

## LESSON 6

January 5, 2025

### Unit II: Our God Reigns

# In Times of Trouble

DEVOTIONAL READING: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Psalms 9–10

PRINT PASSAGE: Psalm 10:12-18

## KEY VERSE

**LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.** (Psalm 10:17, KJV)

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**You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry.** (Psalm 10:17, NIV)

## Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe the psalmist's confidence in God in times of trouble.
- Earnestly desire to see the Lord establish justice in the world.
- Cooperate with God's justice by seeking the good of the poor and the oppressed.

## \*Key Terms

**Arise (verse 12)**—Hebrew: *qum* (*koom*): to stand up, stand; raise; establish; come on the scene.

**Heart (verse 13)**—Hebrew: *leb* (*labe*): inner man, mind, will; the man "himself" (NIV).

**Helpless (verse 12, NIV)**—Hebrew: *chelehab* (*khay-lek-aw'*): hapless; unfortunate; "poor" (verse 14, KJV).

**Humble (verse 12, KJV)**—Hebrew: *ani* (*aw-nee'*): poor; lowly; "afflicted" (verse 14, NIV).

**Observe (verse 14)**—Hebrew: *nabat* (*naw-bat'*): to look; behold; pay attention (to); "beholdest" (KJV); "see" (NIV).

**Renounce (verse 13)**—Hebrew: *naats* (*naw-ats'*): to spurn, treat with contempt; despise; reject; "contemn" (KJV); "revile" (NIV).

\*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



### The Biblical Context

The book of Psalms is a collection of poems and hymns in the Old Testament deeply ingrained in historical Jewish and Hebrew traditions. The word *psalm* is a Greek derivative of "psalms," meaning "a song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument." Its Hebrew meaning translates "praise" from *Tehillion*. The psalms encompass a wide range of themes, including praise, thanksgiving, lament, repentance, wisdom, imprecation (curses), and petition, thus providing multiple ways to communicate with God for comfort, spiritual communion, and guidance. These varied hymns and poems were most likely used in private and public worship by the Jews over time. Many of the psalms are heartfelt prayers voicing fears, anger, helplessness, complaints (laments), grief, and pleas for help during troubled or stressful times. Psalm 10 is an example of a lament in which the composer voices distress over the arrogance and injustice of the wicked, and cries out for divine attention, before finally resolving to trust that God will bring justice.

## Introduction

Trouble is a constant reality, and its existence is inescapable. The reason for this can be attributed to various factors from humanity's perspective, including historical grievances between nations, poverty, inadequate access to vital basic needs, and cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious differences. Resolving these troubles is challenging because they are deeply ingrained in humanity's inherently sinful nature. From a Christian perspective, disobedience to God's commands and moral principles is the root cause and continues generating trouble and strife among humankind. Therefore, without divine intervention, trouble will persist. Jesus warned His disciples about trouble's enduring presence in the world before His crucifixion and death on the Cross. However, His warning was accompanied by the assuring words to be of good cheer because He had overcome the world (see John 16:33). Hence, when (not if) troubles come, we have the assurance that we can expect strength to endure and deliverance His way for our good, even if it doesn't happen immediately (see James 1:2-4; Psalm 50:15; Romans 8:28). In essence, this was the confident viewpoint of the psalmist in Psalm 10. While struggling with

God's seeming delay in dealing with the wicked, he expressed confident faith that God would intervene and bring justice to the world by His own time and purposes.

### ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

## A Plea for Deliverance (*Psalm 10:12-15*)

### KJV

**12 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.**

**13 Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.**

**14 Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.**

**15 Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.**

## NIV

**12 Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless.**

**13 Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, “He won’t call me to account”?**

**14 But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.**

**15 Break the arm of the wicked man; call the evildoer to account for his wickedness that would not otherwise be found out.**

Psalm 10 opens with the psalmist’s cry for help during a difficult time when God’s presence was not apparent. The truth is that those who walk closely with God can be overcome by feelings of abandonment in trouble when divine intervention seems distant or delayed. After describing the wicked’s ruthless behavior, and emphasizing their cruel exploitation of the helpless, the psalmist earnestly pleaded for vengeance by calling on God to arise and come to the aid of the oppressed (**verse 12**). “Arise” is an idiom for God’s strength and power to be used against the wicked because they intentionally reject God and boast that they will go unpunished for their actions (**verse 13**). The psalmist believed that God will respond to the helpless’s plea for assistance because they trust and acknowledge Him as their helper and know that He is aware of their plight (**verse 14**). The psalmist concludes his prayer for God’s fair and impartial intervention by requesting that He “break the arm” (destroy the power) of these ungodly evildoers (**verse 15**).

