PSALM 17

✠ This psalm is written as a Thanksgiving Psalm.

✣ See the note about "psalm of thanksgiving" in the introduction to Psalm 8.

✠ This psalm is also identified as a Royal Psalm.

✣ See the note about "royal psalm" in the introduction to Psalm 2.

✠ This psalm is used (verses 2, 3, 4, 7) as the Great Prokeimenon of Bright Thursday Vespers. It is used (verses 48, 51) for the Alleluia verses at the Divine Liturgy of Sunday in Tone 1. It is used (verse 10) in the Lity at the Great Compline and Matins of the Nativity of Christ.

✠ According to Saint Augustine, whatever is written in this psalm that cannot strictly refer to our Lord Himself, the Head of the Church, should be referred to the Church, since all the members of the Church are contained in the Body of Christ, and the words are about the whole Christ.

✠ *The Orthodox Study Bible* indicates that this psalm forecasts and magnifies the salvation of David, who is both king and christ (anointed one). It prepares prophetically for the arrival of The Christ, who is the Son of David. The seed of the Son of David is the Church.

✠ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) notes that this psalm is almost identical to a variant of this psalm is found in 2 Kingdoms 22:2-51.

✠ Father P Reardon writes that this psalm may be understood to be a prayer of Christ during the hours of His trial.

"*Thanksgiving for the work of salvation*"

"*Act of love and gratitude*"

"*Earth-shaking prayer*"

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1 For the End. By the servant of the LORD, David, who spoke to the LORD the words of this canticle, in the day in which the LORD rescued him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul ; and he said :

V 1 About the Inscription : in the Masoretic (Hebrew) text, the Inscription is : "For the choirmaster. Of David the servant of the Lord, who spoke unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul ; and he said ...".

✠ Saint Athanasius recommends that when we have been saved from our enemies and delivered from our pursuers, we sing Psalm 17.

✣ Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore) says that this psalm is a war-song of Christ the Warrior-king, fighting His way through a rebellious world, with the weapons of His faith and love alone, until He comes into His Kingdom and He gathers all to Himself.

✠ About "*for the End*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea explains that the Prophet David dedicates this hymn of triumph to the Author of all Victories. He inscribed the psalm as he did for three reasons : it was proclaimed in the very last years of his life ; it announces events to happen in the future age ; it prepares for the call of the Gentiles, and it gives a prophecy about Christ, that is, the Messiah.

⁜ See the note about "*for the End*" on Psalm 4:1.

✠ About "*servant*" : this translates the Greek word παῖς, *pais* (*pæs*). This term can imply the relationship between a parent and a child, and also the relationship between a master and a servant (see Matthew 8:5-13). This relationship implies the presence of love to a greater or lesser degree, but not lacking. Another word for "*servant*", δοῦλος, *doulos*, literally means "slave" or "paid servant", and the relationship (only with an owner or employer) is more formal and perfunctory. The presence of love would not be at all expected, but it may be present.

✠ About "*Lord*" : see the note about "*Lord*" on Psalm 1:2.

✠ About "*canticle*" : see the note about "*canticle*" on Psalm 4:1.

✠ About "*rescued*" : see verses 18, 20, 30, 44 ; see the note about "*rescue*" on Psalm 6:5.

✠ About "*enemies*" : see the note about "*enemies*" on Psalm 5:9 ; see also *The Orthodox Study Bible* note about "*enemies*" on the inscription of Psalm 17:1.

✠ About "*the hand of Saul*" : Saint Augustine shares his perception that King David's name indicates "one who is strong of hand" (which he was), and "Saul" means "demand". This name reflects the fact that the people had demanded a king according to their own will, not in accordance with God's will. See 1 Kingdoms 8:4-7.

⁜ See 1 Kingdoms, chapters 19-31, with regard to the general environment of how the Lord repeatedly rescued the Prophet David from the madness of King Saul.

✠ This psalm is the third psalm of fourteen having an historical inscription. See the note about historical inscriptions on the inscription of Psalm 3:1.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:1.

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2 [Ἀγαπήσω σε, Κύριε Diligam te, Domine]

I shall love You, O LORD, my Strength.

V 2 About this verse : Saint Augustine, interpreting from the Christological perspective, teaches us that these opening words of this psalm are the words of Christ and of the whole Church.

✠ About "*I shall love You*" : Saint Augustine is exhorting us to live the words of this verse, because this perfect love eradicates fear (the deadly poison) from our lives (see 1 John 4:18).

⁜ See the note about "*love*" on Psalm 4:3.

✠ About "*Strength*" : Saint Augustine admonishes us not to allow trust in our own strength to insinuate itself into our hearts and minds. We are human beings. He recalls Jeremiah 17:1 and the consequences of failure to trust in the Lord.

✣ In this psalm, "*Strength*" is used as a sort of title for the Lord, as it is six other times elsewhere. For other examples in this psalm of capitalised titles of the Lord, see verses 3, 19, 31, 49.

✣ This word translates the Greek word ἰσχύς, *iskhys*. However, throughout the text, "*strength*" is used equally to translate κράτος, *kratos* and κραταίωμα, *krataiōma* (or this word with different endings).

✣ See the note about "*Strength*" on Psalm 24:14 ; see 2 Moses 15:13 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:13 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Kingdoms 2:9, 10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 21:16 ; 27:8 ; 28:4, 11 ; 30:4, 11 ; 32:16 ; 37:11 ; 38:11 ; 42:2 ; 45:4 ; 58:10 ; 59:9 ; 60:4 ; 61:12 ; 64:7 ; 67:36 ; 70:9 ; 75:4 ; 77:61 ; 85:16 ; 88:10 ; 89:11 ; 101:24 ; 102:20 ; 110:6 ; 117:14 ; 146:5 ; Habakkuk 3:4 (Matins Canticle 4) ; Daniel 3:44 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:51 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1).

✣ See the note about "*strengthen*" on Psalm 16:5.

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3 The LORD is my Steadfastness, my Refuge and my Rescuer./ My God is my Helper : I shall hope on Him./ He is my Protector, the Horn of my salvation and my Support.

V 3 About this verse : Saint Augustine interprets this whole verse from the perspective of himself and the members of the Church by weaving the causality of the words together. Summarising his words in a simple manner, we may say that he demonstrates that with him, we trust in our Lord because of love for Him who is our Protector, our Saviour, our Redeemer, our Hope, our Helper, our Refuge, our Support.

✠ About "*Steadfastness*" : see Psalms 70:3 ; 72:4. See the note about "*Strength*" (capitalisation) on verse 2.

✠ About "*Refuge*": see the note about "*Refuge*" on Psalm 9:10. See the note about "*Strength*" (capitalisation) on verse 2.

✠ About "*Rescuer*" : see verse 49 ; see also Psalms 69:6 ; 143:2. See also the note about "*rescue*" on Psalm 6:5. See the note about "*Strength*" (capitalisation) on verse 2.

✠ About "*God*" : see the note about "*God*" on Psalm 3:3.

✠ About "*Helper*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea comments that one becomes faithful only with God's help, not by mere self-will. As King David, we are to build our house on the Rock, and allow the Lord to protect us, defend us, and support us at all times. See Matthew 7:24-27.

✣ See the note about "*Helper*" on Psalm 9:10.

