PSALM 9

✠ This psalm is written in the form of a Lament. It is also identified as a Thanksgiving Psalm.

- ✣ See the note about "lament" in the introduction to Psalm 3.
- ✣ See the note about "thanksgiving" in the introduction to Psalm 17.

✠ This Psalm is used in Matins. It is used (verses 2, 33) as the Prokeimenon before the Epistle at the Lamentation Matins on Great and Holy Saturday. It is used (verse 2, 33, 37) as the Prokeimenon of Sunday Matins in Tone 5 and in Tone 7 (verses 2, 33).

✠ This is an acrostic psalm. Following the Hebrew alphabet (seen at the margin) in order, each verse, or group of verses, begins with a different Hebrew letter. This is the first of many such in the Psalter (24, 33, 110, 111, 118, 144). The Hebrew letters are provided at the left margin in this work. This poetic form is known in many languages. It demonstrates not only deep knowledge of the language, but also a deep knowledge of the subject at hand (not forgetting Divine inspiration). It is not at all easy to construct such poetry, to have it make sense, and still to be beautiful. Because an acrostic may follow the letters of a word or a phrase, it often consists of a series of statements very loosely connected. This alphabetical acrostic accompanies all the verses of Psalm 9, and does not provide for the division that is produced in the Hebrew text.

✠ Saint Athanasius advises us that we sing Psalm 9 as a thanksgiving for the Son of God's victory when the enemy is being accused and for the saving of created things (and not to take credit for ourselves). He also recommends Psalm 9 for occasions when we wish to make testimony concerning God. For this purpose, he also recommends the use of Psalms 70, 74, 91, 104, 105, 106, 107, 110, 117, 125, 135, 137.

"*Appeal to Christ, Saviour and Judge*"

"*Praise of God's just government*"

"*Call to make God known to the nations*"

א 1 For the End. About the secrets of the son. A psalm by David.

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

- ✣ "Muth-labben" may be the title of the melody to which the psalm was to be sung. Some consider that this may also refer to some sort of musical instrument about which we now are ignorant.
- ✣ "The Aramaic version is "On the death of the son", which is directly related to the alternative LXX inscription : "A triumphal ode on the death of the son".

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

✠ About "*the secrets of the son*" : Saint Augustine suggests that the hiddenness may refer to the First

Advent of the Son. It was hidden because part of Israel brought a blindness upon themselves. There is a hidden judgement which happens in this present time (see 1 Peter 4:17), and there is an open judgement which will happen at the end of all things, at the Second (Last) Advent of the Son. Saint Augustine considers that our Saviour refers to both judgements in John 5:24. The secret judgement through which we presently pass by means of various sorts of suffering is the way in which we are corrected and pass from death to life. It is, as it were, like a refining fire. He refers us to Hebrews 12:6, which refers to Proverbs 3:12. If we do not improve through the secret judgement, then we will receive our due at the final and open judgement. Saint Augustine adds that the Last Day, the Second Advent, could be said to be included amongst the hidden things, even though the Presence of the Lord will be clearly visible, since when this actual Day will come is known only to the Father, and it is not revealed even to the Judge Himself. [See Mark 13:32.]

✣ Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, informs us that this psalm contains a prophecy of Christ's victory over death. He says that after Christ had thoroughly conquered sin and evaded being captured by death, He brought the dominion of Hadēs to an end. Bishop Theodoret notes that the Septuagint calls this mystery a secret, since it escaped the notice of everyone, including the Holy Apostles. He adds that Saint Luke attests that when our Saviour spoke about going up to Jerusalem, the coming Passion and Resurrection were hidden from their understanding (see Luke 18:34).

✠ *The Orthodox Study Bible* notes that this Inscription refers to the Only-begotten Son of God.

✣ Blessed Jerome reports that this enigmatic Septuagint title refers to the death of the Son of God. He added that the translators of the Septuagint, who read in Hebrew "*the death of the son*", understood that this Scripture passage referred to the Son of God, and they were hesitant at that time (under King Ptolemy) to write that the Son of God would die. Therefore, they translated "death" as "*secrets*", or "hidden things". He further comments that "*the End*" refers not to the Jews, who are the first sons, but to us Christians who are the last sons. Because we are at the end, it is for us to give heed to this psalm, and to the hidden things regarding the Son of God which were hidden in the past, but have now been revealed to us (Colossians 1:26). It is crucial that we understand the whole psalm in the context of the death of our Saviour.

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2 [Ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι Confitebor tibi]

I shall confess You, O LORD, with my whole heart :/ I shall recount all Your wonders.

V 2 About "*shall confess*" : Saint John Chrysostom, in his commentary, reminds us that confession can mean either the awareness of one's own sins, or thanksgiving to God.

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

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

✠ About "*whole heart*" : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus comments that it is characteristic of those who are perfect that they offer their whole heart and mind to the Lord. He reminds us of the Mosaic words of the Law, and of the citation of them in the Holy Gospels : "*You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart, from your whole soul, and from your whole power*" (5 Moses 6:5 ; Luke 10:27).

✣ See Psalms 110:1 ; 137:1.

✠ About "*heart*" : see verses 27, 32, 34, 38 ; see the note about "*heart*" on Psalm 4:3.

✠ About "*recount all Your wonders*" : Saint John Chrysostom explains the importance of giving thanks, and of giving glory to God for everything. The result of giving thanks brings joy in the midst of every sort of difficulty. In giving thanks and giving glory to God, all discouragement is dissolved and pain assuaged in the Lord's love. In the context of love, Saint John exhorts us to reduce worldly needs to the minimum for the sake of being free to be aware of the Lord and of His marvellous works – not only in in the whole of creation and in past acts, but also in the present, and in the daily lives of ordinary people. The past wonders of God reassure us of His present and future similar activity amongst us.

✣ Saint Augustine opens to us that the one who is ready to perceive secret things has made the transition from the visible to the invisible. However, those who are earthbound will be more amazed about the Resurrection of the dead Lazarus than about the conversion and rising of the living Apostle Paul. The one who is able to perceive both the hidden and the tangible, the invisible and the visible, may exult in all God's wonders and proclaim them all, both seen and unseen (in body and in soul). Thus, for such a person, the transformation of the Apostle will be understood to be a yet greater wonder.

✣ Father P Reardon informs us that the key to the proper praying of the psalms is purity of the heart, that is, praying from one's central core, from a heart characterised by wholeness. All prayer is the struggle to see God, which is only for the pure (see Matthew 5:8). He adds that a second element in praying the psalms is the recounting of the Lord's wonders, which may be likened to story-telling. A major motif of the psalms is the telling and re-telling of these divine acts. From the Creation until King David, the Lord's wonders themselves prepare for future wonders at the time of the Incarnation of Christ, and beyond.

✣ See Psalms 25:7 ; 74:3 ; 104:2 ; 144:5.

✠ About "*recount*" : this translates the Greek word διηγέομαι, *diēgenomai*, meaning "set out in detail", "describe", "tell".

✣ See Psalms 18:2 ; 25:7 ; 49:16 : 54:18 ; 65:16 ; 72:15 ; 74:3 ; 77:3 ; 86:6 ; 87:12 ; 104:2 ; 117:17 ; 118:85 ; 144:5.

✠ About "*wonders*" : see Psalms 25:7 ; 39:6 ; 70:17 ; 71:18 ; 74:3 ; 76:12, 15 ; 77:4, 11, 12, 32 ; 85:10 ; 87:11, 13 ; 88:6 ; 95:3 : 97:1 ; 104:2, 5 ; 105:7, 22 ; 106: 8, 15, 21, 24, 31 ; 110:4 ; 118:18, 27 ; 130:1 ; 135:4 ; 144:5 ; Wisdom of Sirach 18:5 ; Daniel 3:43.

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3 I shall be glad and I shall exult in You :/ I shall chant to Your Name, O Most High.

V 3 About "*be glad*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that to be able to find gladness in the Lord is no small measure of sound values. People do take delight in perishable things, but it brings disappointment and sorrow when what they love perishes. However, those who love the Lord as He ought to be loved take delight in the imperishable (immortal), since that is how the Lord is. There can then be no

disappointment or loss in Him, in whom there is only eternal life and love.

✣ See the note about "*may they be glad*" on Psalm 5:12.

✠ About "*I shall exult in You*" : see verse 15 ; see also the note about "*exult*" on Psalm 2:11.

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

✠ About "*Most High*" : see 5 Moses 32:8 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 17:14 ; 20:8 ; 45:5 ; 49:14 ; 72:11 ; 76:11 ; 77:17 ; 81:6 ; 82:19 ; 86:5 ; 90:1, 9 ; 91:2 ; 106:11 ; Lamentations 3:37 ; Luke 1:76 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2) ; Acts 7:48. See the notes on Psalm 7:18.

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4 ב When my enemy turns back,/ they shall become weak
and perish away from Your Face ;

V 4 About "*enemy*" : see the note about"*enemies*" on Psalm 5:9.

✠ About "*turns back*" : Saint John Chrysostom considers that maintaining the same attitude of watchfulness even after the enemies have turned back, watchfulness that we had had during the attack, is crucial for us in the Christian life. Maintaining this vigilant attitude helps us to avoid the "sneak-attacks" that frequently come after a period of relief. If we lose the attitude of watchfulness by "letting down our guard", we may easily find ourselves ensnared.

✣ Saint Augustine mentions that we begin in this verse to hear the Lord's voice as the speaker in this psalm. His enemy is surely turned back when he hears from our Lord in Matthew 4:10 : "*away with you*", or "*get behind Me*" (in another Greek text). The enemy was unable to deceive the God-Man, so he turns to human beings in order to deceive them. It is far better for us to flee from this enemy rather than to follow him as a leader. We are able to flee and to take refuge in the hidden things of the Son because God is our Refuge.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea interprets that in this case, death is the actual enemy. Death is the enemy of life, which the Prophet understood would be turned back. This turning back is the return to the situation before death came into being through the activity of the devil. At that time, death will no longer exist, and all other enemies of God will be destroyed. See Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-14 ; 2:24 ; 1 Corinthians 15:26.

✠ About "*become weak*" : see 5 Moses 32:36 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Kings 2:4, 5 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 17:37 ; 25:1 ; 26:2 ; 30:11 ; 57:8 ; 63:9 ; 67:10 ; 87:10 ; 104:37 ; 106:12 ; 108:24.

✠ About "*perish*" : see verses 6, 7, 19, 37. See note about "*perish*" on Psalm 1:6.

