

Praise God for Justice and Righteousness

You got the promotion!" Catrina exclaimed.
"Yes!" Laverne beamed.

Laverne was the new vice president of sales of the hotel chain where she had worked for the past 11 years. She was more than qualified to do the job, but she had grown discouraged. Management seemed to solely operate on favoritism and preferential treatment. Now, however, new management had infiltrated the hotel chain. They were judging people on merit, not just personal preferences.

"You should try for advancement again," Catrina had said. "You're a great manager. I think you'd make a great VP of sales."

Laverne had to admit, she thought she could do the job well. So, she submitted to the process. Laverne found it refreshing that some of the testing and fact-finding involved removing people's names from the applications and assigning a number. It turned out that #4707, or Laverne Jenkins, had the highest marks heading into the in-person interviews.

"I heard you impressed them in your interviews as well," said Catrina.

Laverne's mind had drifted off. She was still trying to grasp the news. She had prayed and asked God to intervene on her behalf. God, the righteous Judge, had answered her prayers and leveled the field for her to walk on and succeed!

1. Why are the judgments by a judge especially significant in a society?

2. Why is making a judgment by a judge such a daunting task?

3. Why are the judgments of God impossible for humans to make?

LESSON FOCUS: Praise God for being our righteous Judge.

Praise for Victory

Psalm 9:1-4, KJV

1 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.

Psalm 9:1-4, NIV

¹I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;

I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

²I will be glad and rejoice in you;

I will sing the praises of your name,
O Most High.

³My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you.

⁴For you have upheld my right and my cause, sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.

This week's Scripture passage continues our study of how we should praise God and why we should do so. Psalm 9 says that our praise should reflect a heart that is filled with thanksgiving. When our hearts overflow with gratitude for all that God has done for us, joyful praise will flow forth abundantly from our lips.

Of course, the more blessing we recognize that we have from God, the more grateful we are for what He has done for us, and the more we will want to tell others about Him. When we thankfully acknowledge all that God has done for us, others will see a difference in our lives, and some may want to know why. Their asking allows us to tell about all the wondrous works of God in our lives.

Among the glorious blessings God's people have is victory over enemies. Considering all that He has done for Israel, from their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, to the conquest of the promised land, to His continued victory over their enemies through the centuries, God's people

have every reason to proclaim the marvelous deeds of the “enthroned” and only truly “righteous judge” (vs. 4). And though believers today have not conquered the promised land, there is victory by faith in our Lord, “for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

4. *What is the relationship between thanksgiving and praise?*

5. *How do we proclaim God’s wondrous works?*

6. *What is the source of our victorious living?*

Praise for Righteous Judgment

Psalm 9:5-8-4, 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.

Psalm 9:5-8, NIV

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

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

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

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

When the Lord brought His people into the promised land, wickedness certainly abounded among the inhabitants. The righteous God of heaven and earth is also merciful—He had given the inhabitants of the land some 400 years to turn from their wicked ways (Gen. 19:13). But

instead, they gave themselves over to idolatry, human sacrifice, and wanton immorality, which God strictly admonished His people to avoid. Therefore, when the iniquity in the land had become full, God used His people to execute His righteous judgment upon the wicked so even their names would be “blotted out” (vs. 5) forever.

When the people were faithful to Him, they had victory over any nation who would try to conquer them. In David’s day, for instance, the Lord had delivered His people from the Philistines and allowed His chosen king to expand Israel’s borders. There was truly reason to praise and thank the Lord.

The Lord sits upon His eternal throne and reigns over all the world in perfect and righteous judgment. He ministers justice “with equity” (vs. 8), showing no favoritism or respect for people because of social status, gender, ethnicity, or nationality.

Of course, the ultimate fulfillment of righteous judgment will be when Israel’s Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, returns for His people. They will be with Him while the wicked “will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (Matt. 25:46). In David’s day, today, and when our Lord returns and sets all things right, we can know that He reigns eternally and deals righteously and equitably with every person—another great reason to praise and worship Him with heartfelt gratitude!