✠ About "*hope*" : Saint John of Kronstadt explains that "*hope*" grows up from faith, and it enables us to be free from fear. It does this as a plant grows from a seed and a stream grows from a spring. This hope provides us experience and knowledge of the Lord, who is limitless in love, mercy, wisdom, power, ability and holiness. It also provides us with the trust in the Lord about everything in our present and future, and the confidence that He, in His love, will fulfil all His promises so that we may pass our lives without fear. If we rebel, the we have only this "*hope*" as a resort.

✣ See the note about "*hope*" on Psalm 4:6.

✠ About "*Protector*" : see the notes on verse 31 ; see also Psalms 26:1 ; 27:7, 8 ; 30:5 ; 32:20 ; 36:39 ; 39:18 ;

58:12 ; 83:10 ; 113:17, 18, 19 ; 143:2.

✣ See the note about "*Strength*" (capitalisation) on verse 2.

✠ About "*horn*" : Saint Basil the Great explains that "*horn*" is used as a metaphor for glory, and for power.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) adds the metaphor of the trumpet of victory.

✣ "*Horn*" is a symbol of power throughout the Scriptures.

✣ See the note about "*horn*" on Psalm 21:22 ; see also 1 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalm 131:17 ; Luke 1:69 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

✠ About "*salvation*" : see verses 36, 47, 51 ; see the note about "*salvation*" on Psalm 3:9.

✠ About "*Support*" : see verse 19 ; see the note about "*support*" on Psalm 3:4.

✣ See the note about "*Strength*" (capitalisation) on verse 2.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:2, 3.

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4 While praising, I shall call upon the LORD,/ and from my enemies shall I be saved.

V 4 About "*praising*" : Saint Augustine warns us to praise and to call only upon the Lord, and not ever to praise ourselves. Only in asking for help from, and giving thanks to the Lord, can we be saved from enemies.

✣ See the notes about "*praise*" on Psalm 134:1, 3 ; see Psalms 62:4, 6 ; 99:4 ; 112:1 ; 145:1, 2 ; 146:1 ; 148:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13 ; 150:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ; Wisdom of Sirach 17:23. See the note about "*praise*" on Psalm 8:3.

✠ About "*call ... saved*" : when we call or cry out to the Lord, there is always a response of some sort. When He hears us (see the note about "*cried out ... listen*" on Psalm 3:5), He acts through saving (as in this verse), healing, rescuing, and in other loving, protecting and life-giving ways.

✣ See Judges 3:9 ; 2 Chronicles 2:9 ; Psalms 21:6 ; 29:3 ; 30:18 ; 33:7, 18 ; 55:10 ; 80:8 ; 106:6, 13, 19, 28. See the note about "*cried out*" and "*listened*" on Psalm 3:5.

✠ About "*call upon the Lord*": see verse 7.

✠ About "*enemies*" : see the note about "*enemies*" on Psalm 5:9.

✠ About "*saved*" : see the note about "*save*" on Psalm 3:8.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:4.

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5 Pangs of death encompassed me,/ and torrents of lawlessness greatly agitated me.

V 5 About this verse : "*pangs*" and "*torrents*" are forces in opposition to God, the Giver of Life, not simply

the death of the body. It is this death, associated with the Adversary, which Christ overcomes.

- About "*pangs of death*" : see verse 6 ; Psalm 114:3 ; Acts 2:24.
- About "*death*" : see the note about "*death*" on Psalm 6:6.
- About "*encompassed*" : see verse 6 ; see also the note about "*encompassed*" on Psalm 16:9.
- About "*torrents*" : see Psalms 35:9 ; 73:15 ; 77:20 ; 82:10 ; 109:7 ; 123:4 ; 125:4.
- About "*lawlessness*" : see verse 24 ; see the note about "*lawlessness*" on Psalm 5:5.
- About "*agitated*" : see Psalm 87:17.
- 2 Kingdoms 22:5.

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6 Pangs of Hadēs encompassed me round about :/ snares of death outran me.

V 6 About "*pangs of Hadēs*" : Saint Augustine explains that the pangs include the death-dealing passion of envy.

- About "*Hadēs*" : see the note on Psalm 6:6.
- About "*encompass me round about*" : see the note about "*encompassing Him round about*" on Psalm 88:8.
- About "*encompassed*" : see verse 5.
- About "*snares of death*" : see Proverbs 14:28.
- About "*snares*" : see the note about "*snare*" on Psalm 9:16.
- About "*death*" : see verse 5.
- 2 Kingdoms 22:6.

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7 When I was being afflicted, I called upon the LORD,/ and to my God I cried out./ From His holy temple He heard my voice,/ and my cry before His Face shall enter His ears.

V 7 About "*when I was being afflicted ...*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea comments that King David came to comprehend the great peril in which he was (being surrounded by dangers and various evils). At that time, he fled to the gate of his Deliverer, and he cried out to the Lord. When one is full of faith, then hope does not disappoint, because it is hope on the Lord (see Romans 5:5). Then we stray the least from the right path.

- See the note about "*afflicting*" on Psalm 3:2.

- About "*called upon the Lord*" : see verse 4.
- About "*cried out*" and "*heard*" : see the note about "*cried out"*and "*listened*" on Psalm 3:5.

✠ About "*from His holy temple ...*" : Saint Augustine explains the fact that the human heart is this temple. The cry is in and from the heart, and it is there that the Lord hears. As he wrote in his *Confessions* , we are often out of focus : "Late have I loved You, beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved You ! Lo, You were within, but I outside, seeking there for You ...".

✣ See Jonah 2:8.

✠ About "*temple*" : see the note about "*temple*" on Psalm 5:8.

✠ About "*cry ... ears*" : see James 5:4.

✠ About "*before His Face*" : see verses 13, 23 ; see the note about "*before Your Face*" on Psalm 5:9.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:7.

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8 The earth was shaken and was trembling ;/ the foundations of the mountains were stirred up and were shaken,/ for God was angry with them.

V 8 Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) mentions that verses 8-18 give an overview of certain tumultuous events. The phenomena of this theophany are a demonstration to the Prophet David that God is with him, and on his side.

✠ About "*earth ... trembling*" : see Psalm 76:19.

✠ About "*earth*" : see the note about "*earth*" on Psalm 2:2.

✠ About "*shaken*" : Saint Augustine explains that the Lord allows the earth to be shaken and to tremble in order to help us to avoid hoping on temporal things instead of on Him.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea interprets that when the Son of God walked upon the earth during the Incarnation, those who worshipped the creatures and elements of the earth were shaken up. He adds that the mountains refer to all the self-inflated and egocentric ideas of human beings which are contrary to God's Will. They refer specifically to the demonic influences which throughout the ages have deceived human beings into embracing such delusions as the worship of materials and multiple gods.

✣ See the note about "*shaken*" on Psalm 12:5.

✠ About "*trembling*": see Psalm 76:19. See the note about "*trembling*" (noun) on Psalm 2:11.

✠ About "*foundations*" : see verse 16 ; see Psalms 81:5 ; 86:1 ; 83:5 ; 88:15 ; 103:5 ; 136:7.

✠ About "*God was angry*" : see Psalms 78:5 ; 79:5 ; 84:6 ; 102:9 ; 105:40. See the notes about "*anger*" and "*fury*" on Psalm 2:5.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:8.