✠ About "*Face*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that when we hear the word "*Face*" in this verse, we ought not to imagine any bodily face. "*Face*" suggests God's power, His manifestation, His strength. One look from Him is enough to destroy His enemies. If the demons are enfeebled just by the presence of holy people, how much more so are they by God's presence.

✣ See Psalms 17:9 ; 20:10 ; 67:3.

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5 ג for You have made my fair-judgement and my cause ;/ You have sat down on a throne, You that are judging righteously.

V 5 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom calls our attention to the fact that King David took no vengeance upon the enemy (see 5 Moses 32:35 ; Romans 12:19) ; but rather, he was confident in the fact that it was the Lord who had judged and had vindicated him. That the Lord gives right and righteous judgements is a revelation of part of what is God's essence. Human beings cannot give such a pure judgement.

✠ About "*fair-judgement*" : see verse 8 ; see the note about "*fair-judgement*" on Psalm 1:5.

✠ About "*throne*" : Saint John Chrysostom tells us that the sitting on a throne is part of the act of proclaiming the judgement. To speak about sitting on a throne is rather anthropomorphic ; therefore, Saint John further mentions that the throne is not fashioned from materials, but rather from righteousness. He is seated in righteousness, and "*He ... will judge the world in righteousness*" (verse 9).

- ✣ Father P Reardon comments that there are two references in this psalm (verses 5 and 8) to the judgement throne of God, which is the final arbiter.
- ✣ *The Orthodox Study Bible*, with regard to Hebrews 4:16, points out that the "*throne*" anticipates that at the right-hand of the Father, Christ is seated upon a throne of Grace, rather than of judgement. From there, the Lord grants us Grace and mercy in the times of our need.
- ✣ See verse 8 ; see Psalms 10:4 ; 28:10 ; 44:7 ; 46:9 ; 88:25, 37 ; 102:19 ; Isaiah 66:1 ; Lamentations 5:19 ; Matthew 5:34 ; 23:22.

✠ About "*judging righteously*" : see verse 9 ; see also the note about "*Righteous Judge*" on Psalm 7:12.

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6 You have rebuked the nations, and the impious one has perished ;/ his name You have blotted out unto the age,/ and unto the age of the age.

V 6 About "*rebuked*" : see Psalms 67:31 ; 105:9 ; 118:21. See also the note about "*rebuke*" on Psalm 17:16.

✠ About "*nations*" : this generally refers to Gentiles, to those outside the Chosen People, to those who worship other than the one Lord God, to those whose influence on the faithful is negative, because of the temptation to fall away from the Truth.

- ✣ See verses 12, 16, 18, 20, 21, 37 ; see the note about "*nations*" on Psalm 2:1.

✠ About "*impious one*" (singular) : see verses 23, 34 ; see Psalms 10:5 ; 16:3 ; 36:35 ; Isaiah 26:10 (Matins Canticle 5). See the note about "*the impious*" (plural) on Psalm 1:1.

✠ About "*perished*" : see the note on verse 4.

✠ About "*his name ... of the age*" : Saint Athanasius explains that this is concerning the destruction of the devil.

- ✣ Cassiodorus explains that from this juncture in the psalm (including the previous verse), there is

explanation of the Second Advent of the Lord. Unbelieving nations will be rebuked and the devil with his tricks will perish "*unto the age of the age*". This refers to the Lord's Kingdom which has no end whatsoever.

✣ See Psalms 33:17 ; 108:13 ; Job 18:17 ; Proverbs 10:8 ; Wisdom of Sirach 10:17 ; see also *The Orthodox Study Bible* note on Luke 16:22.

✠ About "*his name*" (not divine) : see Psalms 15:4 ; 40:6 ; 44:18 ; 48:12 ; 71;14, 17 ; 82:5 ; 108:13 ; 146:4.

✠ About "*blotted out*" : this word means "*caused to disappear*", "*obliterated*", "*wiped out*", "*erased*", "*obscured*", "*covered over*".

✣ See Psalms 50:3, 11 ; 68:29 ; 108:13, 14.

✠ About "*unto the age*" : Saint Augustine comments that "*unto the age*" refers to the present time through which we pass in temporal history. He says that this time is but a shadow of what is to come : the "*age of the age*", which is eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven, unchanging life beyond time. Our present life is a sort of imitation of the eternal life to come.

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7 ז The swords of the enemy have failed unto the end,/ and You have pulled down cities ;/ their remembrance has perished with a roar.

V 7 About "*swords of the enemy...*" : Saint Athanasius, in his *Life of Saint Anthony*, wrote that someone knocked at the door of Saint Anthony's cell. He opened and saw a person of great size. When asked, the person revealed that he was Satan. When asked why he had come, he complained by asking why all the Christians blame him undeservedly and constantly curse him. Saint Anthony asked why Satan troubled them. Satan replied that the Christians trouble themselves, since he has become weak. He then asked whether the Christians have read this very verse. He added that he no longer has a weapon or city. He complained that Christians had spread everywhere, and that even the desert was filled with monks. He concluded by requesting that the Christians pay attention to themselves, and not blame him undeservedly. Saint Anthony replied that Satan, who only tells lies, had just then revealed the strength of Christ, because Satan had just then told the truth, which is that the coming of Christ had weakened him and cast him down. Then, burned by the mention of the Name of Christ, Satan vanished. Saint Anthony then commented that the Christians ought therefore to be courageous and without any fear, since the evil powers can do us no harm.

✣ Saint John of Damascus comments that the Orthodox Faith has been spread amongst the nations. The Light of Christ has illumined those who were in darkness. Although the enemy (the devil) is annoyed by this defeat, and he annoys the Faithful, he has, in fact, no power because of the power of Christ, since "*the swords of the enemy have failed unto the end*".

✣ Saint Augustine points out that the word "*enemy*" is in the singular, and therefore it refers to the enemy of our race, the devil. For Saint Augustine, the swords are heresies, various misguided opinions by which the devil cuts down souls. The Great Sword which overcomes them is at work in a hidden way, but at the Last Judgement, it will be wielded openly and it will destroy the fortresses of the devil. The past and the future destruction of these cities refer both to the Resurrection of Christ and to the Last Judgement.

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

✠ About "*failed unto the end*" : this translates the Greek word ἐκλείπω, *ekleipō*, which means "to forsake", "to desert", "to die", "to faint", "to cease, to fail", "vanish", "come to an end", or "to make extinct". Because of this variety, it is translated variously in the text of this work, in accordance with the nuances of its context.

⁜ See, for instance, Psalms 30:11 ; 63:7 ; 67:3 ; 72:19, 26 ; 83:3 ; 101:4 ; 103:29, 35 ; 141:4.

✠ About "*pulled down*" : see Psalm 27:5.

✠ About "*perished with a roar*" : Saint John Chrysostom urges a Christological connexion here, with reference to the notorious destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of those who crucified Christ. Christ's Providence has overtaken everything. Saint John continues, and suggests that the enormity of the destruction would serve as an object-lesson to everyone. As a sign of the Lord's care, the disaster was open and visible so that it might lead some to repentance.

⁜ Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović) comments that the adversary and slayer of human beings has always been bent upon our destruction. All this is to no avail, since with the arrival of Christ, it was made clear that in the presence of Christ (who is everywhere), the devil has not power or influence whatsoever. It is further revealed that the devil's works are mere insubstantial pretence rooted only in fear. When Christ arrived, the devil was overthrown in the Passion and Resurrection. No weapons remain to our enemy ; his cities of antagonism are destroyed, and the memory of the devil will "*perish with a roar*".

⁜ See the note about "*not rebuild*" on Psalm 27:5.

✠ About "*perish*" : see the note on verse 4.

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8 ה The LORD remains unto the age ;/ He has prepared His throne in fair-judgement.

V 8 About "*remains*" : Saint John Chrysostom notes that an alternative translation is "is seated" or "is enthroned". He refers to such a possible interpretation of Baruch 3:3. He further comments that being seated is often used to express "abiding being", "steadiness", "stability", "constancy of nature", "steadfastness".

⁜ "Is seated" can also mean "remains", "abides", "endures".

✠ About "*prepared His throne*" : Saint Augustine comments that when Christ was subjected to distorted human judgement, He then, through all the events of His Passion and Resurrection, hiddenly prepared His throne for the future, open, final righteous and fair-judgement at the end of all.

✠ About "*throne*" : see the note on verse 5.

✠ About "*fair-judgement*" : Saint Irenæus of Lyon reminds us that it is the Lord who will judge all in fairness and righteousness. He remarks that there are nevertheless persons who are contemptuous towards the martyrs, and they even vituperate those who thus suffer and die because they seek to follow the love and the way of the Lord. It is the Lord who will ultimately set everything aright.

✣ See the note on verse 5.

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9 He it is who will judge the world in righteousness ;/ He will judge the peoples in uprightness.

V 9 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom points out the use of tenses in order to differentiate between the particular and the universal judgement. The judgement which is to come has to do with the universal judgement of the world (see Acts 17:31). The Lord puts many things into effect in the present so that the careless do not come to think that He has no power or presence in the present. If not everyone receives his or her due in this life, then it will be given on that Day. Now is the time for struggle, forbearance and long-suffering, so that sins may be wiped away through repentance. It is possible now to change for the good.

✣ Saint Augustine emphasises the future, final, manifest judgement of all, at which the Lord will righteously apportion to each and all what is deserved (see Matthew 25:33). His judgement is not like the distorted and often mistaken fallen judgement of humans, because He is pure, and because He is the Knower of Hearts.

✣ Saint Didymus the Blind similarly warns us that in view of the coming Divine Judgement, if we are prudent, then we ought to pursue excellence and righteousness, and to keep away from evil and impiety.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea comments that the righteous who seek the Lord are confident that He will not abandon them on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, may the righteous hope strongly on the Lord, and have patience in everything in the Lord, as they await the prepared requital.

✣ See the note on verse 5 ; see also the note about "*judging*" on Psalm 2:10 ; and the note about "*Righteous Judge*" on Psalm 7:12.

✠ About "*World*" : this translates the Greek word οἰκουμένη, *oikoumenē*. Here, it does not mean simply "the universe" (κόσμος, *kosmos*), as some seem to suppose. Rather, "*world*", *oikoumenē*, means where all people (all rational beings who can know, and who can understand) dwell. Some translators use instead "inhabited world" or "inhabited earth". Several psalms make a clear distinction between the planet earth as such (γῆ, *gē*), and the world in which people dwell (*oikoumenē*) by using two different words. The dwelt-in world is *oikoumenē*.

