

**Psa 95:1 Come let us praise the Lord with joy: let us joyfully sing to God our saviour.**

An invitation and an exhortation to praise God. The word “come” contains an exhortation, exciting them to join heart and lips in praising God; just as the word is used in Genesis, where the people, exciting and encouraging each other, say, “Come, let us make bricks;” and “Come, let us make a city and a tower;” and, in the same chapter, the Lord says, “Come, let us go down, and there confound their tongue.” “Let us praise the Lord with joy.” He invites them first to exult in the spirit, and then to compress their joy in song; for song is of little value unless the mind be previously raised up to God in interior joy and admiration. Hence, it is written of the Lord himself, that “he rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said, I give thanks to thee, O Father;” and the Mother of the Lord said, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced.” The prophet, then, says, “Come, let us praise the Lord with joy.” Let us all unite in praising the Lord, giving full expression to our joy, and chanting hymns of praise to him who is our hope and salvation.

**Psa 95:2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; and make a joyful noise to him with psalms.**

This verse may be understood in two ways—one making the prophet summon us to rise early in the morning to praise God, as if he said, Before others rise let us be first before God; and in such spirit does the Church put this Psalm in the beginning of matins. The second explanation makes the prophet tell us to unite an avowal of our own misery with God’s mercy, making us come before him by acknowledging our sins, previous to his sitting in judgment on them, and punishing us for them; “and make a joyful noise with psalms,” in praising the great mercy so extended to us.

**Psa 95:3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.**

He assigns five reasons why God should be praised by us. The first is, because our Lord is a great God, far above all other gods; and he is a great King, far higher than all other kings, who are sometimes called gods.

**Psa 95:4 For in his hand are all the ends of the earth: and the heights of the mountains are his.**

The second reason is, because God’s power is supreme throughout the entire world, whether as to its length, or breadth, or height; and, therefore, all who inhabit the earth are subject to him, and owe him the sacrifice of praise. “For in his hand,” in his power, “are all the ends of the earth;” the whole world to its extreme boundaries; “and the heights of the mountains are his;” not only does the whole length and breadth of the land belong to him, but even up to the top of the highest mountains are subject to him. In a very old manuscript, after these words is read a verse from the preceding Psalm, “For the Lord will not cast off his people;” which verse is daily read in the divine office, but it is not in the Hebrew, the Greek, nor in the Vulgate. In the same copy, instead of the words, “the heights of the mountains are his,” the version is, “he sees the heights of the mountains;” indicating God’s elevation and power.

**Psa 95:5 For the sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.**

The third reason is, because our God is Lord, not only of the land but of the sea; for it is he who made it, and surrounded it with its sands that confine it as if in a bowl. It is, therefore, most meet that mankind, who derive so many benefits from the sea, should thank and praise him who gave it to them.

**Psa 95:6 Come let us adore and fall down: and weep before the Lord that made us.**

The fourth reason is, because the same Lord that created the earth and the sea created us men, too, though we are daily offending our Creator by our sins. Come let us adore and fall down and weep, deploring our ingratitude and our sins, “before the Lord that made us;” and, therefore, our Lord by every title, to whom we owe implicit obedience.

**Psa 95:7 For he is the Lord our God: and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.**

This is the fifth and last reason, because the Lord not only made us, but he governs us by a special providence, as a shepherd would the flock that belonged to himself. St. Augustine notices an elegant transposition of words here, for instead of saying we are the people of his hand, and the sheep of his pasture, he connects people with pasture, and sheep with hand; to give us to understand that the people, in respect of God, are like sheep that need a shepherd; yet, still, that they are not sheep devoid of reason, that need to be driven with a staff; and they are called the sheep of his hand, either because he made them, or because he guides them with his hand; for though God’s people have shepherds and teachers to feed and to direct them, still God has a peculiar care for them, and does not let them suffer from the negligence or the ignorance, or even the malice of the pastors. Whence we infer that God’s people should put great confidence in God, their supreme Pastor, and have recourse to him, through prayer, when they fall in with an unworthy pastor, for God himself says, “I will feed my sheep,” Ezek. 34.