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9 Smoke went up in His anger,/ and fire blazed forth from His Face :/ coals were ignited from it.

V 9 About "*smoke*" : see Psalms 36:20 ; 67:3 ; 101:4. See also the note about "*smoke*" (verb) on Psalm 103:32.

✠ About "*anger*" : see verse 16. See the notes about "*anger*" and "*fury*" on Psalm 2:5.

✠ About "*fire ... Face*" : Saint Augustine explains that the fire of the Lord's love kindles love to such an extent that those who will receive it, although previously cold and dead, may return to life and light.

✠ About "*fire*" : this might be compared also with the Uncreated Light.

> ✣ See 5 Moses 4:24 ; 9:3 ; Psalms 49:3 ; 96:3, 5 ; Joel 2:3 ; Isaiah 66:15 ; 2 Thessalonians 1:8 ; Hebrews 12:29 ; 2 Peter 3:12.

✠ About "*Face*" : see verse 43 ; see the note about "*Face*" on Psalm 4:7.

✠ About "*coals*" : see verse 13 ; see also Ezekiel 10:2.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:9.

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10 He bent the Heavens and He came down,/ and gloom was beneath His feet.

V 10 About this verse : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea likewise explains these words in terms of the Incarnation. He says that the Lord (speaking through the Prophet) uses words regarding darkness and gloom to refer to the fallen condition of human beings which the Son of God took up when He took flesh. See also verse 12 of this psalm.

✠ About "*He bent ... down*" : That You might fill all things with Your glory, You came and bowed the Heavens until they touched the earth (Stikh of Compline, Ode One of the Canon of the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ). Beholding him that was in God's image and likeness fallen through the transgression, Jesus bowed the Heavens and came down, and without changing He took up His dwelling in a Virgin's Womb ; that thereby He might fashion corrupt Adam anew, who cried to Him : "Glory to Your Epiphany, O my Deliver and my God" (Stikh of the Lity of Great Compline for the Nativity of Christ). The Creator, when He saw man perishing, whom He had made with His own hands, bowed the Heavens and came down ; and from the divine and pure Virgin did He take all man's substance, being made truly flesh : for He has been glorified (Stikh of Ode One, Canon One of Matins for the Nativity of Christ). You have bowed Your head before the Forerunner and crushed the heads of the dragons. You descended into the waters and You have given light to all things that they may glorify You, O Saviour, the Enlightenment of our souls (Stikh of "Lord, I have cried" of Vespers of the Theophany of Christ).

> ✣ Saint Jerome interprets these words largely in the context of the Incarnation of the Son of God. He reminds us that because we are lowly and cannot approach God, in His great compassion, He brought Himself to us, most particularly through the Incarnation, and He hears us. In other words, because we are human beings and therefore limited, and cannot by our own strength become gods, God "*bent the Heavens and He came down*" and became a human being in order that we might be with Him.
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> ✣ Saint Augustine comments that these words express the humility of the Lord in His Incarnation, in His taking upon Himself the whole of fallen humanity, the totality of the weaknesses of human beings.

✣ See Psalm 143:5. See also 2 Moses 3:8 ; 19:11, 18, 20.

✠ About "*the Heavens*" : see verse 14 ; see the note about "*the Heavens*" on Psalm 2:4.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:10.

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11 He rode upon the Cherubim and He flew : / He flew on the wings of winds.

V 11 About "*He rode*" and "*He flew*" : Saint Gregory of Nazianzus comments that some things in Scripture are not exactly factual (meaning that they are metaphors). Thus we read that God "sleeps", "wakes up", "is angered", "walks", or has "a throne of Cherubim". His swift motion we call "flight"; His watching over us is His "Face"; His giving and receiving is His "hand". In this way, God's actions are sometimes given a bodily reference.

✠ About "*Cherubim*" : Saint Augustine comments that this verse refers to the fact that the Lord is elevated above the full range of knowledge, so that only by love, the fulfilment of the law (see Romans 13:10), everyone must approach Him.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea points out that when the Lord emptied Himself in His love at the Incarnation, the Cherubim were not involved. However, at the time of the Ascension into Heaven, it was the Cherubim who carried Him up.

✣ Although the word "*cherubim*" appears many times in the Scriptures, there is not provided a precise function for these creatures. It is certainly one of the bodiless powers. One function which we are given is protecting the entrance of the Garden of Eden (1 Moses 3:24). In the Prophecy of Ezekiel (1:5-23), we are told that each cherub has two pairs of wings, and four faces (of a lion, representing all wild animals ; of an ox (representing domestic animals) ; of a human (representing the human race) ; an eagle (representing birds)). Their legs were straight, the soles of their feet like the hooves of a bull, gleaming like polished brass. They are also referred to as bearers of the Throne of God, with particular reference to the Mercy Seat in the Temple. See the note about "*throne*" on Psalm 46:9.

✣ See 1 Moses 3:24 ; 2 Moses 25:18-20 ; 1 Kingdoms 4:4 ; 2 Kingdoms 6:2 ; 3 Kingdoms 6:22-28 ; 4 Kingdoms 19:15 ; Psalms 79:2 ; 98:1 ; Isaiah 37:16 ; Ezekiel 9:3 ; 10:5-21 ; Daniel 3:55 (Matins Canticle 7).

✠ About "*wings of winds*" : see Psalm 103:3.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:11.

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12 He made darkness His secret place :/ round about Him was His tent –/ dark water in the clouds of the air.

V 12 About "*darkness*" : Saint Jerome comments that the clouds and darkness are metaphors for the body

of fallen humanity, the tent (see John 1:14) that our Saviour took up in the Incarnation. He is the Son of Righteousness, and He is Light. Darkness refers to the human limitations and myopia which inhibit our ability to see either the Lord's righteousness or His light. However, just as we cannot look with our eyes directly at the sun, but we may do so through some shading, so in the Incarnation, our Saviour enables us to come into contact with Divine Righteousness and Light despite our limitations.

- ✣ Saint Augustine explains that in order to communicate His love more clearly to human beings, and to teach them in a manner which they might comprehend, the Lord limited Himself : He concealed Himself in the tent of flesh through the Incarnation, in order to enable this contact and communication.
- ✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea relates the darkness, the tent and the clouds to the Incarnation.
- ✣ See 5 Moses 4:11 ; Psalm 96:2 ; Isaiah 50:3.

✠ About "*secret place*" : although "*secret place*" and "*hiding-place*" translate the same Greek word, there is a difference in English because of a nuance.

- ✣ See the notes about "*secret place*" on Psalm 26:5. See Psalms 30:21 ; 80:8. See also the note about "*hiding-places*" on Psalm 9:29.

✠ About "*tent*" : see the note about "*tent*" on Psalm 14:1.

✠ About "*clouds*" : see verse 13 ; see Psalms 35:6 ; 56:11 ; 67:35 ; 76:18 ; 77:14, 23 ; 88:7 ; 96:2 ; 98:7 ; 103:3 ; 104:39 ; 107:5 ; 134:7 ; 146:8 ; Job 22:14 ; Daniel 3:71 (Matins Canticle 8).

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:12.

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13 From the brightness before His Face, the clouds came through –/ hailstones and coals of fire.

V 13 About "*brightness*" : see Habakkuk 3:4 (Matins Canticle 4).

✠ About "*before His Face*" : see verse 7.

