PSALM 82
Reading Guide
PSALM 82

1 God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:

2 “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah

3 Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 I said, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you;

7 nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince.”

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!
DAY 1
Read through Psalm 82 once writing down what you find interesting, what you find helpful, and what you don’t fully understand.

According to the introductory notes on Psalm 82 in the *ESV Study Bible*, the exact classification of this Psalm is unclear; it could either be a community lament or a prophetic hymn. Nevertheless,

Singing this Psalm should enable the faithful, many of whom were socially weak and lowly in Israel... to take courage in the face of unjust rule, so that they do not yield to the ever-present temptation to cooperate with the injustices of their wicked rulers... The son should also help those who hold social and political power to use that power in service to others, especially to protect those who are easiest to exploit.

Read through the notes on Psalm 82 in the *ESV Study Bible*. Write at least one paragraph highlighting what you learned from the study notes.

Reread Psalm 82, personalizing the Psalm as your own prayer. Write out that prayer.

DAY 2
Read Psalm 82 again.

As the Israelites either find themselves as those who are victims of injustice (verses 3–4) or those who are watching others being mistreated by the wicked, they are given both a place to take their cries of injustice (God) and a prayer to pray in verse 8: “Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit the nations.”

Lawrence Tuttiett in his hymn, “O Quickly Come, Dread Judge of All,” offers us a similar prayer for God to intervene and bring about justice.

O quickly come, dread Judge of all;  
For, awful though thine advent be,  
All shadows from the truth will fall,  
And falsehood die, in sight of thee:  
O quickly come; for doubt and fear  
Like clouds dissolve when thou art near.

O quickly come, great King of all;  
Reign all around us, and within;  
Let sin no more our souls enthrall,  
Let pain and sorrow die with sin:  
O quickly come; for thou alone  
Canst make thy scattered people one.
O quickly come, true Life of all;
For death is mighty all around;
On ev’ry home his shadows fall,
On ev’ry heart his mark is found:
O quickly come; for grief and pain
Can never cloud thy glorious reign.

O quickly come, sure Light of all;
For gloomy night broods o’er our way;
And weakly souls begin to fall
With weary watching for the day:
O quickly come; for round thy throne
No eye is blind, no night is known.

Tuttiett’s prayer is one step beyond the original prayer in Psalm 82. For Tuttiett knew something the Psalmist didn’t: The prayer, “Arise, O God, judge the earth,” was ultimately answered in the person of Jesus and will be finally answered when Jesus returns.

Spend some time thinking about what would change when Jesus returns and “God himself... will wipe away every tear” from our eyes, “and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Spend some time praying, asking Jesus to speed the day of his return.

DAY 3
Read Psalm 82 again. As you read it, consider if it is a prayer you need to pray for yourself for you are being unjustly treated by others, or a prayer you need to pray for others that are being unjustly treated.

Read through the Psalm again, writing down specific phrases or verses that help give you faith and courage to cry out to God either for yourself or for others. Read those phrases and verses again, and then write out a prayer to God, asking him to act justly, either for you or for others.

DAY 4
Read Psalm 82 again.

Verses 2–4 make that the world is still full of injustice. When Jesus returns, it will ruled with true justice. Until that day, God’s people wait “for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13).

God’s delay in executing one final judgment is grounded in his patience. As we read in 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”
Jesus followers are the ones who call people to that repentance as we tell them the good news of the gospel. Ask God who you should share that good news with and ask God to give you an opportunity to do so.

**DAY 5**

Read through Psalm 82 twice.

Write out at least two paragraphs reflecting on what you’ve learned about God, yourself, and others from Psalm 82. Write out at least one thing you hope to apply to your life from Psalm 82.

Spend at least 15 minutes sharing what you wrote with a trusted friend or family member. If they read Psalm 82 this week, ask them to do the same. End your time in prayer, thanking God for what he taught you this week.

*Purchasing an ESV Study Bible (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Bibles, 2008.) will aid you in your understanding of the Psalms. The first day’s reading each week assumes you will have access to the notes in the ESV Study Bible. The ESV Study Bible is the most comprehensive study Bible ever published. It will help you understand not just the Psalms, but also the rest of the Bible in a deeper way. You can either buy the Bible (amazon.com, search: ESV Study Bible) or purchase online access to the notes at www.esvbible.org.*

“Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”

© 2014 Elliot Grudem.