

## Obed-Edom's Story

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I am a Gittite and my father's name is Jeduthun. We were Philistines from Gath. My name means "servant of god", after the Philistine god, Dagon.

I have an extraordinary testimony. It all began when a man named David came to live among our people, when Achish was our king and admired and trusted him.<sup>1</sup>

It always seemed that David's God was more powerful than ours. Achish wanted him to be in our army but the Philistine commanders said to send him away.<sup>2</sup>

Not long after this David came back to fight our army and I saw for myself how his God was with him and gave him victory. They had a great parade of celebration and in the parade was a glorious gold box on a cart.

I had heard a story about this gold box when our people had captured it many years before and put it in our temple.<sup>3</sup>

Something terrible happened when a man touched the box and fell down dead. I was watching and when David didn't want to take the box any further I offered to put it in my house.

I have never been so blessed in every way,<sup>4</sup> and we knew with absolute certainty that the God of Israel was the one true God. When David came for the box I begged that I could come too. This time the priests carried the box on gold poles and there was a powerful presence and joy. I am a very good musician and I begged to be allowed to be involved in the rejoicing. There were some rituals to be done but I became a believer in Jehovah God and was accepted as a Levite and eligible to be a worshipper and a gatekeeper.<sup>5</sup> I said to David "I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked." He liked these words and put them in a song.<sup>6</sup> Sixty-eight of my family also joined me.

David wrote many poems that encouraged me.

"I hate those who cling to worthless idols...I trust in the Lord...I trust in you O Lord, I say you are my God...Let your face shine on your servant, save me in your unfailing love...How great is your goodness which you bestow on those who take refuge in you." (Psalm 31)

"The earth is the Lord's and all who live in it...Who may stand in His Holy Place...he who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol...he will receive blessing from the Lord and the gift of righteousness from God his Saviour...Lift up your head O you ancient doors that the King of Glory may come in." (Psalm 24)

My story I think is unique. God of all the world, who chose one family to be His own – the descendants of father Abraham, permitted a Philistine family, enemies of God, to be adopted into His family and serve in His house, and to be under His protection is a wonderful miracle. We knew His presence when the gold box was in our house. We had seen the power before but we knew it more with His blessing and we gave up our Philistine identity gladly to be a part of His family and to become a servant of GOD. Is my story to be repeated? I hope so.

<sup>1</sup> -1 Samuel 27

<sup>2</sup> -1 Samuel 29

<sup>3</sup> -1 Samuel 5

<sup>4</sup> -2 Samuel 6

<sup>5</sup> -1 Chronicles 16

<sup>6</sup> - Psalm 84