

Psalm 95

3rd Sunday of Lent Year A; 23rd Sunday Year A
4th Sunday Year B; 27th Sunday Year C
Daily Invitatory to the Office

This is the third in a series of psalms dedicated to the kingship of YHWH (Psalms 93-99). Psalm 93 celebrates in song God's victory and reign, Psalm 94 God's activity as judge, and now Psalm 95 the homage we owe God and the need to respect God's authority. The psalm is in two parts. In the first part the psalmist invites us to join in praise of YHWH, the great King, Creator of the Universe. Then comes a warning. Those who were freed from slavery in Egypt failed to enter the Promised Land because they failed to heed God's word. Let not the same happen to us. If we think that we can engage in cult without listening to God, we are putting God to the test in failing, once again, to place our trust in God. We may be entering the physical building of the temple, but we are not entering the promised land or true rest and we could once again lose what God is offering us as a gift.

This psalm opens the Divine Office each day. The same warning holds. We are entering into God's presence. It is imperative that we listen to God's voice, or our offering of cult is empty and profitless. There is no title to the psalm.

**¹Come, let us acclaim
YHWH*; let us sing
joyfully of the rock of
our salvation*!**

**²Let us come into his
presence with thanks-
giving; let us sing
joyfully to him to the
sound of music!**

When you have come into the land that YHWH your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that YHWH your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that YHWH your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'Today I declare to YHWH your God that I have come into the land that YHWH swore to our ancestors to give us ... YHWH brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, YHWH, have given me.' You shall set it down before YHWH your God and bow down before YHWH your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that YHWH your God has given to you and to your house.

– Deuteronomy 26:1-3, 8-11

There shall be a day when sentinels will call in the hill country of Ephraim: 'Come, let us go up to Zion, to YHWH our God.'

– Jeremiah 31:6

Great is YHWH, and greatly to be praised;
to be revered above all the gods.

– Psalm 96:4

All gods bow down before him.

– Psalm 97:7

On the greatness of the supreme God see Psalm 29.

We know that ‘no idol in the world really exists,’
and that ‘there is no God but one.’ Indeed, even
though there may be so-called gods in heaven or
on earth – as in fact there are many gods and many
lords – yet for us there is one God, the Father, from
whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one
Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and
through whom we exist.

– 1Corinthians 8:3-6

On that day people will regard their Maker, and their
eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.

– Isaiah 17:7

Shall the thing made say of its maker, ‘He did not
make me’; or the thing formed say of the one who
formed it, ‘He has no understanding’?

– Isaiah 29:16

Thus says YHWH who made you, who formed you
in the womb and will help you: Do not fear, O Jacob
my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

– Isaiah 44:2

You shall be my people, and I will be your God.

– Ezekiel 36:28

Know that YHWH is God. He made us, we belong to
him. We are his people, the sheep of his fold.

– Psalm 100:3

O that my people would listen to me,
that Israel would walk in my ways!

– Psalm 81:13

**³For YHWH is the High God,
the Sovereign over all the
gods.**

**⁴In his hand are the depths
of the earth; the heights of
the mountains are his.**

**⁵His is the sea for he made
it, and the dry land, which
his hands have formed.**

**⁶Come, let us worship and
bow low, let us kneel before
YHWH, our Maker!**

**⁷For he is our God, and we
are the people of his pas-
ture, the sheep he feeds by
hand.**

**O that today you would
listen to his voice!**

We must listen and heed

**⁸Do not harden your hearts,
as at Meribah, as on that
day at Massah in the wil-
derness,**

**⁹when your ancestors tested
me, and put me to the proof,
though they had seen my
deeds.**

**¹⁰For forty years I was
sickened by that generation
and said: 'They are a people
whose hearts* are astray,
they pay no regard to my
ways.'**

**¹¹So in my anger* I swore an
oath: 'Never will they enter
my rest.'**

'Meribah' means strife, and 'Massah' means testing. The reference is to a rebellion that occurred during the desert wandering (see Exodus 17:7).

The loyal one, whom you tested at Massah, with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah.

– Deuteronomy 33:8

On the subject of putting God to the test, see Psalm 78 and the following:

They had a wanton craving in the wilderness,
and put God to the test in the desert.

– Psalm 106:14

Their heart was hard:

I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit
within them; I will remove the heart of stone from
their flesh and give them a heart of flesh.

– Ezekiel 11:19

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will
put within you; and I will remove from your body
the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

– Ezekiel 36:26

They honour me with their lips, but their heart is far
from me.

– Mark 7:6

God's rest is the model and the guarantee of the rest of those who are in communion with God:

You have not yet come into the rest and the possession that YHWH your God is giving you.

– Deuteronomy 12:9

Blessed* be YHWH, who has given rest to his people Israel according to all that he promised.

– 1Kings 8:56

Thus says YHWH: Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.

But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'

– Jeremiah 6:16

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.

– Matthew 11:29

Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord. 'Yes,' says the Spirit,
'they will rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them.'

– Revelation 14:13

There is a commentary on Psalm 95 in the Letter to the Hebrews 3:7 - 4:11.