

## II. QUOTABLE QUOTES AND SUMMARY NOTES

### A. Theme of Psalm 95

“The main themes of the psalm are the kingship of Yahweh, his ownership of the world because he had created it, his care for the Covenant people and the responsibilities of those who are in a Covenant relationship with him.” (A. Anderson, cited in Greidanus, 324 fn 34.)

“In opposition to all the praiseworthy things that Yahweh has done (stanza 1 and 2) we have the contemptible behavior of Yahweh’s people. The rhetorical function of this contrast and consequently the whole psalm is to warn readers/listeners and to convince them that their association with Yahweh should not be taken for granted.” (Greidanus, 325 fn 37, citing Prinsloo.)

### B. Context of Psalm 95

“Psalm 95 is fitted carefully into its context. It is linked to Psalm 94 by the ‘rock’ picture in verse one (Ps 94:22; also 92:15). It is also tied to the ‘kingship of the Lord’ psalms with the king imagery (Psalm 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 98:6; 99:1).” (Limburg, cited in Greidanus, 317.)

### C. The Warning Part

The section consisting of verses 7d-11 “[c]ombines the story about the Israelites’ lack of faith at Massah and Meribah in Exod 17:1-7 with the pronouncement of judgment on the Israelites’ lack of faith in Num 14:21-35. The two events are related; these were the very same people who experienced God’s deliverance from Egypt (Num 14:22). The psalmist correlates the experience of God’s people in the present by adding, “Today, if you would only hear his voice (v. 7d). Thus, Psalm 95 applies to all generations of believers because the message is for “today.” And like the wilderness generation who witnessed the glory of God (Num 14:21-35), the current generation experiences the glory of God when it hears his voice (v. 7d).” (NIV Study Bible, 1111.)

### D. Relation to New Testament

“In the New Testament Jesus also warns us that we will not enter the kingdom of heaven if we fail to respond obediently to his Word (Mat. 7:1). But the good news is that Jesus came for sinners and paid for our sins. He promises to give us ‘rest’ if we will come to him.” (Greidanus, 322.)

### E. Application

“In worship today, God can be seen as too friendly, too nice, too forgiving. We can easily forget the great power of the King God. Our sanctuaries are filled with light and flowers and beauty. We work hard at making them beautiful and calming spaces. Indeed, we make them so much so that the great mysterious God of the Universe may get erased from our midst. This God is mighty and powerful, and our reverence is due our Great Creator. It also reminds us that worship and the way we live are related. We can make God so angry that worship is an abomination (Amos 5:18-25). . . . This psalm leaves the people . . . on their knees contemplating the sins of past generations that serve as a warning to them. ‘Is the praise honest and real?’ . . . ‘Are you really prepared to encounter God’s face?’ The questions for these ancient ones should also be ours. Worship, full-voiced, praise-filled worship, requires an understanding of the serious nature of that praise, for . . . God is . . . the Judge and Controller of the creation and of all the peoples. The praise of God cannot be taken lightly, and so the congregation is left here on their knees to understand just that.” (Tanner, emphasis mine.)

## III. RELEVANT TEXTS

### 1. Exodus 17:1-7<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The NIV study Bible notes of this passage, “The last in this trio of grumbling stories is undoubtedly the most serious. Together with a similar episode in Num 20:1-13, it brackets Israel’s wilderness period as a time of

<sup>1</sup>From the wilderness of Sin the whole Israelite community continued by stages as the LORD would command. They encamped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>The people quarreled with Moses. “Give us water to drink,” they said; and Moses replied to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you try the LORD?” <sup>3</sup>But the people thirsted there for water; and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?” <sup>4</sup>Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do with this people? Before long they will be stoning me!” <sup>5</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pass before the people; take with you some of the elders of Israel, and take along the rod with which you struck the Nile, and set out. <sup>6</sup>I will be standing there before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will issue from it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup>The place was named Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and because they tried the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD present among us or not?”

2. **Psalm 81:7-16**—*note that here also reference to Meribah provokes a call to obedience. Note too that, as promised in the covenant at Sinai, obedience brings with it abundant blessing.*

<sup>7</sup>In distress you called, and I delivered you;  
I answered you in the secret place of thunder;  
I tested you at the waters of Meribah. *Selah*  
<sup>8</sup>Hear, O my people, while I admonish you!  
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!  
<sup>9</sup>There shall be no strange god among you;  
you shall not bow down to a foreign god.  
<sup>10</sup>I am the LORD your God,  
who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.  
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.  
<sup>11</sup>*“But my people did not listen to my voice;  
Israel would not submit to me.*  
<sup>12</sup>*So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts,  
to follow their own counsels.*  
<sup>13</sup>*Oh, that my people would listen to me,  
that Israel would walk in my ways!*<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>14</sup>I would soon subdue their enemies  
and turn my hand against their foes.  
<sup>15</sup>Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him,  
and their fate would last forever.  
<sup>16</sup>But he would feed you with the finest of the wheat,  
and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.” (ESV.)

3. **Psalm 100**—*this psalm shares some content with Psalm 95*  
A psalm of thanksgiving.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

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rebellion. Moreover, this event attains a measure of notoriety, serving as a severe warning in other parts of Scripture (Ps 95:7-11; Heb 3:7-4:13.)

<sup>2</sup> Note that, unlike Psalm 95, the concluding verses of Psalm 81 sound a positive note. The reader familiar with both Psalms would recognize that what the implied disobedient of Psalm 95 are missing is blessing for obedience.

<sup>3</sup> This is the only psalm specifically called “a psalm of thanksgiving”; JPSV “for praise” with note, traditionally “for the thanksgiving offering.” [David in 145 has a psalm of praise as the last in the psalter prior to the conclusion.]

<sup>2</sup>Serve the LORD with gladness!  
 Come into his presence with singing!  
<sup>3</sup>Know that the LORD, he is God!  
*It is he who made us, and we are his;  
 we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*  
<sup>4</sup>Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
 and his courts with praise!  
 Give thanks to him; bless his name!  
<sup>5</sup>For the LORD is good;  
 his steadfast love endures forever,  
 and his faithfulness to all generations.

#### 4. Hebrews 3:7-4:7<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice,  
 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness,<sup>9</sup> where your  
 fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.<sup>10</sup> Therefore I was provoked with that  
 generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’

<sup>11</sup> As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’

<sup>12</sup>Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the  
 living God. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be  
 hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original  
 confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup> As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

<sup>16</sup>For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup> And  
 with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the  
 wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were  
 disobedient? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

**Heb. 4:1** Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should  
 seem to have failed to reach it. <sup>2</sup> For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did  
 not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. <sup>3</sup> For we who have  
 believed enter that rest, as he has said,

“As I swore in my wrath,  
 ‘They shall not enter my rest,’”

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. <sup>4</sup> For he has somewhere spoken of the  
 seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” <sup>5</sup> And again in this  
 passage he said,

“They shall not enter my rest.”

<sup>6</sup>Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to  
 enter because of disobedience, <sup>7</sup> again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long  
 afterward, in the words already quoted,

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

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<sup>4</sup> The author of Hebrews develops three concepts from his quotation of Psalm 95b; “the consequences of an  
 unbelieving (or ‘hardened’) heart; a reworking of the meaning of ‘rest’; and an encouragement to enter that  
 rest ‘today’ by means of faithfulness.” (Cox, cited in Greidanus, 325.)