

PSALM 95

¹Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD JHWH!

Let us shout triumphantly to the Rock of our salvation.

²Let us enter His presence with thanksgiving.

Let us shout triumphantly to Him in song.

³For the LORD (JHWH) is the great God,
the great King above all gods.

⁴He holds in His hands the deep places of the earth
and the highest mountains are His also.

⁵The sea belongs to Him, for He made it.
His hands formed the dry land, too.

⁶Come, let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the LORD (JHWH) our maker,

⁷ for He is our God.

We are the people He watches over,

We are the flock under His care.

If only you would listen to His voice today!

⁸The LORD says, "Don't harden your hearts as Israel did at Meribah,
as they did at Massah in the wilderness.

⁹For there your ancestors tested and tried Me to see if I were true,
even though they saw everything I did.

¹⁰For forty years I was angry with (loathed, grieved, disgusted) with that generation, and
I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray.
They do not know my ways.'

¹¹Therefore in My anger I took an oath:

'They will never enter My place of rest.'"

The psalmist knew a God of incomparable greatness, a God of eternity (Psalm 90), security (Psalm 91), righteousness (Psalm 92), sovereignty (Psalm 93) and vengeance (Psalm 94). Surely, He is worthy of worship (Psalm 95) and exaltation (Psalm 96), for He is far above all other so-called gods (Psalm 97). Psalms 90-93 are about the works of God. Psalms 94-97 are about the worship of God. Psalm 95 is a hymn. It begins with a call to the people to praise the Lord (vv. 1-2) because of His sovereignty above all supposed gods (vv. 3-5); continues with a call to worship God (v. 6) because He is their Creator and Shepherd (v. 7a); and concludes with a warning to the present generation to avoid the unbelief of their forefathers (vv. 7b-11). This psalm, with its references to the wilderness wanderings, may have been composed by David (Heb 4:7) for the Feast of the Tabernacles. During this feast the people of Israel lived in booths, remembering God's provisions for them in the wilderness. After a call to worship (vv. 1-7a), a prophecy in the voice of the Holy Spirit Himself breaks in and reminds the people of the dangers of rebellion and tempting God. Verses 7b-11 are quoted verbatim in Heb 3:7-11 with the warning that those vacillating Jews also were in danger of missing the promised "rest" (i.e., salvation). The MacArthur Study Bible simply outlines the psalm Positive Call to Worship (vv. 1-7a) and Negative Warning of Wrath (vv. 7b-11).

I. Names of God used in this Psalm

- A. 95:1,3,6 – *JHWH* – Note many Psalms begin with *JHWH*, the proper name of God – Used 6,469 times in the OT and 722 times in Psalms. Knowledge and use of the name implies personal or covenant relationship; the name pictures God as the one who exists and/or causes existence. *JHWH LORD* – The most significant name for God in the O.T. It has a twofold meaning: the active, self-existent One (Exodus 3:14 – I AM THE I AM) and Israel's Redeemer. The name occurs 6,823 times in the O.T. and is especially associated with God's holiness, His hatred of sin, and His gracious provision of redemption.
- B. 95:1 – Rock of our salvation
 1. Old Testament references to *Rock* as a symbol of God's strength, security, safety and stability occur frequently.
 2. The Hebrew word for "rock" describes the steadfast character of God (Ps. 18:1-2,31; 73:26; 92:15; 144:1).
 3. This metaphor for God was especially appropriate in this psalm which refers in verses 8 and 9 to the water that came from the rock in the wilderness (Ex 17:17; Num. 20:1-13).
 4. 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 – "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all at the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness."
 - a. Both Israel, the church at Corinth and believers today have a rock providing all we need. It is Christ.
 - b. Rock, *petra*, refers to a massive cliff, not simply a large stone or boulder, signifying the pre-incarnate Messiah (Christ), who protected and sustained His people.
 - c. Matthew 16:18
- C. 95:3 – *El* God, the Mighty one, as a title of majesty and power, used 231 times
- D. 95:3 – The great King above all gods
 1. The Lord is great. A common superlative to distinguish the true God of Israel from the false gods of the other nations (Ps 48:1; 77:13; 86:10; 95:3; 104:1; 145:3; 147:5).
 2. This is a poetic way of denying the existence of other gods which existed only as statues, not persons.