✣ See Psalms 17:16 ; 18:5 ; 23:1 ; 32:8 ; 48:2 ; 49:12 ; 71:8 ; 76:19 ; 88:12 ; 89:2 ; 92:1 ; 95:10, 13 ; 96:4 ; 97:7, 9 ; Daniel 3:45 (Matins Canticle 7).

✣ About the appearance together of "*world*" and "earth" : see Psalms 18:5 ; 23:1 ; 32:8 ; 76:19 ; 88:12 ; 89:2 ; 95:13 ; 96:4 ; 97:9.

✠ About "*righteousness*" : see the note about "*His righteousness*" on Psalm 7:18.

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

✠ About "*uprightness*" : see 3 Kingdoms 9:4 ; Psalms 10:7 ; 16:2 ; 25:12 ; 36:37 ; 44:7 ; 66:5 ; 95:10 ; 97:9 ; 98:4 ; 110:8 ; 118:7 ; 142:10.

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10 ו The LORD has been the Refuge of the needy one :/ a Helper, in favourable times, in affliction.

V 10 About "*Refuge*" : Saint John Chrysostom provides alternative readings, in which the Lord is the Refuge of "the worn-out" and "the bruised". He reminds us that King David constantly describes himself as poor and needy, despite the fact that he lives in a palace (see Psalm 39:18). [See Psalms 68:30 ; 69:6.] He tells us that this is because of King David's perception that human beings have less substance than a shadow. Everything else besides virtue is insubstantial, and nothing belongs to us in the way that virtue does (which is interior to us, rather than exterior). The King/Prophet confesses that it is not his palace, nor his fortifications, nor his army that are his safety ; but rather, the Lord, who is always close at hand [see Psalm 144:18] is his Refuge.

✣ This word is used, as is "*Helper*", as a sort of title for the Lord. See the notes on Psalm 17:2, 3.

✣ See Psalms 17:3 ; 30:3-4 ; 31:7 ; 45:2 ; 58:17 ; 70:3 ; 89:1 ; 90:2 ; 93:22 ; 143:2.

✠ About "*needy one*" : Saint Dorotheus of Gaza reminds us that God is aware of our needs. God is merciful, and He does give to everyone what is needed. In so doing, He reveals the abundance of His love of human beings, and he teaches them to give thanks. When He may not give a person what is needed, He urges the person to compensate for what is needed through the working of the mind, and in this He teaches the person patience.

✣ See the note about "*the needy*" (plural) on verse 13 ; see verse 29 ; see 1 Kingdoms 2:8 (Matins Canticle 3) ; see also Psalms 10:4 ; 34:10 ; 36:14 ; 40:2 ; 71:13 ; 73:21 ; 81:3, 4 ; 85:1 ; 106:41 ; 108:31 ; 112:7 ; 139:13.

✣ "*Poor*" and "*needy*" often appear together in the same verse. See the note on verse 19.

✠ About "*Helper*" : this word is used, as is "*Refuge*", as a sort of title for the Lord. See the notes on Psalm 17:2, 3.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom explains that this word implies more than simply being a benefactor or a hired worker. From this word, we are to understand it is the Lord Himself who is with us and helping us, but that we are to be active ourselves, just as in the saying "the Lord helps those who help themselves". The apostles were busy ; they were active, and the Lord was amongst them and working with them. We likewise should be at work in our prayers and in our alms, and the Lord will be working with us.

✣ See verse 35 ; see the note on Psalm 18:15 ; see also 2 Moses 15:2 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 3:29 ; Psalms 17:3 ; 26:9 ; 27:7 ; 29:11 ; 32:20 ; 36:39 ; 39:18 ; 43:2 ; 51:9 ; 58:18 ; 61:9 ; 62:8 ; 69:6 ; 70:7 ; 77:35 ; 80:2 ; 93:22 ; 113:17, 18, 19 ; 117:6, 7 ; 118:114 ; 145:5 ; Isaiah 25:4.

✠ About "*favourable times, in affliction*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that this refers to a single situation rather than two different situations. He tells us that just as winter is a time to till the earth, so a time of affliction is a good season, an opportune moment, in which indifference and dissipation may be removed, and we may become more diligent in supplication.

✣ Saint Paisius of Mount Athos likens thoughts [whether good or bad] during prayer to æroplanes circling an æroport. He says that our responsibility is to keep the thoughts from landing [since any distraction in prayer is not good]. This is primarily accomplished by asking the Lord for help at all times.

✣ See verse 22.

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11 Let them hope on You – those knowing Your Name,/ for You did not abandon those seeking You out, O LORD.

V 11 About "*hope*" : Saint John Chrysostom, keeping in mind the faith of the Three Children (Daniel 3:20-97), reminds us that despite any sort of difficulty that we may face, we who know the Lord have the same unassailable hope on the Lord. We know His support ; we know His assistance ; we know that He is a sufficient anchor and an impregnable tower of protection for us. King David thus shows us how the Lord is our Refuge and Helper. However, if He does not relieve the troubles at once, it is because He wishes to help us become stronger in hope and zealous in our trust in Him.

✣ Saint Augustine emphasises the need for us to put our trust in the Lord in and for everything, so that we never place our trust in anything created.

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

✠ About "*knowing Your Name*" : Saint Augustine reminds us that only those who know and love the Lord can begin to know the Name of the Lord, which is unpronounceable (see the note about "*LORD*" on Psalm 1:2). No-one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

✣ See Psalm 90:14 ; Isaiah 52:6.

✠ About "*You did not abandon*" : Saint Didymus the Blind comments that those who have a perfect knowledge of God's Name trust in no other thing. Some erroneously say that persons such as Abel and the multitude of others (including the Holy Apostles) were abandoned by God because they suffered as they did. However, not one of them was ever abandoned by God. Otherwise they would not have been able to endure and persevere.

✣ Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović) exhorts us never to succumb to the temptation to believe that God has abandoned us. He is very well aware of precisely how much each person can endure, and He measures the sufferings and pains of each one. He loves us.

✠ About "*abandon*" : this word appears many times in the Psalter, in which it is used in various positive and negative manners.

✣ See verse 35 ; see 5 Moses 31:6 ; 5 Moses 32:15, 18 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Joshua 1.5 ; 3 Kingdoms 8:56 ; Psalms 15:10 ; 21:2 ; 26:9, 10 ; 36:8, 25, 28, 33 ; 37:11, 22 ; 39:13 ; 70:9, 18 ; 88:31 ; 93:14 ; 118:8, 53, 87 ; 139:9 ; Jonah 2:9 (Matins Canticle 6) ; Hebrews 13:5.

✠ About "*seeking ... out*" : Saint John Chrysostom addresses the weakness of indifference amongst us by reminding us that we must be free from the worldly concerns which produce this jaded state. This may even have been the occasion for the original Adamic fall. The Lord is everywhere, and everyone who seeks Him finds Him (see Matthew 7:8). When we direct our hearts towards Him and seek Him, He renews our strength and energises our godly motivations. The Lord never abandons us.

✣ See verses 13, 25, 34 ; see the note about "*seeking out*" on Psalm 24:10 ; see Psalms 13:2 ; 21:27 ; 26:4, 8 ; 30:24 ; 33:5, 11 ; 43:22 ; 52:3 ; 60:8 ; 68:33 ; 77:7, 34 ; 104:45 ; 118:2, 33, 145, 155 ; 141:5 ; Hosea 10:12. See also the note about "*seek*" on Psalm 4:3.

12 ר Chant to the LORD, to Him, dwelling in Sion./ Announce His purposes amongst the nations ;

V 12 About "*chant*" : see the note about "*chant*" on Psalm 7:18.

✠ About "*dwelling in Sion*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments on the apparent paradox that God, who is illimitable, uncircumscribable and omnipresent, would dwell in Sion. He says that the expression describes the Lord's affinity with the place, rather than its being His actual dwelling. Likewise, God dwells in each of us also, but without being circumscribed by us. A home is so called because we feel "at home" there, and so it is with the Lord. Saint John adds that Mount Sion refers spiritually to the Church (see Hebrews 12:22-23) because the Church is a solid and unshakable mountain.

✣ See Psalms 19:3 ; 49:2 ; 73:2 ; 75:3 ; 127:5 ; 131:13-14 ; 133:3 ; 134:21 ; Joel 4:17, 21 ; Zephaniah 3:15-17 ; Zechariah 8:3 ; Isaiah 24:23 ; Hebrews 12:22.

✠ About "*Sion*" : see the note about "*Sion*" on Psalm 2:6. See the note about "*daughter of Sion*" on verse 15.

✠ About "*announce*" : this translates the Greek word ἀγγέλω, *angelō*, meaning "report", "recount", "announce", "proclaim".

✣ See 5 Moses 32:7 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 18:2, 3 ; 21:31, 32 ; 29:10 ; 37:19 ; 39:10 ; 43:2 ; 49:6 ; 50:17 ; 51:2 ; 63:10 ; 67:12 ; 91:3, 16 ; 95:2, 3 ; 96:6 ; 101:22, 24 ; 110:6 ; 151:3.

✠ About "*purposes*" : see the note about "*purposes*" on Psalm 13:1 ; see 1 Kingdoms 2:3 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 27:4 ; 76:13 ; 80:13 ; 98:8 ; 105:2, 39.

✠ About "*amongst the nations*" : see Psalms 95:3 ; 104:1 ; Isaiah 66:19.

✠ About "*nations*" : see see the note on verse 6.

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13 for He, seeking out crimes of blood, has remembered them :/
He has not forgotten the cry of the needy.

V 13 About "*seeking out*" : see the note on verse 11.

✠ About "*crimes of blood*" : Saint John Chrysostom explains that that there is no murder committed that will go unpunished and fully avenged : "*For your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning*" (see 1 Moses 9:5). [See also Job 16:18.] He continues to say that these and similar words demonstrate the Lord's intense and personal care. However, if there appears to be a delay, then it is because of the Lord's compassionately providing an opportunity for repentance. [See 2 Peter 3:9.]

✣ About "*blood*" : see the note about "*blood*" on Psalm 5:7.

✠ About "*remembered*" : being remembered by the Lord has to do with salvation. However, since the Lord is the Source of all being, of all that is, that the Lord remembers is simply an active expression of His life-giving love. Nothing can exist in any way unless the Lord, in His love, remembers.

