Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"God of gods, Have YOUR Way in Our Midst"

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Psalms 82; *Ps. 72:1–4, 12–14; Dan. 10:12–13, 20–21; 12:1; Eph. 6:12; Jacob (James) 1:26–27; 2:1–10; Matt. 6:6–13.*

Introduction: What Would It Look Like if God Had His Way?

We know what it feels like when someone with authority plays favorites. Perhaps you have watched the person with money, influence, or a recognizable name receive special treatment, while someone without those advantages was barely noticed. Something inside us says, "That's not right." And rightly so. We recognize that justice has been twisted. But here is a more personal question: When the Lord looks at the way we treat people, the decisions we make, and the things entrusted to our care, does He see His own character reflected in us? Or have we begun to operate by the values of the very world He has called us to transform?

Psalm 82 is a remarkable and, at first, somewhat puzzling psalm. It opens with God standing in His assembly, judging among the *elohim*, the "gods" or "mighty ones." The picture is of the divine council: the one true Creator calling those under His authority to account. Daniel gives us a glimpse of an invisible spiritual struggle, with Michael standing guard over Israel (Dan. 10:12–13; 12:1). Paul reminds us that *"our struggle is not against flesh and blood"* (Eph. 6:12). But Psalm 82 also speaks powerfully to human rulers and, ultimately, to every one of us who has been entrusted with responsibility. God is asking whether those who represent Him are actually walking in His ways.

1. THE GOD OF gods CALLS THE MIGHTY TO ACCOUNT (Ps. 82:1–2)

The psalm begins, *"God takes His stand in the assembly of God. He judges among the 'gods'"* (Ps. 82:1). The Hebrew word *elohim* can refer to God, but also to mighty ones or rulers, depending on the context. Here, the God of Israel, the Creator of all, stands over those who have been given authority. As "mighty" as these may be, they are not His equals. He has no equal. They answer to Him. And immediately He asks, *"How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?"* (Ps. 82:2). In other words, how long will you do justice in a twisted way? How long will you show partiality (literally, "lift up the face") to the wicked simply because they are powerful? The Judge of judges is in session, and He sees what others may overlook.

This is not merely a warning for earthly judges, politicians, or leaders. It is a question for anyone entrusted with influence: a parent, a pastor, an employer, a friend. God does not give us responsibility so we can exercise power according to our own preferences. He entrusts it to us so that His nature might be demonstrated through us. Think about it this way: Suppose Yeshua were living your ordinary day in your place, appearing outwardly just as you do. Would the people around you experience something different? Would

they encounter more patience, mercy, truth, kindness, and righteousness? That is the goal: not simply claiming His name, but allowing the Spirit of the Living God to rule in us so that others increasingly encounter His character through our lives.

2. GOD'S GREATNESS IS REFLECTED IN HOW WE TREAT THE INSIGNIFICANT (Ps. 82:3–4). The Lord does not wait for an answer to His accusation. He tells the mighty ones exactly what He expects: *"Give justice to the poor and fatherless. Be just to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy. Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked"* (Ps. 82:3–4). That word translated "poor" or "weak" carries the sense of someone small, insignificant, easily overlooked. Do this for these who can't repay the favor. The Lord is saying, in effect, "These are the ones I want you to see. These are the ones I want you to protect." Those entrusted with authority are meant to be guardians and places of refuge for people who lack the resources or strength to protect themselves. Godlikeness is revealed in care for the vulnerable. It's not a reciprocal relationship that's meant to benefit us. Isn't that how the Lord is toward us in our weakness?

Psalm 72 gives us a beautiful picture of this. The king is meant to govern as though the Lord Himself were visibly sitting on the throne: defending the poor, rescuing the needy, and regarding their lives as significant (Ps. 72:1–4, 12–14). No one is a disposable pawn to God. Yet how easily we honor people who might benefit us and overlook those who may cost us something! Jacob/James confronts this very tendency when he describes giving the well-dressed visitor the best seat while pushing aside the poor person (James/Jacob 2:1–4). He reminds us that genuine devotion cares for widows and orphans in their distress (Jacob 1:27). So consider the person who cannot repay your kindness, the neighbor who is struggling, or the individual everyone else walks past. Do they see in us the heart of the One we say we serve?

3. WHEN GOD'S WAYS ARE REJECTED, EVERYTHING IS SHAKEN (Ps. 82:5–8)
The verdict comes with sobering language: *"They know nothing; they understand nothing—they walk about in darkness. All of earth's foundations are shaken"* (Ps. 82:5). This is what happens when those entrusted with God's ways refuse to walk in them. Injustice does not remain a small, private problem. It destabilizes families, communities, nations, and the relationships that hold life together. God made His creation to flourish under His righteous rule. His ways work because they reflect who He is. When people abandon truth and justice, the foundations begin to stagger. The Lord then reminds the mighty ones of their exalted calling, but announces that they will fall (Ps. 82:6–7). Whatever authority they possess, they are accountable to the One who gave it.

Then the voice changes. The courtroom has heard its verdict, and Asaph cries out, *"Arise, O God, judge the earth! For You possess all the nations"* (Ps. 82:8). This is more than a request that God punish wrongdoers. It is a longing for His righteousness, justice, love, and truth to be established throughout the earth. Not only among Israel, but among all the nations that belong to Him. And does that not bring us directly to the prayer Yeshua taught us? *"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt. 6:10).

We are asking the Lord to establish His ways here, in the world around us—and first in the very place where we stand.

CONCLUSION: HAVE YOUR WAY IN ME

It is easy to look at the injustice around us and pray, "Lord, do something about *them.*" But Psalm 82 invites us to begin closer to home. What has He entrusted into our hands? A family? A congregation? A workplace? A friendship? Someone who is vulnerable or in need? We are not called merely to point out the failure of others. We are called to walk in the ways of the King we represent. His justice must shape our decisions; His mercy must shape our responses; His love must determine how we see people. When someone encounters us, may it increasingly be as though they are encountering Yeshua Himself.

So today, come before the Lord and ask Him to examine your heart. Have you shown favoritism? Have you treated someone as insignificant? Have you insisted on your own way while praying for His Kingdom to come? Do not defend it or explain it away. Bring it to Him in repentance. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you ears to hear His correction and the strength to obey. Surrender the people and responsibilities entrusted to your care. Let this become more than a prayer about the world: "God of gods, have YOUR way in our midst. Have Your way in my heart, in my home, and wherever You have placed me." Let His Kingdom begin to be visible through the way you live today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does God's confrontation of the mighty ones in Ps. 82:1–2 reveal about His character and the responsibility that comes with authority?
2. Why does the Lord place such emphasis on defending the poor, the fatherless, and the vulnerable in Ps. 82:3–4?
3. Where are you most tempted today to show greater attention or favor to people with influence, wealth, or something to offer you?
4. Think about the people and responsibilities God has entrusted to you. What would change this week if you cared for them as Yeshua Himself would?
5. How does Asaph's cry in Ps. 82:8 reshape the way we pray, *"Your kingdom come, Your will be done"*?

CLOSING PRAYER

Spirit of the Living God, in the name of Yeshua, give us ears to hear Your voice and hearts willing to receive Your correction. Forgive us for showing partiality, overlooking the insignificant, or handling what You have entrusted to us according to our own ways. Teach us to see people through Your eyes. Make us guardians of the vulnerable, faithful stewards of Your gifts, and living reflections of Your righteousness, justice, mercy, and love. May it no longer be our selfishness that rules, but Messiah living in us. Establish Your Kingdom in our homes, our communities, and every place where we stand. God of gods, have YOUR way in our midst.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.