

Psalm 95 – A Call to Worship the LORD and Learn from the Mistakes of Predecessors

Psalm 95

This is a call to worship psalm. It calls on people to draw near to worship the Lord and not act as the Jewish fathers in the wilderness when they hardened their hearts against the Lord just a few short days after being led out of Egypt.

There and Then

Outline:

A complete outline for Psalms is available on the [Downloads](#) page in the *Outlines & Word Lists* folder.

Group ¹	C	V	Description
Praise to the LORD, and Warning against Unbelief	95	1-5	v1-2 – A call to worship the Lord v3-5 – Why? He is greater than all gods, The Creator of the Universe
		6-11	v6-7a – A call to worship the Lord v7b-11 – The Lord's call to not repeat the past

People:

Lord, great God, great King, our Maker, fathers, *that* generation

Location:

No specific location directly connected but Meribah and Massah are mentioned in the psalm (see references below).

Context:

Key Words:

Old Testament, Wisdom, Psalms, Poetry, Worship, Joyfully, Salvation, Today

Key Verse(s):

Psalms 95:1-2 NASB O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. **2** Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

Psalms 95:6-8 NASB Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. **7** For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, **8** Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,

Cross References², Questions, Notes, and Commentaries:

Three uses of the word “come” in verses 1-6³

1 (NASB) “Group” column from the headings in the NASB text.

2 (Smith)

3 (KJV Bible Teacher & Leader - Winter 2014-2015. 129-136)

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v1 - *Come and Sing*: “The use of the word “*come*” is an imperative, and it is one of three different words translated this way in today’s text. The word here is usually translated “walk,” so the idea is to walk so as to come and do something. The *King James Version* shows the intensity by prefixing *O* to the command.”

v2 - *Come with Thanksgiving*: “The word *come* is used again, but it is not the same Hebrew word for *come* as was used in verse 1. The word here has the idea of walking at the head of a procession, or being in front (compare Psalm 68:25). It marks a progression in that the person who receives the invitation in verse 1 is now encouraged to take the lead in coming before the Lord *with thanksgiving*.”

Psalms 68:25 NASB The singers went on, the musicians after *them*, In the midst of the maidens beating tambourines.

v6 - *Come and Worship*: The flow of thoughts about the greatness of God leads to two things. First, the third invitation to *come* is given. The Hebrew is different from the *come* of either verse 1 or verse 2. The Hebrew word for *come* in the verse before us involves opposites, for it may mean “to come” or “to go,” depending on the context. The use of three different words for *come* should leave no doubt as to the psalmist’s intent: all this is a decisive invitation to approach God for a specific reason. That reason, the second feature of the verse, is *worship*.

“Come” in Strong’s, The Complete WordStudy Dictionary⁴

H1980 - הָלַךְ, *hâlak*, haw-lak’ : Akin to H3212; a primitive root; to walk (in a great variety of applications, literally and figuratively)

hâlak: A verb meaning to go, to come, to walk.

H6923 - קָדַם, *qâdam*, kaw-dam’

qâdam: A verb meaning to come before, to meet, to confront. It can mean to confront with hostility (2Sa 22:6, 2Sa 22:10; Psa 18:6, Psa 18:19; Job 30:27); or as a friend (Deu 23:4 [5]; Isa 21:14; Mic 6:6). It means to proceed, to go before (Psa 68:25 [26]). It carries the sense of getting in someone’s face, confronting him or her (Psa 17:13; Amo 9:10). It means to say or do something earlier, before (Jon 4:2); something before the sun rises (Psa 119:147); to think or meditate beforehand on something (Psa 119:148).

H935 - בָּא, *bô’*, bo : A primitive root; to go or come (in a wide variety of applications)

bô’: A verb meaning to come, to go, to bring.

Uses of “Let Us” in Psalm 95 and Hebrew Parallelism⁵

Psa 95:1 O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.

let us sing for joy	to the LORD
Let us shout joyfully	to the rock of our salvation

Psa 95:2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with

⁴ (Strong; Zhodiatas, Baker, and Carpenter) on H1980, H6923, H935.

⁵

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psalms.

Let us come before His presence	with thanksgiving
Let us shout joyfully	with psalms

Psa 95:6 Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

let us worship and bow down	
Let us kneel before	the LORD our Maker

The use of “let us” carries with it the idea that worship is to be a corporate activity. One can worship alone, but it is best experienced with others. The object of our worship is always to be the Lord and should be joyous, with thanksgiving and praise.