✣ See the note about "*knows*" on Psalm 1:6 ; see 1 Moses 8:1 (and its *Orthodox Study Bible* note) ; see 2 Moses 2:24 ; Psalms 24:7 ; 105:4 ; Luke 23:42-43.

✠ About "*has not forgotten*" : Saint John Chrysostom calls our attention to the esteem in which the Lord holds the needy and the poor in spirit. He points out that humility is at the foundation of prayer. If we cry out to the Lord in poverty of spirit and with a contrite heart, then the Lord will hear. Even though we may be tempted to believe that He has forgotten because we have long cried to Him, we must never accept the temptation, because the Lord knows what He is doing. The Lord is always concerned with the poor and the needy. [See the note about "*in the midst of affliction*" on Psalm 137:7 ; see Isaiah 25:4.] Saint John points out that King David has taken on the role of a suppliant, an advocate, who is entreating on behalf of the wronged.

✣ Saint Augustine reminds us that the Lord never forgets either the living or the departed. It is a fact of our fallen life that sometimes people perish at the hands of evil because of their love for the Lord. It happens in every age. The Lord remembers all and everyone in His love, and at the Last Judgement, He will treat both the killed and the killers appropriately. The Lord never forgets, despite the apparent delays and the length of time things may take.

✣ See verses 19, 33 ; see Isaiah 49:15.

✠ About "*the needy*" (plural) : see the note about "*needy one*" (singular) on verse 10 ; see also verses 19, 31, 33, 38 ; see Psalms 11:6 ; 21:7 ; 68:34 ; 71:4 ; 111:9 ; 139:13.

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14 ח Have mercy on me, O LORD ;/ see my humiliation from my enemies./
You are the One lifting me up from the gates of death,

V 14 About "*have mercy*" : Saint Didymus the Blind suggests that anyone who is depressed and oppressed by the troubles and tribulations of the world, and who is truly repentant for his own sins, ought frequently to repeat the words : "*have mercy on me, O LORD ; see my humiliation*". Such a person can continue, saying : "they have humiliated me, and drawn me down and You, alone, O Lord, are able to lift '*me up from the gates of death*', because of Your essential goodness".

✣ Saint John Chrysostom comments that we are always in need of God's providential help, and especially at a time of freedom from troubles and affliction. This is because at such a time, there is a struggle which is much more difficult to engage as we confront indifference and obtuseness. It is then that the devil is more aggressively attacking. We therefore need the Grace to cope with the "good times". For instance, when the Jews were freed from the Egyptians, they were confronted with their own obtuseness in the desert. At that time, they greatly failed, and as a result they wandered for 40 years. After King David was freed from the difficulties with King Saul, he ran afoul of other, more difficult challenges. With regard to humiliation, he refers us to Psalm 118:71.

✣ Saint Augustine rhetorically asks why the request for mercy is in the singular instead of the plural, since the number of the poor and needy is so great. He cites 2 Corinthians 8:9. He reminds us that One who was made poor for our sake is the One whose voice we hear, as He intercedes for the multitudes. Our Saviour says that the Lord who lifts Him up also lifts up all who are members of His Body. Thus, we are all lifted up and away from the gates of death.

✣ See the note about "*have mercy*" on Psalm 6:3.

✠ About "*humiliation*" : this translates here the Greek word ταπείνωσις *tapeinōsis*. This word may also be translated as "humility" or "lowliness". "Humility" is used primarily to refer to a state of being, whereas "*humiliation*" refers to the experience of abasement.

✣ According to Saint Porphyrios (Bairaktaris) of Kafsokalivia, a person who is accustomed to humiliation attracts the grace of God.

✣ See the note about "*humiliation*" on Psalm 135:23 ; see also Psalms 24:18 ; 89:3 ; 118:50, 92, 153. See also the note about "*humility*" on Psalm 21:22.

✠ About "*lifting me up from the gates of death*" : Saint John Chrysostom gives thanks to the Lord who not only expels our troubles, but who also lifts us up from out of our afflictions. This phrase about *the gates of death* indicates the extremity to which the Lord goes in order to save us. He is always extending to us His Hand.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea emphasises that the Prophet David prophesies, and we hear the voice of Christ about His Resurrection from the dead. He is convinced that not even the dullest person could see and hear these words and not comprehend the meaning.

✣ The "*One lifting me up from the gates of death*" is the Lord, who is greater than death, and who is victorious over death. There was no death before the rebellion of God's creatures. We see in the icon venerated at Pascha that our Saviour with His right hand is raising Adam. Our Lord is trampling underfoot the two crossed doors of Hadēs which He has pulled down.

✠ About "*lifting ... up*" : this translates the Greek verb ὑψόω, *hypsoō*, which is usually translated as "*exalt*" in this Psalter, although it may also be translated as "*lift high*" ; however, the meaning in English does not work correctly with "*exalt*", hence the substitution.

✣ See 1 Kingdoms 2:8 ; Psalms 17:49 ; 60:3 ; 112:7.

✠ About "*gates of death*" : see Psalm 106:18 ; Wisdom of Solomon 16:13 ; Isaiah 38:10.

✣ It ought always to be remembered that "*gates of death*" here, and elsewhere, is a cipher (code-language) for "Hadēs".

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

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15 ט so that I might tell forth all Your praises/ in the gates of the daughter of Sion/. I shall exult in Your salvation.

V 15 About "*praises*" : see the note about "*praise*" on Psalm 8:3.

✠ About "*gates of the daughter of Sion*" : Saint Didymus the Blind comments that the "*gates of the daughter of Sion*", the opposite of "*the gates of death*", are praiseworthy deeds and contemplation on the works of God.

✣ Saint Augustine reminds us that through these gates we enter the city of peace ; we enter into the vision of peace in the Holy Church. Within these gates, all the praises of God are properly proclaimed. The gates, which are opened to those who knock, are the Holy Mysteries (sacraments),

the steps we take towards the hidden things of the Son. He further comments that it is the Church who says in hope that she shall exult in the salvation which has come and which is to come.

✣ Saint Bede of Jarrow exhorts his brothers to learn the mysteries of the Faith and that they show that their deeds are in accord with this Faith. He says that with all vigilance we must be aware and wary of the multiple subtle snares of the gates of Hadēs, so that in accordance with the words of the Prophet David, we may be worthy to be snatched from these snares by the Lord's help and be enabled to announce His praises at "*the gates of the daughter of Sion*". This means to enter into the joys of the Heavenly City.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) writes : "*The gates of the daughter of Sion*" is in contrast to "*the gates of death*". By "Sion" is meant Jerusalem, the city which was regarded as the mother of its inhabitants. Therefore, the "the daughters of Sion" are the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

✠ About "*the daughter of Sion*" : this phrase is a cipher (code-language) for "Jerusalem".

✣ See verse 12 ; see Psalm 72:28 ; Zephaniah 3:14.

✠ About "*gates ... of Sion*" : see Psalm 86:2.

✠ About "*exult in Your salvation*" : Saint John Chrysostom explains that it is the Prophet's own crown and diadem that he may "*exult in Your salvation*". Saint John adds that we ought not to seek to be freed or saved at any price or in any manner, but only in God's way. Being saved by God is truly salvation.

✠ About "*exult*" : see the note on verse 3.

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

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16 The nations became stuck in the corruption which they made :/ in that snare which they hid has their foot been caught.

V 16 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom mentions that the "*corruption*" in which "*the nations became stuck*" is the vice (sin, evil, wickedness, iniquity, turpitude) which they made. Nothing is weaker than the wicked, and they are undone by their own weapons. Those who kick against the goad do it no harm, but bloody their own feet. So it is with the wicked. Vice itself requires satisfaction from the guilty one. Therefore, the nations became shackled by their own evil. Daniel 3:21 and 6:25 are clear examples of this.

✣ See the note on verse 17 ; see also the note on Psalm 7:16.

✣ Cassiodorus explains that those who are held down by the nails of sins are unable to free themselves from the fetters that restrain them. They have become tightly bound up by the complex web of deceit.

✠ About "*nations*" : the nations are, as it were, paralysed by the lies which they accept to be the truth. The nations, and we also, become paralysed by such lies as though we had been bitten by a venomous creature.

✣ See the note on verse 6.

✠ About "*stuck*" : see Psalms 37:3 ; 68:3, 15.

✠ About "*corruption*" : this translates the Greek word διαφθορά, *diaphthōra* (from the Hebrew for "decay",

"pit", "grave"). It means destruction ; corruption. The root meaning of this word is physical or moral "destruction" ; "ruin" ; "decay" ; "depravity" ; "rottenness" ; "putrefaction". In the hymn to the Theotokos, "It is truly meet ... ", the usage "without corruption" regarding the Incarnation indicates that there is nothing leading to death involved. Only what is life-giving is involved.

✣ See the notes on Psalms 13:1 ; 15:10 ; 27:1 ; 102:4 ; see also Psalms 29:10 ; 54:24 ; 106:20 ; 139:12 ; Jonah 2:7 (Matins Canticle 6). See the note about "*destruction*" on Psalm 34:7.

✠ About "*snare ... hid*" : see Psalm 30:5.

✠ About "*snare*" : Saint Didymus the Blind addresses "*that snare*" by saying that the wicked, first harming themselves, strive deceitfully to drive others into the same malaise. Secretly, they build traps of deceit with their own scheming so that they may seize some unsuspecting person. However, by that very trap which they have hidden are they punished (see Psalm 7:16). This punishment, which reflects God's judgement, is by the Providence of God.

✣ Saint Augustine also addresses that "*snare*" (he used the Latin word "*muscipula*" : "mousetrap") by commenting that the sinners "get a taste of their own medicine", since the consequences of their corrupt plots against others (against the Church) fall upon themselves. They wanted to kill bodies, but their own souls were dying. He explains that the hidden mousetrap is deceitful scheming.

✣ See the note on verse 31 ; see also the notes on Psalms 10:6 ; 34:7 ; 65:11 ; 139:6 ; see also Psalms 17:6 ; 24:15 ; 30:5 ; 56:7 ; 63:6 ; 68:23 ; 90:3 ; 118:110 ; 123:7 ; 140:9 ; 141:4 ; Job 22:10.

✠ About "*hid*" : this translates the Greek word κρύπτω, *kryptō*, which means "hide", "cover".

✣ See Psalms 16:14 ; 18:7 ; 26:5 ; 30:5, 20, 21 ; 34:7, 8 ; 37:10 ; 39:11 ; 53:2 ; 54:13 ; 55:7 ; 63:6 ; 68:6 ; 77:4 ; 118:11, 19 ; 138:15 ; 139:6 ; 141:4 ; Isaiah 26:20 (Matins Canticle 5).

