

LESSON 6
October 10, 2021

Unit II. Called to Praise God
Ball of Confusion

DEVOTIONAL READING: Deuteronomy 10:17-21
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Psalm 9; Ecclesiastes 3:16-22
PRINT PASSAGE: Psalm 9:1-12

KEY VERSE

He shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. (Psalm 9:8, KJV)

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He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity. (Psalm 9:8, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Contrast God's justice with humanity's injustices.
- Value how God listens and responds to our needs.
- Practice God's justice in difficult situations.

*Key Terms

Endure (verse 7, KJV)—Hebrew: *yashab* (yaw-shab'): to sit, remain, dwell, continue.

Glad (verse 2)—Hebrew: *samach* (saw-makh'): rejoicing; happy.

Judge(s) (verse 8)—Hebrew: *shaphat* (shaw-fat'): to evaluate and give a decision; govern(s).

Refuge (verse 9)—Hebrew: *misgab* (mis-gawb'): a secure height; retreat; stronghold.

Rejoice (verse 2)—Hebrew: *alats* (aw-lats'): to celebrate with joy; to exult.

Righteous (verse 4)—Hebrew: *tsedeq* (tseh'-dek): morally right; godly; "right" (KJV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Introduction

I recently had a birthday. While I am not one for a whole lot of parties and such, everyone wants to be acknowledged every now and then. In my thrust and thirst to remain humble as a pastor and Sunday school writer, I purposely seek non-attention-



The Biblical Context

Psalm 9 celebrates God's goodness and help in the face of an enemy. This psalm was originally joined with Psalm 10, a plea for action against the enemy. In certain Hebrew and Latin manuscripts, like the Vulgate, Psalms 9 and 10 appear together as one composition. The two psalms form an acrostic, using the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. While the tone of Psalm 9 is highly national, engaging all, Psalm 10 is intensely personal. Some scholars suggest that perhaps David wrote this psalm recalling his triumph over the Philistine enemy, Goliath, from the vantage point of many years since that victory.

grabbing moments. My birthday falls during the month of which we celebrate pastoral appreciation. This year, maybe due to age or seasons, I was feeling overly bubbly, singing happy birthday to others on every occasion and opportunity that arose. This is not out of the ordinary. I think I just added a little extra humph to the singing. It probably should be noted here that I am not a psalmist by any means of the word. When my birthday came, I received many phone calls and texts wishing me a happy birthday. Shortly thereafter, I had a bag in the office that was very colorful and decorative. *Hey, a birthday gift for me.* I peeked into it and said, "Yes. I can use this." I took that bag home and showed my wife. At the bottom of the bag was a card. The card was pink and had her name on it. The gift was for her—a belated happy birthday gift. We laughed about that for some time, including sharing with the couple that gave her the gift. I had to go back to the church the next day to get some items I had

left and some mail on my desk. In the midst of the mail was an old envelope with the words "We see and we love you, Pastor." In the envelope was enough to fill my tank to take me to and on my next journeys. I smiled, not only at the on-time financial blessing, but at the timely words of encouragement. *We see you at work. Keep up the good work. Humility is good for you. You do not have to toot your own horn—for in due season, you shall reap if you faint not. I am grateful that this situation with my wife was not a ball of confusion as with the Temptations' song with the same name recorded in 1970. While the world can be confusing, our God is confirming. Keep the faith.*

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Praise God for His Justice (*Psalm 9:1-4*)

KJV

I WILL praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

2 I will be *glad* and *rejoice* in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

3 When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging *right*.

NIV

- 1** I WILL give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
2 I will be *glad* and *rejoice* in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.
3 My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you.
4 For you have upheld my right and my cause, sitting enthroned as the *righteous* judge.

This psalm of David's opens with a personal testimony. Few things are more meaningful than praise that is personalized. Musicians, choirs, praise teams, soloists, directors, and other leaders in worship serve important roles. Their goal is to lead the congregation into an authentic, personal encounter with God. Until praise and worship become personal, they are far from authentic. Instead of calling the congregation to gratitude, the psalmist begins with the personal declaration: "I will." The psalmist gives wholehearted thanks to God (**verse 1**). The psalmist is not addressing an individual "you," or a collective "us." Again, he says "I will" speak of the wonderful things God has done (**verse 1**). Your telling your own story forces you to reflect. Those who reflect on the Lord's works on their behalf are often stirred to expressions of joy and gratitude and praise to the Lord "Most High" (**verse 2**). The psalmist focused on how God turned back the psalmist's enemies, causing them to "fall and perish" at the sight of His presence (**verse 3**), recounting specific details about the workings of the Lord. We should not imagine that God always joins our side in our battles and disagreements. Our priority is not to always win at any cost, but to always be on God's side, conforming ourselves to His word and will. The psalmist understood his personal victory as divine vindication from the throne of God (**verse 4**)—a sweet judgment against his enemy from the just and righteous Judge who rules heaven and earth.

