

## LO-DEBAR- A THING OF NAUGHT



Lo-debar was a place where history opened its pages through the Bible and showed its conditions- spiritual, and physical. This city existing even in the time of Joshua carries a negative prefix Lo, and debar meaning “word” or “thing.” It was there that Jonathan’s son’s nurse found refuge when she had to flee the palace at

the news of King Saul's death to protect Jonathan's son from being killed. He was only five years old when his nurse took him up and fled; and in her haste, he fell and became lame (II Sam.4). She then fled to Lo-debar, where she found refuge in the house of Machir son of Ammiel at Lo-debar (II Sam. 9:4). While still alive, Jonathan made a friendship covenant with David saying if anything would happen to him, David would take care of his family. Jonathan knew that David, and not he was to take the throne of his father, consequential to the destruction of his family. His son was taken and hidden in a remote place, where only the outcasts from society, the unskilled and non-educated people lived. Lo-debar was nonetheless, a place of refuge. Mephibosheth son of Jonathan lived there all his life until he was sought for and rescued by King David for the sake of his friend Jonathan.

David said, Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake? And of the house of Saul there was a servant whose name was Ziba. He then replied, Jonathan has yet a son who is lame in his feet. And the king said, where is he? Ziba replied, He is in the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar. Then David sent and brought him from the house of Machir. When Mephibosheth met King David, he fell on his face and did obeisance. King David said to him, fear not, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table. (II Sam.9). And King David did so for Jonathan's son. Mephibosheth ate at David's table for the rest of his life and enjoyed freedom from fear; he was rescued from the Lo-debar situation which enslaved many. Mephibosheth bowed himself and said, what is your servant that you should look upon such a dead dog as I am? (II Sam. 9). Mephibosheth, even though a grandson of a king, considered himself as low as a dog. Crippled of his both legs, he could not work or be useful in society and be part of it. His place in society died when his grandfather and father died. It did not matter if he was a grandson of a king. There in Lo-debar nothing was important; every individual resident of that place was in one time or another, a rejected person or a criminal hiding from the law. Not only had he nothing, but he was brought to live in a place of naught. He probably grew up believing that he was good for nothing in society. Mephibosheth was carried away from Gibeah to Lo-debar, a town in Gilead. Gilead was the home of a rare perfume with medical properties. The Prophet Jeremiah asks the question: Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people restored? (Jer.

8:22). No, Mephibosheth was the victim of circumstances, suffering for being the grandson of an ousted king. Lo-debar offered him nothing, besides a refuge. So he took upon himself the shame of the place and registered in himself the consequences of it. Fearful of being killed for whom he was, Mephibosheth lived in prison in a land of nothing, no vision, no word, no pasture. So he believed: "I am nothing, I came from Lo-debar." Mephibosheth would have been killed, if they had not fled to safety. Many generations later, we read in I Chronicles that His family generations were mighty warriors, archers, with many sons and grandsons -150 in all. All these were Benjamites (I Chron. 8:34-40). Lo-debar was situated in a frontier town of Jordan, in a remote place, with an important route interior of Bashan- Gilead area. It is north of Jabbok River and considered a low place town.

The world became men's Lo-debar when Adam and Eve fell into sin. They were kicked out of the Eden Garden and thrown out to labor in raising their own food. The beautiful and perfect place they were accustomed to became thistle and thorn because the soil was cursed. God told Adam, the ground is under a curse because of you; in sorrow and toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread until you return to the ground for out of it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you shall return (Gen. 3:17-19) Eve was also found guilty and given the punishment of pain in childbearing, as well as her desire was to be for her husband and he would rule over her (Gen. 3:16). The earth no longer enjoyed the presence of the Lord every day while He came to fellowship with Adam. It became a "thing of naught." YAHSHUA when on earth, experienced Lo-debar when He went to the wilderness. For forty days and forty nights He stayed there experiencing the devil's temptations in that place where there was no pasture, no water, no food, but only thirst and hunger. He went without food forty days and forty nights. The devil only came to Him when He started experiencing hunger. At the point of His need, Satan showed himself to tempt Him to turn stone into bread to satisfy His hunger. To every temptation Satan brought to Him, YAHSHUA responded in line with the Word of God. That dry and isolated place was YAHSHUA'S Lo-debar. Of course, He did not look at it with fear, and disappointment, even at the rejection from His own people. YAHSHUA did not suffer under penalty of sin, because He was holy. He had to go to that dry place to fulfill all His Father's commands, and be tempted as we are tempted.

The Prodigal Son in Luke 15<sup>th</sup> is also a picture of a life style in Lo-debar. He had everything, but still was not satisfied. He asked for his inheritance before the time and left to face Lo-debar. It didn't take long for him to realize his foolishness and repented after he had spent all his inheritance. To make things worse, a famine came upon that country and he began to fall behind and be in want. The famine was so great that he wished to eat the hogs' food he was feeding them with. When he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father have enough food, and to spare, but I am perishing here of hunger (Luke 15:13-17). His life became empty and lacking in that country. The source of his happiness was not found in that land, where famine caused many to faint.

No one needs to live in Lo-debar for the rest of his life, although, many have made the decision to stay imprisoned in that life style. A life style voided of blessings, no matter how much one tried to get it in some way or another. The prodigal son was set free when his heart was broken before his father. So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity and tenderness; and he ran and embraced him and kissed him. The first thing he did was to change his clothing, his appearance. With a festive robe, a ring and sandals and he was celebrated with great joy (Luke 15:18-23). We all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God. But God, in His mercy, has provided a way for us to be redeemed from a Lo-debar life style of no blessings unto a life filled with blessings through His Son, YAHSHUA Messiah. Just like that father who waited for his son to come back to him, God waits for us to return to Him. A table has been prepared for the celebration. In fact, the Bible says that there is celebration in heaven when a sinner returns to Him. King David showed mercy toward Jonathan's son and gave him a place at his table. Mephibosheth enjoyed the freedom offered him, after a long time living a life of poverty and handouts and being a slave in Lo-debar.

Where are you today my friend? Are you powerless to break loose from Lo-debar and tired of it? YAHSHUA has an invitation for you: Come to Me all you who labor are heavy-laden and overburdened and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28). There is no other rest, but the rest and peace that He offers.

**THINK ABOUT IT!**