

The Lord is God

HN 20/03/05 pm

Reading: Deuteronomy 4:31-43, Acts 4:1-31

Study Text: Deuteronomy 4:32-43

Palms : 8:1-5, 97:1-7, 97:9-12, 134

One day in India I was driving down a street that I often travelled but this day the road was completely blocked. People were spilling out from a temple onto the road blocking all traffic. I had never seen such a crowd at this temple before. I later found out why so many people were there. A report had got out and was spreading like wildfire – Ganesh was drinking milk. Crowds flocked to this temple and others to watch their stone idol drink milk from a teaspoon. Thousands believed the story. Investigation later showed that on a hot day the milk quickly evaporated from the white stone fashioned as the elephant god.

Not long ago in Brisbane a similar thing happened. A priest thought he saw his statue of the Virgin Mary shedding tears. People flocked to see this piece of stone weeping. How tragic. People are so desperate for their gods to do something, to drink, to weep or anything to show that they are alive. They want their gods to help them but how can they help if they do not live.

The Lord your God spoke to you at Horeb said Moses. The Lord your God acted to save you by a mighty hand, by signs and wonders never before seen on the earth or in heaven.

The covenant children of God were poised to go in and possess the land. They would encounter people who worshipped carved images, man made gods. They would be tempted to bow down and worship such gods – the gods associated with this land, gods that appealed to the flesh.

After warning them against making a carved idol in the likeness of any created thing, Moses goes on in this passage to remind them of the incomparable greatness of the Lord your God. Monotheism is fundamental to the belief system of the people of God. *The Lord himself is God, there is none other besides him.*

On what basis does Moses make this claim? What is so different about the *Lord your God*? What makes the God of Israel unique? Well ask! Go ahead and ask why your God is so great says Moses (4:32). Search throughout all the history of mankind. Search the earth from one end to the other and even the heavens. See anything like this has ever happened before; see if what has happened to you has ever happened before. See if there is any report, any evidence whatsoever of a god doing what the Lord your God has done.

It was a bold challenge from Moses. He gave it as a man of great faith. He was not afraid of those who might say ‘how do you know, you have not been everywhere. There may be a tribe somewhere; there may be a planet out there where such great wonders have been

seen'. No there it not. For by faith we understand that the worlds, the eons or ages, were framed by the word of God (Hebrews 11:3). Moses actually confirms that God created man. He spoke of *the day that God created man on the earth* (4:32). He speaks of this as a fact, as a given. It is not the central point of his argument here.

The Lord your God is a living God. He is not like other so called gods. God has revealed himself through his words and his actions.

Voice of God

Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as you have heard and live (4:33). I have not heard or read any report of an idol speaking – have you? Of course some individuals do report that they hear voices and they imagine the gods are talking to them. But Moses was reminding them of when the Lord came down upon Mt Sinai in an awesome revelation. They saw no form but they heard the voice of God as he spoke out of the midst of the fire.

The Lord did not speak through a dream (though he could well do so). He did not speak in some strange language that had to be interpreted. His voice was like thunder but his words clear and able to be understood by all who heard. The people *cried out let not God speak to us lest we die* (Exodus 20:19). But they did not die. They heard the voice of God and lived (4:33).

God came down and spoke to his people to instruct/discipline them (4:36). He gave them the commandments, instructing them how to live in the land they were going in to possess. It was an awesome sight as they stood there terrified at the foot of the mountain. God wanted them to learn the fear of the Lord but this revelation was also verbal as well as visual. God spoke, telling them how to live as his people in the land.

God did not want them going of in all manner of places searching for clues on how to live. *God spoke that he might instruct you*. No other god has spoken – idols are dumb remember. There is no point in searching for 'helps to live' from dumb gods. Meditate we are told, go and mediate and you will enjoy a better life. Learn a mantra – that will help you. How tragic to see and hear people reciting words they do not understand in the hope they will have a better life.

What did the apostle Peter say to Jesus – *Lord, to whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life* (John 6:68). Jesus is the word become flesh, the living word of God. In these last days God has spoken by his Son. Jesus spoke openly to all people. He spoke clearly to those who will listen. *Why do you not understand my speech* he said to the Jews (John 8:43). Anyone searching for the truth will understand the word of God. It is perspicuous as the theologians say.

How truly amazing this Bible is. It was read by our fathers and by their fathers and their fathers. Back over the centuries, over the millennia, this book has been read by people and they have understood it. Around the globe people from all nations are reading the Bible and

understanding it. No other book has been translated into so many languages because no other book can be understood by every human being in the way the Bible can be and is being understood even as we read it today. Only this book can be understood by all people and bring life to those who combine hearing with faith in Jesus Christ.

Actions of God

God has spoken. You have heard his voice. God has also acted in this world in a unique way. By his mighty hand, and an outstretched arm God brought these people out of Egypt and would soon bring them into their own land. Has any other god done such an amazing thing?

These people were but few in number, they were powerless, and they were slaves within another nation. From this impossible situation God took them, he took them out of the mighty nation of Egypt – one nation from the midst of another nation. And he did so through many signs and wonders, great acts of judgment upon that powerful nation.

God did this that *you might know that the Lord himself is God; there is none other besides him* (4:35).

Jesus came into this world and spoke the words the Father gave him. He also performed mighty works, signs and wonders, which the Father gave him to finish (John 5:36). Our salvation *first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard him, God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, with various miracles* (Hebrews 2:3-4). The miraculous signs which Jesus did – healing the sick, casting out demons, calming the storm, raising the dead – were just that – signs; Signs that he is the Son of God, that he is God and *there is none besides him*.

The greatest work of Christ of course is his death upon the cross – his sacrifice as *the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world*. Has anything like this ever happened before in history? Has such a thing happened from one end of heaven to the other? That God would give his own Son, his perfect Son, to die for the sake of his enemies, rebellious human beings! No one has ever heard of such a great act of grace and mercy. No god and no man has ever died to save his enemy – but God, the Lord our God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

Love of God

Ask has anything like this ever been seen before. And ask why, why did God do this? Why did he come down, why did he speak, why did he save with an outstretched arm? Because of love! *Because he loved your fathers, therefore he chose their descendants after them* (4:37). The Lord did not set his love on them because they were great in number, or a strong people, or a worthy people. They were weak and helpless and he set his love upon them. He gave them victory over more powerful nations and brought them to the Promised Land – *as it is this day*.

Therefore know this day and consider it in your heart, that the Lord himself is God in heaven above and on earth beneath there is no other (4:39). He is the God of creation, he is the God of revelation, and he is the God of redemption. He alone has brought you to the land of your inheritance. Therefore obey his commandments and all will go well with you and your children in the land. You will be kept safe there – cities of refuge were already established for those who accidentally killed a neighbour.

The Lord is God, there is no other. *There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).* And that name is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In view of God's mercy let us offer ourselves to him, let us obey him, let us live so as to please him always.

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