



## **God's Promise to David: The Lord Himself will Establish a House (2 Sam 9-10)**

*Notes: Week Five*

### **2 Samuel 9-10 (HCSB)**

#### **David's Kindness to Mephibosheth**

**9** David asked, "Is there anyone remaining from Saul's family I can show kindness to because of Jonathan?" **2** There was a servant of Saul's family named Ziba. They summoned him to David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?"

"I am your servant," he replied.

**3** So the king asked, "Is there anyone left of Saul's family that I can show the kindness of God to?"

Ziba said to the king, "There is still Jonathan's son who was injured in both feet."

**4** The king asked him, "Where is he?"

Ziba answered the king, "You'll find him in Lo-debar at the house of Machir son of Ammiel." **5** So King David had him brought from the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.

**6** Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, bowed down to the ground and paid homage. David said, "Mephibosheth!"

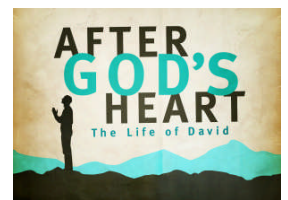
"I am your servant," he replied.

**7** "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "since I intend to show you kindness because of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all your grandfather Saul's fields, and you will always eat meals at my table."

**8** Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant that you take an interest in a dead dog like me?"

**9** Then the king summoned Saul's attendant Ziba and said to him, "I have given to your master's grandson all that belonged to Saul and his family. **10** You, your sons, and your servants are to work the ground for him, and you are to bring in the crops so your master's grandson will have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, is always to eat at my table." Now Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants.

**11** Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do all my lord the king commands."



So Mephibosheth ate at David's<sup>[a]</sup> table just like one of the king's sons.<sup>12</sup> Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All those living in Ziba's house were Mephibosheth's servants.<sup>13</sup> However, Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king's table. His feet had been injured.

### **War with the Ammonites**

**10** Some time later the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king in his place.<sup>2</sup> Then David said, "I'll show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me."

So David sent his emissaries to console Hanun concerning his father. However, when they arrived in the land of the Ammonites,<sup>3</sup> the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun their lord, "Just because David has sent men with condolences for you, do you really believe he's showing respect for your father? Instead, hasn't David sent his emissaries in order to scout out the city, spy on it, and demolish it?"<sup>4</sup> So Hanun took David's emissaries, shaved off half their beards, cut their clothes in half at the hips, and sent them away.

<sup>5</sup> When this was reported to David, he sent someone to meet them, since they were deeply humiliated. The king said, "Stay in Jericho until your beards grow back; then return."

<sup>6</sup> When the Ammonites realized they had become repulsive to David, they hired 20,000 foot soldiers from the Arameans of Beth-rehob and Zobah, 1,000 men from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 men from Tob.

<sup>7</sup> David heard about it and sent Joab and all the fighting men.<sup>8</sup> The Ammonites marched out and lined up in battle formation at the entrance to the city gate while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were in the field by themselves.<sup>9</sup> When Joab saw that there was a battle line in front of him and another behind him, he chose some men out of all the elite troops of Israel and lined up in battle formation to engage the Arameans.<sup>10</sup> He placed the rest of the forces under the command of his brother Abishai who lined up in battle formation to engage the Ammonites.

<sup>11</sup> "If the Arameans are too strong for me," Joab said, "then you will be my help. However, if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I'll come to help you."<sup>12</sup> Be strong! We must prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God. May the LORD's will be done."<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Joab and his troops advanced to fight against the Arameans, and they fled before him.<sup>14</sup> When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, they too fled before Abishai and entered the city. So Joab withdrew from the attack against the Ammonites and went to Jerusalem.

<sup>15</sup> When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they regrouped.<sup>16</sup> Hadadezer sent messengers to bring the Arameans who were across the Euphrates River, and they came to Helam with Shobach, commander of Hadadezer's army, leading them.

<sup>17</sup> When this was reported to David, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and went to Helam. Then the Arameans lined up in formation to engage David in battle and fought against him. <sup>18</sup> But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed 700 of their charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers.<sup>[c]</sup> He also struck down Shobach commander of their army, who died there. <sup>19</sup> When all the kings who were Hadadezer's subjects saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became their subjects. After this, the Arameans were afraid to ever help the Ammonites again.

