PSALM 10

✠ This psalm is written in the form of a Lament.

⁜ See the introduction to Psalm 3.

✠ This psalm is also identified as a Psalm of Trust.

⁜ This sort of psalm likely developed as an expansion of the expression of trust, which is a common feature of a psalm of lament. King David rebukes those who tell him that his only safety is in fleeing from his enemies. Rather, he stands steadfast, and he depends on God for his vindication. See, for instance, Psalms 3:3-4 ; 5:4-8 ; 7:10-11 ; 9:4-13.

⁜ See Psalms 15, 22, 26, 61, 130.

✠ Saint Athanasius exhorts us that, when anyone wants to disturb or harm us, we ought to hold on tightly to our trust in the Lord and say Psalm 10. Singing this psalm, he says, expresses our faith and our prayer.

"*Confidence in Christ, the Righteous Judge*"

"*An act of trust*"

"*The sin-lover is a self-hater*"

---

1 For the End. A psalm by David.

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

✠ About "*For the End*" : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus informs us that this phrase occurs in the inscription because this psalm contains a prophecy about God's righteous judgement and the consequences to be applied to the lawless.

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

[᾽Επὶ τῷ Κυρίῳ πέποιθα In Domino confido]

In the LORD do I trust./ How shall you say to my soul :/ "Flee away to the mountains as a sparrow ?"

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

✠ About "*trust*" : this psalm reveals how the Church is to trust Jesus Christ. "*Trust*" may be directly compared with hope. Trusting in God implies having absolute and complete confidence in Him, as one

trusts a chair to hold one up. Trust in God implies a confidence born of love, which allows us to rest in Him. We well remember the warning in Psalm 145 not to put our trust in great persons or powerful persons. Human beings always fail us, willy-nilly. It is the Lord alone who never fails us.

✣ About "*trust*" : see the note about "*putting ... trust*" on Psalm 2:12.

✠ About "*soul*" : see verse 5 ; see the note about "*soul*" on Psalm 3:3.

✠ About "*flee away*" : there are three Greek words which may be translated as "*flee*", and they are so translated in this Psalter with their nuances. The particular word in this verse may also mean "*depart*", or "*move from place to place*", which is its translation in Psalm 108:10.

✣ See Psalm 54:8. See the note about "*flee*" on Psalm 30:12.

✠ About "*mountains*" : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) writes that "*the mountains*" are a place in which to hide ; but the Prophet David does not require such refuge, since the Lord is his Protector.

✣ See 5 Moses 32:22 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 41:7 ; 103: 6, 8, 10, 13, 18, 32 ; 113:4, 6 ; 120:1 ; 143:5 ; 146:8 ; 148:9 ; Jonah 2:6 (Matins Canticle 6) ; Habakkuk 3:3, 6 (Matins Canticle 4) ; Daniel 3:75 (Matins Canticle 8).

✠ About "*sparrow*" : Saint Ambrose of Milan explains that the soul has wings with which it can raise itself free from the earth. However, the wings are not covered with feathers, but rather with a continuous series of good works such as those of the Lord, of whom it is truly said "*I shall be sheltered in the shelter of Your wings*" (Psalm 60:5). When the hands of our Lord were affixed to the Cross, their extension resembled something in flight. God's acts are like a refreshing shelter (under His wings) of eternal salvation.

✣ See the note about "*the shelter of Your wings*" on Psalm 16:8.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom, speaking as though he were the Prophet David himself, addresses those who urged King David to flee. The King responds that he has as his ally the Lord of the Universe who created everything. He asks why he should seek refuge and help in an empty desert when the Lord of all, who is capable of doing everything with ease, is present and supporting him. Furthermore, he says, when the Lord is helping, would it not be shameful to behave like a frightened bird ? He compares those who trust in money and created things that pass away instead of trusting the Lord with the frightened sparrow that is prey to all sorts of animals. Indeed, he says that such people are more vulnerable than the sparrow. They become slaves of dread and fear. The souls of those who trust in the Lord are in peace and at rest. He shows us that even sinners clinging to the anchor of the Lord are buoyed up by the Lord's loving-kindness if they trust in Him. [See Wisdom of Sirach 2:10.]

✣ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus points out to us that the Prophet David, while he was being pursued by Saul, spoke the words of this psalm to his companions. They were urging him to save himself by fleeing. This psalm, therefore, is appropriate for every wronged person hoping on God.