✠ About "*foot*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea points out that whenever the evil desire to eradicate the Faithful, they themselves are enticed into their own traps and disaster. In their own snares, their own foot is caught.

✣ Cassiodorus comments that "*foot*" implies the mental steps, together with corrupted longings, which press the "*nations*" to move towards evil. See Proverbs 1:17.

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17 › The LORD is known in His making judgements ;/
the sinner has been caught in the works of his own hands.

V 17 About "*making judgements*" : Saint John Chrysostom asks rhetorically why the Lord does not more often vigorously pursue and prosecute the sinners. His answer is that the Lord does not wish that people behave properly because of fear or coercion , but rather because of willing love. He further recalls for us that when the Lord wiped out the rebellious during the desert wanderings of Israel, those remaining did, indeed repent, but only in a shallow manner. They soon returned to their grumbling, murmuring and rebellion (see Psalm 77:34-37). [See 2 Moses 16:2-3 ; 4 Moses 11.]

✠ About "*judgements*" : the Greek word κρίμα, *krima*, "judgement", is sometimes similar in meaning to the Greek κρίσις, *krisis*. "*His*" is lacking in Greek in this verse.

✣ See verse 26 ; see the notes on Psalms 16:2 ; 18:10 ; see also 5 Moses 32:41 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 17:23 ; 35:7 ; 36:6 ; 47:12 ; 71:1 ; 80:5 ; 88:15, 31 ; 96:2, 8 ; 102:6 ; 104:5, 7 ; 118:7, 13, 20, 30, 39, 43, 52, 62, 75, 102, 106, 108, 120, 121, 132, 149, 156, 160, 164, 175 ; 145:7 ; 147:8, 9 ; 149:9 ; Daniel 3:28 (Matins Canticle 7). See also the note about "*judging*" on Psalm 2:10 . See also the note about *krisis* on Psalm 1:5.

✠ About "*sinner*" : see verses 18, 24, 25, 36 ; see the note about "*sinners*" on Psalm 1:1.

✠ About "*caught in the works of his own hands*" : Saint John Chrysostom points out that we are preparing schemes against another when we make plots. However, these schemes come back upon ourselves. [This is a "boomerang effect".]

✣ See Esther 7:9-10 as an example of what Saint John means. Saint Jerome is quoted in *The Orthodox Study Bible*, as saying that Haman is burnt in the fire of his own kindling.

✣ Saint Augustine rhetorically asks : How does God pass judgement on sinners ? How is it that sinners are afflicted ? He answers that in no manner does God send out the sword, fire or attacks of wild animals to afflict sinners. This is contrary to the deep and blessed goodness, tranquillity and peace of His love. Rather, sinners simply reap what they sow.

✣ Cassiodorus amplifies these perceptions by saying that God's Judgement implies that there is first a clear and carefully detailed examination of the life and deeds of each person. Despite the apparent impunity of the wild misbehaviour of the malefactors, it will then be seen that each one of them has become ensnared and bound in and by his own misdeeds. They have produced their own noose.

✣ It is after the Lord's thorough investigations (He is the Knower of Hearts) that He will separate the sheep from the goats.

✠ About "*works*"(human) : see Psalms 16:4 ; 27:4 ; 32:15 ; 44:2 ; 61:13 ; 89:17 ; 103:23 ; 105:35 ; 106:23 ; 113:12 ; 134:15. See the note about "*works*" (*Divine*) on Psalm 8:4.

Canticle of Pause

✠ About "*Canticle of Pause*" : In the Masoretic (Hebrew) text, the direction is *higgaion selah*, the meaning of which is now unknown.

✣ Saint Gregory of Nyssa says that this unique variation may be understood as "Pause of a Canticle". He points out that in this unique case, there is no indication about what hidden things were communicated to the Prophet David by the Holy Spirit, nor what knowledge he was given, nor what he had learned. Therefore, Saint Gregory says, the two elements belong together (perhaps instruction and knowledge, but this is nowhere stated) and the Holy Spirit moves the Prophet David to continue singing the psalm without any interruption.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom simply translates it as "a voice continuously", or else "chanting continuously".

✣ Diodore of Tarsus does not distinguish between the meaning of "pause" and "canticle of pause". He says that "pause" indicates a change of melody, style and/or rhythm, but not a shift in thought

or idea. "Canticle of pause", he says, likewise simply indicates a change of melody, style and/or rhythm, since the singers usually make adjustments depending on the instruments and/or voices available. It does not indicate a change in the pattern of thought. He emphasises that there is always a continuity of thought before and after every pause.

✣ See the note about "*canticle*" on Psalm 4:1.

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18 כ Let the sinners be turned back to Hadēs :/ all the nations forgetting God ;

V 18 About "*sinners*" : see the note on verse 17.

✠ About "*be turned back to Hadēs*" : Saint John Chrysostom elaborates that wickedness has punishment prepared for it (Hadēs), that godlessness produces death, and that sin produces great dangers. The godless will suffer the consequences, and the retribution will be severe.

✣ Saint Athanasius teaches us that the Lord's people, having embraced true life, will certainly receive the joy of Heaven. However, the ungodly, who do not care about the true life, are rightly denied its blessings. He refers to Isaiah 26:10. Likewise, the ungodly will, along with the godly, hear the proclamation : "'*Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead*'" (Ephesians 5:14). When they then try to gain entrance to Heaven, the Lord will respond : "'*I do not know you*'" (Luke 13:25).

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

✠ About "*nations*" : see the note on verse 6.

✠ About "*forgetting*" (human) : see 5 Moses 32:18 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 30:13 ; 43:18, 21 ; 44:11 ; 49:22 ; 58:12 ; 77:7, 11 ; 101:5 ; 102:2 ; 105:13, 21 ; 118:16, 30, 61, 83, 93, 109, 139, 141, 153, 176 ; 136:5. See also the note on verse 13 (Divine).

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

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19 for the poor one shall not be forgotten unto the end :/ the endurance of the needy shall not perish unto the end.

V 19 About "*the poor one*" and "*the needy*" : Saint John Chrysostom emphasises that the poor will definitely and ultimately be remembered and they will receive their reward, even though they may have to wait. The Lord loves the poor, and He will not permit them to be overcome by the schemes of the godless. However, any delays have to do with opportunities for repentance for some, and for others opportunities for exhibiting patience and humility. These virtues are characteristic of the poor and the needy, since their whole lives train them in this direction. Any waiting or patience will not have to continue endlessly. There will be an end to it. Further, Saint John perceives that King David, not thinking about himself, is imploring help for the wronged and for the poor of the whole world as though they were one person.

✣ The Hebrew word "*'anawim*" ("*inwetan*" in Aramaic) means "those who are bowed down". It is equivalent to the Greek πτωχοί, *ptōchoi*, "*the poor*" (plural). It is equivalent also to the Greek πένητες, *penētes*, "*the needy*" (plural). "*Anawim*" refers primarily to the poor, but the prophets make an extension by also calling them "the oppressed" : those who are deprived of their sustenance by the greedy consumerism of the wealthy. This is why they are "bowed down". With the prophets, Saint John Chrysostom would say that those who amass wealth usually do so on the backs of the poor. See Amos 2:6-7 ; Isaiah 10:2. It is clear that our Saviour's words and actions regarding the poor are rooted in the Torah. See 2 Moses 22:20-26 ; 5 Moses 24:12-15. The Christ (the Messiah) was sent to the poor. See Psalm 71:12-14 ; Luke 4:18 (Isaiah 61:1-2). Christ was Himself amongst the poor. See Isaiah 53:4 ; Matthew 11:29 ; 21:5 (Zechariah 9:9).

✣ Saint Augustine reminds us about our need for the virtues of long-suffering and patience. The poor are demeaned, mistreated and mocked by the oppressive and apparently successful rich. Long-suffering is required by the poor under such evil circumstances so that they will be able to endure in hope until the end. Although the poor may seem to be forgotten in the present, and although sinners appear to flourish, the poor will not be forever forgotten.

✣ Saint Cæsarius of Arles cautions the proud that from the beginning of the world, they have been and correctly ought to be rebuked, in various writings. On the contrary, in the Scriptures, the poor have always been and ought to be blessed (see James 4:6).

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea cautions the sinners who are forgetfully enjoying themselves at the cost of others, that they will surely suffer the consequences of trampling the poor. He encourages the poor towards patience in hope, and to keep remembering that the Lord never forgets them, despite their having been trampled by others. Their patience will ultimately bear fruit.

✣ Cassiodorus teaches us that patience (long-suffering, endurance) required by "*the poor*" is an unending act of thanksgiving in the midst of the world's troubles and turmoils, a thanksgiving which continues until death.

✣ It is important that we keep in mind that the perseverance in hope by the poor is not to be disappointed, since the Lord loves the poor. This test is a refining fire which strengthens the endurer.

✣ The NAB suggests that the Hebrew term for "*poor*" came to include the religious sense of "humble", "pious", "devout".

✠ About "*the poor one*" : see verses 23, 30 ; see the note on verse 35 ; see the note about "*the poor one*" on Psalms 21:25 ; 33:7 ; see also 1 Kingdoms 2:8 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 13:6 ; 24:16 ; 34:10 ; 36:14 ; 40:2 ; 67:11 ; 71:12, 13 ; 73:21 ; 81:3, 4 ; 85:1 ; 87:16 ; 101:1 ; 112:7 ; Luke 18:1-8.
See the note about "*the poor*" (plural) on Psalm 11:6. "*Poor*" and "*needy*" often appear together in the same verse throughout the Psalter.

✠ About "*not be forgotten*" : see the notes on verse 13.

✠ About "*the endurance of the needy...*" : Saint Leo the Great exhorts us that our hearts be generous in feeding the poor, and that Christian kindness be greatly abundant in us. Although the Lord Himself could provide more than enough for the poor, He leaves it to us to make this provision so that those who have and those who have not benefit each other. Otherwise, the poor would not receive the crown of patience, and those with abundance would not come to the glory of compassion. Thus, the holy poor and the compassionate rich benefit one another in their diversity, and they both give thanks. See 2 Corinthians

9:7.

✠ About "*endurance*" : see Psalms 38:8 ; 61:6 ; 70:5.

✠ About "*needy*" : see the note on verse 10.

✠ About "*perish*" : see the note on verse 4.

✠ About "*unto the end*" : this translates the Greek phrase εἰς τέλος, *eis telos*.