✠ About "*clouds*" : see verse 12.

✠ About "*hailstones and coals of fire*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea reminds us that these were the response from the Lord to the Egyptian sorcerers (see 2 Moses 9:23-24). However, the main object of the hail and coals was the demons who had much earlier brought into Egypt not only their demonic presence, but also a multiplicity of false gods.

- ✣ See verse 9.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:13.

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14 The LORD thundered out of Heaven ;/ the Most High gave His voice.

V 14 About "*thundered*" : see 1 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; 7:10 ; Psalms 28:3 ; Job 37:2, 4, 5. See

the note about "*thunder*" on Psalm 76:19.

✠ About "*Heaven"* : see verse 10.

✠ About "*Most High*" : the note about "*Most High*" on Psalm 9:3.

✠ About "*gave His voice*" : Saint Augustine comments that the Lord, the Righteous One, spoke. He "*gave His voice*" so that we human beings might receive it and in the depth of our human affairs be mindful of the heavenly things.

✠ About "*voice*" (Divine) : see Psalms 28:3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 ; 45:7 ; 67:34 ; 80:12 ; 94:8 ; 102:20 ; 105:25.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:14.

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15 He sent out arrows and He scattered them ;/ He multiplied lightnings, and He threw them into confusion.

V 15 About this verse : Saint Augustine tells us that this verse is a metaphor for our Saviour, who sent out His Apostles. In the strength of the Holy Spirit, they truly had strength. In their service, there was a scattering, in that some received their preaching for their salvation, while others did not receive it, and thus found death. See 2 Corinthians 2:16. He adds that the Lord worked many miracles through the Apostles, which laid low the enemies.

✠ About "*arrows*" and "*lightnings*" : "*arrows*" is a metaphor for "*lightning*".

✠ About "*lightnings*" : see Psalms 76:18, 19 ; 96:4 ; 143:6 ; Wisdom of Solomon 5:21 ; Zechariah 9:14 ; Jeremiah 10:9.

✠ About "*threw them into confusion*" : this phrase translates a single Greek verb.

- ✣ See Psalms 20:10 ; 59:4 ; 64:8 ; 82:16 ; 143:6.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:15.

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16 The springs of the waters were seen,/ and uncovered were the foundations of the world :/ because of Your rebuke, O LORD,/ because of the blast of the breath of Your anger.

V 16 About this verse : Saint Augustine explains that through the apostolic preachers, "*the springs of the waters*" to which our Saviour referred sprang forth, and gave eternal life. See John 4:14. [See also John 7:38.] He continues to explain that the Prophets and the Holy Apostles are, in fact, the foundation of the world, because they preached the Holy Gospel which sustains this world (whether or not it be recognised or accepted). The Lord has assured us that "'*the Kingdom of God has come near to you*'" (Luke 10:9). The "*blast of Your breath*" [see 2 Moses 15:8 (Matins Canticle 1)] is the Lord's warning to us that if we do not repent, we will perish (see Luke 13:5).

✠ About "*springs of the waters*" : a spring is the point or place at which water flows from an aquifer to the

Earth's surface. It is sometimes called a "source", a "fountain".

✣ See Psalms 41:2 ; 73:15 ; 103:10 ; 113:8 ; Daniel 3:77 (Matins Canticle 8).

✠ About "*foundations*" : see verse 8.

✠ About "*world*" : see the note about "*world*" on Psalm 9:9.

✠ About "*rebuke*" : see Psalms 75:7 ; 79:17 ; 103:7. See also the note about "*rebuked*" on Psalm 9:6.

✠ About "*breath*" : see Psalms 102:16 ; 134:17 ; 150:6.

✠ About "*anger*" : see verse 9.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:16.

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17 He sent out from on high, and He took me ;/ He took me to Himself out of many waters.

V 17 About "*sent out from on high*" : see Psalm 143:7 ; Luke 1:78 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1).

✠ About "*He took me to Himself*" : Saint Augustine relates this verse to the Church as the Bride of Christ, "without spot or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27), which He has gathered from amongst the Gentiles, the multitude of peoples.

✣ See Psalm 72:24.

✠ About "*many waters*" : there is an implication in this phrase that there is a considerable amount of troubled water. Enough water is good, helpful and life-giving. Too much water, such as flooding, and stormy water, can be dangerous and life-threatening.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:17.

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18 He will rescue me from my powerful enemies and from those hating me, for they became stronger than I.

V 18 About "*rescue*" : see verse 1.

✠ About "*powerful enemies*" : Saint Augustine comments that "*powerful enemies*" can have more strength than I only if I am in subjection to them, and if I am ignorant of the Lord and not subject to His love. These enemies are those who hold a grudge against us when we begin to desire the Lord, and who hate us when we desire Him.

✣ See the note on Psalm 5:9.

✠ About "*powerful*" : see 1 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 23:8 ; 102:20 ; 111:2.

✠ About "*stronger than I*" : see Psalm 141:7.

✠ About "*stronger*" : see the note about "*strong*" on Psalm 7:12.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:18.

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19 They outran me in the day of my ill-treatment,/ but the LORD became my Support.

V 19 About this verse : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that the Lord always knows what He wants to do with the man that helps Him.

✠ About "*Support*" : see the note about "*support*" on Psalm 3:4.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:19.

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20 He led me out into a broad place ;/ He will rescue me, for He delighted in me.

V 20 About this verse : Saint Augustine comments from the perspective of both the Prophet David and of Christian believers. He says that before ever we could begin to desire the Lord, the Lord was already rescuing us from our most powerful enemies.

✠ About "*broad place*" : see the use of this phrase in Psalms 117:5 ; 118:45. See also the note about "*spacious place*" on Psalm 30:9. See also the note about "*set at large*" on Psalm 4:2.

✠ About "*rescue*" : see verse 1.

✠ About "*delighted in me*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea adds interpretive and explanatory words to those of the Prophet David. The Prophet says to the Lord that he is convinced that at the Judgement no mention will be made of his sins and mistakes. Indeed, this will be the case not merely on account of his having previously been convicted of his sin and repented after having encountered Nathan the prophet, but it was and will be so because the Lord takes delight in rescuing such as he.

✠ About "*delighted in*" : see the note about "*delighting in*" on Psalm 5:5.

✠ A verse not included in the usual text could follow here : "*He delivered me from my powerful enemies, from those who hate me*".

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:20.

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21 The LORD will requite me in accordance with my righteousness ;/ and in accordance with the purity of my hands will He requite me,

V 21 About "*requite*" : Saint Augustine comments that the merciful Lord requites us in accordance with the righteousness of our good will. He shows mercy towards us even before we have a good will.

✣ The reverse and mirror-like repetition of "*requite*" and "*in accordance with*" is an example of the mnemonic device "chiasmus".

✣ See "*requite*" in verse 25 ;

✠ About "*my righteousness*" : see verse 25 ; see also the note on Psalm 4:2.

✠ About "*purity of my hands*" : Saint Augustine adds that it is the Lord who leads us to have pure hands who requites us. He leads us into the freedom of faith, and He enables us to act rightly.

✣ See verse 25 ; see also the notes on Psalm 25:6 ; see also Job 22:30.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:21.

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22 for I kept the ways of the LORD./ I have not turned impiously away from my God ;

V 22 About "*I have kept the ways of the Lord*" : Saint Augustine explains that keeping to the ways of the Lord enables arrival at a broad plain of good works which grow from faith and longsuffering perseverance.

