

November 13, 2022

Know that the Lord is God

Psalm 100:3

“Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”



Special Music: “Be Still And Know”

Steven Curtis Chapman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jop65i0sZGw>

WHO IS MY MASTER

Who is my Master,

Shepherd, and Lord?

Who claims

The majority of authority

Amidst ambiguous addictions

And moral contradictions

With regards to self-preservation

Balanced with self-sacrifice?

A cosmic interpretation

Of “My brother’s keeper”

Or self-appointed gatekeeper

To a realm not of my making.

Who is my Master,

Shepherd, and Lord?

Certainly not I,

A human creature

Given to features

Of illogicalities

And irrelevant fantasies.

Unworthy and unable

To tie the shoelaces of Jesus

Who, in all essence and presence

Is my brother.

Who is my Master,

Shepherd, and Lord?

Certainly not

The things of this earth

For they did not give birth

To my eternal soul.

The fool in me believes

That I am the captain of my fate

And as of late

I am blind to the reality

That from antiquity

I never had control.

Who is my Master,

Shepherd, and Lord?

Surely it is He

That created me

From the mud of the ground

With a wraparound soul

In the title role of my life.

And who, out of love

Gave up His child,

Tender and mild,

So that I could choose

Who is my Master.

“As for me and my house,

We will serve the Lord.”

“You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so that you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.” Can anyone tell me who these words were spoken to? If you said Moses, you would be partially correct. God says these words to Moses with the direction that they be told to the Israelites. It happens on Mt. Sinai as Moses is about to descend with the tablets bearing the Ten Commandments.

But God also knows what is happening at the foot of Mt. Sinai. You see, Moses had been on the mountain quite a while and the Israelites had become nervous and restless, as they were prone to do. But it was worse this time because Moses had gone up the mountain and hadn't returned within the amount of time that they had expected. They had struggled with the belief in an invisible God, one that they couldn't see. They did not doubt the miracles that they had witnessed, but the nature of their human hearts had given in to impatience with the absence of Moses to remind them who God was and what He had done for them. That the miracles were not his, but God's.

When God created humans, he created a space in their heart that needed filling, a place in their heart for a master, an overseer, a presence that gives purpose to their lives. A cavity for authority. He did it on purpose. While God created humans with body and spirit, in order to find purpose and connection with living, that cavity had to be filled by something, even if it didn't really fit.

And human beings filled that cavity with whatever it was they wanted in order to have some authority speak in their lives. Some filled it with riches.

Some filled it with religion. Some filled it with science. Some filled it with other people. But there was only thing that was made to fill that cavity, have a perfect fit, and would complete the human spirit. That was the presence of God in the shape of the Holy Spirit.

With Moses gone so long, the Israelites assumed that the God Moses spoke about and gave authority to, wasn't around anymore. In order to calm their restless souls, they had to find something to fill that cavity in their spirit. Without that authority in their lives, they felt purposeless and confused. So, they came to Aaron, Moses' brother and the high priest of Yahweh and they tell him that since Yahweh doesn't seem to be around, they need something fill that hole in their hearts that seems to be missing. Unfortunately, they had been confused and filled the cavity in their souls with Moses rather than God. With Moses gone and many questioning if he would ever come down off the mountain, that cavity was empty.

What the Israelites were really looking for is something that they could worship. Something that they could see. Something that they could thank for their blessings and blame for their problems. And you would think that Aaron, as both Moses' brother and as the high priest of Yahweh, would push back and support God and Moses. But he doesn't object even a little. He's ready to forget about God and Moses just like the rest of the Israelites. He might have even been a little afraid of the people and what they might do to him if he did not give them what they wanted. The people don't want to continue on their journey without

some kind of authority to fill the cavity in their souls and go in front of them, even if they have to make them themselves. The Israelites were always trying to fit in with other cultures and all the other nations they encountered had idols to worship.

And fickle Aaron obliges them without a whisper of a challenge. He tells the people to collect all the earrings from the wives, the daughters, and the sons and bring them to him. He then melts them down and forms the gold into the shape of a calf and tells the people, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” Not only does he create this idol for the people to worship, but he then attributes their rescue from the Egyptians to that idol. And then he tells the people, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord,” and by Lord, he means this manufactured idol of gold. This all happens in the 32nd chapter of Exodus. The story continues with verse 6 which says”

“So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.”