✣ See verse 32 ; see Psalms 15:11 ; 17:46 ; 43:24 ; 51:7 ; 61:17 ; 73: 1, 3, 10, 11 ; 76:9 ; 78:5 ; 88:47 ; 102:9 ; Daniel 3:34 (Matins Canticle 7). See the note about "*for the End*" on Psalm 4:1.

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20 ל Arise, O LORD, let not Man become strong ;/ let the nations be judged before Your Face.

V 20 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom interprets this verse as indicating that King David now becomes insistent in prayer, and he asks that the Lord now act decisively : Help the wronged ; correct the wrong-doers. He asks that the wrong-doers pay the penalty for their evil acts, since it seems that they did not profit from the Lord.

✠ About "*arise*" : see verse 33 ; see the note about "*arise*" on Psalm 3:8.

✠ About "*Man*" : Cassiodorus explains that the Prophet David, in discussing the end of the world, could see in his heart the time of the Antichrist. The words of this verse sprang from his lips. Cassiodorus further explains that the "*Man*" referred to here is an unendurably evil man who embodies such dark deceiving power that only God could overcome such evil.

✠ About "*become strong*" : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that "strong" refers to Man's being strong, especially in unbelief.

✣ See 5 Moses 32:43 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 16:5 ; 17:34 ; 26:14 ; 30:25 ; 37:20 ; 63:5 ; 67:10 ; 685 ; 73:13 ; 79:16, 18 ; 88:14 ; 102:11 ; 104:4, 24 ; 116:2 ; 138:6, 17 ; 141:7 ; 147:2. See the note about "*strength*" on Psalm 17:2 (noun).

✠ About "*nations*" : see the note on verse 6.

✠ About "*be judged*" : see the note about "*judging*" on Psalm 2:10.

✠ About "*before You Face*" : see the note about "*before Your Face*" on Psalm 5:9.

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21 Appoint, O LORD, a law-giver over them ;/ let the nations know that they are Men.

V 21 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom points out the supplication of the Prophet David for wilful human beings who need a law-giver so that they may come out of their madness, and that they may remember that they are humans. The request is not that they be punished (since evil-doers ultimately

punish themselves), but rather that they may come to their senses, and that their madness be cured.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea explains that the Prophet David is urging the Lord, through His mercy and patience, that before the Judgement, He appoint a long period of trials to the people harassing him, and that He appoint a "*law-giver*" for the people. They are in need of understanding that they are human beings and not brute beasts. He further emphasises that the "*law-giver*" is Christ, and that His law of self-emptying love and service of God and others applies to all the nations.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) explains that the pagans, the impious and the infidels are lacking common sense. They lost their balance and they do not comprehend their limits.

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

✠ About "*law-giver*" : see Psalm 83:7 ; see the note about "*give a law*" on Psalm 24:8.

✠ About "*nations*" : see the note on verse 6.

Pause

✠ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that the Masoretic (Hebrew) version of this psalm is divided into two parts. Verses 1-21 make up Psalm 9, and Psalm 10 consists of verses 22-39. This difference introduces the gap between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint and Vulgate in the numbering of the Psalms.

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22 מ Why, O LORD, have You stood so far away ;/ do You disregard us in favourable times, in affliction ?

V 22 About "*stood so far away*" : Saint Augustine suggests that perhaps the Lord seems to delay or to be aloof in order that we be filled with longing for His coming. The spring of life is all the sweeter to those who are thirsty. [See the note about Saint Augustine's reflection on Psalm 68:17.]

✣ Cassiodorus explains that the questions asked in this verse express human weakness. We tend to feel slighted if the Lord does not seem to respond instantly. Indeed, the holy God is omnipresent, and He does not move about. Nevertheless, He may seem to us to be far away and unresponsive. In His providence, the Lord makes His help the more beneficial as He uses this perception to develop patience in us.

✣ The delaying tactic is similar to that of a parent who does not immediately respond to every whimper of an infant or child. Through this tactic, the child may develop a greater longing and awareness of the need for the parent.

✠ About "*favourable times, in affliction*" : see the note on verse 10.

✠ About "*in affliction*" : Saint Athanasius reminds us that in the psalms we read how afflictions are to be

borne, and what we ought to say both during and after the afflictions.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom comments that King David is not accusing, but imploring on behalf of the afflicted. They, in their pain, plead before the moment of judgement, as one needing surgery might do both before the incision is made and before it is completed (such as with the amputation of a gangrenous leg). They can think only about the immediate pain, not about the life-giving results of the completion of the work. [Those who remember pre-anæsthetic dentistry might understand this more clearly. See the notes about Saint Augustine's comment on Psalm 21:3.]

✠ About "*affliction*" (noun) : see the note about "*affliction*" on Psalm 4:2.

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23 When the impious one behaves proudly, the poor one is set on fire ;/
they are caught in their deliberations, which they reasoned out ;

V 23 About "*the impious one ... on fire*" : Saint Augustine explains that in affliction the minds of the poor become inflamed with hope and longing for divine help, and for the coming of the Righteous Judge. Further, a negative experience can be a positive learning experience. For instance, when one encounters the horrible distortions of heresies and their deadly consequences, one may the much more appreciate and embrace the beauty of the truth.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that impious pride can make the afflicted one lose balance and then sin in anger.

✠ About "*impious one*" : see the note on verse 6.

✠ About "*behaved proudly*" : this phrase expresses a single Greek verb which suggests excessive prideful behaviour, as in "behaving arrogantly", "behaving haughtily".

✠ About "*the poor one*" : see the note on verse 19.

✠ About "*caught in their deliberations*" : Saint John Chrysostom says that there is nothing so vulnerable as a scheming man. He need not be harmed by the weapons of others, since he falls prey to his own, and he is caught by in his own schemes. What is more vulnerable than a person carried off in such a manner ?

✣ Saint Augustine suggests that this means that the evil thoughts of the proud impious become as chains to them, and they become caught and held by them.

✠ About "*deliberations*" : see Psalm 5:11.

✠ About "*reasoned out*" : this phrase expresses a single Greek verb which also suggests "devise", "consider", "think over", "debate", "discuss".

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24 for the sinner praises himself in the cravings of his soul,/ and the one
doing unrighteousness blesses himself.

V 24 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom points to the inversion of reality in such a prevalence of evil : evil is openly and shamelessly spoken about. Thus, not only does the sinner praise and bless

himself/herself, but also receives applause in the midst of the sinning. What is to be hidden and to be ashamed of is rather admired, encouraged and promoted. Under these conditions, how can a cure be administered ? This is the same as calling good evil and evil good. [See Isaiah 5:20.] We ought to mourn for those in such a state, since they have forgotten who they are and what it is to be human beings created by God. He reminds us that in the world, there is never approbation for the lover of poverty and righteousness. Rather, the attention and applause go to those sycophants who live in the vain pursuit of empty flattery and who grasp at the illusion of wealth and power.

✣ Saint Didymus the Blind, in his comments, does not seem to take the verbs of this verse as reflexive. The evil, lacking wisdom, bring about the Lord's Judgement when they praise the sinners who indulge their own cravings. Such persons crave only things, but not what is higher. Further, the evil misunderstand that because they have much wealth, they have great blessings. Thus, they claim that the wicked are blessed by God. Regardless, Saint Didymus insists that it is crucial that we understand that God blesses the godly.

✣ Cassiodorus likewise seems not to take the verbs of this verse as being reflexive. When an evil person is praised, or is sycophantically supported, he is unlikely to be aware of the need to correct himself. Because of this, the evil-doer considers himself to be blessed. Such a deceived and self-deceived person exaggerates his own worth and status and becomes tyrannical. These characteristics are those of the Antichrist, who proclaims himself as an earthly king, and more, the god of all.

✣ Ultimately, the self-excusing of the sinners is tantamount to their blessing themselves in the midst of their self-deception.

✣ Although "*praises himself*" and "*blesses himself*" are not treated as reflexive verbs by Saint Didymus and Cassiodorus, Saint John Chrysostom correctly does so. In the Greek text, both verbs are in the middle (reflexive) voice.

✠ About "*the sinner*" : see the note about "*the sinner*" on verse 17.

✠ About "*cravings*" : see verse 38 ; Psalms 20:3 ; 37:10 ; 102:5 ; 105:14 ; 111:10 ; 126:5 ; 139:5.
See the note about "*crave*" on Psalm 50:7.

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

✠ About "*doing unrighteousness*" : see Psalms 43:18 ; 70:4 ; 88:34.

✠ About "*blesses*" : see the note about "*bless*" on Psalm 5:13.

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25 ג The sinner has provoked the LORD to sharp anger ;/ in accordance with the multitude of his anger, he shall not seek Him out./ God is not before his face.

V 25 About "*the sinner has provoked ... anger*" : Saint Didymus the Blind shows us that when the sinner turned his back on the Lord, He thus provoked the Lord. This is the same as the behaviour of Cain (see 1 Moses 4:16). This behaviour is the deliberate abandonment and rejection of the Lord's protection.

✠ About "*sinner*" : see the note about "*sinner*" on verse 17.

✠ About "*provoked to sharp anger*" : this phrase represents a single Greek verb. This verb is different from the Greek verb used in verse 34, which is translated "*provoke to anger*".

✣ See 5 Moses 32:21 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 73:10, 18 ; 77:41 ; 105:29 ; 106:11.

✠ About "*shall not seek [Him] out*" : "Him" is lacking in Greek. Similarly in verse 34 "it" is lacking. There are other places also in which these pronouns are lacking in Greek, but which should be supplied in English for the sake of clarity.

✣ See the note about "*seeking ... out*" on verse 11.

✠ About "*God is not before his face*" : Saint Augustine comments that, just as with one who had previously had sight and lost it, anyone who has known the love and joy of the Lord also knows what a calamity it would be were the light of the truth to be abandoned or imperceivable.

✣ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus explains that because of denying the presence of the Lord, and because of denying that there be any Judgement, the unbelieving sinner is constantly making his ways dark and filthy. The rebellious sinner embraces the ways of darkness because he despises the ways of the Lord, and he insists on following only the ways of lawlessness.

✠ About "*God*" : see the note on verse 18.

✠ About "*before his face*" : see the note about "*before Your Face*" on Psalm 5:9.

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26 ט His ways are profaned at all times./ Your judgements are wiped out from before his face :/ he shall lord it over all his enemies ;

V 26 About "*his ways are profaned at all times*" : Saint Didymus the Blind points out that these words pertain completely to the devil. There may yet be hope for the humans who turn their backs on the Lord, since good is often may found amongst them, and they may yet repent.