✣ The "*sparrow*" is a metaphor for the one who is hunted and pursued (see Psalm 123:7 ; compare Psalm 54:7-8).

---

2 for behold, the sinners have strung their bow ;/ they have made arrows ready for a quiver,/ to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart ;

V 2 About this verse : Saint Augustine treats the whole verse as a unit as he comments on the attacks upon the Church by those who have strayed from the true Faith and now teach against it.

✠ About "*sinners*" : see verse 6 ; see the note about "*sinners*" on Psalm 1:1.

✠ About "*strung ... quiver*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that there is no strength or effect in this weaponry because God's favour is lacking (which means that their bows are actually unstrung). Therefore, what is to be feared ? He also ridicules those who shoot in the dark.

> ✣ Blessed Jerome explains that rebels (the wicked) have prepared burning arrows which must be repelled by the shield of faith. Their quivers are full of arrows to shoot at the righteous, which they intend to use only by stealth, when it is completely dark.
>
> ✣ Saint Cyril of Jerusalem reminds us of Ephesians 6:16 : "*above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*". Although the enemy be unseen, we have our faith which is our protection.
>
> ✣ See the the note about "*arrows*" on Psalm 7:14.

✠ About "*shoot in the dark*" : see the note about "*ambush*" on Psalm 9:29.

✠ About "*dark*" : the Greek word means literally "dark moon", that is, "moonless night", "during a new moon" , sometimes rendered "a moonless night". These words refer, regardless, to a night in which there is no moonlight.

> ✣ Saint Augustine says that the moon allegorically represents the Church. As the Church has light and life only from the Son, the moon has light to illuminate the earth only from the sun. He treats the periods of dark moon as representing a preparation for a period of greater light, whether it be the regular monthly cycle, a time of heavy clouds, or an eclipse. In the first case, he says, the darkness refers to the earliest times of the Church [up until the legalisation of the Edict of Milan in 313] and the beginning of the brighter shining. The second case, he says, refers to the times when various attacks and slanders against the Church are perpetrated by one or another movement, and it is difficult to see the Church clearly. The third case, he says, refers to the full moon, now greatly stained by the shed blood of martyrs during the periods of great martyrdom in which the abundant shedding of blood by Christians can make others fearful of approaching the Church.

✠ About "*upright in heart*" : see the note about "*upright in heart*" on Psalm 7:11.

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

---

3 for what You have, Yourself, perfected,/ they have, themselves, brought down ;/ but the righteous one – what has he done ?

V 3 About "*for what ... brought down*" : Saint Augustine refers in this verse to the pernicious work of heretical teachers who destroy what the Lord has created in perfection. Instead of giving life-giving milk to the children who offer perfect praise (see Psalm 8:3 ; 1 Corinthians 3:2), they poison them.

> ✣ The heretics twist and distort the truth of Christ, the Trinity, the Church, and they thus transform life-giving and saving food into poisonous and death-dealing substances.

✠ About "*perfected*" : see the note about "*prefected*" on Psalm 8:3.

✠ About "*they have ... done*" : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that in Hebrew the meaning is : "When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do ?"

✠ About "*the righteous one*" : Saint Augustine points us to the Righteous One, our Saviour, and he reminds us about how kindly and righteously Christ dealt with him who would betray Him. He gave him every opportunity to repent, and He did not deny him participation in the Last Supper. He continued to offer him Life.

✣ Father P Reardon comments that this psalm is concerned with the plight of the upright. Ultimately, the "righteous one" (sometimes translated "just man") is Jesus the Lord, about whom it is said : "*we receive the due reward of our deeds ; but this Man has done nothing wrong*" (Luke 23:41).

✣ See verse 5 ; see the note about "*the righteous one*" on Psalm 5:13.

---

4 The LORD is in His holy temple ;/ the LORD – His throne is in Heaven./ His eyes look intently upon the needy ;/ His eyelids examine the sons of Men.

V 4 About "*The Lord is in His holy temple*" : Saint John Chrysostom draws our attention to how the Lord provides support to us. The Prophet took refuge in the omnipresent God. In no way did the Prophet attempt to defend himself in the usual worldly ways. Rather, he trusted in God to protect him with His invincible and effective support.