7. *What happened to the enemies of God?*

8. *What two things in our Scripture passage are said to be forever?*

9. *How does the Lord judge from His throne?*

Praise for Safe Refuge

Psalm 9:9-12, KJV

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a

Psalm 9:9-12, NIV

9The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,

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.

a stronghold in times of trouble.

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

those who seek you.

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

¹²For he who avenges blood remembers;

he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.

We praise the Lord as a refuge for those who are under oppression, a strong place of safety during troubled times. The Hebrew word for refuge, *misgab* (MIS-gawb), means stronghold or high tower (vs. 9), a place that is protected and inaccessible to our enemies. Those who are oppressed and afflicted by others can find protection in the Lord; those who face hardship and tribulation find a stronghold in Him for shelter from life's storms. This knowledge gives us hope that those who know God's name can trust that He will never forsake anyone who diligently seeks Him. Therefore, our passage closes with the admonition to sing His praises and to declare His wondrous deeds throughout the earth. His children can take heart that He will avenge the shedding of innocent blood, and that He hears the cries of the troubled and afflicted.

10. *How is the Lord our refuge?*

11. *What blessing is there in knowing the name of God and diligently seeking Him?*

12. *How should we respond to the truth that He hears our heart cries in troubled times?*

God's Justice Brings Hope

Life seems exceedingly unfair, particularly when we see so much injustice and disasters in the world, hardships and tragedies among our friends and family, and setbacks and anguish in our own lives. At times, it seems as though God is nowhere to be found and justice lacks any practical meaning. It is especially in these times that we must have faith in God's righteousness and in His love for us.

The Hebrew prophets rarely were treated justly, and yet they often proclaimed the righteousness of God's judgments. Although most of them did not live to see the realization of God's judgments, they continued to have faith in God's promises. "Let justice roll on like a river," declared the Lord God through His prophet Amos, and "righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:24).

Like the prophets of old, we too must anchor our faith in the trustworthiness of God's judgments, having faith that justice will truly prevail. And like the prophets, God will bring us a hope in a wondrous and eternal life beyond the grave while uplifting our spirits in the here and now.

No justice and no hope are possible, however, if Jesus had not taken human form, died on the Cross for us, and was resurrected from the dead. Without Jesus, can there really be any justice for us? But the truth is that Jesus did do all those things, and, therefore, God's judgments do bring us hope, for God's judgments and justice are realized in our Savior, Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us pray the with the psalmist, "Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee" (Ps. 33:22, KJV).

13. *Is it your tendency to want God to judge others before He judges you? Explain your answer.*

14. *For you, why do you need to believe God's judgments are righteous?*

15. *How do you keep your judgments aligned with God's judgments?*

An Embodiment of God's Justice

In Psalm 9, the psalmist David praises the Lord God Almighty for providing justice to His people. In fact, the execution of God's judgments truly manifests His faithfulness to them. Moreover, we, too, should glorify God for being a righteous judge, who expects us to live by His judgments justly and with compassion.

► *Take a few minutes to write a letter to God. Begin by praising Him for the righteousness of His judgments, particularly through the ministry of Christ Jesus. Next, thank Him for the justice He demands for those who need justice and for pouring justice into your life. Finally, ask God to help you be an extension of God's justice in every way you can and promise to be an embodiment of God's justice.*

KEY VERSE

And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. —Psalm 9:8, KJV

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

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of October 11 through October 17

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Psalm 107:1-9—Delivered from Hunger and Thirst.
- Tues.** Psalm 107:10-22—Delivered from Darkness and Gloom.
- Wed.** Psalm 107:23-32—Delivered from Storms.
- Thurs.** Ephesians 1:3-14—Delivered through Jesus Christ.
- Fri.** Ephesians 2:1-10—Delivered from Sin.
- Sat.** Ephesians 2:11-22—Delivered and Reconciled.
- Sun.** Psalm 107:33-43—Delivered by God's Steadfast Love.