

TBC – 9/29/02 p.m.

## “LET US WORSHIP”

Psalm 95

**Intro:** This morning as we examined what Moses told the children of Israel to do to prepare for the Passover, we came to two statements which I said marked a very high point in the lives of the children of Israel in Egypt. At the conclusion of what Moses told the people to do, Moses wrote this to tell us what the people did:

And the people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they (Ex. 12:27b-28).

I believe it is very important that we recognize that this is not what the people said that they were doing, but it is what Moses wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit to tell us what the people did. “And the people bowed the head and worshipped.” So it seems that we are to understand that this was true worship, not just going through the form of worship. And for the words, “the head,” to be singular (instead of *the heads*) would indicate that it was all like a great worship service. Ex. 12:21 tells us that Moses gave the message to the elders of Israel, but we can assume that the elders passed the word on to the people, and that what Moses said at the end of verse 27 expressed the reaction of the people when the elders passed Moses’ message on to them. “And the people bowed the head and worshipped.”

The question is, What did they do? We don’t know if they had some place of worship. The Tabernacle was not constructed until later. And the people had been strangers in the land of Egypt for over four hundred years. So what did they do, where did they do it? It seems that they did it right where they were as they heard from the elders the message God had given to Moses. Probably elders were assigned to different groups of the Israelites. It is possible that not all of the people heard the message at the same time. But, however it was, this was the reaction of the people. They “bowed the head and worshipped.”

Well, we would have to think that in their worship they were giving thanks to God for this promise of His blessing and the prospect of their deliverance from Egypt. None of the Israelites who were alive at that time had known anything but Egypt. They all had been born there. They had not had any other home. And yet we must recognize that God had kept His promises alive in their hearts so that while they had never known any other home but Egypt, yet they longed to see the fulfillment of the

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promises which God had given to Abraham approximately 500 years before any of them was born. The Lord will never let His Word die. He keeps it alive in the hearts of His people.

The second thing that we must understand from this statement in Exodus was that their worship was directed toward the Lord, not toward Moses, and not toward Aaron, and not toward the elders, *but toward the Lord*. It is very important to understand this. Moses could not have done for the people what they needed. He was simply the Lord's spokesman, and so the worship was directed toward the Lord.

But let me point out another thing: Before they worshiped, or as they worshiped (because it also was a part of their worship), they "bowed the head." There is no indication that anyone told them to do this; they just did it. And it was an indication that they were humbling themselves before the Lord. Such statements as these explain why, when we pray, we bow our heads. We need to realize that this is a token of our submission to our great and wonderful and faithful God.

Now I don't want to put too much into their action, but from other passages dealing with worship, it seems that words were usually involved – either the singing of the people, or words of adoration and praise to the Lord for the promise of His blessing.

There may be other things that can be said from this verse, but these, at least, seem to be evident from the passage before us. But I would also have you notice that from their worship, they went to do what the Lord wanted them to do. So this, too, would speak that we are not to think here that this was an empty form of worship, but that it was genuine worship, worship by which the people were glorifying God for the immediate prospect of His blessing.

Now let us go to Psalm 95.

The verse from which I have taken my subject for this evening, is verse 6. (Read the whole verse.)

The word translated "worship" in this verse is the same word that Moses used in Ex. 12:27.

Sometimes we come to an understanding of the meaning of Biblical

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words by noticing how they are used in Scripture as well as by the definition of a word from a lexicon, or dictionary. Both are very important. This word for worship is used 172 times in the OT.

It would seem that we are on good ground Scripturally to think that since this appeal to worship the Lord does not come until verse 6, that what the Psalmist said in the first five verses helps us to understand what it means to worship the Lord, and why we should worship Him.

We don't know who wrote this Psalm, not when it was written, but it had to follow the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt because of what we read from the last part of verse 7 to the end of the Psalm. We see, regretfully, that the children of Israel did not continue worshipping the Lord in their wilderness wanderings even though Exodus 12 indicates that they made a good start. This Psalm was obviously calling upon the people of God in whatever day it was written to take a warning from the past, and not to follow the example of their fathers who were always complaining and rebelling against the Lord. And to avoid that kind of a life, the Psalmist, directed by the Holy Spirit, gave some excellent points in this Psalm to help even us in our worship of the Lord today.

The first thing I want you to notice in this Psalm is how the Psalmist encouraged the people to keep their thought directed toward the Lord. David spoke of this as:

### **I. THE HABIT OF SETTING THE LORD BEFORE HIM.**

See Psalm 16:8:

8 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Notice how the writer of Psalm 95 did this. Maybe this is an indication that David wrote this Psalm, but I wouldn't make a strong point of this.

