” David restored everything to Mephibosheth that he had lost. He not only restored everything that Mephibosheth had lost; he gave him even more than he lost. Why? Mephibosheth would be adopted as one of the king’s sons. He would eat at the king’s table and then some. Everything he had lost as the son of Saul was restored.

Everything that we lost in Adam is now restored, and then some. What did Adam have originally? He had knowledge, righteousness, and dominion. Turn to Colossians chapter 3, verse 10, and let me show you what has restored us in Christ: “And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Didn’t Adam have original knowledge? Yes, he did.

And he lost it in the fall. What do we get back in Christ? We get back the knowledge of God. We are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. In other words, now we can see and know God as He is revealed in His Word. Just as Adam knew God, now we know God through His Word.

That is not all. Adam also was created with original righteousness. Ephesians 4:24 says, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." We not only get back our knowledge; we now get back righteousness and holiness through the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been given everything that we lost in the fall.

But Adam had dominion too. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus came and said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth." How much power and authority does Jesus Christ have? All of it. What does He do with all power and authority? He says in verse 19, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." He concludes, "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

He now sends us back out into the world to exercise the dominion that has been given to Him. In other words, He gives us power to share in that dominion. Everything that Mephibosheth lost by being the son of Saul is now restored to him. Everything that we lost in Adam is now restored to us. But Mephibosheth got back more than he lost: he was adopted into the king's family, treated as a king's son, and continually ate at the king's table. Did we get back more than we lost in Adam? Romans 8:17 says that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

Romans chapter 8, verse 17, says, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” If we are children of God, then we are heirs. What are we now? We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Everything that Jesus Christ receives, we receive as well. We are joint-heirs; we are heirs of God. God has become our God.

In 1 Corinthians 3:21, Paul says, “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.” Whether Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, whether the world, life, death, things present, or things to come, all are yours; you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. What did we get in Christ? Everything. We did not have everything in Adam. We had some things, but now we have everything.

Covered Lameness and Justification

The king told Ziba, “Everything that belonged to Saul, I am giving to Mephibosheth.” Ziba was to take his fifteen sons and twenty servants and work all that land so that Mephibosheth’s son Micah might have

food to eat. Mephibosheth would eat at the king's table as one of the king's sons.

Although Mephibosheth had been adopted into the king's family, he was still lame on both feet. Although we are adopted into the King's family, we are still sinners. But when Mephibosheth came to the king's table and was placed in his chair, the tablecloth flowed down and covered his lameness. You could not see that he was a lame man.

By the grace of God, each of us has been covered with the robe of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Although we are sinners, when God sees us, He sees us in Christ. He sees us justified, just as if we had never sinned. Everything that we lost in Adam, we got back—and then some—through Jesus Christ.

David and Mephibosheth give us a perfect portrait of the grace of God. We ought to praise Him and thank Him for His marvelous, wonderful grace.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your mercy and Your grace. You have been so good to us. You have not only covered our sins; You have forgiven our sins. The Bible says You have put them as far away as the east is from the west. You have put them behind Your back, never to remember them anymore. You will not charge them against us or hold them against us. We have been forgiven, and we thank You and acknowledge with Jonah that salvation is of the Lord. Give us grace now that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

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