

## **Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down**

*Psalm 95*

### **Introduction (2 Minutes)**

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#### **Read Psalm 95:1-11**

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#### **Background**

Psalm 95 is what we would call an “enthronement psalms.” With an “enthronement psalm,” the focus is on the “entrance of the LORD God into His sanctuary, wherein He ascends to His throne in His role as the King, the indisputable, supreme Ruler of the entire world.” With these “enthronement psalms,” the ancient people of Israel remembered God’s saving work on their behalf. With Psalm 95, many scholars believe that it was sung by the people during the Festival of Shelters (which is also known as the Feasts of Booths).

This festival of shelters was to take place “after the produce of the orchards and vineyards had been brought in and the wine had been pressed (Deuteronomy 16:13) ... This feast was known as the most joyous, characterized by singing and dancing. Deuteronomy and Leviticus say that the feast is to last seven days, but Lev 23:36 adds an eighth day, a day of ‘solemn assembly,’ and no labor. In Leviticus 23:42–43 this feast is tied to Israel’s redemptive history, the time of sojourning in ‘booths’ in the wilderness. As a result, it was both a time of joyful celebration for the new produce and a time of remembering how Yahweh had guided and cared for his people.”<sup>1</sup>

In the case of Psalm 95, the Lord’s miraculous provision of saving mercy is remembered by His people while God Himself warns the people to not grow cold and hard-hearted in the face of His continued mercy.

#### **Exposition (15 Minutes)**

##### **I. Worship God with Joy-filled Thanksgiving! (Vv. 1-7)**

When we come to verses 1-7, we are immediately confronted with a command that is often translated as “come,” but in fact, the sense of the term is actually more like, “move it” or “let’s get going.” What are you waiting on? It’s time to worship! Beth Tanner and Rolf Jacobson provide some great details about these words that are translated as “call aloud” and “shout.” They wrote, “The two verbs in v. 1 are in the intensified form (*piel*), with one meaning to “call loudly,” and the other *often being used to describe a war-cry or cry of alarm* (also v. 2). This type of song requires great effort and is expressed with as much power as a cry of alarm or war. The effect of a congregation performing in this way would be deafening! The praise is loud and rowdy and would sound threatening and frightening to someone listening. This is praise using all of the force and power that the human body has.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, vol. 4, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1992), 381.

<sup>2</sup> Beth Tanner and Rolf A. Jacobson, “Book Four of the Psalter: Psalms 90–106,” in *The Book of Psalms*, ed. E. J. Young, R. K. Harrison, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 716.

This is the type of singing and shouting in worship that causes us to lose our voices. We are tired after this kind of worship.

Now, at this point, you may ask, “But why? Why should I worship God with joy-filled thanksgiving?” Well, if verses 1-2 gives us the command, verses 3-7 provide the reason.

We are to worship God as the Great King over all. He rules over all, giving us absolute protection, salvation, and support even in the midst of desert moments of our wandering lives. (see Exodus 17)

We are to worship God as the Creator and Sustainer over all. He determines our lives, providing continual direction, guidance, and care.

We do not simply acknowledge truths about God, but we submit ourselves to God as well. We worship (acknowledge) and kneel (submission). We know and act accordingly!

Of course, as Christians, we have to recall the ways in which God has been the Great King and Sustainer over us, which points us to Jesus Christ, which we will consider more fully with the next verses...

## **II. Beware of Going Blind to the Goodness of God! (Vv. 8-11)**

The people of Israel were tempted to miss the goodness of God, even though they had witnessed it many times in their lives. The reference to Meribah and Massah refers to times of quarreling and testing that the Israelites went through as they journeyed toward the promised land. It was during those times that God Himself provided manna for bread and birds for meat and water from a rock. Yet, even though God had so richly provided for His people, they still grumbled, blind to the goodness of God. As Beth Tanner noted, “The words here are a warning not to repeat the mistakes of old and not to doubt the power of the Lord as the ancestors did. One key phrase here is they *tried me even though they had seen my deeds*. This generation had been a witness to the power of the Creator God and the leading of the Shepherd King that provided sustenance in the wilderness, and their response was complaint and doubt. The psalm ends here, with God declaring separation from the very people God delivered in the first place.”<sup>3</sup>

Like these Israelites, we too are tempted to miss the goodness of God. We are tempted to grumble and complain in the face of His saving mercy and grace. We shrug at His miraculous kindness toward us, as if we deserved it. In fact, the apostle Paul references the miraculous provision of salvation through Christ in connection with God’s provision to the Israelites in their desert wanderings. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 points to Christ being the “rock that accompanied the Israelites” during their wanderings, which I understand to mean that just as God provide an unexpected salvation for the Israelites in an impossible circumstance, God does so for all people through Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> Beth Tanner and Rolf A. Jacobson, “[Book Four of the Psalter: Psalms 90–106](#),” in *The Book of Psalms*, ed. E. J. Young, R. K. Harrison, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 717.

### **Conclusion (2 Minutes)**

The work of God in our midst through Jesus Christ calls and ought to compel us to worship Him. We ought not to harden our hearts in blindness to His goodness. We ought to “hear His voice” this morning through His Word to us and worship and bow down before our God.

We must not miss the glory of the goodness of God toward in Christ Jesus.

We must remember the redemptive work of God toward us in Christ Jesus.

We must not be like those who see but never see, hear but never hear.

Today is the day. Not tomorrow, but today. I pray that God would soften our hearts this morning, giving us eyes to see and ears to hear the goodness of God’s grace toward in Jesus Christ, and that we would worship accordingly as we being this season of Thanksgiving.