

# Psalms 82:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

## Analysis

**Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.** The psalm concludes with urgent prayer for direct divine intervention. After exposing corrupt judges (vv. 2-5) and pronouncing their mortality (v. 7), the psalmist appeals to God Himself to execute the justice human authorities have failed to provide. The imperative *qumah* (קוּמָה, "arise") calls God to action—to stand up from His throne and actively intervene in earthly affairs.

"Judge the earth" (*shoptah ha-aretz*, שִׁפְטָה הָאֶרֶץ) petitions God to do what corrupt human judges refuse to do: administer perfect justice. The verb form is emphatic—not merely "judge" but "YOU judge!" When earthly courts fail, heaven's court remains. This cry anticipates Revelation 6:10 where martyred saints cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?"

"For thou shalt inherit all nations" (*ki-attah tinchal bekhoh-haggoyim*, כִּי-אַתָּה תִּנְחַל בְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם) provides theological basis for the petition. *Nachal* means "to inherit, to possess"—language used for Israel inheriting the Promised Land. All nations ultimately belong to God as His inheritance. Though they rage against Him (Psalm 2:1-3), their rebellion is futile. God's rightful ownership of all peoples guarantees He will eventually judge them.

This verse moves from particular (corrupt judges in Israel) to universal (God's judgment of all nations). It anticipates the Day of the Lord when God will comprehensively judge all injustice, vindicate the oppressed, and establish His

righteous kingdom. Until that day, believers cry "Arise, O God!"—longing for justice while trusting God's perfect timing.

## **Historical Context**

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### **Eschatological Hope in Israel's Worship and Christian Expectation**

Ancient Israel lived under the tension between God's covenant promises and present realities. God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his seed (Genesis 12:3), yet Israel often suffered oppression from those very nations. God declared His universal sovereignty (Psalm 47:7-8), yet pagan empires dominated the ancient Near East. This tension produced prayers like Psalm 82:8—appeals for God to manifest His rightful kingship over all nations.

The prophets elaborated this hope. Isaiah envisioned God judging between nations and establishing peace (Isaiah 2:4). Daniel prophesied a stone (God's kingdom) crushing the statue of worldly empires (Daniel 2:31-45). Malachi promised the sun of righteousness would arise with healing (Malachi 4:2). These prophecies sustained Israel through exile, foreign domination, and persecution—confident that God would ultimately judge the earth and inherit all nations.

The New Testament declares this inheritance belongs to Christ, David's greater son. He is "heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2), appointed by God "to judge the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42). At His name, every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10-11). His first coming inaugurated this kingdom; His second coming will consummate it. Meanwhile, the church prays "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10)—a prayer echoing Psalm 82:8.

For persecuted Christians throughout history, this verse provided hope. When earthly judges condemned them unjustly, they appealed to heaven's Judge. When authorities failed to protect the innocent, they trusted God would arise. Though delayed, divine justice is certain. God will inherit all nations and establish righteousness throughout the earth.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean to pray "Arise, O God" when facing injustice, and how is this different from taking vengeance ourselves?
2. How does God's eventual inheritance of all nations provide hope when earthly authorities fail to administer justice?
3. In what ways should Christians today live in the tension between God's promised universal kingship and present unjust realities?
4. How does Christ's role as ultimate Judge fulfill Psalm 82:8's prayer, and what does this mean for how we await His return?
5. When have you experienced the necessity of appealing to God's judgment when human courts or authorities failed to deliver justice?

## Interlinear Text

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|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|---------|------|-------------------------------|------------|----------|
| הָאֵלֹהִים   | קוּמָה       | הָאֵלֹהִים   | שֹׁפֵט           | הָאֵרֶץ | כִּי | אֶתְּ                         | הָאֵלֹהִים | לְיָרֶשׁ |
| <b>Arise</b> | <b>O God</b> | <b>judge</b> | <b>the earth</b> | H3588   | H859 | <b>for thou shalt inherit</b> |            |          |
| H6965        | H430         | H8199        | H776             |         |      | H5157                         |            |          |

|        |                    |
|--------|--------------------|
| בְּכָל | הַגּוֹיִם:         |
| H3605  | <b>all nations</b> |
|        | H1471              |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 11:15** (Parallel theme): And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

**Psalms 2:8** (Parallel theme): Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

**Psalms 96:13** (Judgment): Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

**Psalms 102:13** (Resurrection): Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.

**Psalms 22:28** (Parallel theme): For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations.

**Psalms 12:5** (Resurrection): For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

**Psalms 44:26** (Resurrection): Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

**Micah 7:7** (References God): Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

**Zephaniah 3:8** (Resurrection): Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.