✣ However, the devil made a permanent commitment.

✠ About "*ways*" : see the note about "*way*" (bad) on Psalm 1:1.

✠ About "*profaned*" : see Psalms 54:21 ; 73:7 ; 88:32, 25, 40.

✠ About "*judgement*" : see the note on verse 17.

✠ "*Wiped out*" translates the Greek for "erased", or "expunged", or "removed", or "cancelled": that is, removal from the opposite side of an account in a balance-sheet.

✣ About "*wiped out*" : see Psalms 108:23 ; 140:8.

✠ About "*face*" : see the note about "*Face*" on Psalm 4:7.

✠ About "*lord it*" : see verse 31 ; see Psalms 18:14 ; 48:15 ; 118:133.

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

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27 for he said in his heart : "I shall not be distressed ;/ from generation to

generation, I shall be without badness".

V 27 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom points out the stupidity of such a statement which denies reality. Rather, Job and Sirach both exemplify the importance of being prepared for hard times (see Job 3:25 ; Wisdom of Sirach 18:24).

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea comments that the person who says such things is unsafely bold because he does not look to the Lord, nor accept His Judgement. In his self-deceiving, he believes that his own evil ways are acceptable, and that he may perpetually prosper by his own power.

✠ About "*heart*" : see the note about "*heart*" on verse 2.

✠ About "*not be distressed*" : this translates a Greek verb which primarily means "not be shaken".

✣ See Psalms 29:7 ; 54:23 ; 61:3. See the note about "*shaken*" on Psalm 12:5.

✠ About "*generation*" : see 5 Moses 32:5, 7, 20 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 11:8 ; 13:5 ; 21:31 ; 23:6 ; 32:11 ; 44:18 ; 47:14 ; 48:12, 20 ; 60:7 ; 70:18 ; 71:5 ; 72:15 ; 76:9 ; 77:4, 6, 8 ; 78:13 ; 84:6 ; 88:2, 5 ; 89:1 ; 94:10 ; 99:5 ; 101:13, 19, 25 ; 104:8 ; 105:31 ; 108:13 ; 111:2 ; 118:90 ; 134:13 ; 144:4, 13 ; 145:10 ; Luke 1:48, 50 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1).

✠ About "*badness*" : see Psalms 33:15 ; 35:5 ; 36:27 ; 49:19 ; 51:3, 5 ; 106:34.

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28 It is he, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness and deceit :/ beneath his tongue are trouble and distress.

V 28 About this verse : Saint Augustine comments that the "*cursing*" and "*deceit*" require considerable work on the part of the rebellious who try to take others down with them. "*Trouble and distress*" are "*beneath his tongue*", because the words on the tongue are different from and opposite to the intentions.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea continues his interpretation of the previous verse by pointing out that such a rebellious person proceeds to proclaim deceiving, false and death-dealing words. He not only denies that God exists, but he also tries to persuade others to follow him in his deception (see Psalms 13:1 ; 52:2).

✠ About "*cursing*" : see Psalms 58:13 ; 108:17, 18. See the note about "*cursing*" on Psalm 36:22.

✠ About "*It is he, whose mouth ... bitterness*" : see Romans 3:14.

✠ About "*bitterness*" : see the note about "*bitter*" (adjective) on Psalm 63:4. See the note about "*embittering*" on Psalm 65:7.

✠ About "*deceit*" (noun) : see Psalms 31:2 ; 33:14 ; 34:20 ; 35:4 ; 37:13 ; 49:19 ; 51:4 ; 54:12, 24 ; 72:18 ; 138:4. See the note about "*deceitful, deceitfully*" (adjective, adverb) on Psalm 5:7. See the note about "*deceived*" on Psalm 5:10.

✠ About "*trouble*" : see the note about "*trouble*" on Psalm 24:18 ; see also Psalms 54:11 ; 72:5 ; 87:16 ; 89:10 ; 139:10 ; Habakkuk 3:7 (Matins Canticle 4).

✠ About "*distress*" : see the note on verse 35 ; see the note about "*distress*" on Psalm 7:15.

29 ע He lies in ambush with the rich,/ in hiding-places, to slay
the innocent one./ His eyes look intently upon the needy one.

V 29 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom points out the insanity of the rampant greed of those who have more than enough of everything, but who nevertheless find ways to take away for themselves the few possessions of the poor, and even to take away their lives.

✠ About "*ambush*" : see verse 30 ; see also Psalm 10:2 ; Job 24:14-16 ; Wisdom of Solomon 2:12.

✠ About "*the rich*" : see Psalms 33:11 ; 44:13. See the note about "*rich one*" on Psalm 48:3. See the note about "*become rich*" on Psalm 48:17. See the note about "*riches*" on Psalm 36:16.

✠ About "*hiding-places*" : see the note about "*hid*" on verse 16 ; see Psalms 16:12 ; 63:5. See also the note about "*secret place*" on Psalm 17:12.

✣ Although "*hiding-places*" and "*secret place*" translate the same Greek word, there is a difference in English because of a nuance.

✠ About "*slay*" : see 5 Moses 32:39 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 58:12 ; 100:8 ; 138:19.

✠ About "*innocent one*" : rooted in the Latin verb "*nocere*" (to harm), the English word strictly means "harmless". The related Greek word ἀθῳος, *athōos*, means "free from a penalty", "unpunished", and it therefore also means "blameless", "guiltless". This is a state of purity, which is found in open communion with God. It is the aim of us all in Christ, to be full of love. This can only be accomplished by Christ in us.

✣ See the note about "*the innocent*" on Psalm 14:5. See the note about "*innocent*" on Psalm 17:26.

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30 פ He lies in wait in secret, as a lion in his den ;/ he lies in wait to snatch
up the poor one :/ to snatch up the poor one and drag him into it.

V 30 About "*lies in wait in secret*" : see the note about "*ambush*" in verse 29.

✠ About "*a lion in his den*" : Saint Augustine comments that with these words, King David describes a person in whose heart hides both violence and deceit. He says that "l*ion*" refers to violence, and "*den*" refers to deceit and hiddenness. He then applies the words to the future persecutions of Christians. He reminds us that the first persecutions (and many to follow) were violent. Property was confiscated ; people were tortured ; people were murdered. He continues to remind us that the second sort of persecution operates by guile : it is perpetuated in every time by heretical teachers and false brethren of all sorts. [This involves the propagation of false philosophies and distorted theories about Christianity.] He says that the third sort of persecution is to come in the last days with the antichrist. Nothing will be more dangerous, since this will be both violent and deceitful. The antichrist's use of power will be violent, and his "miracles" will be deceitful while he gives the appearance of being good.

✣ Saint Didymus the Blind associates this verse with the person of the Devil. He hides in secret so as to catch the unwary and poor person and to drag that one away from the Lord into deception,

lies, and mis-perception of the person's own deeds. He points out that it was by such tactics that Adam, Eve, and Judas were drawn away.

✣ It is important that we be constantly aware that the powers of darkness are not "nice", and they do not play fair. They invariably pounce upon us when we are forgetful or unmindful. We must always, at all times, be ready for surprise attacks.

✠ About "*lion*" : see the note on Psalm 7:3.

✠ About "*snatch up*" : see the note about "*snatch*" on Psalm 7:3.

✠ About "*the poor one*" : see the note on verse 19.

✠ About "*drag*" : see Psalm 27:3.

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31 ע In his snare shall he humble him ;/ he shall stoop down and fall,/ as he lords it over the needy ;

V 31 About this verse : Saint Augustine continues his comments on the previous verse as he explains that "*snare*" refers to deceit, since it implies an ambush [see Jeremiah 5:26] ; and he says that "*lords it over the needy*" refers to violence, since this behaviour involves terror. [See Isaiah 3:15.]

✠ About "*snare*" : see the note on verse 16.

✠ About "*humble*" : see Psalms 71:4 ; 73:21 ; 74:8 ; 105:42 ; 114:6 ; 118:67, 71, 75, 107 ; 141:7 ; 142:3 ; 146:6. See also the note about "*humble one*" on verse 39.

✠ About "*stooped down*" : see Psalms 13:2 ; 52:3 ; 84:12 ; 91:8 ; 101:20.

✠ About "*lords it*" : see the note about "*lord it*" on verse 26.

✠ About "*the needy*" : see the note on verse 13.

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32 for he said in his heart : "God has forgotten ;/ He has turned His Face away so as not to see, unto the end".

V 32 About "*heart*" : see the note about "*heart*" on verse 2.

✠ About "*God has forgotten*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that God has in no way "*forgotten*". The more the suffering, the more He is present. Oppressors do not oppress with impunity. God's action may not follow closely, because in His forbearance He is giving the opportunity for repentance even to the oppressor. Meanwhile, the forbearance of the poor and the long-suffering of the Lord become evident. Inexpressible is the ocean of the Lord's patience. Justice does not necessarily come quickly because the Lord is summoning them to repentance. When it is clear that their stubborn resistance continues, it is then that the Lord brings retribution.

✣ See Psalms 41:10 ; 43:25 ; 73:19, 23 ; 76:10 ; Lamentations 5:20.

✠ About "*turned His Face away*" : see the note on Psalm 68:18 ; see also Psalms 12:2 ; 21:25 ; 26:9 ; 29:8 ; 43:25 ; 50:11 ; 87:15 ; 101:3 ; 103:29 ; 131:10 ; 142:7 ; Isaiah 54:8 ; 64:6.

✠ About "*so as not to see*" : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus says that the impious may think that they are "getting off scot-free" (that is, tax-free), because the Lord is not paying attention. However, they are deceiving themselves. The Lord is not only watching, but He is also keeping track of events for the future settlement of accounts.

✣ Saint Augustine explains that the evil mind deceives itself into believing that it prospers in the midst of its iniquitous thoughts and behaviours, and that it is escaping consequences. However, the Lord is simply waiting, and the final reaping of what was sown will be revealed in due time.

✠ About "*not to see*" : see Psalms 63:6 ; 93:7 ; Job 22:14 ; Isaiah 29:15 ; Ezekiel 9:9.

✠ The series of characteristics described in this and in the previous verses is typical of those who turn their backs on God, which results in their oppression of others. Turning away from the Lord and thus in on oneself produces destruction of normal relationships with other humans, and also with other creatures.

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33 ק Arise, O LORD my God ;/ let Your hand be lifted up ;/ do not forget the needy.