✠ About "*the ways*" : see the note about "*the way*" on Psalm 1:1 ; see also 1 Moses 18:19.

✠ About "*impiously*" (adverb) : see the note about "*the impious*" (plural) on Psalm 1:1.

✠ About "*God*" : see verse 3.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:22.

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23 for all His judgements are before my face,/ and His statutes I have not put away from me.

V 23 About "*judgements*" : see the note about "*judgements*" on Psalm 9:17.

✠ About "*before my face*" : see verse 7.

✠ About "*statutes*" : see Psalms 18:9 ; 49:16 ; 88:32 ; 104:45 ; 118:5, 8, 12, 16, 23, 24, 26, 27, 33, 48, 54, 56, 64, 68, 71, 80, 83, 93, 94, 112, 117, 118, 124, 135, 141, 145, 155, 171 ; 147:8.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:23.

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24 I shall be blameless with Him,/ and I shall keep myself from my lawlessness.

V 24 About "*blameless*" (spotless, immaculate) : see verses 31, 33 ; see also Psalms 18:8, 14 ; 100:2, 6 ; 118:80.

See also the note on Psalm 36:18 (noun).

✣ About "*blameless*" (irreproachable, faultless) : this same translation (which has a different nuance) can refer to another the Greek word not used in the Greek Psalter. However, because this other word is used in Job 1:1 and Philippians 3:6, and it has a very closely related meaning, it may be taken into consideration.

✣ About Job 1:1 : Saint John Chrysostom mentions that although Job was described here as being "*blameless*" in the sense of being righteous (or just), the text does not say that he was without sin. He cites Ecclesiastes 7:20 in support of this statement.

✣ "*The Orthodox Study Bible*" comments that even the righteous find it difficult to avoid involuntary sin. The note further recalls the comments by Saint Gregory the Great of Rome regarding blamelessness. Saint Gregory admits that everyone is vulnerable to mistaken or malformed thinking, and it is in this that the involuntary fault lies, although it may not lead to mistaken acts. Another note refers us to an Orthodox Christian prayer in the litany for the departed to amplify the words of Ecclesiastes 7:20, in which it is stated that there is no human being who is without sin. [See Romans 3:23.]

✠ About "*lawlessness*" : see verse 5.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:24.

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25 The LORD will requite me in accordance with my righteousness,/ and in accordance with the purity of my hands before His eyes.

V 25 About this verse : according to Father John Behr, in the psalms, and in the Old Testament Scriptures, it was understood that it is possible to be blameless according to the Law, and therefore to be without sin (*The Mystery of Christ*, SVS Press, 2006, p. 80).

✣ There is evidence in the Scriptures that this is so. Nevertheless, this sort of technical blamelessness can be something which is not necessarily life-giving (when love is lacking).

✠ About "*requite*" : see verse 21.

✠ About "*in accordance with my righteousness*" : Saint Augustine explains that the requital for righteousness refers to the righteousness of the Prophet David, which includes both the far-extending faith which is expressed through love (Galatians 5:6), and constant perseverance [that also results from love].

✠ About "*purity of my hands*" : see the note on verse 21.

✠ About "*before His eyes*" : Saint Augustine points out that the "*eyes*" are not human eyes (because human vision is limited to the material and temporal), but the eyes of God which see what is eternal, and which we cannot see (2 Corinthians 4:18).

✣ See the note about "*before His face*" on verse 7,

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:25.

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26 With the holy, You will be holy ;/ with the innocent man, You will be innocent ;

V 26 About "*with the holy, You will be holy*" : Saint Augustine comments that there is deep mystery in the fact that the Lord is known to be holy with the holy persons, because it is He who makes them holy. He says that this is the same with the innocent : He will harm no-one.

- ✣ The translator, Sister Maria Boulding, OSB, mentions that it is crucial to understand the antithesis between "*innocent*" and "harm". The root meaning of the Latin word "innocens" ("no harm") clearly gives the meaning "You will harm no-one".
- ✣ See Wisdom of Sirach 39:24.

✠ About "*innocent*" (adjective) : see Psalms 23:4 ; 105:38 ; Matthew 27:4. See the note about "*the innocent one*" on Psalm 9:29.

✠ About "*innocent*" (noun) : see the note about "*innocent one*" on Psalm 9:29.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:26.

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27 with the chosen, You will be chosen,/ and with the twisted, You will twist about ;

V 27 About "*chosen*" : Saint Augustine comments that the Lord is chosen by those whom He has chosen [see John 15:16].

- ✣ See Psalm 77:31 ;

✠ About "*twisted*" : Saint Augustine uses the Latin word for "perverse". He says that from the perspective of a person who is perverse (twisted), the Lord is perceived to be perverse (Ezekiel 18:25).

- ✣ Clement of Alexandria explains that this means that the Lord chastises us sinners, because in His goodness and love, He tries to restrain our impulse towards death.

✠ About verses 26 and 27 : In these verse, King David is describing the Incarnation. The Lord took on everything about us. "What has not been assumed has not been redeemed", said Saint Athanasius the Great, and Saint Gregory the Theologian made a similar statement. Our Lord became sin for us, He who is sinless : "*He ... made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Corinthians 5:21) ; "*He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*" (Hebrews 4:15).

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:27.

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28 for You will save a humble people,/ and You will humble the eyes of the proud.

V 28 About "*people*" : see verses 44, 48 ; see the note about "*people*" on Psalm 2:1.

✠ About "*humble the eyes*" : Saint Augustine says that those who do not know God's righteousness, but who wish to substitute their own instead, will be humiliated (see Romans 10:3).

✣ See Job 22:29 ; Proverbs 3:37 ; Isaiah 2:11 ; 5:15 ; Luke 14:11 ; 1 Peter 5:5.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:28.

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29 You will illumine my lamp, O LORD my God :/ You will illumine my darkness ;

V 29 About "*illumine my lamp*" : Saint Augustine comments that light does not come from ourselves, because we are darkened by our sins. Rather, it is the Lord who lights our lamp, that is, who illuminates us, and who enlightens our darkness.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea cites a related verse in Psalm 131:17 (see also verses 14-18). He explains that King David speaks prophetically about Christ, who is his descendant. He avers that the "*lamp*" is prepared for Christ Himself. However, Christ is, Himself, the Light, the True Light (see John 1:9), and the radiance of this light shines brightly for all people. It is He, who in a mysterious manner lights the "*lamp*" that comes mystically from the prophet. The shadows (and even the memory of the shadows) which once covered the Prophet are scattered, and in like manner the shadows which cover us are dissipated.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that the next phrase complements this understanding. One of the greatest deceptions of mankind is to mistake darkness for light, falsehood for truth, evil as good. Jesus Himself says, "*If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness*" (Matthew 6:23). True light comes only from God. [See Psalm 9:24 ; Isaiah 5:20.]

✣ See 2 Kingdoms 21:17 ; 22:29 ; Psalms 26:1 ; 35:10 ; 42:3 ; 118:105 ; 131;17 ; Job 29:3 ; Micah 7:8 ; 2 Peter 1:19 ; Apocaplypse 21:23 ; 22:5.

✠ About "*God*" : see verse 3.