🔍 WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Share your inner feelings when you share of God's deliverance and/or vindication in your life.

Praise God for His Righteousness (*Psalm 9:5-8*)

KJV

- 5** Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.
6 O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.
7 But the LORD shall *endure* for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.
8 And he shall *judge* the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

NIV

- 5** You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

6 Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies, you have uprooted their cities; even the memory of them has perished.

7 The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment.

8 He rules the world in righteousness and *judges* the peoples with equity.

As the psalmist shared his love for the Lord, encouraging others to worship God, offering additional reasons for praise. God rebuked the unbelieving “heathen,” “destroyed the wicked,” and removed their “name for ever” (**verse 5**). David saw God in action among the nations, righteously judging the wicked and removing the enemy from his presence. God is omnipotent—He can uproot an enemy or absolutely eliminate any issues, problems, or troubles we may confront. When God takes up our case, He handles it once and for all (**verse 6**). Upon the final destruction of his enemies, David takes no personal credit. Instead, he acknowledges that the Lord is God who reigns forever as the righteous judge (**verse 7**). As the everlasting judge, God shall continue to rule and reign over the world with righteousness, delivering verdicts that vindicate righteousness (**verse 8**). It is fitting to give God praise for His victorious, righteous reign in our lives. This psalm is a word of comfort and hope for those who are still facing enemies and wondering if God’s justice will ever be seen on their behalf. God never fails and His righteousness shall prevail.

🔍 WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How do you encourage others when they feel defeated by an enemy or life’s circumstances?

Praise God for His Memory (Psalm 9:9-12)

KJV

9 The LORD also will be a *refuge* for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

NIV

9 The LORD is a *refuge* for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

10 Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

11 Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.

12 For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.

Like the psalmist, we can be grateful that God does more for us than judge the wicked. Our God covers us, protecting us from being oppressed by the wicked. When we are oppressed and mistreated, God is our shelter (**verse 9**). Rather than seeking affirmation and support from others, we can trust God to help us again and again, as He has helped us in the past. He is forever faithful, never turning His back on those that seek safety in His loving care (**verse 10**). This is a good reason to “sing praises to the LORD” (**verse 11**). This is also a good reason to “declare” or make known His deeds to all nations in the earth (**verse 11**). Even when we find ourselves at our very lowest point, we can trust in the Lord to help us. He will never forget or leave us. God hears and remembers our cries and pleas for help. Even if His deliverance is delayed, we can be confident that our God will not ignore us in our suffering (**verse 12**). When the world seems like a ball of confusion, trust that our God is always in control. Rejoice—He rules forever with justice and righteousness.

🔍 WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Many adults can recall when parents promised a delayed punishment for misbehavior. They might say, “Just wait until we get home!” or “You know you’re in trouble!” Whatever else they might have forgotten, parents never seemed to forget that punishment. Why is it wrong to imagine that God’s delayed judgment means that evildoers are “off the hook”?

A Closing Thought

What is the best thing to do in a world that sometimes appears as a “ball of confusion”? We should praise the Lord. He is the God who judges with truth, justice, and righteousness. He will handle our enemies and the things that frighten, trouble, or afflict us. God is not only a righteous judge, but also the redeemer and avenger of those who love Him and share a covenant relationship with Him through the blood of Jesus Christ. Stop fighting. Stop worrying. Stop stressing. Just trust God.

Your Life

This week, consider Deuteronomy 32:35 and Romans 12:19, which teach us that vengeance is the Lord’s. As you reflect, consider the reasons for why we try to handle things on our own. Is this a show of faith or a sign of pride?

Your World!

Take the “Your Life” discussion and share it with a fellow Christian. Use your social-media platform, if you have one, to share spiritual encouragement today. If you do not have

one, reach out to someone you know is struggling and remind the person that God sees his or her struggle and hears his or her cries for help. He will come through at just the right time.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the assurance of Your omnipotent presence with us in every challenge. In a troubled world, we are grateful that we can trust in Your unfailing love for us and Your righteous judgment. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

While reading the Background Scripture, consider this thought: "What do you do when God delivers you?"

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, October 11	"Delivered from Hunger and Thirst"	(Psalm 107:1-9)
TUESDAY, October 12	"Delivered from Darkness and Gloom"	(Psalm 107:10-22)
WEDNESDAY, October 13	"Delivered from Storms"	(Psalm 107:23-32)
THURSDAY, October 14	"Delivered through Jesus Christ"	(Ephesians 1:3-14)
FRIDAY, October 15	"Delivered from Sin"	(Ephesians 2:1-10)
SATURDAY, October 16	"Delivered and Reconciled"	(Ephesians 2:11-22)
SUNDAY, October 17	"Delivered by God's Steadfast Love"	(Psalm 107:33-43)

NOTES