3. *The Lord is a great God* is an expression prevalent in the psalms that celebrate the Lord's kingship (47:2,7-8; 48:2-3; 96:4; 97:9; 136:2; 149:2).
- E. 95:4 – "Most High" is a title for God expressing His sovereignty over the whole earth.
- F. Verse 6 – *Jehovah-Hoseenu* – The Lord Our Maker.
We are indebted to the psalmist for this union of titles to be found in his invitation to approach the Mercy Seat. As Jehovah, the Immutable One, He is fashioning out of such poor material His habitation (Eph 2:22). Paul reminds us that "we are His workmanship." It is from the Greek word for workmanship that we have our English term poet. Thus, in effect, "We are God's poem." The question is, "As such, do we read well, and are we expressive of the feelings of His heart?" How necessary it is to be submissive to Him who is our Maker, that He might shape and fashion us according to the pattern given on the Mount!
- G. 95:7 – *Elohim* God, plural of majesty; plural in form but singular in meaning with a focus on great power; one characterized by greatness or power. Used of God 2,365 times.
- H. 95:7 – Shepherd - The Lord is often referred to as the shepherd of His people, Israel (Gen 48:15; 49:24; Deut 32:6-12; Psalm 23:1; 28:8-9; 74:1; 77:20; 78:52; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Isaiah 40:11; Jer 23:3; Ezek 34:11-16; Hos 4:16; Mic 5:4; 7:14; Zech 9:16). In the ancient Near East, kings were commonly known as the shepherds of their people. Since the Lord is the true King, the title "shepherd" is most appropriate. Jesus is a shepherd (John 10; Heb 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4).

Outline of Remainder of the Psalm

Verse 2 – To enter His presence means to worship God at the temple.

The word for thanksgiving can also mean thank offering.

Verses 4-5 – Devotional – *The Creator's Hands*

Verse 4 – God understands incomprehensible things such as the foundations of the earth, the depths of the ocean, or the depth of God himself. The power of God extends from the bottom of the sea to the mountain peaks.

Verse 5

- a. The sea and the dry land belong to God because He created them.
- b. The wind and the sea had to obey Christ (Mark 4:35-41) for He made them.
- c. In John 1:9, the same phrase is part of the prophet's confessional statement about his identity.

Verse 6

- a. 1st Devotional – *The Lord Our Maker*
- b. 2nd Devotional – *The Lord Our Maker*
- c. The same God who created the world created humanity as well. Both the cosmos and humanity kneel before their Creator.

Verse 7

- a. Devotional – *Daytona Rogue*
- b. Hear. Includes the idea of obedience.
- c. The Lord, who created the world, also created Israel.
- d. He serves a dual role as Creator and Shepherd.
- e. Those who truly belong to the Lord will hear His voice and respond to Him.

Verses 8-11 recall Exodus 17:1-7 and Numbers 20:2-13. The psalm relies heavily on the covenantal associations and language of the two texts.

Verse 8 – "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness." NKJV

1. *Do not harden* warns against the self-reliance of God's people, who followed their own counsel and complained in the wilderness.
2. Hardness of heart – An inability to understand because of a rebellious attitude.

Israel was blinded by a judicial act of God in response to their hardened hearts.

3. The names Marebah (contention, controversy) and Massah (test) were given by Moses to the location where God provided water from a rock after the people tested God (Ex 17:7; Num 20:13).
4. Meribah, which means argument, quarrel, strife or dispute (day of rebellion) marked the place where Israel complained about no water. Moses struck the rock in following the direction of God (Ex 17:1-7; Num. 20:1-13).
 - a. Their complaint about lack of water demonstrated their lack of faith in the Lord.
5. Massah – trial, testing

Verse 9 – Tested Me. This is a reference to the same event mentioned in verse 8 when God brought water out of the rock.

- a. *Tested* describes the refining of precious metals by smelting. Tested God to see if He was true/pure.
- b. The writer to the Hebrews applies the principle of this event to his readers, suggesting that their inclination to doubt the Lord and return to Judaism was parallel with their fathers' inclination to doubt the Lord and go back to Egypt.
- c. Devotional – *Worship and Obey*

Verse 10

- a. Go astray in their hearts. Their wanderings in the desert were the outworking of straying hearts.
- b. Although the original group that departed Egypt would not enter Canaan because of their sinfulness, Caleb and Joshua would lead the next generation into the promised land.

Verse 11 – My Rest. I.E., the promised land of Canaan, which the wilderness generation did not enter.

1. A person may rest at home or rest through relief from enemies. God rested on the Sabbath and rests among His people (2 Chron 6;41-42). The concept of rest reaches its full development in Hebrews 4:3-11.
2. The “rest” was originally the promised land where the people came at the end of Israel’s 40-year journey in the wilderness. It was analogously applied in the book of Hebrews to salvation by grace (Heb 3:7-4:10).
3. Hebrews 4:5-9 – The divine promise is still good: the believer may enter into God’s rest through faith. This is true both of salvation and sanctification. Rest in the Christian life comes through complete reliance on God’s promises and full surrender to His will.
 - a. 2 Cor. 5:7
 - b. Col. 2:6

Verse 11 – Devotional – *The Holy Ghost in David*