

Psalm 95: Listen to God's voice



Psalm 95 (94) (Mode 3. 3....12 / 4.....271)

This is the third in a series of psalms dedicated to the kingship of the Lord (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 the Lord, 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.

Come, let us acclaim the Lord;
let us sing joyfully of our Saviour!

Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving,
singing joyfully to the sound of music!

Deuteronomy 26:1-3, 8-11

'When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name, and say:

Deuteronomy 26:1-3, 8-11

‘The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm ... 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, Lord, have given me.’ You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.’

For the Lord is the High God,
Sovereign over all the gods.

‘Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods’(Psalm 96:4).

‘All gods bow down before him’(Psalm 97:7).

On the greatness of the supreme God see Psalm 29.

1 Corinthians 8:3-6

‘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.’

God cradles the depths of the earth;
holds in place the mountain peaks.
The ocean belongs to God who shaped it.
It is God who moulded the dry land.

Come, let us worship and bow low,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

‘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 the Lord 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).

This is our God, our shepherd.

We are the sheep fed by God's hand.

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

(Ezekiel 36:28)

'Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture'(Psalm 100:3).

O that today

you would listen to God's voice!

'O that my people would listen to me,
that Israel would walk in my ways!'(Psalm 81:13).

‘Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah [‘strife’],
as on that day at Massah [‘testing’] in the wilderness.
There your ancestors tested me,
though they had seen my deeds [Exodus 17:7].

‘For forty years I was sickened by that generation
and I said: They are a people whose hearts are astray,
they pay no regard to my ways.
Never will they enter my rest [Hebrews 3:7 - 4:11].’

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 the Lord your God is giving you'(Deuteronomy 12:9).

'Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel according to all that he promised'(1Kings 8:56).

‘Thus says the Lord: 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)