

International Bible Lessons Commentary
Psalms 95:1-11

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, December 14, 2014

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, December 14, 2014**, is from **Psalms 95:1-11**. Please Note: Some churches will only study **Psalms 95:1-7a**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Teacher Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Psalms 95:1-11

(Psalms 95:1) O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Listening to good music or favorite songs, and humming or singing along with them, can fill us with joy, fond memories, and renew our feelings of love and devotion. God created us in His image with a deep appreciation for music, song singing, and other forms of expressing our joy. God inspired the psalmists to sing, teach, and write the words of songs that praise Him and express our own thoughts and feelings in the right words. The LORD and our Savior Jesus Christ are our rock of salvation: compare Deuteronomy 32:15; 2 Samuel 22:47; Matthew 7:25; and Matthew 16:16-18 (Note: the Confession of Faith that the Father inspired Peter to make declared that Jesus was the rock upon which His church would be built, which is another indication of Jesus' divine sovereignty).

(Psalms 95:2) Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

Song leaders in the Bible and throughout history call God's people to sing to Him. Moreover, our loving God has deep appreciation for every "joyful noise" that honors Him and seeks to bring Him happiness. We often come into God's presence with prayer; the Bible also encourages us to come into His presence with singing, even singing songs of our own composition that the Holy Spirit has inspired our hearts to sing. Among other reasons, we can thank God for

our blessings and praise God for His character and deeds. Compare Psalm 81:2.

(Psalms 95:3) For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

From their rescue from slavery in Egypt, and from their looking back upon what we call their biblical history, God's people in the Promised Land had many reasons to sing about God's greatness and lordship over all. Throughout all time God's people have been surrounded by those who worship false gods, and material or mental images of these false gods of their own making. Our great God and King rules above all these supposed gods, idols that do not exist. God's people are called to revere and exalt the LORD above all other supposed gods: compare Psalm 96:4, 97:5, 135:5.

(Psalms 95:4) In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

Just as people today are familiar with the devastation and fear that earthquakes can bring, so were God's people. They remembered how God's people in obedience to Him could bring down a city's walls with the power of God (such as Joshua achieved in the Battle of Jericho). God intended to comfort His people by inspiring the psalmist to write that the depths of the earth are in His hand as well as the highest mountains. Compare the thought of God's

presence in the mountains to Exodus 19:16 and Matthew 17:1-2.

(Psalms 95:5) The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

The Holy Spirit inspired the psalmist to write a song that proclaimed what God had revealed about Himself and His past deeds, especially regarding the fact that God had created the world: compare Genesis 1:9-10. The hymns we sing and write not only remind us of what the Bible teaches, but they also express our appreciation to God for what He has done and revealed about himself in creation, in our lives, and in the Scriptures.

(Psalms 95:6) O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

As a knight might bow before his king, or as someone might bow to someone they feel honored to serve, so God's people can bow physically before God in worship. If they do not bow physically, Christians should always bow with their hearts and minds when they come into God's presence. When they bow their hearts they show God that they want to do His will, and when they bow their minds they show God that they believe His Word and want to think His thoughts. God made us, and to kneel before Him expresses our desire to obey His commands and serve Him in all ways to fulfill His purposes.

(Psalms 95:7) For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!

God created all people, and the LORD is God over all; however, God gives people the ability to choose to honor or dishonor the LORD as their true God. God's people choose to live within the boundaries God has set and they follow His leading as their great Shepherd, King Lawgiver, and Savior. People can choose to listen to or disregard the voice of God. Still, God has spoken through creation, the Scriptures, and most completely and profoundly through the Lord Jesus Christ. God holds people responsible for ignoring His voice, for God has spoken in many ways (see especially Psalm 19 and Hebrews 1).

(Psalms 95:8) Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

The psalmist and the writer of the Book of Hebrews both warn God's people not to become stubborn or even began to disobey God. If they do, they will suffer the consequences of God's discipline or punishment. See Hebrews 3:7-11 and Exodus 17:1-7.

(Psalms 95:9) when your ancestors tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

Though the Israelites had seen many of God's miracles in Egypt, and though they knew that God had saved them from the Egyptian army when He parted the Red Sea, they kept testing God to see if He was with them and whether or not He would meet their needs. They refused to believe and cherish in their hearts what they had seen God do. Compare: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13.

(Psalms 95:10) For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they do not regard my ways."

In this verse, the psalmist reminded God's people in song that God can loathe someone. The word "loathe" means to greatly dislike, detest, and become disgusted with someone or something. When we sin against God, He detests what we do. If we continue living in sin and refuse to repent and turn back to God, He says He can come to loathe us. Hymns can call people to repent and return to God. Hymns can call people's hearts back to God and remind them of His ways as they sing or listen to them. Hymns can sometimes teach us truths about God that we have forgotten and draw us closer to Him.

(Psalms 95:11) Therefore in my anger I swore, "They shall not enter my rest."

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews reminded his readers of these facts from this psalm. Compare Hebrews

3:6-19. The Bible includes warnings that God expects His people to heed and the Holy Spirit has inspired; for example, the Bible says: “therefore, as the Holy Spirit says” (Hebrews 3:7). We cannot, we will not, it is impossible to experience, rest and peace of heart, mind, and soul if we are disobeying God and God becomes angry with us and must discipline us or withdraw loving His presence from us until we turn back to Him in faith and love (see Hebrews 4:1-7).

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How important is music and singing to you? How important do you think music is to God? Give reasons for your answers.
2. How does thinking about God as the “rock of your salvation” give you encouragement for living each day?
3. What does Psalm 95:2 encourage you to do whenever you worship God and pray to God?
4. Whenever anyone feels fearful or discouraged, what can you tell them about God that may help them by turning their attention to Psalm 95?
5. Why do you think the psalmist tells believers to kneel before God? What are some of the ways believers can kneel before God without physically being on their knees? Why are these ways important?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly
International Bible Lesson.

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