Many segments of society experience injustice at the hands of the ungodly, including the poor, the sick, the wrongly incarcerated, the weak, the helpless, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised. This reality should do more than stir righteous anger among the faith community—it should move the church to pray and take action. It is not enough to thank God for sparing us of the troubles that others experience. Christians must be more than casual spectators of others’ suffering; we must join God’s work of seeking positive, practical ways to assist the vulnerable and ease the pain of human cruelty against others. It takes renewed spiritual minds to act individually and collectively as God’s agents of justice and loving compassion in the world.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can the faith community utilize God’s power to “break the arm” of social injustice in their communities?

## A Confident Affirmation (*Psalm 10:16-18*)

### KJV

**16 The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.**

**17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:**

**18 To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.**

## NIV

**16 The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.**

**17 You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,**

**18 defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.**

Psalm 10 begins with a somber mood, expressing a sense of abandonment, helplessness, and God's apparent indifference toward the wicked exploitation of the helpless. The writer gradually recalls who God is and what He has done and will do to vindicate His people. In **verse 16**, the psalmist portrays God as the eternal King who has driven out the nations that oppressed His people, implying that despite the apparent success of wickedness, God possesses all power and authority. Those opposing Him will ultimately fail and be subject to His justice. **Verses 17-18** affirm that even when God does not act quickly, He still does not abandon the helpless. Instead, He maintains compassionate concern for them, strengthens their hearts, and remains attentive to their cries for help.

Injustice prevails and continues to adversely affect the lives of every society's most vulnerable members. Although God appears "afar off," the psalmist reminds us that He is the eternal King possessing the power to vindicate all who trust Him. The believers' task is to arm themselves with His strength, and allow God to work through them, wherever they find themselves, to confront and lessen the adverse effects of injustice and its multiple forms.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**Who are God's instruments of justice and healing today? Discuss the role of confident faith in God's power to bring justice to difficult situations in our world.**

## A Closing Thought

Psalm 10 is a lament that begins with the psalmist's sense that God had abandoned him in his troubles and appeared distant and unconcerned. The psalmist's initial reaction is a common human response to adversity. Note, however, that the lament is more than an empty complaint—it is a prayer lifted to God for justice to intervene and protect those experiencing pain as the wicked appear to prosper, unharmed. Ultimately, Psalm 10 expresses confidence in God's power and encouragement to trust that His righteousness will eventually hold the corrupt accountable for afflicting His people. In His established time, God will deliver justice for all.

## Your Life

At some point, every believer has experienced (or witnessed) some form of injustice and felt a sense of God's being "afar off" and slow to deliver help. The closing declaration of



Psalm 10 speaks confidence in God's eternal power. Let it encourage you to continue trusting and seeking opportunities to join God's work of taking a stand against barriers to justice for society's marginalized and disenfranchised.

## Your World!

Although there has been some progress in addressing human cruelty in modern times, the reality of oppression and social injustice remain a global challenge affecting all communities in one way or another. This is not the time to simply ask, "When will things get better?" The better questions are, "How will the church respond?" and "What can I do?" Beginning with prayer, believers can lift their voices, asking God to break the power of wickedness in all its forms. Then, we must surrender to being agents of change and compassion, taking a stand and being a voice for righteous compassion in our land.

## Closing Prayer

Dear God, hear our cries for Your help in dealing with the injustice in Your world today. We seek Your guidance, wisdom, and power to become advocates for the hurting and champions for social justice. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## Conclusion

### (Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Next week's lesson explores the ultimate source of peace and world order amid crisis and unrest—God's reign. Read Psalm 93.

## Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, January 6	"Faithful and True"	(Revelation 19:11-21)
TUESDAY, January 7	"God Makes Great and Gives Strength"	(1 Chronicles 29:10-20)
WEDNESDAY, January 8	"Our God Reigns"	(Isaiah 52:1-12)
THURSDAY, January 9	"Shout Joyfully to God"	(Psalm 47)
FRIDAY, January 10	"Exalted through Obedience"	(Philippians 2:1-13)
SATURDAY, January 11	"The Wind and Sea Obey Jesus"	(Mark 4:35-41)
SUNDAY, January 12	"Robed in Majesty"	(Psalm 93)