References to Massah and Meribah⁶

Meribah, Massah⁷ –

ISBE⁸: *mas'á, mer'í-ba* (מַרִּיבָה מַסָּה, *massâh uḥf'rbha h*, “proving and strife”; *πειρασμός και λειδώρησις, peirasmós kai loidórēsis*): These names occur together as applied to one place only in **Exo 17:7**; they stand, however, in parallelism in **Deu 33:8**; **Psa 95:8**. In all other cases they are kept distinct, as belonging to two separate narratives. The conjunction here may be due to conflation of the sources. Of course, it is not impossible that, for the reason stated, the double name was given, although elsewhere (**Deu 6:16**; **Deu 9:22**) the place is referred to as Massah.

Strong's⁹

H4809 - מַרִּיבָה, *merýbâ h*, mer-ee-baw' : The same as H4808; Meribah, the name of two places in the Desert: - Meribah.

H4808 - מַרִּיבָה, *merýbâ h*, mer-ee-baw' : From H7378; quarrel: - provocation, strife.

H4532 - מַסָּה, *massâh*, mas-saw' : The same as H4531; Massah, a place in the Desert: - Massah.

H4531 - מַסָּה, *massâh*, mas-saw' : From H5254; a testing, of men (judicial) or of God (querulous): - temptation, trial.

Vine's¹⁰

Strife - Rib

Rib sometimes represents a "dispute" between two parties. This "dispute" is set in

6 (Meyers) search using e-Sword for “Massah” and “Meribah” and related texts. Also my personal thought on the text.

7 *Massah and Meribah*—Exodus 17:7; Deuteronomy 33:8; Psalms 95:8
Meribah—Numbers 20:13,24; 27:14; Deuteronomy 32:51; Psalms 81:7; 106:32
Massah—Deuteronomy 6:16; 9:22

8 (Orr) on “Massah and Meribah”

9 (Strong)

10 (Vine, Unger, and White, Jr.) on “Strife” & “Sanctify”

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the context of a mutual law structure binding both parties and a court which is empowered to decide and execute justice. This may involve "contention" between two unequal parties (an individual and a group), as when all Israel quarreled with Moses, asserting that he had not kept his end of the bargain by adequately providing for them. Moses appealed to the Judge, who vindicated him by sending water from a rock (cliff?) smitten by Moses: "And he called the name of the place **Massah, and Meribah**, because of the chiding [quarrel] of the children of Israel..." (Exo 17:7). God decided who was the guilty party, Moses or Israel. The "contention" may be between two individuals as in Deu 25:1, where the two disputants go to court (having a "case or dispute" does not mean one is a wrongdoer): "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." So in Isa 1:23 the unjust judge accepts a bribe and does not allow the widow's just "cause" (NASB, "widow's plea") to come before him. Pro 25:8-9 admonishes the wise to "debate thy cause with thy neighbor" when that neighbor has "put thee to shame."

Meribah occurs twice, and it means "strife." The word refers to an extra-legal (Gen 13:8) and to a legal confrontation (Num 27:14).

Sanctify - Qadash

In the passive stem the verb means "to prove oneself holy." So Moses wrote: "This is the water of **Meribah**; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them" (Num 20:13). This proving refers not to an act of judgment against sin (an ethical-moral holiness) but a miraculom act of deliverance. Some scholars see an emphasis here on divine power, arguing that at this stage of their history Israel's concept of holiness was similar to that of the pagans, namely, that "holy" signified the presence of extraordinary power. A similar use of the word occurs in the prophet's promise of the future restoration of Israel: "When I...am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations..." (Eze 39:27).

Exodus 17:1-7 NASB Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" 3 But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" 4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me." 5 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He named the place **Massah and Meribah** because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us, or not?"

Numbers 20:1-13 NASB Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people stayed at Kadesh. Now Miriam died there and was buried there. 2 There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron. 3 The people thus contended with Moses and spoke, saying, "If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! 4 "Why then

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have you brought the LORD'S assembly into this wilderness, for us and our beasts to die here? 5 "Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink." 6 Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to them; 7 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink." 9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD, just as He had commanded him; 10 and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. 12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." 13 Those *were* the waters of **Meribah**, because the sons of Israel contended with the LORD, and He proved Himself holy among them.

Deuteronomy 6:13-17 NASB 13 "You shall fear *only* the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. 14 "You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, 15 for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. 16 "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested **Him at Massah**. 17 "You should diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you.

