PSALM 19

✠ This psalm is written as a Royal Psalm.

✣ About "royal psalm" : see the note about "royal psalm" in the introduction to Psalm 2.

✠ NAB : Verses 2-6 : the people pray for the king before battle ; verses 7-10 : they express confidence that such help will be given.

✠ This is the first of the "Royal Beginning" Psalms of Matins. It is used (verses 2, 3, 4, 5) as the Second Antiphon of the Divine Liturgy of Pentecost. It is used (verse 2) as the first Prokeimenon of Friday Vespers in the First Week of Great Lent. It is used (verses 2, 10) for the Alleluia Verses of the Sunday Divine Liturgy in Tone 2.

✠ Saint Athanasius advises us that when we see others suffering in affliction, then we ought to strengthen them by praying with them using the words of Psalm 19.

✠ Saint Augustine teaches us that in this psalm, the Prophet David addresses Christ. Bishop Eusebius similarly says that in this psalm, holy people are praying to Christ. Likewise, Father P Reardon says that this psalm may be taken as a prayer of the Church to Christ.

✠ *The Orthodox Study Bible* indicates that this psalm prepares for Christ as King, and it identifies Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah.

✠ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) points out that this psalm has a "twin-brother" in Psalm 20.

"*Prayer for the victory of the Church*"

"*A prayer for the king offering his sacrifice*"

"*We will rejoice in Thy salvation*"

---

1 For the End. A psalm by David.

V 1 About the Inscription : in the Masoretic (Hebrew) text, the Inscription is : "To the choirmaster. A psalm of David".

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

[Ἐπακούσαι σου Κύριος Exaudiat te Dominus]

2 May the LORD listen to you in the day of affliction ;/ may the Name of the God of Jacob protect you.

V 2 About "*May the LORD listen to you*" : Saint Augustine refers this to Christ, especially when He will say :

"*Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You*" (John 17:1).

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

✠ About "*affliction*" : see the note on Psalm 4:2.

✠ About "*name*" : see verses 6, 8 ; see also the note on Psalm 5:12.

✠ About "*God of Jacob*" : this phrase is a statement of loyalty to God, who revealed Himself to Jacob, and to his ancestors. In the same way, Christians, as spiritual children of Abraham, take refuge in the God of Jacob.

⁜ See 2 Moses 3:6, 15, 16 ; 4:5 ; see also Psalms 23:6 ; 45:8, 12 ; 74:10 ; 75:7 ; 80:2, 5 ; 83:9 ; 93:7 ; 113:7 ; 131:2, 5 ; 145:5 ; Isaiah 2:3 ; Matthew 22:32 ; Mark 12:26 ; Luke 20:37 ; Acts 3:13 ; 7:32, 46.

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

✠ About "*protect*" : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) explains that ὑπεραςπίζω, *hyperaspízō* here means "put on the shield as a defensive weapon", which thus means, "*protect*". Within this word, there is the root word ἀςπίς, *aspis*, meaning "shield". Moreover, the psalm is a prayer for the king before going to war, and a Christian prayer about lurking dangers.

⁜ See Psalms 27:7, 8 ; 30:3 ; 70:3.

---

3 May He send out help to you from the holy place ;/ and from Sion, may He support you.

V 3 About "*holy place*" : here, the Greek gives only ἐξἁγίου, *ex hagiou,* and in many other places some other form of ἅγιος. It implies "holy place"/"holy one", or "holy places"/"holy ones", but it is not explicit. Further, there is no definite article in the Greek, but it seems to require it in English. Sometimes, "holy places" may be translated "holy ones", depending on the context and the tradition.

⁜ See the note about "*holy one*"on Psalm 4:4 ; see also Psalms 21:4 ; 150:1.

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

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

---

4 May He remember your every sacrifice,/ and let your whole-burnt-offering grow fat.

Pause

V 4 About "*remember*" : Saint Augustine says that we may understand this petition as being our petition to the Father that He remember everything that Christ sacrificed and suffered for our sake, and that He make us and keep us mindful of His self-emptying offering.

