

A Study in Psalms, Week 6 Handout Psalm 95: A Warning About Worship

“Exalt the LORD our God and worship at His footstool; Holy is He.”

Psalm 99:5

Introduction

1. Until fairly recently (1600s), mankind believed earth was the center of the universe
2. Many who “worship” focus on what God can do for man, not the other way around
3. Psalm 95 is an invitation to worship (Psalms 95-100 are about worship and praise)
 - a. Written for the **Feast of Tabernacles** after exiles returned to Judah from Babylon
 - b. For centuries, different churches have used this psalm as a **call to worship**
 - c. This psalm highlights the **importance** of worship
 - d. It turns our **attention** and **affection** toward **God**
 - e. It defines our **dual role** in worship—to be both **joyful** and **reverent**
4. This psalm also issues stern warnings against disobedience and hardness of heart
5. No superscription. Author unknown.

A Call to Rejoice

1. <Read Psalm 95:1-5>
2. Verses 1-3 reveals **four characteristics** of worship
 - a. The worship is **collective** (congregational)
 - b. The worship is **vocal**
 - c. The vocal praise is **vibrant** and **vigorous** (“*Sing for joy!*”)
 - d. The joyful, exuberant praise is **God-centered**
3. Verses 4-5 show God’s superiority over His creation
 - a. **Reigns supreme** (“*a great King above all gods*”), **Creator** (“*for it was He who made it*”), **Owner** (“*...the mountains are His also... The sea is His*”), **Controller** (“*in whose hand are the depths [and] the peaks*”)

A Call to Reverence

1. <Read Psalm 95:6-7b>
2. This **second** call to worship is based on the Lord being **our Maker** and **God** (vv. 6, 7)
3. **Change of tone** from enthusiastic, joyous, vocal adoration to **quiet, reverent worship**
4. Three main **verbs** in v.6 (*worship, bow down, kneel*) are about “getting low before God”
5. So public worship involves **both** animated **praise** and speechless **prostration**
6. We are “*the people of His pasture*” and “*the sheep of His hand*”

A Warning from Massah and Meribah

1. <Read Psalm 95:7c-11>
2. Verse 7 is both a **transition** and a **condition** (same meaning when quoted in Heb 3:7-11)
3. Again, note the **mood**—this is a **solemn warning**, not to be taken **lightly!**
4. God **Himself** begins speaking in verse 8—all the more **important** that we **listen!**
5. He illustrates hardheartedness with Israel’s evil in the wilderness—Massah and Meribah
6. A **similar** incident at Meribah, 38 years later
7. These are two examples of typical, **chronic behavior**
8. Purposes of the wilderness experience
9. Upshot: Beware of developing a “Massah-like” attitude, which God despises

Next week, Psalm 127...