

Psalms 100:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Analysis

Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. This verse grounds worship in foundational theological truths about God's identity and humanity's relationship to Him. "Know" (d'u, יְדַע) is an imperative demanding not mere intellectual assent but experiential, relational knowledge that transforms behavior.

"The LORD he is God" (Yahweh hu Elohim, יְהוָה הוּא אֱלֹהִים) is a confessional statement identifying Israel's covenant God (Yahweh) with the supreme deity (Elohim). This echoes Elijah's challenge at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:39) and anticipates Jesus' claim to be "I AM" (John 8:58). Against polytheism or practical atheism, this declares Yahweh's exclusive deity.

"It is he that hath made us" (hu asanu, הוּא עָשָׂנו) establishes God's rights as Creator. The verb asah (עָשָׂה) means to make, fashion, or accomplish. Some manuscripts read lo (לו, "his") instead of lo (לא, "not"), yielding "we are his"—both readings emphasize God's ownership through creation.

"We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" presents complementary metaphors. As "his people" (amo, עַמּוּ), Israel has covenant relationship. As "sheep of his pasture" (tson mar'ito, צָאן מַרְעִיתּוֹ), they depend on His provision, guidance, and protection. These metaphors combat both self-sufficiency and despair—we

neither created ourselves nor sustain ourselves, but belong to the faithful Shepherd.

Historical Context

The affirmation 'the LORD is God' was Israel's central confession, crystallized in the Shema: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one' (Deuteronomy 6:4). This monotheistic claim distinguished Israel from surrounding polytheistic cultures and required exclusive loyalty.

Ancient Near Eastern peoples believed their gods created them to serve divine needs—providing food through sacrifices, maintaining temples, and fighting divine enemies. In contrast, Israel's creation theology emphasizes God's gracious initiative. He created humanity not from need but from love, making them His covenant people through election rather than transaction.

The shepherd metaphor pervades Scripture, from Jacob's blessing (Genesis 48:15) through David's psalms to Jesus' identification as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). In ancient Israel, shepherding was both literal occupation and royal metaphor—kings were called shepherds of their people (2 Samuel 5:2; Jeremiah 23:1-4).

For exilic or post-exilic Israel, this verse offered identity and hope. Even when scattered among nations, they remained God's people, the sheep of His pasture. Political powers might conquer kingdoms, but couldn't sever the Creator's claim on His creatures.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God as Creator shape understanding of human purpose, identity, and accountability?
2. What practical difference should the knowledge that 'the LORD is God' make when facing competing truth claims or worldviews?
3. How do the metaphors of 'people' and 'sheep' balance communal identity with individual dependence on God's care?

Interlinear Text

דַּעַת יְהֹוָה הוּא אֶל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה שֶׁנָּה
Know ye that the LORD he is God it is he that hath made

H3588 H1931 H1931 H6213
H3045 H3068 H430 H6213

אָנוּ חֲכֹם וְלֹא עָמָד וְאַז
and not we ourselves we are his people and the sheep

H3808 H587 H5971 H6629

מִרְעַיִתּוֹ:

of his pasture

H4830

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 46:10 (References God): Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

Psalms 119:73 (Creation): Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

Ephesians 2:10 (Creation): For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

John 17:3 (References God): And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

1 John 5:20 (References God): And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

1 Peter 4:19 (References God): Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Psalms 149:2 (Creation): Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

Deuteronomy 4:35 (References God): Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.

Deuteronomy 4:39 (References God): Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.

Psalms 79:13 (Parallel theme): So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

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