⁜ See the note about "*remembered*" on Psalm 9:13. See also 1 Moses 8:1 ; 19:29 ; 2 Moses 2:24.

✠ About "*sacrifice*" : the Lord, the Knower of Hearts, knows everything about us, our intentions, our offerings. Not only does He remember our "*every sacrifice*", but He also increases each of these sacrifices ; and as is shown in this request, He even fattens them. Such is His life-giving Love.

⁜ See the note about "*sacrifice*" on Psalm 4:6.

⁜ See also the note about "*sacrifice*" on Psalm 19:4.

✠ About "*whole-burnt-offering*" : Saint Augustine interprets this part of the verse as requesting that the Father turn into resurrection-joy the Cross upon which His Son was offered up.

⁜ This phrase translates the Greek noun ὁλοκαύτωμα *holokavtōma*. The word "holocaust" may also be used in English. This term (first used of the sacrifices of Noah) refers to a sacrifice offered as a tribute to God, a burnt offering which was entirely burnt up upon the altar. During the Temple periods, there was such an offering twice a day (except that the skins were reserved for the priests). Otherwise, a sacrifice (a sacrifice of well-being) was partly burnt, and most of it eaten in communion at a sacrificial meal.

⁜ See Psalms 39:7 ; 49:8 ; 50:18, 21 ; 65:13, 15 ; Isaiah 56:7 ; Daniel 3:38-39 (Matins Canticle 7).

---

5 May the LORD give to you in accordance with your heart,/ and fulfil all your counsel.

V 5 About "*in accordance with your heart*" : Saint John of Kronstadt cautions us that when we make our requests and petitions to the Lord, He answers precisely in accordance with the condition of our heart. Whatever may be the condition of our heart directly influences the nature of the gift from the Lord. If we pray with sincere and single-hearted faith, the Lord gives in accordance with this faith (which is already informed by the Lord), and in accordance with how fervent with love our heart is.

⁜ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that the correct sense of this phrase means in accordance with your thought, purpose, target.

⁜ Nevertheless, for the Lord to give to us in this manner, our hearts must first be in harmony with Him, so that we can correctly know what to ask for and when. He will not give to us what is against His will.

⁜ See the note about "*will hear ... cry out*" on Psalm 4:4.

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

✠ About "*fulfil all your counsel*" : Saint Augustine refers these words to Christ. The words ask therefore that the Father fulfil every intention of His Son : not only to lay down His life for His friends (John 15:13) but also so that the seed by dying might live again more abundantly (John 12:24) (1 Corinthains 15:20-47).

⁜ See verse 6 ; see also Psalm 20:3.

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

---

6 We shall exult in your salvation,/ and in the Name of the LORD our God shall we be magnified./ May the LORD fulfil all your requests.

V 6 About "*we shall exult in your salvation*" : Saint Augustine refers these words to Christ. Therefore, we exult, because through His salvation, death will not harm us.

- Evagrius reminds us that it is the righteous who shall so exult in God's salvation, whereas people generally rejoice in riches, nobility, and personal glory.
- Cassiodorus points out that this salvation is our strength, because it is neither weakened by disease, nor wounded by pain ; but rather, it guards us by its eternal presence and activity.
- Father P Reardon comments that these words, and this whole psalm serve, as it were, as an "amen" [so be it] to the redemptive work of Christ.

✠ About "*exult*" : see the note about "*exult*" on Psalm 2:11.

✠ About "*salvation*" : see the note about "*salvation*" on Psalm 3:9.

✠ About "*Name of the Lord*" : see the note about "*Name of the Lord*" on Psalm 7:18.

✠ About "*God*" : see the notes on "*God of Jacob*" and "*Lord*" on verse 2.

✠ About "*shall we be magnified*" : Father P Reardon reflects that after all the completed salvific work of Christ, there remains the fact that Christ must triumph in the lives of each of us. He reminds us that this is clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 15:28, in Phlippians 3:12, and in 1 John 3:2.

- See verse 8.

✠ About "*be magnified*" : see verse 8 ; see the note about "*magnify*" on Psalm 11.5.

