

Fact Sheet for **“Oh Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down”**
Psalm 95

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We sing these words from Psalm 95...

**⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!**
**^{7a} For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.**

“From the seventeenth century Psalms 95-99 and 29 were included in the Jewish liturgy for the inauguration of the Sabbath.”¹ There is also an early Christian chant, first appearing in the 13th century, based on Psalm 95:1-7a; 96:9, 13... with a benediction added. It is called the “Venite” in Latin. The Septuagint for Psalm 95 has the following as part of a superscription: “When the house was being rebuilt after the captivity”, referring to the Babylonian captivity. Although this superscription does not appear in our Bibles it may be the actual history of this Psalm. Verses 1&2 are an invitation to sing to God.

**^{ESV 1} Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!**

The words “let us” are sort of a command to ourselves. The first reference I found to the “rock of our salvation” is in Deuteronomy 32:15 where Israel scoffed at the Rock of their salvation instead of singing to him. The psalmist urged his readers to sing to the rock of their salvation like David did (2 Samuel 22:1, 47).

**² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!**

Verses 3-5 speak of God’s greatness in creation.

**³ For the LORD is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
⁵ The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.**

(see Genesis 1:9-10; Exodus 20:11; 31:17)

Verse 6 is another invitation to sing to God, but this time with a more personal note.

**⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!**

If the superscription that begins this Psalm in the Septuagint is correct, then “our Maker” would refer easily to the nation of Israel (see Deuteronomy 32:6). But you can also hear within these

¹ The Soncino Books of the Bible, The Psalms, p. 312.

words a very personal appeal for you, an individual, to sing to the Lord, your maker (see Psalm 139:13).

**7^a For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.**

This was true of Israel in the Old Testament. It is true of the true church in the New Testament. It is true of every believer in Christ.

With the last line of verse 7 the tenor of this Psalm abruptly changes.

**7^b Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah (*strife*),
as on the day at Massah (*testing*) in the wilderness,**

Consider the last line of verse 7... "Today, if you hear his voice". These words are a call to trust, a call to faith, a call to obey.

**9 when your fathers put me to the test
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.**

God had been their shepherd in the wilderness, but Israel had put God to the test in a bad sense (Numbers 14:22-23, 29-30). These were the ten times they had tested God, instead of trusting him: 1. Exodus 15:1-21 - Straw & Bricks, 2. Exodus 14:1-14 - Red Sea, 3. Exodus 15:22-25a - Bitter Water at Marah, 4. Exodus 16:1-36 - 1st Quail & Manna, 5. Exodus 17:1-7 - Rock Struck Once (Massah & Meribah), 6. Exodus 32:1-35 - Golden Calf, 7. Numbers 11:1-3 - Complaining (fire consumed outskirts of camp), 8. Numbers 11:4-35 - 2nd Quail, 9. Numbers 12:1-15 - Miriam & Aaron, 10. Numbers 13-14 - 12 Spies. The 5th time, referred to in Psalm 95, was when they first thirsted (Exodus 17:3-7). But even after these ten times that they tested God, and God pronounced judgment on them, they would again test the Lord about water. This time Moses would let his anger get the better of him, and would be judged for it (Numbers 20:2-13). Interestingly, when Jesus was himself tested in the wilderness he quoted the words of Moses about Massah in Deuteronomy 6:16 (Matthew 4:5-7). Jesus responded in faith. Israel did not.

In Psalm 95:10 we have God's estimation of those adults in the wilderness...

**10 For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart,
and they have not known my ways."**

The Hebrew for "loathed" is a strong word meaning "to feel loathing, disgust, revulsion".

**11 Therefore I swore in my wrath,
"They shall not enter my rest."**

This "rest" was a reference to living in the Promised Land. The abrupt ending of this Psalm almost sets in capital letters the stern warning to those who were now standing before God, very possibly at the rebuilt temple. Take another look at the words we sing (verses 6-7a). Personalize these words as you sing them. Cultivate the proper heart attitude of worship. Remember that God made you, and fashioned you. He is your shepherd. Hear his voice, in his Word. Set your mind to trust and obey him.