✣ Father P Reardon points out that the first phrase can be considered the crux or focus of this psalm.

✣ That the Lord is in His temple is an expression of "God is with us", and a preparation for the Incarnation. The Lord is with us, and He sees everything – good, and bad. Nothing can be hidden.

✠ About "*temple*" : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) writes that in the Old Testament, the term "His holy habitation" is the Temple. In the new law, it is the Church (on the one hand, as a place of worship, and including every Christian ; on the other hand, as the Temple of God).

✣ See the note about "*temple*" on Psalm 5:8 ; see also 1 Corinthians 3:17 ; 6:19 ; 2 Corinthians 6:16 ; Ephesians 2:21-22.

✠ About "*throne is in Heaven*" : the throne refers less to an actual throne than to the Presence of God in Heaven. See the note on Psalm 9:5.

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

✠ About "*Heaven*" : see the note about "*the Heavens*" on Psalm 2:4.

✠ About "*His eyes ... needy one*" : Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that it is the nature of the Lord's love that He sees everything everywhere and always. Whether or not we desire it or ask for it, He is always aware of every detail of our lives. He exercises providence and care. He helps those in need and those who are wronged, and He pursues and corrects the wrong-doers.

✣ Saint Augustine tells us that the poor are those for whose sake Christ suffered as a Man. Saint

Augustine adds that those who teach heretical doctrines and ideas do not manage to turn away the eyes of the Lord from those who desire to be amongst His poor ones. Even amidst a throng of rich people, the poor are not lost from the Lord's sight. Rather, His eyes search first for the poor.

✣ Evagrius of Pontus encourages us to be numbered amongst the poor. We would do so, since the eyes of the Lord look upon the poor, and we certainly desire that He look upon us. How can the rich (at least those who place riches in the first priority) expect Him to look upon them unless they have the attitude of poverty ?

✣ See 2 Chronicles 16:9 ; Psalms 33:16 ; 112:5, 6 ; Wisdom of Sirach 23:19 ; Habakkuk 1:13 ; 1 Peter 3:12.

✠ "*Eyelids*" is a poetic metaphor. Saint Meliton the Philosopher, Bishop of Sardis, wrote that the eyelids of the Lord suggest hidden spiritual mysteries in the divine precepts.

✣ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus comments that through a mere glance, the eyes of the Lord learn everything about all human affairs. The Lord thus knows precisely what both the righteous and the unrighteous do. He measures out our payment for what sorts of works we do.

✣ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea clarifies that the Lord, the *Pantokrator* (Judge of All), the only true Judge, sits upon His throne, from which He sees everything and misses nothing. When He looks upon the poor, His eyes convey Grace. His eyelids are a metaphor for the Providence by which He assesses and discerns, and thoroughly searches the deeds of all.

✠ About "*examine*" : see verse 5 ; see the note about "*examining*" on Psalm 7:10.

✠ About "*the sons of Men*" : Saint Augustine interprets that the "*sons of Men*" are those who have been re-born by faith in Christ.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) writes that "*the sons of Men*" refers to those who denied the "old man" and became, through a spiritual "face-lift", a new people.

✣ See the note about "*sons of men*" on Psalm 4:3.

---

5 The LORD examines the righteous one and the impious one ;/ but the one loving unrighteousness hates his own soul.

V 5 About "*examines*" : see the note on verse 4.

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

✠ About "*the impious one*' : see the note about "*the impious one*" on Psalm 9:6.

✠ About "*loving unrighteousness ... soul*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that wickedness itself is the enemy of the wicked person. By pursuing wickedness, the wicked person finds himself "hoist with his own petard" (being blown up by his own bomb – falling into his own trap). The very weapons which are intended for self-protection are seen to damage the one who wields them. Thus, he pays the penalty before the consequences of his behaviour are imposed on him.

✣ See the note on Psalm 7:16, particularly with regard to the "boomerang effect" ; see also Proverbs 15:37.

✣ Saint Augustine tells us that the one who loves iniquity actually harms only his own soul.

✣ Much to be pitied and prayed-for is the person so self-hating and so self-destructive as to be "*loving unrighteousness*". This is tantamount to being the living dead, in defiant separation from God's omnipresent love. Often, such persons strike out at all around, spreading suffering, beginning from their own heart.

