

## ARE THERE ANY GITTITES IN THE HOUSE?

TUCKED AWAY IN THE PAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, there lies a most beautiful and unusual love story—one you could easily miss, unless you took the time to gaze at it. It's not a love story between a man and a woman, or a parent and a child—or even between two close friends. No, this one is about a master and his servant. It's about King David and Ittai the Gittite.

Let me share some background with you. When David was king of Israel, Amnon, one of his sons, raped Tamar, his half-sister. Absalom, a brother of the girl, was enraged. He sought revenge and ended up having Amnon murdered. As a result, David banished the hot-tempered Absalom, allowing him to return only after a 3-year absence.

When Absalom returned, he set out to undermine his father, perhaps having learned that his younger half-brother, Solomon, was being favored as David's successor. So successful was Absalom's traitorous scheme that he was soon able to go to Hebron, set himself up as a king and rally the majority of Israelites to his side.

Hearing of the rebellion, David and his small band of loyal followers fled the capital city of Jerusalem. This is where we pick up our story in II Samuel 15.

**2 Sam 15:17-24**

17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.

20 Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

21 And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

22 And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

24 And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.  
(KJV)

### **Look at verse 18**

David has this select guard of 600 men with him. They've been with him since his fugitive days in Gath. They served as his military escort.

After a special appeal to Ittai (who appears to be the commander of this elite group of soldiers), King David releases him from any obligation and urges him and his men to return to the palace (vs. 19,20).

In verse 21 we see Ittai's response. It's a pledge of life-and-death loyalty. And what makes this pledge of faithfulness all the more amazing is due to four astounding facts. Here they are:

- ❖ Ittai freely chose to side with his master, knowing it could well mean certain death.
- ❖ Ittai was not even an Israelite; he was a Philistine!
- ❖ He had only been with David a short time.
- ❖ He was a mercenary (hired soldier).

One would naturally expect this kind of loyalty from a son or a trusted friend aide or a long-time friend. And yet Ittai was none of these!

What was it about this man that he would risk his life for his master?

Was it a matter of INTEGRITY? Did he swear an oath to protect the King no matter what? Remember, David released him from any obligation (vs.20).

Was Ittai one of those who just sided with the UNDERDOG?

The REAL CLUE to his loyalty is found in his reference to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Look at verse 21 again:

But Ittai replied to the king, "As surely as the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be."

It would appear as though GOD is FIRST in his life. He believes that David is the God-ordained monarch of Israel and he will be true to him regardless of what circumstances arise.

The question I would pose today is: Are there any Gittites in the house?

❖ Where are those believers who stay with the Lord Jesus Christ and His church no matter what?

- ❖ Where is the sense of commitment and integrity among God's people today?

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FAITHFUL TO JESUS?

***1. It means recognizing the King without a crown.***

Ittai knew who David was. One of the thieves at Calvary recognized Jesus for who He was—as did a Roman soldier. As far as much of the world is concerned, Jesus does not have this position. But listen to Phil 2:9-11: 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

***2. It means serving a King without a country.*** Satan is called “the prince of this world.” He is a usurper. But remember, the King is coming!

***3. It means following a King whose supporters are few***—being a part of the remnant.

***4. It means following the King without conditions—be it life or death.***

**THE REWARD FOR FAITHFULNESS** is found in II Sam. 18:2, where David rewarded Ittai for his loyalty by making him a 5-star general and putting him over a third of his army.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus promised that those who are faithful with a few things shall be put in charge of many things in the life to come. We may not see our reward in this life, but if we stay committed to Christ and His cause, pay-day is coming!

All across this world of ours in local churches are faithful people of God, doing what they can for our Savior. They don't get a lot of attention. They just do their job—teaching S.S., week after week, ushering, greeting, helping in the nursery, cooking and providing food. And someday, the rewards will be passed out in heaven and theirs will be great!

May God help us to sign up for the "Ittai Club"—to become a Gittite and by so doing, demonstrate Godly faithfulness