

ROYALTY & LOYALTY

TEXT: 2 Sam. 15:13-37 13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. 14 And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. 15 And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint. 16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house. 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. {go up...: 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. {Kidron: Gr. Cedron} 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. 25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation: 26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. 27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. 28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me. 29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there. 30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up. 31 And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. 32 And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: 33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: 34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. 35 And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36 Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. 37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

INTRO.: A. David's sin with Bathsheba was extremely costly. It had cost him an infant so in death, a daughter in rape, a son in murder and now another son fresh out of exile, in treachery. Absalom had returned to Jerusalem only to usurp the throne of his father, David. In v.12 we find that the "conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually w/Absalom." In v.13 the climax comes w/the "bad news" of a messenger to King David. In v.14 David decides to leave his beloved city.

B. Let's look at several possible reasons for David's withdrawal:

1. He wanted to spare his people needless bloodshed in a civil war.
2. He wanted to spare his beloved city the destruction of battle.
3. He would be able to buy some time while he assessed his strength.
4. He wanted to avoid open conflict with his own son.
5. He was experienced in open warfare, rather in restricted city fighting.
6. He could easily identify his loyal supporters as he saw who would follow him.

TRANS.: The bottom line is "ROYALTY & LOYALTY", i.e. who would be loyal to David, the God appointed & anointed King & who would be loyal to the usurper & pretender to the throne? David's son Absalom had demonstrated his *disloyalty*, David needed the encouragement that only his loyal followers could provide. *Those who followed David provide lessons in loyalty...*

I. THE SERVANTS: RELIABILITY V.15-17

A. Commitment: **v.15**

B. Encouragement: **v.16.17**

NOTE: What an encouragement this must have been to the fleeing King! This commitment also speaks volumes about David & his treatment of his servants. Kindness in good times breeds loyalty in bad times.

II. THE ROYAL GUARD: DEPENDABILITY V.18

A. Converts:

1. These were men who were formerly enemies of Israel who had "converted" & had faithfully served David during past battles.
2. What a blessing to have faithful men stand with you in the heat of battle, when others are deserting.

B. Consistency:

1. They did not leave David after his affair w/Bathsheba.
2. They would stand by him during his conflict w/his son.

III. THE NEW-FOUND FRIEND: AVAILABILITY V.19-22

A. Dissuasion: v.19,20

1. David graciously tries to dissuade this "Johnny-come-lately" with the unforgettable name ("*Ittai the Gittite*"), to return to Jerusalem
2. No doubt David was moved to see the apparent loyalty of one who only recently had identified with him.

B. Determination: v.21,22

1. Ittai makes a double oath; one to the Lord & the other to the King.
 - a. Ittai's words must have been like a soothing ointment on David's wounded pride.
 - b. David could not help but compare the loyalty of this new friend with the disloyalty of his own son.
2. Surely David fought back tears as he invites this loyal friend to come with his rag-tag army. v.22
3. David couldn't help but notice how far this man's commitment extended when he saw the "little ones" with him; he was willing to even put his family on the line for David.

IV. THE COMMON PEOPLE: COMPATABILITY V.23

A. Unity: "*all...*" (3X) (Cf. Amos 3:3)

1. God had knit the hearts of the people to David's heart.
2. What a sad day to see their leader have to leave the city he had founded & built under such conditions.

B. Destination: "*wilderness...*"

1. They were leaving everything due to their loyalty to David; homes, safety, security, etc.; talk about **LOYALTY TO ROYALTY!**
2. They were willing to follow God's man into an uncertain future than to follow a self-called man into an unstable present.

NOTE: God's man had God's Word undergirding him, Absalom had risen to power by intrigue & disloyalty. They had seen David's loyalty to Saul & other friends in the past. David was now able to "collect" on his character & reputation.

V. THE PRIESTS & LEVITES: PLIABILITY v.24-29

A. God's Men with God's Man: v.24

1. They brought the Ark symbolizing the presence of God with them.
2. They were showing they believed God to still be with David.

B. God's Man Trusts God's Plan: v.25-29

1. David did not look at the Ark with superstition as if it were some "good luck charm".
2. David was willing to trust God's plan.

ILLUS.: Though there is little doubt that David would have delighted to have the priests with him & the Ark of the Covenant there too, he trusted that God's will would be his portion & looked forward to returning to Jerusalem.

3. David's wishes were granted & they took the Ark back to the Temple.

VI. THE OLD FRIENDS: HUMILITY V.30-37

A. Praying: **v.30-31**

1. David is deeply moved by all the loyalty he sees & leads his followers up the Mount of Olives to worship the Lord & thank Him for all His blessings. **v.30**
2. David is again wounded by news of even deeper disloyalty by a former trusted friend & advisor, Ahithophel. v.31

ILLUS.: The whole scene is prophetic of another similar situation centuries later!

Psalm 41:9 *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*

3. David prays that Ahithophel's counsel to Absalom will backfire.

B. Planning: **v.32-37**

1. God graciously sends David another friend to replace Ahithophel. **v.32**
2. While David is worshipping Hushai, in mourning, approaches David.
3. David requests that his old friend infiltrate the new king's court to overthrow Ahithophel's counsel & report as a spy whatever he might hear there using Zadok & Abiathar as agents. **v.33-36**
4. Hushai obediently & humbly accepts David's suggestions & is on the scene when Absalom arrives in Jerusalem! v.37

CONCL.: There is probably no other passage in the entire Bible which more graphically illustrates the characteristics of loyalty than here. Are **YOU** loyal or disloyal? **Are you reliable, dependable, available, compatible, pliable & humble?**

What kind of friend are you?!