

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part III: Exodus - Functioning Well In A Hopeless Group Assignment"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Over the last 4 weeks, the Lord has allowed me to be exposed to Christians who face difficult group assignments with great crosses in the relationships they have in those assignments:

(a) Four workers in our Church have seriously considered resigning their posts due to increasing difficulties they face in dealing with relationships in their ministries!

Well, is it better to go off and serve God alone than to be char broiled **in a tough marital, family, church or job role?!**

(2) Isaac Watts was born the son of a deacon in a Congregational Church of Southampton, England in 1674. But due to his bright mind and grasp of words, he ran into constant relationship troubles in life.

When his father spanked Isaac for annoying the family with his constant use of rhymes around the house, Isaac tearfully responded, "O father, do some pity take, and I will no more verses make!" (Hymns of Faith and Inspiration, p. 76)

Finally, Isaac's father gave his son the outlet of writing hymns for the congregation. However, one of the hymns he wrote unusually ventured to express his personal feelings rather than the facts or doctrines of Scripture. It was about standing at the foot of Christ's cross with Mary and John, gazing in wonder at the crucified Christ. Public criticism branded him a "radical churchman" for the song, a title similar in punch to our use of "Liberal" or "apostate."

At this point, Isaac Watts, like so many, could have given up on the church, left it for good and written secular music for a living!

Well, why work in a group when, due to carnality in others, we can do better by ourselves?! (We turn to the "Need" section . . .)

Need: "I can live for God myself, but it's hopeless to work in my marital, family, job, or church role(s)! Sin in the relationship has blocked any progress and I'm all burned out over it! Any ideas?!"

I. **Exodus shows God's resolve to broaden His work from individuals to the corporate level no matter WHAT obstructs that change!**

- A. God's plan to advance His rule starts in Exodus with the Abrahamic covenant being stopped in its advance from individual to group levels:
1. Though God created the world with man as ruler, sin caused chaos and Satan ended up the god of this world, Gen. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 2. God thus renewed history, using Noah's family via a flood, 6-9:17.
 3. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod began an apostasy, Rv. 17:5-6.
 4. Accordingly, God chose godly Abraham to start a nation that would influence the world to check Nimrod's apostasy, Gn. 12:1-3.
 5. Still, Abraham and his descendants sinned, almost destroying their family unit until God reunited it in Egypt, Gen. 13-41!
 6. However, events transpired in Egypt where Abraham's descendants helplessly ended up in servile bondage, Ex. 1:1-2:23.
 - a. An uninformed pharaoh unjustly enslaved Israel, Ex. 1:8-10.
 - b. When God's deliverer, Moses came, he murdered an Egyptian and was rejected by the Hebrew people, further cementing Abraham's descendants in dreadful Egyptian slavery, 2:1-23.
- B. However, God both **foreknew** this plight and **resolved safely** to advance His rule via the Abrahamic Covenant at the group level!
1. Before Abraham produced **any** descendants, God unconditionally pledged their release from Egyptian bondage to come:
 - a. God had Abraham bisect animals to make a covenant: in effect, God said, "May what happened to these animals be My end if I do not keep this oath!" (Gn. 15:10, Ryrie St. Bib., KJV fn.)
 - b. God this way predicted that Abraham's descendants enter foreign bondage **before** inhabiting Canaan, Gen. 15:16! After 400 yrs. of bondage, his descendants would come out, 15:14.
 - c. Abraham chased away ravenous birds from the remains as they signaled harmful opposition to God's planned redemption, 11f.
 - d. With darkness came an added dread upon Abraham, picturing awful future pressure on Israel, so God **alone** passed between the carcasses as the sole Hope of Israel's corporate future in spite of opposing spiritual pressures ahead, Gen. 15:12,17!
 2. Accordingly, Exodus presents the fulfillment of God's **infinite resolve** to raise Abraham's descendants into nationhood from Egyptian bondage **in spite of** the obstacles to the **contrary**:
 - a. Though (1) Israel was pressured by Pharaoh and Satan, (2) and though Israel rejected Moses, their very **resolute** God with **great** power **made** Moses lead Israel out of Egypt, 2:23-18:27!

- b. God then organized this people to **sustain** a **theocracy** by **protective suzerain treaty** in the Law and tabernacle, Ex. 19-40 with Meredith Kline, Treaty of the Great King, p. 13-44.

II. **Exodus adds to the "thread of redemption" with the tabernacle prefiguring the believer's support by God to meet his every need:**

- A. The tabernacle is framed like a Bedouin tent: general friends could enter the outer court, the wife could be in the "Holy Place" and the "Holy of Holies" was for the owner's **close** friends; they enjoyed his **nurture** and **asylum** within a **100 mile radius** of the tent, ZPEB, p. 214. The priest's atoning in the Holy of Holies for the **nation** assures God's nurture and safety for **all** who relate to Him well, He. 8:5-9:28.
- B. We view the **basic** tabernacle furnishings to itemize those blessings:
1. The brazen altar pictures Christ's atonement for us, so salvation is the grounds for any blessings from God, Ex. 27:1-8 & 2 Cor. 5:21.
 2. The brass laver portrays the regular cleansing needed by believers for restoring fellowship following sin, Ex. 30:17-21; 1 Jn. 1:9.
 3. The Holy Place speaks of enjoying God's help in life: Christ **first** ministers through the guidance (the Light of the World (lampstand)) and feeding (Bread of Life (table of shewbread)) of Scripture, and believers **then** pray for help or worship (altar of incense), Ex. 25:31-40,23-30;30:1-10; 1 Cor. 2:9-15; Rev. 5:8.
 4. The Holiest of Holies is heaven, the ultimate divine provision and protection where believers will go to live with their Lord, He. 9:24.

Application: *If burned out in the role we play in a relationship, heed the tabernacle format by (1) believing on Christ as Savior (Jn. 3:16; "II, B, 1") and (2) commune with God, (a) confessing sin, (b) heeding God's Word and (c) praying ("II,B,2-4") . (3) Then, take heart that God is resolved to fulfill His plan for us in the role and stay there so that He can step in to supply what we need to function in it (Exodus)! (4) Meanwhile, longing to enter the veil to be with the Father in heaven, stay in the Holy Place of fellowship until God calls us home!*

Lesson: *Though huge problems can exist in group relationships because of sin, God is very resolved to fulfill His plans for us in them! Thus, we should rest in His mighty determination and stick with those assignments!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

As we noted at the beginning of the sermon, Isaac Watts was rejected when he wrote a hymn in 1707 about personal feelings rather than the doctrines of Scripture. The hymn pictured himself standing at the foot of the cross of Christ interacting emotionally to what he saw, so he was branded a "radical churchman."

Yet, Isaac Watts later said, "It was not my design to exalt myself to the rank . . . of poets; but I was ambitious to be a servant to the churches, and a helper to the joy of the meanest (lowliest) of Christians." Thus, he stayed with the church and wrote more hymns.

We are the richer for his staying with the organized church. His following songs are in our hymnal: "Jesus Shall Reign," "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," "I Sing the Mighty Power of God," "Joy to the World!" "Alas! and did My Savior Bleed?" "At the Cross" "We're Marching to Zion" and "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?"

The work that got Isaac Watts branded "radical churchman" is:

"When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Thank God that Isaac Watts kept working in the organized church! He didn't give up there because of carnality that opposed his hymn writing, but, under God's bidding humbly chose to "be a helper to the joy of the lowliest of Christians!" It's God's program that we stick with our group assignments under His care. Let us stick with them as well to enjoy His great provisionary blessings!