✠ About "*loving*" : see verse 7 ; see the note about "*love*" on Psalm 4:3.

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

✠ About "*hate*s" : see Psalms 24:19 ; 35:3 ; 49:17 ; 68:5 ; 104:25 ; 138:21 ; see also John 15:25.

✠ About "*soul*" : see the note on verse 1.

---

6 Upon sinners He will rain snares :/ fire and brimstone and tempestuous wind shall be the portion of their cup ;

V 6 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom explains that God sometimes applies a punishment to demonstrate His loving care for His people. He uses the correction to bring them to moderation.

✣ Cassiodorus comments that this refers to the words of preachers which pour from Heaven and serve as refreshing showers for the faithful, but which become burning traps for the unfaithful. The faithful are fruitful through their right comprehension of the words. The unfaithful become choked by perversity through their wrong interpretation of the words.

✣ This sort of threatening is what a caring parent would do for a child. This apparent retribution can be seen as an expression of how God's love can burn those who reject it. The Life-giving love of God can cauterise.

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

✠ About "*snares*" : see the note about "*snare*" on Psalm 9:16.

✠ About "*fire and brimstone*" : see 1 Moses 19:24 ; Psalm 139:11 ; Ezekiel 38:22 ; Luke 17:29 ; 2 Peter 2:6 ; Jude 1:7 ; Apocalypse 14:10 ; 20:10 ; 21:8.

✠ About "*tempestuous wind*" : see Psalm 148:8.

✠ About "*the portion of their cup*" : Saint Augustine says all the previous threats constitute the consequences of unrighteousness, which is, then, "*the portion of their cup*". On the contrary, the cup of the righteous is brimming over, inebriating, and excellent, which will be given to them to drink from the torrent of the Lord's delight (see Psalms 22:5 ; 35:9).

✠ About "*portion*" : see Psalm 62:11 ; Luke 10:42.

✠ About "*cup*" : Saint Didymus the Blind draws our attention to the fact that the word "*cup*" is frequently used in the Scriptures in association with negative consequences ("*fire and brimstone and tempestuous wind*") for bad behaviours. [See Psalm 74:9 ; Isaiah 51:17, 22 ; Jeremiah 32:1-16.] Saint Didymus exhorts us to live a righteous life, so that the "*cup*" that we receive will be one of blessing (see Psalm 15:5 ; 1 Corinthians 10:16).

✣ About the "*cup*" which involves righteous suffering : see Matthew 20:22-23 ; 26:39 ; Mark 10:38-39 ; 14:25 ; Luke 22:42.

---

7 for the LORD is righteous, and righteousness has He loved./
His Face has seen uprightness.

V 7 About "*righteous*" : see the note about "*righteous*" on Psalm 2:12.

✠ About "*righteousness*" : Saint Augustine comments that the Lord loves "*righteousnesses*" because in the multitude of those who live righteous lives and give righteous examples, His One Divine Righteousness is reflected.

✣ It is the Lord's nature to be and to do righteousness. So much is this the case that He will not tolerate what is done otherwise.

✣ This word is in the plural in the Greek text.

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

✠ About "*His Face has seen uprightness*" : Saint Augustine explains that God's Face is the energy by which He is known by those whose hearts are pure enough to see Him.

✣ Cassiodorus explains that the Lord, the Bestower of All, sees uprightness in us because He has, Himself, given it to us because of His loving-kindness. Humanity has of itself nothing worthy, but only what is given by the Lord.

✣ Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović) urges us to purify our hearts so as to be able to see the Face of the Lord. He says that Face of God shone before the Resurrection, and much more afterwards. The disciples beheld Him risen from the dead. We ought to yearn for the Lord and let the Lord prepare our hearts so that we may behold Him. His every word shows us a line of His Face. Every apostle shows us a characteristic of His Face. Every saint shows us a ray of light from His Face.

✣ See 1 Kingdoms 16:7 ; Psalm 26:8 ; Matthew 5:8 ; John 14:9.

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

✠ About "*uprightness*" : this word is in the plural in the Greek text.

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

O Omnipotent God, direct the eyes of Your Goodness
upon the lowliness and poverty of our person ;
and surround us with the arms of faith,
that, being rescued from the arrows of the iniquitous,
we may be able to keep righteousness and equity. — Roman