V 33 About "*arise*" : Saint Augustine comments that the Church (as a ship upon bestormed waters) thus cries out to the Lord in order to awaken Him (as though He were asleep), so that He will command the waves and bring the return of the calm sea (Matthew 8:25-26 ; Mark 4:38-39 ; Luke 8:24).

✣ See the note on verse 20 ; see the note on Psalm 3:8.

✠ About "*God*" : see the note on verse 18.

✠ About "*let Your hand be lifted up*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea cautions that the uplifted hand indicates the power of Divine Judgement. Through these words the Prophet David asks that when the Lord is stirred to action against the wicked, the exalted Lord will judge each one in accordance with his deeds. The Lord is not forgetful of the poor in spirit, or unable to see what is happening, because everything everywhere is under His hand. It is not for us to take vengeance into our own hands (see 5 Moses 32:35 ; Romans 12:19).

✠ About "*Your hand*" : see the note about "*Your hands*" on Psalm 8:7.

✠ About "*be lifted up*" : see the note about "*lifting ... up*" on verse 14.

✠ About "*do not forget the needy*" : see the note about "*God has not forgotten*" on verse 13 ; see the note about "*the needy*" on verse 13.

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34 Why did the impious one provoke God to anger ?/ for he said in his heart : "He will not seek it out".

V 34 About "*impious one*" : see the note on verse 6.

✠ About "*provoke ... anger*" : see 5 Moses 32:21 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 77:40, 58 ; 105:16, 32.

✠ About "*God*" : see the note on verse 18.

✠ About "*heart*" : see the note on verse 2.

✠ About "*He will not seek it out*" : Cassiodorus warns that although the impious may believe or hope that the Lord is forgetful, they will discover that He is, in fact, mindful. They will be ashamed to understand that although they thought that their innumerable sins were unseen in their multitude, they are both clearly visible and taken into account.

⁜ See the note about "*seeking ... out*" on verse 11.

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35 ר You do see, for You do observe distress and fury,/ to give them over into Your hands./ The poor one has abandoned himself to You :/ it is You that were the Helper of the orphan.

V 35

✠ About "*You do see*" : see 2 Moses 3:7 ; 4 Kingdoms 20:5 ; Psalm 30:8.

✠ About "*distress*" : see the note on verse 28.

✠ About "*fury*" : see the note about "*fury*" on Psalm 6:8.

✠ About "*to give them over into Your hands*" : Saint John Chrysostom marvels at the Lord's forbearance, and how He waits and bides His time. He awaits the movement towards repentance in the heart of the impious. Nevertheless, if there be no such response, then there will come a correction in order to attempt to provoke it.

✠ About "*Your hands*" : see the note about "*Your hand*" on verse 33.

✠ About "*the poor one*" : Saint Augustine comments that the poor are those who relinquish everything of the world which passes away, in order that the Lord alone may be their hope.

⁜ See the note about "*the poor one*" on verse 19.

✠ About "*abandoned*" see the note about "*abandon*" on verse 11.

✠ About "*Helper of the orphan*" : Saint John Chrysostom encourages us to understand that we ought not to lament the condition of the orphan or the poor. This is because the more their condition is difficult, the more help comes from God. He explains that those who are wronged come to no harm ; rather, they emerge better from their afflictions.

✠ About "*Helper*" : see the note about "*Helper*" on verse 10.

✠ About "*orphan*" : see verse 39 ; see 2 Moses 22:21, 22 ; see also Psalms 67:6 ; 81:3 ; 93:6 ; 108:9, 12 ; 145:9.

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36 ש Shatter the arm of the sinner and of the evil one./ His sin shall be

sought, and it shall not be found.

V 36 About "*shatter*" : see the note about "*shatter*" on Psalm 2:9.

✠ About "*arm*" : see the note about "*arm*" (human) on Psalm 43:4 ; see Psalms 17:35 ; 36:17. See the note about "*Your right hand*" and "*Your arm*" on Psalm 43:4.

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

✠ About "*evil one*" : Saint Athanasius explains that we will not be able to see the sin of "*the evil one*" because this evil one has been destroyed because of it.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom warns those lawless who let themselves become arrogant and pompous about the height of their power. Such persons are very easily toppled from their positions.

✣ Evagrius of Pontus cautious us to distinguish between the "*sinner*" and the "*evil one*" in this verse. He points out that the "*sinner*" is one who does so because he falls into weakness and falls prey to the passions. The "*evil one*" is the one who deliberately plans to follow the ways of evil.

✣ See Psalm 100:4 ; Matthew 6:13 ; 12:35 ; John 17:15.

✠ About "*sin*" : this word translates the Greek word ἁμαρτία, *hamartia*, which means "sin", "sin-offering" according to the lexica. However, the translation of the verb ἁμαρτάνω, *hamartanō*, more specifically means "to miss the mark", "to err". *Hamartia* sometimes refers to acts of sin either by omission or commission. It may refer to the fall of mankind. It may refer to weakness. It may be used as a metaphor, as when it refers to our enslavement to sin. It is similarly referred to by Aristotle in his "Poetics". See Romans 3:9 ; 5:12 ; 6:20.

✣ See Psalms 24:7, 11, 18 ; 31:1, 2, 5 ; 37:4, 19 ; 39:7 ; 49:21 ; 50:4, 5, 7, 11 ; 58:4, 13 ; 77:38 ; 78:9 ; 84:3 ; 102:10 ; 108:7, 14 ; 140:4 ; Daniel 3:28, 37 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:77 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2). See the note about "*great sin*" on Psalm 18:14.

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37 The LORD will establish His Kingship unto the age,/ and unto the age of the age ;/ and you, O nations, you shall perish from His earth.

V 37 About "*establish ... Kingship*" : see 2 Moses 15:18 (Matins Canticle 1) ; Psalms 46:9 ; 92:1 ; 95:10 ; 96:1 ; 98:1 ; 145:10.

✠ About "*will establish*" : see 2 Moses 15:18 (Matins Canticle 1) ; Psalms 46:9 ; 67:15 ; 73:16 ; 77:16 ; 88:30, 38 ; 92:1 95:10 ; 96:1 ; 98:1 ; 103:20 ; 104:10 ; 145:10 ; 148:6.

✠ About "*unto the age, and unto the age of the age*": Saint Gregory of Nyssa informs us that this expression shows that we define the Lord to be earlier than any beginning, and far beyond any end.

✠ About "*and you, ... His earth*" : Saint Didymus the Blind comments that God's "*earth*" is a good heart. From this "*earth*" the nations perish because they are driven by all sorts of distortions and ruin of the mind, and by evil thoughts. No sinner can walk on this "*earth*" ; only the righteous may be present there. The righteous recall Psalm 26:13, as they say that they are confident of seeing the Lord's good things in the

land of the living. [See Psalm 114:9.]

✠ About "*nations*" : Saint Augustine explains that by "nations", King David means sinners and ungodly persons.

⁜ See the note on verse 6.

✠ About "*earth*" : see verse 39 ; see the note about "*earth*" on Psalm 2:2.

⁜ See the note about the appearance together of "*world*" and "*earth*" on verse 9. See the note about the appearance together of "*the Heavens*" and "*earth*" on Psalm 56:6.

✠ About "*perish*" : see the note about "*perish*" on verse 4.

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38 ת The LORD has heard the craving of the needy ;/ Your ear gave heed to the readiness of their heart,

V 38 About "*the craving of the needy*" : Saint Augustine comments that this craving is that longing with which they were kindled when, amidst all the struggles and afflictions of the world, they longed for the Day of the Lord.

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

✠ About "*Your ear*" : Saint Augustine interprets the ear of God not as being a body-part, but as His ability to hear. Therefore, any word used about God to describe a body-part must be understood to be God's various capacities for doing things. Indeed, the Lord God is less concerned with the vocalisation than its source in the heart.

⁜ See Psalms 17:7 ; 33:16 ; 129:2 ; James 5:4.

✠ About "*gave heed*" : see the note about "*give heed*" on Psalm 5:3.

✠ About "*readiness*" : see Psalms 56:8 ; 107:2.

✠ About "*heart*" : see the note on verse 2.

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39 to judge the orphan and the humble one,/ so that Man may no longer continue to brag upon the earth.

V 39 About "*to judge the orphan and the humble*" : In this case, the words clearly imply that the Lord is making judgement in favour of the orphan and the humble. As Saint Augustine makes clear to us, it is one thing to judge an orphan (implying a condemnation), and another thing to judge for an orphan (implying avenging the orphan).

⁜ See Psalms 71:4 ; 139:13 ; 145:7 ; Job 36:6 ; Isaiah 1:17 ; 11:4.

✠ About "*to judge*" : "*to judge*" very often has a popular interpretation, which implies "to condemn". A judgement may be favourable or unfavourable, right or wrong, true or false, depending on the nature of

the judge. Is the judge righteous or unrighteous ?

✠ About "*orphan*" : see the note on verse 35.

✠ About "*humble one*" : this translates a Greek word which conveys the sense of bowing down, being lowly, abasement, being humble. Sometimes this state, which may be voluntarily embraced in love for God, may be forced upon a person, in which case it means oppression or being oppressed. As with some other words, the boundary in Greek between noun and adjective with this word may be difficult to discern.

> ✣ See Psalm 81:4 ; Isaiah 11:4 ; see also (plural) Isaiah 11:4 ; Daniel 3:87 (Matins Canticle 8) ; Luke 1:52 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1) ; (adjective) Psalm 17:28 ; Daniel 3:37 (Matins Canticle 7). See the note about "*humiliation*" on verse 14 ; see the note about "*humble*" on verse 31 ; see the note about "*humility*" on Psalm 21:22.

✠ About "*continue to brag*" : Saint John Chrysostom understands that bragging refers to the avaricious on the earth. He comments that the Prophet David, showing the Lord's concern for them also, uses words which are intended to remind them of the peril of condemnation in which they subsist if they do not repent. He says that having a superfluity of possessions is a source or root of numerous evils for the avaricious. In order to inhibit more and more offshoots from appearing, the main root must be cut.

> ✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea refers to this and the previous two verses as he explains that the "*needy*" and the "*humble*", who have suffered disasters and afflictions, will be exonerated by the Judge, the King of the Ages, lest evil people gloat.

✠ About "*earth*" : see the note on verse 37.

O Merciful God, Your custom is never to abandon those who hope in You.
Open Your benevolent ear to our confession ;
that, being raised from the gates of eternal death,
we may be able safely to escape the hidden traps of the Tempter. — Roman

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