✠ About "*illumine my darkness*" : Saint Augustine explains that our fallen human nature is generally aware only of the earth and of human things. When the Grace of God comes, the darkness is illumined. Then our nature can begin to say with the Apostle, "*Yet not I but the Grace of God with me*" (see 1 Corinthians 15:10) and "*It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me*" (see Galatians 2:20).

✣ Abbot Nikon (Vorobeiv) reminds us that before the Fall, human beings were free to choose and do good. However, after the Fall, we lost our freedom to do good. The only freedom left was to choose good consciously, to prefer good, to desire to do good. In order to do this, we must turn to God with prayer, and ask that He grant us the strength to do the good which we desire to do.

✠ About "*illumine*" : see the note about "*illumine*" on Psalm 12:4.

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30 for in You, I shall be rescued from a murderous ordeal,/ and in my God, I

shall leap over a wall.

V 30 About "*rescue*" : see verse 1.

✠ About "*God*" : see verse 3.

✠ About "*I shall leap over a wall*" : Saint Augustine emphasises that it is not by our own strength that we can be rescued or do great things. Rather, it is only the Lord who can rescue us, and it is only in Him that we can accomplish anything great.

✠ Saint Pœmen the Great observes that the fallen will of human beings is, as it were, a brass wall between them and the Lord. It is also a stumbling-stone. When we renounce this fallen will, we are enabled to leap over the brass wall.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea's comments may be interpreted in three different ways : speaking in the voice of King David ; speaking in the voice of Christ ; speaking for himself and us readers. Despite all sorts of opposition from enemies, we shall be enabled to "*leap over*" the walls of enemies (of separation) and the Heavenly wall (of protection) into the safety of salvation.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:30.

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31 My God – blameless is His way./ The teachings of the LORD were tested by fire./ A Protector is He of all those hoping on Him ;

V 31 About "*God*" : see verse 3.

✠ About "*blameless*" : see the note on verse 24.

✠ About "*blameless is His way*" : Saint Augustine reminds us that because the Lord's way is blameless, we may only enable Him to approach us by cleaning our own path. [However, only He can help us to do this cleaning. See verse 33.]

✠ About "*teachings*", "*fire*", and "*Protector*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea assures us that the words of God which have been tried by fire teach us that the Lord is indeed our Protector. The Lord is so great a Protector that there is no-one and nothing that can stand against Him.

✣ See the notes on Psalm 11:7.

✠ About "*A Protector is He*" : Saint Augustine comments that troubles do not destroy those who hope only on Him, because hope grows up from faith. [The Lord is the Protector. The one who hopes is united to that protection.]

✣ See the note on verse 3.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:31.

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32 for who is God, except the LORD ?/ and who is God, except our God ?

V 32 About "*God ... Lord*" : Saint Augustine comments that God is the Lord, who becomes ours in the manner of one who receives an inheritance long hoped-for.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea continues to remind us that there is but one God, the Lord, who is our God.

✠ About "*God*" : see verse 3.

✠ See 5 Moses 6:4 ; 2 Kingdoms 7:22 ; 4 Kingdoms 19:15, 19 ; Psalm 85:10 ; Wisdom of Sirach 36:4 ; Isaiah 43:10-11 ; 44:6, 8 ; 45:5, 14, 21, 22 ; Mark 12:32 ; 1 Corinthians 8:4 ; Ephesians 4:5-6 ; 1 Timothy 2:5.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:32.

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33 God, girding me about with power,/ made my way blameless :

V 33 About "*God*" : see verse 3.

✠ About "*girding me about with power*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea comments that the Lord strengthens us with His own resources ; He affirms our strength by His strength.

✣ See verse 40.

✠ About "*power*" : this word translates the Greek word δύναμις, *dynamis*, which generally means "power", "might", "strength", "ability", "force for war", "ability to do or act", "political strength". This word also refers to specific "Heavenly Powers", which means angelic, bodiless powers (see the notes on Psalms 23:10 ; 102:21). This is word is not identical with "authority", and ought not to be confused with it.

✣ See 1 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 20:2,14 ; 32:6, 16, 17 ; 48:7 ; 53:3 ; 58:12, 17 ; 62:3 ; 65:3 ; 67:12, 29, 34, 35, 36 ; 73:13 ; 76:15 ; 77:26 ; 83:8 ; 88:11, 18 ; 92:1 ; 109:2, 3 ; 121:7 ; 135:15 ; 137:3 ; 139:8 ; 144:4, 6 ; 150:1 ; Habakkuk 3:19 (Matins Canticle 4).
See the note about "*Power*" on Psalm 45:2.

✣ About "*authority*" : see the note on Psalm 113:2.

✠ About "*made my way blameless*" : Saint Augustine elaborates on these words by saying that the Lord has laid the immaculate path of love by which we may approach Him. Likewise, He approaches us upon the immaculate way of faith.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea explains that God refines and perfects the ways of our life so that we may be like Him ; He makes our way blameless through His teaching and correction.

✣ See the notes on verses 24 ; 31.

✠ The words of this verse (with verse 34) are repeated in the priestly and episcopal liturgical vesting prayers, at the taking of the belt.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:33.

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34 He, strengthening my feet just as those of a deer,/ setting me on the high

places,

V 34 About "*strengthening*" : see Psalms 63:6 ; 67:10 ; 73:13. See also the notes on Psalm 17:2.

✠ About "*my feet ... a deer*" : Saint Augustine mentions that the Lord has made our love perfect, so that, as a deer, we may leap over the prickly, dark entanglements of the fallen world. He focusses our attention on Heaven, so that we may "*be filled with all the fulness of God*" (Ephesians 3:19).

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea compares the swiftness of the deer with those who are righteous in God, whose attention is not on the fallen earth, but on the sublimeness of the Heavenly Kingdom. The result of this attention is to be brought into His Kingdom. Although many try to draw us away from Him into the valley of darkness, the Lord, who sees our righteous struggle, renews our strength by His Grace, and He lifts us up. We are not established there by our own excellence ; however, we are, by the Lord's Grace, brought into our home and native land, which is both familiar and where we belong.

✠ About "*high places*" : in this case, the term may refer to heights of military advantage.

✣ See Habakkuk 3:19 (Matins Canticle 4).

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:34.

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35 teaching my hands to war./ My arms You made like a bow of bronze.

V 35 Saint Augustine interprets this verse by saying that the Lord teaches us how properly to behave, in order to overcome enemies who attempt to block our access to the Heavenly Kingdom. He gives us untiring zeal for doing what is good.

✠ About "*teaching my hands*" : see Psalm 143:1.

✠ About "*teaching*" : see verse 36 ;

✠ About "*bow of bronze*" : the NAB mentions that this is a hyperbolic simile which understands that with its great strength, a bronze bow can strongly propel an arrow.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:35.

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36 You gave me the protection of salvation,/ and Your right hand supported me./ Your instruction set me aright unto the end,/ and Your instruction itself shall teach me.

V 36 About "*protection of salvation*" : Saint Augustine comments that we have been upheld by the Lord's loving favour.

✠ About "*salvation*" : see verse 3.

✠ About "*right hand*" : see the note on Psalm 16:7.

✠ About "*supported*" : see the note on Psalm 3:6.