Let’s recount the of the missteps of the Israelites (including Aaron) in this situation:

1. They got impatient with both God and Moses causing them to question their faith.
2. They became discouraged and distraught.
3. They decided to replace their invisible God with a visible one.

4. Using their own resources, they created an idol with their own hands so that they would have something to worship.
5. They attributed the blessings and acts that came from God to their new idol.
6. They sacrificed and worshipped this idol in the same manner as they had worshipped their Creator.
7. They had a festival to celebrate their new relationship with a golden calf.
8. And they believed that God could not see any of this because they did not understand the omnipresent nature of God.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt.

They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

“I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people.” **Exodus 32:7-9**

“And they are a stiff-necked people.” God is ready to take all of their lives and then build a new nation with Moses. That is, until Moses pleads for mercy and grace.

So very often, we are like those Israelites waiting at the foot of Mt. Sinai for Moses' return. So often we lose our patience and give up. We are so focused on Moses' return that we forget it was never about Moses to begin with, but about God. And because we cannot see Him, we feel He's not really be there, that it is just our desire for a God. Our patience grows thin, and we give up waiting for something to happen. If it doesn't happen by the time that we expect it to, then we must have either been wrong about the timeline, or the event we are waiting for, or the very reality of the presence of God. Whatever our reason, we give up. We refuse to give it any more of our precious time. If someone, even God, chooses not to fit into our busy schedule in the way that we expect, then we will just find someone or something that will. And if that doesn't work, we will just make our own someone or something to fill that place in our spirit. We have two hands and the skills to make our own golden calf. If God will not scratch our itch when we want it scratched, we will find a way to scratch it ourselves.

If God won't give us a high paying job, we will just find one ourselves. If God won't give us the big house we want, we will find a way to get it ourselves. If we do not like what the minister says, then we will find a minister that will say what we want them to. If God will not tell us how to vote, what to eat, what to say, where to stay, what to feel, or how to live in a way that meets our demands, then we will just divest ourselves of this God and go make or pick out our own rock to worship. If God won't give us the answers that we want to hear, we will just go get our own answers because we believe that truth is relative, relative to our own needs and beliefs.

Oh, what a stiff-necked people we are. Do we not understand that, when we take this position, tears stream down the face of God. He cares about what we are doing. He cares about what we are saying. He's not going to force us down a path of His choosing. He loves us too much to do that. But He isn't going to cave into our expectations just to make us happy, either. Especially when He knows that what we are asking for will harm ourselves or others. He knows that it is foolish for us to seek blessings that He is more than willing to provide, from a manufactured idol that can deliver nothing.

We are comfortable with making our own gods because we keep control when we do that. We can decide what those gods are like. In many ways, they are much like a pet rock. We can name the rock. We can take care of the rock. We might even derive some pleasure from having the rock around. But in the end, it's still just a rock and is only what we make it, how we define it. The truth is, we can't replace our relationships with rocks. While it is true that they will never intentionally hurt us, rocks can never provide the support and interaction that we need as human beings, even if we attempt to elevate them to the position of god in our lives. The human spirit is often quieter when we feel safe and secure. We are pacified. That's easy to do with a rock. If we pray to a rock and we don't get the results we expect, we can always go get another rock.

Not so with God. No rock will ever be able to create anything on its own. A rock cannot create life. God was there in the beginning because He created the beginning. He will be there at the end because it is His Creation. Nothing will

change that. He did not have to create us. He wanted to create us. And He is pleased that He did, even when we fail Him. He did not have to love us. But He does, even when we fail Him. He does not have to share Himself with us. But He does, even when we fail Him. He does not have to listen to our prayers. But He does, even when we fail Him. No amount of money can buy that relationship because He already loves us unconditionally. All of us. Each and every one of us. Even when we fail Him. Even when we ignore Him. Even when we think that we can replace him with a rock.

I won't tell you that He is happy when we do that, when we put money first, drugs first, relationships first, or anything else first in our lives. No, it makes Him very unhappy, because we should know the truth. We have more than enough evidence to believe. We have more than enough evidence that He is a good shepherd who takes care of his flock, if we will only let Him.

The psalmist knew this. We know because He sings this song. A song that is still sung today.

This week, when we pray, let us be patient knowing that God will answer with the best possible solution at the best time to answer, a time that will meet the needs that He has set forth. There is only one perfect fit for that hole in our souls, and it isn't a rock. All we need to do is ponder the wonders of Creation to know that there is only one God.

“Know that the Lord is God.

**It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”**

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

God bless you all!

AMEN

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