**Footnotes:**

- a. [2 Samuel 9:11](#) LXX; Syr reads *the king's*; Vg reads *your*; MT reads *my*
- b. [2 Samuel 10:12](#) Lit *the LORD do what is good in His eyes*
- c. [2 Samuel 10:18](#) Some LXX mss; MT reads *horsemen*; 1Ch 19:18

## Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible<sup>1</sup>

### 2 Samuel 9-10

## 2 Samuel 9

**9:1** David was determined to fulfill his promise regarding Saul's family, particularly because of Jonathan ([1Sam 20:14-15](#); [23:17-18](#)).

**9:3** The phrase Jonathan's son who was injured in both feet refers to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's previously mentioned son ([4:4](#)); his name also appears as Merib-baal ([1Ch 8:34](#)).

**9:4** Lo-debar lay east of the Jordan River in Gilead. Machir son of Ammiel was an influential man in that region who cared for Saul's son ([17:27](#)).

**9:6** Mephibosheth bowed and paid homage despite the physical challenge of doing so.

**9:7** David told Mephibosheth, Don't be afraid. Any descendant of Saul might expect the new king would kill him ([1Sam 24:20-22](#)). The restoration of Saul's fields near Gibeah would provide Mephibosheth income for future years, plus the king granted him the privilege of eating regularly with him in the palace.

**9:8** Mephibosheth's question was a standard way of replying humbly; he was not considering turning down David's offer (cp. [7:18](#)).

**9:9-11** Ziba was given the task of caring for Mephibosheth's restored estate, and he submitted to David's command at first. However, he later attempted to secure the estate for himself and his 15 sons ([16:1-4](#); [19:17,24-30](#)). The phrase Mephibosheth ate at David's table just like one of the king's sons is a touching comment in light of his father Jonathan's earlier prediction to David ([1Sam 23:17](#))—a prediction that did not come true because Jonathan died in battle ([1Sam 31:2](#)). David thus took the son (Mephibosheth) of his brother by covenant (Jonathan) and treated him as a son.

**9:12** Mica would later have four sons of his own ([1Ch 8:35](#)).

## 2 Samuel 10

**10:1** Ironically, the name Hanun means "gracious."

**10:2** Nahash was the Ammonite ruler whom Saul defeated ([1Sam 11:1-11](#)). Nahash apparently honored Israel's terms of peace with the Ammonites on into David's reign.

**10:3** The Ammonite leaders (lit "princes") suspected David had sent his emissaries on a spying mission. Their words suggest they feared a greater level of Israelite domination; probably their current arrangement gave them a certain amount of freedom.

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1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Samuel 9-10".

[10:4](#) Hanun shaved off half their beards, giving the men a ridiculous appearance but also making them appear to be in violation of the law of Moses ([Lv 19:27](#)) or in mourning ([Isa 15:2](#); [Jer 41:5](#)). He also cut their clothes in half at the hips, exposing their private parts.

[10:5](#) David sent a delegation to the deeply humiliated men, advising them to stay in Jericho in the Jordan Valley about 15 miles below Jerusalem until their beards looked normal again. This would enable them to avoid further humiliation.

[10:6](#) The Ammonites must have known their actions would make them repulsive to David, so Ammon had probably determined to try to free themselves of Israelite dominance. They also purchased ([1Ch 19:6](#)) the assistance of 33,000 additional soldiers from the Arameans. The Ammonites and Arameans thus banded together against David.

[10:7](#) David realized his control to the north and east was in jeopardy, so he dispatched Joab and all the fighting men to counter his enemies.

[10:8](#) The Ammonite-Aramean strategy was to force Israel to fight a war on two fronts—something Joab and his forces did not realize they would have to do until they crossed the Jordan River.

[10:9](#) Joab divided his troops into two groups. He determined the Arameans would prove the more challenging opponent, so he chose some... elite troops to fight them.