✠ About "*instruction*" : Saint Augustine reflects that the Lord's correction which keeps us from straying guides us into union with the Lord through each and every one of our deeds. At the same time, this correction also provides the directions for arriving at the appointed destination.

✣ See the note about "*instruction*" on Psalm 2:12.

✠ About "*teach*" : see verse 35.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:36.

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37 You broadened my foot-steps beneath me,/ and my foot-prints have not become weak.

V 37 About "*foot-steps*" : Saint Athanasius elaborates that the Lord removes the snares and stumbling-blocks prepared by our enemies, in order to clear the way for us.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea comments that the steps refer to those of the present to the future, by which we cross from iniquity to excellence ; from what is perceived only by our senses to what is perceived by our mind (*nous*) along with these senses. At first, these steps seem to be very difficult and narrow because our ways have been so crooked ; but after some progress, we become aware of how much easier it is to follow this path which the Lord has made smooth before us.

✣ See the note on Psalm 16:5.

✠ About "*foot-prints*" : Saint Augustine interprets from a Christological perspective that the "*foot-prints*" are those of Christ, which He has made sure were not erased, so that those who love Him may see His way and follow Him.

✣ See Psalm 76:20.

✠ About "*become weak*" : see the note about "*became weak*" on Psalm 9:4.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:37.

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38 I shall closely pursue my enemies and lay hold of them,/ and not turn away, until they come to an end.

V 38 About this verse : Saint Jerome exhorts us that we not permit our minds through disbelief to fall into despair. The soul, darkened and distorted by sin, must not allow itself to believe that its sins are beyond remedy. Rather, he comments, it is important to recall the Lord's promise here that He will deal appropriately with those who are His enemies. Saint Jerome adds that he has confidence that he, who was himself once an enemy of the Lord and fleeing from Him, shall be taken hold of by the Lord ; and he asks the Lord not to cease this pursuit until all evil has been removed from him.

✣ Evagrius of Pontus suggests that when we pray against our passions or the demons assailing us,

we keep this verse in mind. It is important to say this at the needed times, so that we will be armed by humility in order to avoid and resist the attack.

✠ About "*not turn away, until they come to an end*" : Saint Augustine comments from the Christological perspective, as he says that the Lord will not deviate from His purpose, nor will He rest, until those who clamour against Him fall down in defeat.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:38.

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39 I shall squeeze them out, and they shall not be able to stand ;/ they shall fall beneath my feet.

V 39 Saint Augustine comments from the Christological perspective that once the Lord has seen to the end of all evil, He will continue on in those ways of love in which He [and we with Him] will walk unto the ages.

✣ Evagrius of Pontus reminds us that when fighters are being attacked, they attack in return. Likewise, when demons assault us, they will be in return assaulted. [He says this because he understands that we are able to do this only because of the Lord's working in and through us.]

2 Kingdoms 22:39.

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40 You girded me about with power for war ;/ You fettered beneath me all those rising up against me.

V 40 2 Kingdoms 22:40.

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41 As for my enemies, You gave me their back,/ and those hating me, You exterminated.

V 41 About "*enemies*" : see the note on Psalm 5:9.

✠ About "*you gave me their back* : Saint Athanasius explains that in these words, it can be understood that those who hate us flee ; our enemies, the demons, disappear when they cannot introduce passionate thoughts to our souls.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that when King David says, as it were, "You have given me my enemies with their backs to me", we may see a certain glee in the winner.

✣ See the note on Psalm 20:13 ; see Psalm 77:66.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:41.

42 They cried out, but there was no-one to save –/ to the LORD, but He did not hear them.

V 42 About "*cried out*" : see the note on Psalm 21:3 ; see 5 Moses 32:3 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 27:1 ; 29:9 ; 30:18 ; 56:3 ; 65:17 ; 74:2 ; 79:19 ; 85:3 ; 87:2, 10, 14 ; 88:27 ; 98:6 ; 101:3 ; 104:1 ; 114:2, 4 ; 115:4, 8 ; 121:1 ; 118:147 ; 137:3 ; 140:1 ; 141:2, 6 ; 144:18 ; 146:9.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:42.

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43 I shall grind them to be just like dust in the face of the wind ;/ as the mud of the squares shall I pound them down.

V 43 About this verse : Saint Augustine explains that the enemies will be crushed because, being bone-dry, they are completely lacking the moisture of the Lord's mercy. Exalted and deceptively inflated with pride, the enemies, unable to coalesce, will be dispersed from any foot-hold as dust before the wind. As they are blown about on well-trodden broad places [see Matthew 7:13], they will be brushed off [and ground down].

✣ See 4 Kingdoms 13:7 ; Psalm 82:14 ; Isaiah 10:6.

✠ About "*grind*" : see the note about "*grind up*" on Psalm 28:6.

✠ About "*face*" : see verse 9.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:43.

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44 You will rescue me from the contradiction of the people ;/ You will appoint me as the head of nations./ A people whom I did not know served me ;

V 44 About "*rescue*" : see verse 1.

✠ About "*contradiction of the people*" : Saint Augustine, from a Christological perspective, recalls the allegations and accusations which were levelled against Christ by those who did not understand nor accept Him (see John 11:48 ; 12:19). [Despite false allegations and lies, people indeed turned to Him. The Lord rescued.]

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) points out that "*contradiction*" is in the plural here in the Greek. Ἀντιλογία, *antilogía* means, mainly, "a controversy", "a contradiction", "a counter", "a challenge".

✠ About "*contradiction*" : see Psalms 30:21 ; 54:10 ; 79:7 ; 80:8 ; 105:32.

✠ About "*people*" : see verse 28.

✠ About "*appoint*" : see the note about "*appointed*" on Psalm 2:6.

✠ About "*nations*" : see verse 50 ; see the note about "*nations*" on Psalm 2:1.

✠ About "*A people I did not know served me*" : Saint Augustine, interpreting from the perspective of Christ, explains that the Gentiles, whom Christ did not bodily visit, gave Him their allegiance. Although they did not themselves see Him, they have heard Him through the preaching of His apostles, and they have become His disciples.

⁜ Saint Hilary of Poitiers is of the opinion that these words are a reference to the Son of God.

✠ About "*a people whom I did not know*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea points out that these words of the Prophet David prepare for the future time when the Prophet's words will be carried respectfully in the memory of multitudes of peoples throughout the earth, and they will be lifted up in honour in all the Churches of Christ in every age. By extension also, these words may refer to Christ.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:44.

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45 when the ear heard, they obeyed me./ Foreign sons lied to me ;

V 45 About "*ear*" (human) : see Psalms 43:2 ; 91:12 ; 93:9.

✠ About "*foreign sons*" : Saint Irenæus comments that all human beings are by nature created as the children of God ; but when we are behaving contrary to His will, we become foreign to Him.

⁜ Saint Cyril of Alexandria explains that this term may refer to the children born of foreign wives (see 5 Moses 7:3-4) ; or it may refer to those children who from the womb or infancy were dedicated to idolatrous worship by offerings to the demons. These have not been offered to the Lord, but to the evil one. Either way, the children do not know the Lord.

⁜ Saint Augustine interprets from the Christological perspective in notes that these sons, the chosen people, have no more the right to call themselves the Lord's children. They have lied to Him. They have become the children of the devil (see John 8:44).

⁜ See verse 46 ; see the note on Psalm 143:7 ; see also Isaiah 1:2.

