

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).

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher's Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week's student assignments ("Your Life" and Your World!").
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People choose to praise and have joy in particular things that may not be the best for them. Why do we choose those things that may harm us or others? Psalm 9 proclaims that God will bring justice and that this is cause for our joyful praise.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Countless songwriters have penned the lyrics to songs about injustices in today's world. Whether gospel, blues, rhythm and blues, rap, or another musical genre, people find self-expression through music and song. Even as adults, and maybe especially as we get older, we wonder why people can be so cruel to each other. It is not unusual to feel powerless in the face of injustices throughout the world. In the long struggle for freedom and fairness, many have been disappointed and

disillusioned by leaders who promised to fight injustice but failed to do so. This could be part of the reason why Marvel, DC Comics, Star Wars, and other fictional worlds find many adults enjoying the stories of fictional heroes who wage war against evil. While this world is a continual “ball of confusion,” we praise God for His justice and righteousness in all things.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

Psalms 9 and 10 are treated as a single song in the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament). It is likely that Psalms 9 and 10 were originally a single acrostic poem, with every other line starting with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The Septuagint numbers Psalm 10 as part of Psalm 9. This separation results in a numbering mismatch between the Septuagint and other texts following Psalm 9. When Psalm 9 and Psalm 10 are put together, they answer the collective complaint shared by many believers when God seems silent or disengaged as evil people persecute the helpless. The instruction “according to Muth-labben” seems to be directing the leader that it is to be sung to the tune of a song known in that day (“Death of the Son” or “To Die for the Son”). This title may indicate a mournful mood for public reading or singing of the psalm. Military victory was important in Israel, as it represented God’s vindication against Israel’s enemies and confirmed the justice of His cause (see Psalms 9:4; 17:2; 24:5; 26:1). While it is true that some injustices are not resolved fully in this life, the psalmist expresses a faith that God is always active, fighting for those who are oppressed (see Psalms 9:7-8; 10:12-14; 12:5-7). The role of “avenger of blood” is one that the Law of Moses gives to a kinsman-redeemer, a family member of a wronged party who will bring about justice (see Numbers 35:19-27). David pictures himself in that role, avenging blood on behalf of his brothers and sisters in his nation (see Psalm 9:11-12).

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Although most are not eager to admit it, many people have been harmed by an enemy in some circle of life—school, work, or even family, etc. What is a common response to bullying?
2. What are some reasons why people endure long years of oppression or abuse from an enemy without retaliating or fighting back?
3. What are the possible outcomes when a victim (or third party) steps up to address the bullying behavior?

INSIGHTS

Believers know that God will ultimately judge evil. Many who struggle for peace, justice, and righteousness in this world understand that only God can bring enduring peace and the complete banishment of evil in the world. Through various methods of protest, voting, and the judicial system, citizens act to ensure that the powerful do not oppress the weak and innocent. God is a friend of the weak and the oppressed; therefore, we can be confident that He stands with all who we seek justice for those who have been truly mistreated.

EXPLORATION

Christians bear witnesses to God’s judgment as an ongoing process, not just as an end-times event. God is the avenger of His people—He seeks and establishes justice. As we trust God and seek to be His vessels of justice and reconciliation, we must be willing to respond to the cries of the afflicted wherever we encounter them.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

COMMENTARY ON 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.

Verses 1-3 offer a reason for gladness and thanksgiving: God is just. The psalmist gives wholehearted praise to God because his enemies have been condemned by God. Sitting on His heavenly throne, God has issued fair and final judgment. The psalmist is so moved by God's mercies that he purposes to give God praise from his whole heart—an indication of full, focused direction and attention on God. Rather than offering a private meditation on God's goodness, the psalmist's praise includes telling of God's marvelous works. The psalmist determined that he would not conceal God's goodness—instead, he boasted about his God. Likewise, believers today should not hesitate to tell of God's marvelous works. Often, Christians are all too eager to brag about material possessions (cars, houses, jobs, and clothes) and personal achievements, while neglecting to celebrate or even mention God's deliverance and saving power. In a similar worship experience, Abraham strikes a tone similar to that of the psalmist, referring to the great God of justice as "the Most High God" (see Genesis 14:18-22). The psalmist's view of God is the basis of his worship—God intervened to deal with his enemies, causing them to stumble and perish. The psalmist feels fully vindicated by God against the enemy.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

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

Young Adult Questions:

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?

COMMENTARY ON 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.

Verses 5-8 present a vision of ultimate judgment upon the wicked—an eschatological picture of final or end-times judgment. It is possible that this psalm was first used at the Feast of Tabernacles in a symbolic celebration. Enemies are temporary—they come and go, they rise, and they fall. Thus, the psalmist's affirmation of God's sovereignty echoes his understanding that only God eternal. God cannot be impeached or overthrown. He cannot be outlived or overtaken. There is no ruler that can overrule Him. He is God and He alone is God. As the everlasting, wise God, all nations, and kingdoms will stand before Him and receive their final judgment. This judgment will be one of righteousness and permanence. This is perfect justice. In that great and dreadful day, there will be no mercy. There is no more time remaining to seek God for grace and salvation. Unbeliever's rejection of grace has come to an end (Acts 17:31). The fact that God is the final Judge is noteworthy and praiseworthy in and of itself. David highlights another aspect that saints and sinners can appreciate. Unlike earth's rulers, who judged based on what is advantageous to their plans and needs, The Lord judges in righteousness. This righteousness is so prevalent and enduring that some 1,000 years later, the apostle Paul would quote the psalmist in his sermon on Mars Hill (Acts 17:31), calling for belief and repentance. Present decisions and conduct determine one's future destiny with God. While many may approach their final days with fear and regret, those who are saved may approach the future with praise and joy because their times are in God's hand—the hand that covers and justifies His people.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

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

Young Adult Questions:

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?

COMMENTARY ON 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 this section, the psalmist calls for praise to the Lord. Since God blesses those that trust Him, the psalmist seeks others who will join him in sincere praise. The natural sequel to praising God's name is declaring His righteous actions to the world. Those who reject God and abuse those who love God will be judged and punished—they have no cause for rejoicing. Those who receive God, however, may rejoice in that they have been redeemed by God. They may rejoice boldly and proclaim God's greatness to all the earth. God protects and defends the humble. The psalmist goes on to present God as a secure refuge for the oppressed. The word translated as "refuge" is *misgob*. It defines a high place that is safe from the reach of the enemy—with strong and sure security and defense protecting it. The phrase "those who know your name" speaks to the personal and intimate relationship grasped and maintained by those who love the Lord, trusting Him only. The psalmist encourages these to praise God and to boast of His marvelous works throughout all the land. God has not forgotten His people. With His just and righteous reign, God remembers those who have been afflicted; He loves them and takes vengeance upon them. The words sing and declare are a call for robust praise, a joyful noise (see Psalm 100:1).

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

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"?

Young Adult Questions:

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?

LIFE APPLICATION

Refer to Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—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?

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—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.

Refer to Young Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—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.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—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.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, October 17, 2021, is “I Shall Be Released.” The Devotional Reading text is Psalm 68:1-6, the Background Scripture text is Psalm 107, and the Printed Text is Psalm 107:1-9, 39-43.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father God, we thank You for Your unfailing love and the amazing grace that prompts You to come to our aid as our avenger and defender, despite our unworthiness. Give us an intolerance for injustice, and the courage to speak and stand for the defenseless as You stand for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

GIVE THANKS FOR DELIVERANCE

(October 11-17, 2021)

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)