**The Fidelity of the King**

Exodus 34:10-17

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* In 1818, Henry Francis Lyte underwent a great spiritual change, which shaped and influenced the whole of his after life, the immediate cause being the illness and death of a brother clergyman. Lyte says of him:—
  + "He died happy under the belief that though he had deeply erred, there was One whose death and sufferings would atone for his delinquencies, and be accepted for all that he had incurred;"
* and concerning himself he adds:—
  + "I was greatly affected by the whole matter, and brought to look at life and its issue with a different eye than before; and I began to study my Bible, and preach in another manner than I had previously done." [[1]](#footnote-1)
* He began to preach in the manner of the pastors that he formerly considered "enthusiastic rhapsodists."
  + As a student at university, Lyte had distinguished himself as a three time award winning poet.
    - Now he set his talents to congregational singing.
      * Last week, we sang two of Lyte’s most popular songs.
        + “Jesus, I my cross have taken”
        + And “Abide with Me”
      * This morning, we began worship by singing “Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven”.
* Lyte pleads with his own soul to praise the King of Heaven for He is “glorious in his faithfulness”.
  + Beloved, this thought in our passage today… Our Covenant King makes known to you his fidelity… his dependability… his trustworthiness.
    - He is faithful, now heed his words by faith.

**The Reading of God’s Word** – Exodus 34:10-17 (P. 74 in the Pew Bible)

*10 And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.*

*11 “Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 12 Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. 13 You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim 14 (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), 15 lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, 16 and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.*

*17 “You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.*

**The Preaching of God’s Word**

1. **The Sweetness of Intimacy (vs. 10, 14)**
   1. *Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;*

*To His feet thy tribute bring.*

*Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,*

*Who like me His praise should sing:*

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Praise the everlasting King.*

* + 1. This posture of humble thankfulness is the overflow of faith that rejoices in God’s words inverse 10.
  1. *10 And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.*
     1. One commentator… “Against all human odds… God agrees to be in Covenant with his people.”
        1. There is a solidarity… a communion… an intimacy between the Lord of Heaven and his people.
           1. Notice how the formality of the relationship does not produce a cold detachment.
     2. Rather the language bristles with vitality especially in the word “create”.
        1. The imagery runs through the Psalm written by Asaph.
           1. Psalm 74 - *12 Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. 13 You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. 15 You split open springs and brooks; you dried up ever-flowing streams. 16 Yours is the day, yours also the night; you have established the heavenly lights and the sun. 17 You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; you have made summer and winter.*

Here the God of the Exodus is the LORD of All Creation.

He subdues all chaos.

He rules over all beings.

He establishes the lights in the sky, the boundaries of the water, and the contours of the land.

The Lord God who needed nothing decisively sought our His Covenant People for the praise of His great NAME!

* + - * 1. Psalm 77 - *16 When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled. 17 The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side. 18 The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook. 19 Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. 20 You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

Here is the Divine warrior who subdued all his people’s enemies.

The Red Sea stood still as a rock.

The Rock in the barren wilderness gushed out water like a spring.

The embodiment of evil in Pharaoh and Egypt lays spread on the shore like sea foam.

The mighty Nile shows it true nature as blood flooded.

But the most amazing sign of Covenant Intimacy is that the LORD makes the flock led by the hand of Moses and Aaron into a NEW CREATION.

* + - 1. The awesome thing that the Lord will do is take his people to himself.
  1. Thus Lyte wrote
     + 1. *Praise Him for His grace and favour*

*To our fathers in distress.*

*Praise Him still the same as ever,*

*Slow to chide, and swift to bless.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Glorious in His faithfulness.*

* + - 1. The sweetness of this intimacy flows from the solidarity of the covenant.
  1. *14 (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),*
     1. The word “jealousy” is interesting because it is often referencing sins like coveting or selfishness with the result being quarrels (1 Cor. 3:3). In contrast to our sinful jealousy, God’s covenant jealousy reveals his gracious and holy nature with the result being poetry (see Song of Songs).
        1. Notice how *Jealous* is the name of the LORD.
           1. The one who has predestined his people for intimacy jealousy preserves, protects, and subdues them for the sake of his holy name.
     2. Transition: How should those who know his grace and favor respond to their King.

1. **The Strictness of Exclusivity (vs. 11-13, 15-17)**
   1. *11 “Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 12 Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. 13 You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim*
      1. With unmatchable power, the LORD will route all the other inhabitants in the promised land.
         1. But the greatest threat to the Covenant is not the other nations, but the seduction to worship the gods of the other nations.
            1. Thus, tear down altars, pillars and Asherim.