✠ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) notes that "*lied to me*" can mean "*provoked me*". [The lying and deception (characteristic of evil) may also include provocation.] In Hebrew, the phrase is translated "*The strangers became my courtiers*", or "*The sons of strangers court me*". A flatterer is one who possesses the art of mastering minds, thus making him happy. [Another word for such a person is "sycophant".] [See John 8:39-45.]

✠ About "*lied*" : see Psalms 26:12 ; 77:36 ; 80:16 ; 88:36.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:45.

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46 foreign sons became old :/ they limped away from their paths.

V 46 About "*foreign sons*" : see verse 45.

✠ About "*became old*" : Saint Augustine, commenting from the Christological perspective, emphasises that although the New Covenant was given to them, the wayward children have insisted on keeping to their old ways.

✠ About"*limped away*" : Saint Augustine continues from his previous comments as he observes that the wayward children hobbled away from the true path. They walked, as it were, with a damaged foot, since they preferred not the balance of the Old and New Covenants together, but rather to remain with the Old Covenant. For instance, being in the habit of fault-finding as they followed their own rules and interpretations, they unthinkingly complained about unwashed hands (see Mark 7:2-5).

✣ Even when apparently walking evenly, without aids for orientation in the forest, one may find oneself walking in circles. How much more likely is this the case, when one is limping ? The limping here may also express a spiritual ailment, which leads astray.

✠ About "*paths*" : see the note about "*paths*" on Psalm 8:9.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:46.

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47 The LORD lives ;/ and blessed be my God,/ and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

V 47 About "*The Lord lives*" : see 5 Moses 32:40 (Matins Canticle 2).

✠ About "*blessed*" (adjective) : this word translates the Greek adjective εὐλογητός, *eulogētos*, which means "good word". It is translated into Latin as "benedictus", which means "well-spoken", or "speak what is good".

✣ See 1 Kingdoms 2:9 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 27:6 ; 30:22 ; 65:20 ; 67:20, 36 ; 71:17, 18, 19 ; 105:48 ; 117:26 ; 123:6 ; 128:8 ; 134:19, 20, 21 ; 143:1 ; 147:2 ; Daniel 3:26, 52-56 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:68 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

✣ See the notes about "*blessed*" on Psalm 1:1 ; see the notes on Psalms 3:9 (noun) ; 5:13 (verb).

✠ About "*blessed be my God*" (and variants) : see Psalms 40:14 ; 65:20 ; 71:18 ; 88:53 ; 105:48 ; 143:1.

✠ About "*God*" : see verse 3.

✠ About "*salvation*" : see verse 3.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:47.

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48 It is God giving me vengeance,/ having subjected peoples under me :

V 48 About "*God*" : see verse 3.

✠ Saint Augustine, from a Christological perspective, explains that Christ is avenged by His Father who

mystically placed under His authority those who had but lately cried out : "'*Crucify Him*'" (see John 19:6).

✠ In Greek, "*vengeance*" is in the plural. Rather than being understood in the usual, simply retributive, manner of humans with passions, vengeance may instead be understood as the process of God's correction of the wrongs of humans. God does correct our wrongs, but in a manner without passion, beyond our understanding.

✣ See Psalm 93:1 ; Nahum 1:2.

✠ About "*people*" : see verse 28.

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:48.

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49 my Rescuer from my angry enemies./ From those rising up against me, You will lift me up ;/ rescue me from an unrighteous man.

V 49 About "*my Rescuer*" (noun) : see the note on verse 3.

✠ About "*angry*" : see the note about "*be angry*" on Psalm 4:5.

✠ About "*You will lift me up*" : Saint Augustine explains that the Father lifted up Christ in the Resurrection and rescued Him from those who angrily put Him to death and freed Him from their iniquitous rule.

✣ See the note about "*lifted up*" on Psalm 6:2 ; see 1 Kingdoms 2:8 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 27:9 ; 46:10 ; 60:3 ; 109:7 ; 112:7.

✠ About "*those rising up against me*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea treats these words with reference not only to the Prophet David but also to Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

✠ About "*unrighteous*" (adjective) : see Psalms 24:19 ; 26:12 ; 34:11 ; 42:1 ; 43:18 ; 88:34 ; 118:118, 128 ; 119:2 ; 134:2 ; 139: 2, 5, 12 ; Daniel 3:32 (Matins Canticle 7).

✠ 2 Kingdoms 22:49.

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50 Because of this, I shall confess You amongst the nations, O LORD,/ and to Your Name shall I chant :

V 50 About "*I shall confess You amongst the nations*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea, echoed by the perception of Saint Augustine, comments that the Prophet David, who proclaimed the Lord to all through his psalmody, continues to do so at all times and places through the hearts and lips of those who pray these psalms. The Christ, the Messiah, who is descended from the Prophet, and who fulfils the words of the psalms, and who lives in the Church and in all believers, continues to share Truth and Grace with all peoples throughout the earth. In the Church, He is made known. [See Psalm 66 ; Romans 15:9.]

✠ About "*nations*" : see verse 44.

✠ About "*to Your Name shall I chant*" : see the note on Psalm 7:18.

✠ See 2 Kingdoms 22:50.

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51 as He magnifies the salvations of His king ;/ and as He does mercy to His christ,/ to David, and to his seed until the age.

V 51 Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) points out that the first phrase may refer, as it were, to "a king that is under Your dominion, whom You have ordained to be seated on the throne".

✠ In contrast to the received Septuagint text, the variant used by Saint Athanasius has "I shall magnify", instead of "*He magnifies*".

⁜ In this Greek text, the third person, "*He*", refers back to God. Hence, perhaps, the first person "I" in the variant used by Saint Athanasius was an adjustment in an attempt to clarify the reference.

✠ About "*magnifies*" : see the note about "*magnify*" on Psalm 11:5.

✠ About "*salvations*" : Saint Jerome, in commenting, does not consider Christ's salvation as an isolated event. He says that His work of salvation has multiple applications, hence this plural. Because we are sinning in multiple ways, and needing salvation repeatedly, Christ rescues us repeatedly.

⁜ See Psalms 27:8 ; 43:5 ; 67:20 ; 84:5. See the note about "*salvation*" on Psalm 3:9.

✠ In this case, "*christ*" (meaning "anointed one") refers to King David.

⁜ See the note on Psalm 2:2.

✠ About "*seed*" (messianic) : Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore) clarifies that this "*seed*" is Jesus the Christ, the Son of David, who inherits King David's throne. See Luke 1:32-33.

⁜ "*Seed*" means "children", "offspring", "progeny", "descendants". In this psalm, the "*seed*" refers to the descendants of the Patriarchs and of King David, the inheritors of the promise, and those who prepare for the Messiah, the Christ.

⁜ See 1 Moses 22:17-18 ; 26:3-4 ; 28:13-14 ; Psalms 21:24, 31 ; 24:13 ; 88:5, 30, 37 ; 104:6 ; Daniel 3:36 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:55 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1). See also the note on Psalm 24:13 (the seed of the good).

✠ See 2 Kingdoms 22:51.

O Most Good God, the Support of hope, and Refuge in oppression,
save us from our enemies, and from the snares of death ;
that, taken up from the multitude of tribulations around us,
we may, with deep devotion,
sing psalms to Your holy Name, with the purity of innocence. — Roman

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