[10:10](#) Joab's brother Abishai, another seasoned warrior ([2:24](#); [1Sam 26:6-11](#)), led the second group against the Ammonites. Nonetheless, such a strategy was risky.

[10:12](#) Joab knew that if Israel lost this battle, Ammon and Aram might overrun Israel's territory and cities. He challenged Abishai to be strong and asked for the LORD's will to be done (lit "May the Lord do what is good in His eyes").

[10:13](#) The Arameans fled before the Israelite army in defeat ([1Sam 4:17](#); [31:1](#)).

[10:14](#) The Ammonites knew any hope of victory over Israel was gone when the Arameans fled. They entered the city of Rabbah (their capital) to defend it from siege. Joab withdrew, content for now to return to Jerusalem.

[10:15](#) The Arameans probably feared an Israelite reprisal, so they regrouped.

[10:16](#) Hadadezer, whom David had earlier subdued ([8:3-4](#)), gathered the Arameans even from the distant city-states across the Euphrates River. They gathered at Helam about 30 miles east of the Sea of Galilee.

[10:17](#) David could not ignore this second threat, so he crossed the Jordan River to face them. He wanted to keep the battle outside Israelite territory as much as possible.

[10:18](#) Again the Arameans fled before Israel (see [v. 13](#)). The extent of the victory is indicated by the comment that David struck down Shobach commander of their army.

[10:19](#) Israel's enemies realized the battle was lost, and they negotiated terms of peace with Israel—terms that probably included paying greater tribute to David than they had before.

## English Standard Version - Study Bible<sup>2</sup>

### 2 Samuel 9-10

#### 2 Samuel 9

**9:1-13 Mephibosheth.** David keeps his promise to Jonathan and Saul that he would not destroy their descendants ([1 Sam. 20:14-17](#), [42](#); [24:21-22](#)) as often happened in changes of dynasty (cf. [2 Kings 10:11](#); etc.).

**9:2-4** For **Ziba**, the **servant** (here the Hb. word is *'ebed*) of Saul's house, see note on [v. 9](#). The exact location of **Lo-debar** is unknown, but it seems to have been in northern Transjordan ([17:27](#)). Mephibosheth had probably been taken to Transjordan soon after Saul's death ([4:4](#)), during the time his uncle Ish-bosheth ruled from the Transjordanian city of Mahanaim ([2:8](#)).

**9:6-8** For the name **Mephibosheth**, see note on [4:4](#). Note that the word **father** (Hb. *'ab*) in [9:7](#) means "father" in one sentence and "grandfather" in the next. This phenomenon can also be seen in some of the genealogies (e.g., probably [1 Sam. 9:1](#)). In [2 Sam. 9:9-10](#), the "grandson" is literally "son" (Hb. *ben*), as can be seen in the translation of the same Hebrew phrase in [16:3](#). **Dead dog** is a term of self-abasement here and in [1 Sam. 24:14](#); in [2 Sam. 16:9](#) it is used for contempt.

**9:9** **Ziba** is here referred to as a **servant** (Hb. *na'ar*, "young man, servant"), but because Ziba had 15 sons ([v. 10](#)), it was probably the more specific "steward of an estate." Ziba had probably continued to be the steward in charge of the land after Saul's death, but had paid the benefits of the estate to David or to someone to whom David had assigned the land. But from now on he is required to pay the benefits to Mephibosheth.

**9:11 Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons.** The arrangement David sets up for Mephibosheth is similar to that of at least David's older sons. Though the king's sons "ate at David's table," some of them lived in their own houses in Jerusalem ([13:7](#), [20](#)) and had fields and agricultural lands of their own to support them ([13:23](#); [14:30](#)).

**9:12 Mica** (or "Micah") had many descendants, through whom the house of Saul and Jonathan was preserved ([1 Chron. 8:35-40](#); [9:41-44](#)).

