

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)

Life Happens

Carlie created a nonprofit to dismantle racism and blast today's church for their inaction regarding racial injustices, specifically after the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. Carlie finds it puzzling that Christians all over the world can read God's Word and interpret different meanings as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Carlie believes that God is not pleased with the inaction or divisiveness. During the Civil Rights Movement, churches were at the forefront and led people to act, vote, and speak up. Carlie is irritated by what he sees



Overview

The book of Psalms is a collection of prayers that offer believers words to express their experiences rather than answers for their troubles. The psalms teach us to embrace a God-centered worldview rather than giving instruction on how to live. 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, 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 has more of a national focus, Psalm 10 is highly personal. Some interpreters have suggested that David wrote this psalm while looking back over his triumph over Goliath, but this cannot be confirmed.

as the modern-day church's deafening silence on issues of institutional racism, police brutality, homelessness, unemployment, and hunger. Carlie understands that systems play a role in all of this, especially when it comes to people of color. Carlie believes that churches cannot afford to ignore injustices any longer.

Psalm 9:8 (NIV) reads, "He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity." As the body of Christ, we as a people must come together, break the chains of systemic racism and injustice, and *believe* in the power to make a difference.

Questions

1. Please share your thoughts on how the church is responding to systemic and social injustice.
2. Do you feel as though the church is doing enough?
3. If not, in what ways can you help and organize within your church to make a difference?

COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLICAL TEXT

"Thank You, God!" (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

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.

In **verses 1-2**, the psalmist calls upon the Lord and declares Him worthy of heartfelt praise. The Lord is worthy because of His wonderful deeds—in this case, referring to His judgment of the wicked. It is appropriate to praise the Lord for every aspect of His being. Every believer's internal awareness of the Lord's true nature should inspire him/her to offer Him an outward praise. The more believers know of God's marvelous works, the more they should praise Him (**verse 1**). The psalmist rejoices in the Lord, acknowledging that no one is higher or mightier. This mighty God is the one to whom the psalmist lifts his praise (**verse 2**). In **verse 3**, the psalmist begins to list the reasons for personal confidence in the Lord's judgment. The Lord causes the defeat and destruction of human enemies as He defends the righteous against them. To be clear, God judges righteously

(verse 4). The Lord sides with believers only when their cause is true, just, and right. God cannot contradict His own holiness; therefore, He is unable to stand with believers in any sin or wrongdoing.

What Do You Think? When facing an enemy, many are tempted to speak unkind words, to seek their enemy's harm, or to give way to excessive anger or despair. Are you surprised (or not) at the psalmist's decision to praise God? How does focusing on God rather than negative people or circumstances help us to overcome them?

God Judges Fairly (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.

In verse 5, the psalmist notes the reign and rule of God and His ultimate, righteous triumph over the wicked. Because God is against the wicked, He will ultimately destroy them completely. God causes the defeat of the wicked, uprooting their successes and diminishing their honor by blotting out the significance of their name (verses 5-6). Whether sooner or later, God will judge those who sin against Him.

As the everlasting judge, the Lord shall continue to rule and reign over the world with righteousness, judging all people fairly (verses 7-8). The righteous need not fear the Lord's judgment; He will comfort them. However, those who have rejected and forgotten the Lord may rightfully fear the wrath of God's judgment. This psalm is a word of comfort and hope for those wondering if they will see God's justice on their behalf. God never fails and His righteousness shall prevail (verse 8).

What Do You Think? Do you pray and ask God to forgive those who have wronged you, or do you try to handle the situation on your own (without prayer)? Why or why not?

God Is Our Refuge (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.

In **verse 9**, God shows favor to His people by providing a safe place for them when troubles come their way. No matter the circumstances, God does not abandon those who trust in Him. When His children cry out to Him, the Lord Himself will respond to their call (**verse 10**). The psalmist calls the faithful to offer praise to the Lord as the king in Zion, and to tell the world of His mighty deeds (**verse 11**). In **verse 12**, believers are assured that God remembers them. God will punish those who cause pain, and will protect the hurting. Even when God seems silent or absent, realize that He will never abandon His own. God will always hear them and stand ready to respond to their afflictions.


 **What Do You Think?** You pray that God would intervene to save a loved one's life, but He doesn't. How can believers continue to praise God, even when they are disappointed or hurt by Him? Do you think God is obligated to say yes to every believer's prayers? Why or why not?

Your Life

Sometimes, Christians can be too harsh when judging the actions of others. To be more like the Lord, you can practice showing others a little more compassion, even when they have done wrong. "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:2, NIV). But as a believer, you must always pray that your relationship with God will cause you to remember that only God can and should judge.

Your World!

This confusing world is filled with injustices and losses that cause some people to question God's presence, His goodness, or His power. Amid the confusion, believers must remember the Lord's blessings and the many reasons they have in every circumstance to praise the Lord.

 **Closing Prayer** Dear God, thank You for the grace and mercy that You extend to Your children every day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.