Deuteronomy 9:22, 24-26 NASB "Again at Taberah and at **Massah** and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath. ... 24 "You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day I knew you. 25 "So I fell down before the LORD the forty days and nights, which I did because the LORD had said He would destroy you. 26 "I prayed to the LORD and said, 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

Deuteronomy 33:8-11 NASB 8 Of Levi he said, "*Let* Your Thummim and Your Urim *belong* to Your godly man, Whom You proved at **Massah**, With whom You contended at the waters of **Meribah**; 9 Who said of his father and his mother, 'I did not consider them'; And he did not acknowledge his brothers, Nor did he regard his own sons, For they observed Your word, And kept Your covenant. 10 "They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, And Your law to Israel. They shall put incense before You, And whole burnt offerings on Your altar. 11 "O LORD, bless his substance, And accept the work of his hands; Shatter the loins of those who rise up against him, And those who hate him, so that they will not rise *again*."

Mat 4:1-11	Luk 4:1-13
<p>1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT</p>	<p>1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN</p>

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<p>ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD."</p> <p>5 Then the devil *took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,</p> <p>6 and *said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON <i>their</i> HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"</p> <p>7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"</p> <p>8 Again, the devil *took Him to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;</p> <p>9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."</p> <p>10 Then Jesus *said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"</p> <p>11 Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and <i>began</i> to minister to Him.</p>	<p>SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE."</p> <p>5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.</p> <p>6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.</p> <p>7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."</p> <p>8 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"</p> <p>9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;</p> <p>10 for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,'</p> <p>11 and, 'ON <i>their</i> HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"</p> <p>12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"</p> <p>13 When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.</p>
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Hebrews 3:7-13 NASB Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, 8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, 9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED *Me* BY TESTING *Me*, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. 10 "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'; 11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'" 12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Bible Knowledge Commentary¹¹

The psalmist called the congregation to sing (cf. comments on [Psa 5:11](#)) praises to the Lord. He is designated here as the **Rock of our salvation**, a figure of God's provision of security by delivering His people. Apparently the congregation had experienced some such deliverance, for which they were to give **thanksgiving**. ...

In exhorting his audience the psalmist began with the word **Today**, a rhetorical device to stress the immediacy of the opportunity. They must not resist God's **voice** calling them to trust and obey. In the Bible the word **hearts** often means people's wills. To **harden** one's heart meant to refuse to obey. If this psalm's hearers also disobeyed through unbelief, God would keep them from attaining rest in the land.

11 (Walvoord and Zuck) on Psalm 95.

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Believer's Bible Commentary¹²

v1-2 - It is interesting to notice the variety of expressions used to describe true worship. It is singing to the **LORD**. It is making a joyful **shout to the Rock of our salvation**, that is, to the cleft Rock of Ages in whom we find eternal refuge. It is coming into **His presence**, confessing with thanksgiving all that He has done for us. It is making the rafters ring with **psalms** of praise to Him.

v6-7a - But now a second invitation to **worship** rings out, and it becomes even more personal and intimate. We should **worship** and **kneel before the LORD our Maker**, because **He is our God**. He is our God by creation and then by redemption. He is the Good Shepherd who gave His life for us. Now **we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep** who are led, guided, and protected by **His nail-pierced hand**.

v7b-9 - In the middle of verse 7 there is an abrupt change from worship to warning. It is the longing, eloquent sighing of the Holy Spirit:

Today, if you will hear His voice. . . .

In the remaining verses we hear the voice of Jehovah Himself warning His people against an evil heart of unbelief. At Meribah near Rephidim the Israelites provoked God by their complaints about the lack of water (this was the same place as Massah—[Exo 17:7](#)). At another Meribah near Kadesh, Moses offended God by smiting the rock instead of speaking to it ([Num 20:10-12](#)). The two events, one at the beginning of the desert journey and the other near the close, form significant terminals expressing in their names (Meribah = **rebellion**; Massah = **trial**) the faithlessness of the people during that time. Even though they had seen God's marvelous **work** in delivering them from Egypt, they **tested** Him and **tried** Him.

v10-11 - This poignant appeal, once directed to Israel, is quoted in [Heb 3:7-11](#) and directed to any who might be tempted to forsake Christ in order to return to the law. And it will be a warning to Israel in the last days that unbelief will keep them out of God's millennial rest.

Unbelief excludes men from God's rest in every dispensation.

Here and Now

Answer the questions below as you reflect on your own life and this study¹³: *my LOG vs others SPECK*

S – Are there *sins* to avoid or confess?

•

P – Are there *promises* from God to claim?

•

E – Are there *examples* to follow?

•

C – Are there *commands* to obey?

¹² (MacDonald and Farstad) on Psalm 95.

¹³ (*The Navigators*) [with additions] & Matthew 7:1-5.

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•

K – How can this passage increase my *knowledge* about God / Jesus Christ / Holy Spirit?

•

Other Application Questions

Are there principles to guide?

Are there warnings to heed?

Are there attitudes to adopt?

Are there actions to take?

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