#### 2 Samuel 10

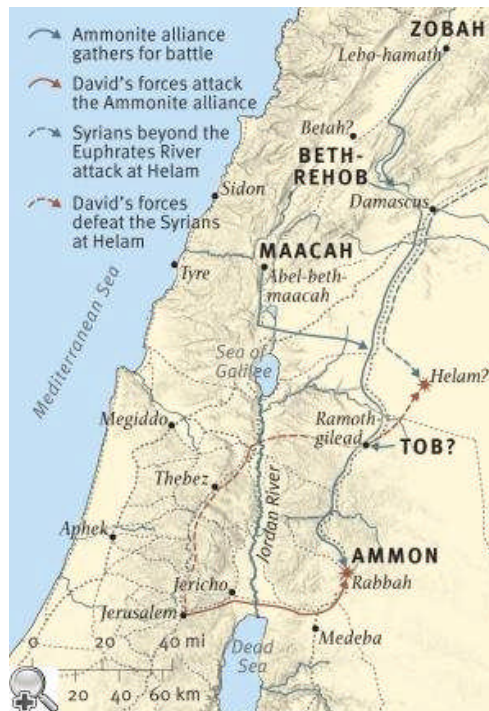
**10:1-12:31 Israel-Ammon War.** The Ammonite war is the background of the next three chapters. As far as David's empire went, it led to his domination of the Syrian kingdoms (see [8:3-12](#); [10:15-19](#)). More importantly to the biblical writer, however, it was the setting for David's great sin ([11:1-12:25](#)).

#### David Defeats the Ammonites and the Syrians c. 995 B.C.

After purposely humiliating ambassadors sent by David, the Ammonites prepared for David's response by calling for help from the king of Maacah, the men of Tob, and the Syrians living in Beth-rehob and Zobah. When David's commander Joab defeated these forces, the Syrians called for more troops from beyond the Euphrates River and attacked David at Helam. David's forces defeated them again, and the Syrians became subject to Israel.

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2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Samuel 9-10".



**10:1-19 Beginning of Israel-Ammon War.** The war began because the Ammonites disgraced David's ambassadors; it did not result from any wrongdoing by David.

**10:1-5 Nahash** was presumably the Nahash of [1 Samuel 11](#). David wants to **deal loyally** with Hanun because of his father Nahash, who showed "loyalty" to David in accordance with their treaty. While his loyalty, or "kindness" (Hb. *hesed*), toward Mephibosheth ([2 Samuel 9](#)) was "for Jonathan's sake," this "kindness" is for diplomatic reasons: David wants to keep the Ammonites as peaceful neighbors. It may be that the **princes of the Ammonites** ([10:3](#)) are alarmed by the representatives of David, who had conquered Moab ([8:2](#)), the country directly south of them. Humiliating the official envoys ([10:4](#)) certainly means breaking off diplomatic relations. David allows his messengers to **remain at Jericho** so that they would not have to display their humiliation in court.

**10:6-8 Beth-rehob, Zobah, Maacah, and Tob** were Syrian kingdoms in the northern Transjordan and Lebanon Valley. For the relationship of this passage with [8:3-4](#), see note on [8:3-12](#). Hiring armies was not uncommon ([2 Kings 7:6](#)). The numbers of troops are mentioned according to the usual list formula (see note on [1 Sam. 6:17-18](#)). **Syrians** can also be translated "Aram" or "Arameans," the normal term for Syria or the Syrians. "Aramaic," the later common language (cf. [2 Kings 18:26](#)), was the language of Syria. The **gate** ([2 Sam. 10:8](#)) is that of the city of Rabbah ([11:1](#)), the capital of Ammon, near present-day Amman, Jordan.

**10:9-19** David's army under Joab is trapped between the Syrians and the Ammonites, but they defeat the Syrians and force them to leave. **Hadadezer** of Zobah (see [8:5](#)) attacks again at **Helam**, apparently a city in northern Transjordan, but is again defeated.

**10:12 let us be courageous... and may the LORD do what seems good to him.** Joab expresses both faith in God and a resolve to fight with all his strength. Faith and human effort are not incompatible with each other. Joab is a complicated figure: as here, he can express sturdy piety (e.g., [24:3](#)), and he can also display a chilling ruthlessness in preserving David's and his own position (e.g., [18:14-15](#); [20:9-10](#), [20-22](#)). It is not surprising that David does not trust him to treat Solomon well after Joab supported Adonijah ([1 Kings 1:7](#), [19](#); [2:5-6](#)).



