

TEXTUAL ISSUES PSALM 95

Psalm 95. *Listen to His voice—you're closer to destruction than you know.* Let us gather together. Let us sing for joy to the Lord God Yahweh. Let us shout out loud to the rocky summit of our deliverance. Let us come before Him with thanking Him, praising Him—with music, with song.

Why? Yahweh is the great God, the great King above all gods. The depths of the earth are under His authority; the mountains themselves are His property. Even the sea is His—He made it; He formed the dry land.

Let us gather together. Let us kneel down as we praise Him—let us kneel before Yahweh, our Creator. He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, the sheep He owns (of His hand).

If you would only listen to His voice today:

*Do not be stubborn like at Meribah.*¹⁴

*Do not be obstinate like at Massah.*¹⁵

In the desert your forefathers tested, tried, and angered Me—even though they had ample reason to appreciate what I had done for them. For forty years I was livid with that generation. I said “They are a group whose raison d’être is far from Mine—they have not known My ways.” So?

I swore an oath in My anger—“They shall never enter the resting place I have set aside for them.”

1-2

Q How would you characterize “singing with joy?” “Shouting aloud” to the Lord God?

Q What is to precede/accompany “coming before the Lord?” Why?

3-5

Q What evidence is there for extolling Yahweh as “great?” As “king above all gods?” So?

Q What makes Yahweh less than “great?” As a king lesser than some other gods?

¹⁴The name *Meribah* means “strife.” Two separate but similar incidents at Meribah are recorded in the Torah (Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-13, see also Psalm 81:7; 106:32). In both cases we complained about lack of water that the Lord God miraculously provided for us.

¹⁵The name *Massah* means “testing.” This was another name (along with Meribah) given to the place where we complained following the Red Sea crossing (see Exodus 17:1-7, as well as Deuteronomy 6:16; 9:22; 33:8).

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Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. ²Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

³For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. ⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. ⁵The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; ⁷for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah [Hebrew for *quarrelling*], as you did that day at Massah [Hebrew for *testing*] in the desert, ⁹where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.

¹⁰For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, “They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.”

¹¹So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.”

6-7

Q Why are we to “bow down” and “kneel” before the Lord God Jehovah? Why don’t we?

Q What aspects of being sheep, even with Yahweh as our shepherd, are problematic?

[Hint: consider Isaiah 53:6—*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*]

8-11

Q What does it mean to “hear His voice?”

Q Why did we shift our allegiance at Meribah and Massah, especially given the evidence of the Lord God’s provision, guidance, and protection?

Q Why was the Lord God angry with us for forty years in the desert? Why so long?

Q What ways of the Lord God will assuage His anger?

Q What was the consequence of changing allegiance from the Lord God Yahweh?

Q Is this still the consequence of turning our backs on the Lord God? [Hint: Hebrews 3:7-4:16]

95:6-11 For an inspired commentary on these verses in the context of Christ’s arrival on earth, see Hebrews 3:7-4:13—

⁷So, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ do not harden your hearts

as you did in the rebellion,

during the time of testing in the desert,

⁹where your fathers tested and tried me

and for forty years saw what I did.

¹⁰That is why I was angry with that generation,

and I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray,

and they have not known my ways.’

¹¹So I declared on oath in my anger,

‘They shall never enter my rest.’ "

¹²See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵As has just been said:

"Today, if you hear his voice,

do not harden your hearts

as you did in the rebellion."

¹⁶Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ¹⁷And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the

desert? ¹⁸And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed [or *disbelieved*]? ¹⁹So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. ⁴¹Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ²For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith [many manuscripts read *because they did not share in the faith of those who obeyed*] ³Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

"So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.' "

And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. ⁴For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." ⁵And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

⁶It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. ⁷Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before:

"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts."

⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. ¹¹Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

¹²For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.