(Read the first six verses showing the emphasis upon the Lord.)

We need to be continually aware of the Lord's presence with us. He never leaves us, even though we may spend hours or even days without acknowledging that He is with us.

So we are to sing and be happy, but our singing is to be to the Lord,

especially as the One Who is “the Rock of our salvation.” Our salvation is just as secure as the Lord Himself. If He fails, we lose out. But He cannot fail because He is the Lord. And so (verse 2) we come before Him with thanksgiving and with Psalms. The Israelites were right. They did not have to go any special place to worship the Lord because the Lord was with them where they were.

At this point (verse 3) the Psalmist began to give us reasons why we need to worship the Lord.

## **II. REASONS FOR OUR WORSHIP (Psa. 95:3-7a).**

The Psalmist had already mentioned that:

### **A. The Lord is “the rock of our salvation” (v. 1).**

Think about what this means. We will come back to this theme later in the Psalm.

### **B. “The Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods” (v. 3).**

And none of us has yet fully understood how great the Lord really is. We have some indications of His greatness, of His absolute sovereignty over all of creation, animate and inanimate, but His greatness cannot be expressed in words.

We have it in Psalm 96 which we know was written by David. Cf. Psa. 96:4. Also see also Psa. 145:3:

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

### **C. His greatness is seen in creation (vv. 4-6).**

To attribute the origin of all things to anything or anyone but the living and true God, is to blaspheme His holy Name. Imagine saying that the shining of the sun, the falling of the rain, the rotation of the earth, the movements of the stars, the cycle of the seasons, and millions of other things in this universe of ours, is due to a non-entity called “Mother Nature”! And one of the greatest of reasons that all men in every generation should worship the Lord, is *because He made us!* Let us kneel

before the Lord our Maker”!

But those of us who know the Lord have another great reason as to why we should worship the Lord:

**D. “He is our God” (v. 7a).**

And so here the Psalmist bring us back to his starting point. See v. 1.

See the same thought in Psa. 100, esp. v. 3.

Delitzsch said that “the sheep of His hand” does not mean “by His creating hand” (although that would be true), but that we are “the flock under His protection, the flock led and defended by His skillful, powerful hand” (*The Psalms*, Vol. III, p. 87). The Lord has charged Himself with our care.

But now notice:

**III. THE PSALMIST’S TWO APPEALS FOR OTHERS TO JOIN HIM IN WORSHIPING THE LORD.**

The first one is in verse 1: “O come.” The second is in verse 6: “O come.”

But then there are five times that he says, “let us.”

- 1) “Let us sing” (v. 1).
- 2) “Let us make a joyful noise” (v. 1).
- 3) “Let us come . . .” (v. 2).
- 4) “Let us worship and bow down” (v. 6).
- 5) “Let us kneel” (v. 6).

When the truth about worship really grips our hearts, we cannot be satisfied if we alone are worshiping the Lord, but we must call upon all of the people of God to do the same. Posture is important. But true worship can only come from a heart that has been moved upon to worship the Lord.

We all have to admit that most of our praying is seeking from the Lord certain blessings that we need. And we are encouraged to make our needs known to the Lord. But in worship we are occupied with God Himself,

His glorious attributes, and all that He has done and continues to do. The true worshiper is concerned about the glory of God. May the Lord teach all of us more about what it means to really worship the Lord. There is nothing worse than just going through the motions.

The Psalmist concludes with a warning.

#### **IV. THE HINDRANCE TO TRUE WORSHIP (Psa. 95:7b-11).**

We have in Scripture a forty-year example of people who were kept from worshiping the Lord because they had hardened hearts. What is a hardened heart? It is a heart that insists on having its own way instead of submitting to God's way. Notice the last part of verse 10.

Scripture gives us some good examples which we will do well to follow. But it also gives us examples of people we should not follow. The people of God in their journey through the desert from Egypt to Canaan as among the greatest examples of how we should not live. The Lord called it a time of "provocation." This means that they were constantly quarreling with God, striving against Him, always wanting something to be different, never learning the ways of the Lord and the peace that they bring.

When should we give attention to all of this? With one word the Psalmist tells us, "Today."

Remember what Solomon said in Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

**Concl:** Worship is like everything else in Scripture: it can always be improved. The woman of Samaria, perhaps to direct attention away from herself and her sins, sought to engage the Lord in a discussion as to *where* the proper place of worship was. But the Lord told her that *the place* was not what was chiefly important. It was the heart. This is how He expressed it:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him (John 4:23).

(Close with Psa. 95:6.)