**Psa 95:8 To day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts:**

This is the second part of the Psalm, in which the prophet exhorts God's people to praise God, not only by word of mouth, but also by their works. Now, the most agreeable sacrifice we can offer to God is the observance of his commandments, according to 1 Kings 15, "Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed?" He introduces God speaking here, in order to give greater effect to his exhortation; for the use of the pronoun "his" would lead one to suppose it was other than God was speaking; still, in the Scripture, it is not unusual for God so to speak of himself as in the passage last quoted, "Doth the Lord desire holocausts?" for it is God himself who puts the question; so also the Holy Ghost in this passage says, "Today if you shall hear his voice," if you will hear my voice, who am your Lord, "harden not your hearts." The word "today" means, at present; and, as the Apostle, Heb. 3, explains, holds good or stands "whilst today is named;" that is, during the whole time of this life, for after this life time will be no longer, it will be eternity. The word "if" seems to mean, that God does not speak to us every moment, but that he advises in fitting time and place, either through his preachers, or through the reading of the Scriptures, or in some other mode to make his will known to us. The expression, "harden not your hearts," signifies that the hearing of the voice of the Lord is of very little value, unless it penetrate the very inmost recesses of our hearts. The hardening of the heart is sometimes ascribed to God, sometimes to man, for the Lord says, Exod. 7, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart;" and yet, in 1 Sam 6, it is said, "Why do you harden your hearts, as Egypt and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?" Now, God hardens the heart, not by the infusion of malice, but by withholding his mercy; for as St. Augustine says, God hardens, by deserting, by not helping; a thing he can do in his secret dispensations, but not by way of injustice. God is said to harden the heart justly, when he does not, by his grace, soften the reprobate; and man hardens his own heart when he resists the voice and the inspirations of God, according to Acts 7, "You always resist the Holy Ghost;" and by the passing pleasure of sin, which the Apostle calls "the deceitfulness of sin," when he says, "Lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin," which induces man to resist God, and to close the ears of his conscience against him.

**Psa 95:9 As in the provocation, according to the day of temptation in the wilderness: where your fathers tempted me, they proved me, and saw my works.**

He gives an example of the obduracy. For the fathers of old, who were led out of Egypt by Moses, while they were on the way, and were passing through the desert, hardened their hearts, and refused to believe in God's promises or to obey him, more than once; and, therefore, they tempted him and got a proof of, and saw, his wonderful works; such as the manna that rained from heaven, and the water that spouted from the rock. He then says, "As in the provocation," when they provoked God to anger; "according to the day of temptation in the wilderness," at the time they were in the habit of tempting him, for it is not necessary to point out any one specific day, because they frequently rebelled against, and tempted, him; and the day, therefore, comprehends the whole term of their journey through the desert. "Where your fathers tempted me;" when they wanted to find out if I were truly God, and whether I could procure bread and water for them in the desert, of which the place seemed totally void. "They proved me, and saw my works," where they had a proof of my omnipotence, seeing the things done by me could be done only by one truly divine, truly omnipotent.

**Psa 95:10 Forty years long was I offended with that generation, and I said: These always err in heart.**

He tells the length of time during which he was provoked and tempted. "Forty years long," during the whole time that he was conducting them through the desert to the land of promise; "and I said, These always err in heart;" are carried away by various desires, and, therefore, wander and stray from the right path of salvation.

**Psa 95:11 And these men have not known my ways: so I swore in my wrath that they shall not enter into my rest.**

He explains why they should have erred in their heart, "because they have not known my ways," my laws which are the straight path, and anyone walking therein cannot possibly go astray; and when he says they have not known his laws, he means knowing them so as to observe them. The meaning, then, is, They who always err in heart have not known my ways, that lead to rest, and, therefore, have not come into rest. "So I swore in my wrath that they shall not enter into it." The rest, in a historical sense, was the land of promise, which very few of those who left Egypt saw at all, as the Lord swore, Num. 14, "As I live, saith the Lord; according as you have spoken in my hearing, so will I do to you. In the wilderness shall your carcasses lie." In a higher sense, the rest means, that heavenly country, where alone is perfect rest and peace.