

# Retired Members Corner



## MEPHIBOSHETH

Each month in the church I attend we have a mid-week men's meeting. Sometimes the format is on a topic for discussion and recently we have discussed the lives of remarkable men in the Bible. So far we have covered Daniel, Joseph (son of Jacob) and Elijah. On reflecting whom my favourite choice would be there is one person who is high on my list - Mephibosheth.

The life story of this man reveals to us what it means to make a covenant. Mephibosheth was a son of Jonathan and a grandson of Saul. That puts him in the tribe of Benjamin and makes him a prince. To be born a prince would seem to be a good start in life, but at the age of five his future was torn apart. His grandfather, King Saul, and father, Jonathan, were killed at mount Gilboa whilst fighting the Philistines (1 Sam 31). His uncles, cousins and brothers were all killed and Mephibosheth was the only surviving male in the whole royal family. To make matters worse, his nurse, who was running away from the enemy and carrying the young boy, dropped Mephibosheth, with the result that he was crippled for life in both feet. In order to escape the wrath of the Philistines he was taken out of Israel over the Jordan into Gilead to a remote place called Lodebar, whose name means "without pasture". The young prince went from the palace to be a down and out refugee, an orphan in a foreign, barren land. He sank into obscurity.

Meanwhile David had routed the Philistines and was anointed King over Israel (II Sam 5). Jonathan and David had been friends and they had made a covenant - in fact they made two covenants. The second one was cut, a blood covenant (1 Sam 20 v 15/16). Jonathan saved David's life by warning him that Saul was plotting to kill him. Now David, motivated by his covenant relationship with Jonathan, made enquiry as to whether any of the royal family of King Saul were still surviving. Ziba, David's servant, told him of the existence of Mephibosheth in Lodebar (II Sam 9).

King David sent messengers to Lodebar to fetch Mephibosheth from obscurity to the king's palace. A trembling and fearful Mephibosheth, wondering what fate was about to befall him, was overwhelmed when he realised he was being welcomed into the King's presence. He was told that because he was Jonathan's son he would from now on dine at the royal table for the rest of his life and all the land belonging to his grandfather would be restored to him. In future he would be regarded as one of

David's sons. Mephibosheth had done absolutely nothing to deserve this sudden elevation from poverty to riches, from being a refugee to becoming a prince, from being a lodger to becoming the owner of a large estate. The blood covenant between David and Jonathan was the sole reason for this tremendous transformation.

The life of Mephibosheth is typical of the experience of a Christian believer. God has made a covenant with man for his salvation and Jesus is the mediator. As many as receive Jesus, to them he gives the right, or privilege, to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name which were born, not of the will of the flesh, but of God. In other words eternal redemption for the born again believer.

God has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus (Eph 2 v 6/7). He has brought us into His banqueting house and His banner over us is love. By grace we are saved, totally unmerited as far as I am concerned. We have been brought from Lodebar to Beulah land, a land that is idyllic. In my estimation, the journey from darkness into the light of the glorious gospel is just as dramatic as Mephibosheth's journey. What is more, one day messengers will come to take us to the King's palace to dine at His table and there will be a seat reserved for us. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. We'll have new bodies: no more aches or pains, no doctors and hospitals. When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there. Will you? You're not sure? You can be sure. Surrender to Jesus.