

Psalms 10:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble. After describing the wicked's arrogance and violence (verses 2-11), David now petitions God to act. This urgent plea employs three imperatives, calling God to intervene on behalf of the oppressed. The prayer presupposes that God can act, should act, and will act—but David requests it passionately nonetheless.

"Arise, O LORD" (qumah Yahweh, קוּמָה יְהוָה) uses qum, meaning to arise, stand up, or take action. The imagery suggests God has been sitting—perhaps enthroned in judgment (9:7) but not yet actively intervening. "Arise" calls God to stand and act decisively. This same call appears throughout the Psalms (3:7, 7:6, 9:19, 10:12, 17:13, 44:26, 74:22, 82:8) and in Numbers 10:35 when the ark moved forward: "Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered."

"O God, lift up thine hand" (El nesa yadekha, אֱלֹהִים נָשָׂא יָדְךָ) employs nasa (to lift, raise, carry) with yad (hand). Lifting the hand symbolizes taking an oath (Genesis 14:22, Deuteronomy 32:40) or, more relevantly here, exercising power and taking action (Exodus 14:16, Isaiah 49:22). The "hand" represents God's active power. David calls on God to exercise His might on behalf of the oppressed. The raised hand can be for blessing or for striking—here, both: blessing the humble and striking their oppressors.

"Forget not the humble" (al-tishkach aniyyim, אַל-תִּשְׁכַּח אֲנִיִּים) employs the negative imperative al with shakach (to forget). Aniyyim (humble, poor, afflicted) describes

those who are lowly and afflicted. The plea echoes 9:18: the needy shall not always be forgotten. David asks God to remember now. Divine "remembering" in Scripture means active intervention, not mere cognitive recall (Genesis 8:1, Exodus 2:24, 1 Samuel 1:19). To remember is to act.

The three imperatives create urgency and passion. This is not casual prayer but desperate petition. David speaks for the oppressed who have no human advocate, calling on God as their ultimate defender.

Historical Context

The call for God to "arise" reflects ancient Near Eastern warfare imagery. When armies prepared for battle, the call to "arise" signaled movement from rest to action. The ark of the covenant led Israel into battle, and Moses' cry "Rise up, LORD" (Numbers 10:35) indicated military engagement. David uses this militaristic language to call God into action against His enemies.

The theology of God "remembering" the humble has deep roots. God remembered Noah and ended the flood (Genesis 8:1). He remembered His covenant with Abraham and delivered Israel from Egypt (Exodus 2:24, 6:5). Hannah prayed that God would remember her, and He gave her Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11, 19). In each case, divine remembering led to divine action.

This prayer pattern influenced later Jewish and Christian spirituality. The Kaddish prayer includes: "May He establish His kingdom during your life." The Lord's Prayer echoes: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth" (Matthew 6:10). Believers across millennia have joined David in calling on God to act decisively to establish justice and vindicate the oppressed.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to ask God to 'arise,' and how does this reflect the nature of petitionary prayer?
2. How do we reconcile calling on God to act with the doctrine that God is always actively sovereign?
3. Why does David specifically ask God to 'forget not the humble' rather than the righteous or faithful?
4. What role does passionate, urgent prayer play in God's sovereign plan to execute justice?

Interlinear Text

קוּמָה	יְהוָה	אֵל	נִשָּׂא	יָדְךָ	אֵל	תִּשְׁכַּח	עֲנִיִּים:
Arise	O LORD	O God	lift up	thine hand	H408	forget	not the humble
H6965	H3068	H410	H5375	H3027		H7911	H6035

Additional Cross-References

Micah 5:9 (Parallel theme): Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

Psalms 9:12 (Parallel theme): When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

Isaiah 33:10 (Resurrection): Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.

Isaiah 26:11 (References Lord): LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

Psalms 94:2 (Parallel theme): Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.