✠ About "*May the Lord fulfil all your requests*" : see verse 5.

- Saint Augustine refers this phrase to Jesus the Christ, as he notes that the request refers not only to His petitions made upon the earth, but to those offered on our behalf in Heaven.

---

7 Now I know that the LORD has saved His christ ;/ He will listen to him from His holy Heaven ;/ salvation is in the mighty deeds of His right hand.

V 7 About "*I know*" : this verb of knowing is in the aorist (past tense) in Greek. Sometimes, whether or not the reference be to the Lord, the sense is in the present, as in Psalms 39:10 ; 40:12 ; 55:10 ; 68:6 ; 72:11 ; 102:14 ; 103:19 ; 118:75 ; 134:5 ; 138:5 ; 139:13 ; 141:4.

✠ About "*saved His christ*" : Saint Augustine and others understand "*christ*" to refer to the future prophesied anointed messiah. This was the general usage after the Babylonian exile, according to the Nun Maria Boulding OSB.

- See the note on Psalm 2:2.
- Saint Athanasius comments that God saved Christ by raising Him from the dead.

✣ See Acts 2:22-24 ; 3:15, 26 ; 5:30 ; 17:31 ; Romans 8:11 ; Hebrews 5:7.

✣ The earlier use of "*christ*" as "anointed one" was with reference to King David and his descendants. However, after the Babylonian exile, it referred to the future and hoped-for messiah.

✠ About "*saved*" : see verse 10 ; see also the note on Psalm 3:8.

✠ About "*mighty deeds*" : see Psalms 20:14 ; 77:4 ; 105:2 ; 150:2.

✠ About "*salvation*" : see verse 6.

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

---

8 Some in chariots, some in horses,/ but as for us, it is in the Name of the LORD our God that we shall be magnified.

V 8 About this verse : Saint Athanasius points out that, as regarding the Judges in Psalm 104, so in this psalm the Prophet refers to the kings who put their trust in the Lord.

✣ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus elucidates by showing us that those others trusted in horses and chariots, from which they received no true good. However, we call for Divine Help, and we achieve salvation visibly.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that strength of spirit, fuelled by faith in God and His help, takes precedence over material forces, no matter how good they are ; moreover, this refers to the topic of unseen warfare.

✣ There is a consistent historical tendency for human beings to place their trust in some creature, rather than to accept the love of God, and put their trust there, in the Creator.

✣ See 1 Kingdoms 17:24, 26 ; 4 Kingdoms 19:23 ; 2 Chronicles 14:10 ; 20:15 ; 3 Maccabees 2:2-8 ; Psalms 43:7-8 ; 123:8 ; 146:10 ; Proverbs 21:30 ; Hosea 1:7 ; Isaiah 31:1 ; 36:8-9.

✠ About "*God*" : see verse 2.

✠ About "*we shall be magnified*" : see verse 6.

---

9 As for them, they were fettered and fell,/ but we arose and stood upright.

V 9 About "*arose and stood upright*" : In the context of the second and final arrival of our Saviour, Bishop Eusebius explains that in Luke 2:34, the Holy Symeon the God-receiver prophesied about Jesus the Christ that "*Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against*". These words refer to the General Rresurrection on the Last Day, and the Final Judgement.

✣ Cassiodorus teaches us that a Christian rises in two senses (in resurrection, a person stands upright, rising from humiliation to exaltation) : first, when the believer is delivered by Grace from darkness and vice in this world, and second, at the General Resurrection.

✣ See Isaiah 40:30-31.

---

10 O LORD, save the king,/ and listen to us on whatever day we may call upon You.

V 10 About this psalm : Because of the responsibility borne by any monarch or other such leader, it behoves everyone to pray for the leader, as the Apostle Paul has exhorted us (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

✠ About "*save*" : see the note on verse 7.

✠ About "*king*" : see Psalm 20:2.

O Lord, fulfil our petitions, and receive us,
just as the fattest whole-burnt offering ;
that, with the chariots of the enemy bound up,
we may rejoice in the help of Your salvation. — Roman