# NLT Life Application Study Bible<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Samuel 9-10

### Chapter 9

**9:1ff** Most kings in David's day tried to wipe out the families of their rivals in order to prevent any descendants from seeking the throne. But David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, whose father was Jonathan and whose grandfather was King Saul. David was kind, partly because of his loyalty to God's previously anointed king (see the note on [1 Samuel 24:5, 6](#)); partly for political reasons—to unite Judah and Israel (see the notes on [3:13, 14](#) and [3:29](#)); and mainly because of his vow to show kindness to all of Jonathan's descendants ([1 Samuel 20:14-17](#)).

**9:3** How Mephibosheth became crippled is recorded in [4:4](#). Mephibosheth was five years old when Saul and Jonathan died.

**9:5, 6** Mephibosheth was afraid to visit the king, who wanted to treat him like a prince. Although Mephibosheth feared for his life and may have felt unworthy, that didn't mean he should refuse David's gifts. When God graciously offers us forgiveness of sins and a place in heaven, we may feel unworthy, but we will receive these gifts if we accept them. A reception even warmer than the one David gave Mephibosheth waits for all who receive God's gifts through trusting Jesus Christ, not because we deserve it, but because of God's promise ([Ephesians 2:8, 9](#)).

**9:7** His treatment of Mephibosheth shows David's integrity as a leader who accepted his obligation to show love and mercy. His generous provision for Jonathan's son goes beyond any political benefit he might have received. Are you able to forgive those who have wronged you? Can you be generous with those less deserving? Each time we show compassion, our character is strengthened.

### Chapter 10

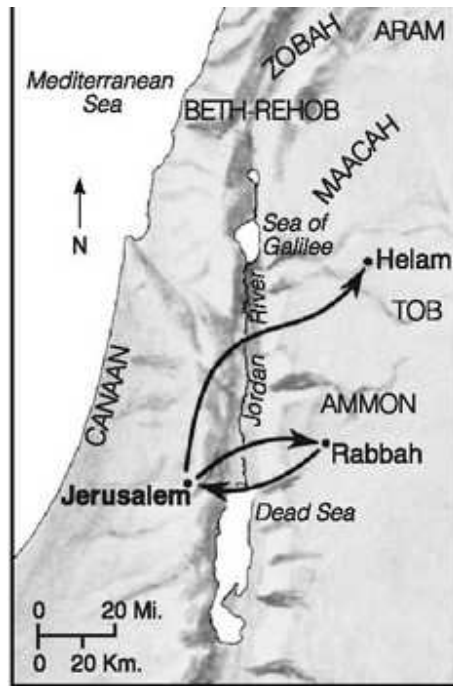
**10:4, 5** In Israelite culture, all men wore full beards. It was a sign of maturity and authority. Thus when these ambassadors had their beards half shaved, they suffered great indignity. Cutting off their robes also exposed them to ridicule.

**10:6** Because Hanun took the wrong advice, he suspected the motives of the ambassadors and humiliated them. Then he realized that David was angry and immediately marshaled his forces for battle. Hanun should have thought through the advice more carefully; but even if he had not, he should have tried to negotiate with David. Instead, he refused to admit any fault and got ready for war. Often we respond angrily and defensively rather than admitting our mistakes, apologizing, and trying to defuse the other person's anger. Instead of fighting, we should seek peace.

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3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 476-478.





*David and the Ammonites*

Ammon gathered together its troops from the north; Joab brought the Israelite army to attack them near Rabbah. Joab returned to Jerusalem victorious, but the enemy recruited additional forces and regrouped at Helam. David himself led the next victorious attack.

**10:12** There must be a balance in life between our actions and our faith in God. Joab said, "Let us fight bravely." In other words, they should do what they could, using their minds to figure out the best techniques and using their resources. But he also said, "May the LORD's will be done." He knew that the outcome was in God's hands. We should use our minds and our resources to obey God, while at the same time trusting God for the outcome.