What is a Asherim?

Asherah was the Canaanite goddess.

She used her powers for fertility, love, and warfare.[[2]](#footnote-2)

She was the consort of the Canannite god Ba’al, who controlled weather and fertility.

* + - 1. These are the Prosperity Gospel proponents of the ANE.
         1. If you want your crops to flourish, worship Baal.
         2. If you want a wife, give an offering to Asherah.
         3. If you want a victory over your enemies, bow to Chemosh, Dagon, or Marduk.

Point: The greatest threats to the people were not the bows and arrows of the nations, but the desires and cravings of their own hearts (James 4:1ff).

* + 1. Just as God wages a Harem warfare on the principalities and powers for the sake of His own name, so the people are to radically amputate unbridled desires as their King subdues them to himself. (Matt. 5:29).
       1. Similarly, Lyte wrote
          1. *Fatherlike He tends and spares us;*

*Well our feeble frame He knows.*

*In His hands He gently bears us,*

*Rescues us from all our foes.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Widely yet His mercy flows.*

* + - 1. Consequently, there will be a focus in relationships as the vertical always manifests in the horizontal.
  1. *15 lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, 16 and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods. 17 “You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.*
     1. The Redeemer says beware the foolish progression.
        1. Watching their sacrifices… being invited to their sacrifices… eating… then giving your children to the other gods.
           1. In 1 Kings 16:33 – King Ahad married Jezebel and built a temple to Ba’al for his Tyrian wife and set up therin Asherah.[[3]](#footnote-3)
           2. In 2 Kings 21:7 – Manasseh erects and image of Asherah in the Temple.
     2. The intermarrying of a worshipper of the true God and a worshipper of the other nations gods would be not just idolatry, but adulerty.
        1. Be like a bird that flees the snare, my son (Ps. 127:4)… and do not give way to cast metal gods.
           1. But rather recognize how fleeting your days are and marvel by recalling with Lyte.

*Frail as summer's flower we flourish,*

*Blows the wind and it is gone;*

*But while mortals rise and perish*

*Our God lives unchanging on,*

*Praise Him, Praise Him, Hallelujah*

*Praise the High Eternal One!*

1. Conclusion
   1. The book of Exodus has three parts… rescue (Ex. 1-18)… regulations (Ex. 19-24)… and rituals (Ex. 25-40).
      1. The overall view of the book is of the LORD GOD Almighty proving his fidelity.
         1. Here is the Covenant-Keeper who drives out the nations, even as He subdues hearts to glory in His name.
         2. Here is the Jealous Husband who directs his betrothed in the path of holiness.
         3. Here is the Merciful and Gracious God who ordained rituals for intimate relationship.
      2. The sweetness of intimacy and the strictness of exclusivity to the Covenant will be utterly despised by those gathered about the mountain.
         1. But there would come a descendant from the Moabite woman, Ruth, who would be a faithful Israelite.
   2. Jesus Christ is the Holy Man who kept Himself from idols.
      1. Jesus Christ is the Jealous Husband who came to specifically deliver his Bride from the clutches of sin.
         1. Jesus Christ is the faithful and true King who sent froth his Holy Spirit to make you a new creation.
            1. Jesus Christ is the true prophets who instructs us in all that would ensnare our souls from the worship of the one true God.
   3. Though we are the adulterers who lustfully salivated after other gods, Jesus Christ is the One established the NEW Covenant for you.
      1. As the Word of God declares…
         1. *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*
      2. Now as new creations by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone,[[4]](#footnote-4) we sing to all creation by saying…
         1. *Angels, help us to adore Him;*

*Ye behold Him face to face;*

*Sun and moon, bow down before Him,*

*Dwellers all in time and space.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Praise with us the God of grace.*

**Prayer**

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* (Rev. 1:5-6).

**Benediction – Jude 24-25**

*Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

1. https://hymnary.org/person/Lyte\_HF [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 339 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Life in Biblical Israel*, King and Stager, 352 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “A nominal Christian is content with proving the way of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. But the true Christian loves it, delights in it, glories in it, and shudders at the very thought of glorying in anything else... Let all your joys flow from the contemplation of His cross.” - Charles Simeon in *The Roots of Endurance* by John Piper [↑](#footnote-ref-4)