

PSALM 31

✠ This psalm is written in the form of a Maskil (maschil). This is a Hebrew poem, a poem of contemplation, an instructive or didactic poem. It is in the Masoretic (Hebrew) Inscription of thirteen psalms. For some, it may mean “to serve with discretion”. In this Psalter, “maskil” is translated “understanding”. Hence, some consider a “maskil” to be a Wisdom Psalm. It is also understood to be a musical term that denotes a melody which requires great skill in its performance. The term was later applied to a particular sort of well-educated person.

✧ See the note on verse 1 ; see the introductions to Psalms 41, 43, 44, 51, 52, 53, 54, 73, 77, 87, 88, 141.

✠ This psalm is also considered to be a Penitential Psalm.

✧ This psalm is the second of the seven penitential psalms in the Psalter. See the note about “penitential psalm” in the introduction to Psalm 6.

✠ This psalm is read fully at Holy Baptism. It is read fully at the Service of the Twelve Psalms. It is used (verses 1, 11) as the first Prokeimenon of the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday of the Second Week of Great Lent. It is used (verses 1, 11) as the Prokeimenon of the weekly Saturday Divine Liturgy.

✠ According to Saint Athanasius, if we wish to declare someone to be “blessed”, then in Psalm 1 we learn how to do so, whom to call upon, and what words to say. He also shows us that the same can be done by singing Psalm 31, and also Psalms 40, 111, 118, and 127. Furthermore, he recommends that we sing Psalm 31 whenever we see people being baptised and ransomed from this fallen and evil world, and we are filled with wonder about God’s love for human beings, and we wish to give thanks to Him.

✠ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus explains that this psalm anticipates the Grace of the New Testament.

✠ *The Orthodox Study Bible* indicates that this psalm is a prophecy about illumination which is fulfilled in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. The newly-baptised are called “the newly-illuminated”.

“Prayer of a forgiven sinner”

“A prayer of repentance and confession”

“The joy of being forgiven”

1 By David. Of understanding.

V 1 About the Inscription : in the Masoretic (Hebrew) text, the Inscription is “Of David. A Maskil”.

✚ About “*understanding*” (noun) : Saint Augustine of Hippo explains that this psalm is written for the purpose of understanding, and that it was written both by and for the Prophet David [often an author or preacher writes for oneself as much as for others]. He continues that the first thing to be understood is that we are sinners. The second thing is that as faithful persons, with God’s help we consistently choose the good. The result is a heart with no guile.

✚ In the perception of Cassiodorus, this psalm deserves our deep attention because of the assurance of mercy and joy in repentance.

✚ See verse 9. See also Psalms 41:1 ; 43:1 ; 44:1 ; 48:4 ; 51:1 ; 52:1 ; 53:1 ; 54:1 ; 73:1 ; 77:1, 72 ; 87:1 ; 88:1 ; 110:10 ; 135:5 ; 141:1 ; 146:5.

✚ See also the note about “*understand*” (verb) on Psalm 2:10. See the note about “*maskil*” in the introduction to this psalm.

[Μακάριοι ὧν Beati, quorum]

Blessed are those whose lawless acts have been forgiven,/ and whose sins have been covered up.

✚ About this verse : Saint Ambrose of Milan states that when God forgives and covers, He takes away our sins altogether, in fact. Moreover, only what He remembers exists.

✚ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus shows us that God is so generous towards sinners that as He forgives, He also wipes out their sins, so that no trace of them remains. He adds that the words of this psalm anticipate the New Testament.

✚ Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović) explains to us that King David the Prophet was very aware of his own sins of volition, commission and omission. He prostrated himself with tears before the Lord as he admitted them in detail before the Lord (and before us who read) as he sincerely repented. In being forgiven by the Lord, he again experienced the blessedness that comes with open communion with the Lord. Saint Nikolaj reminds us that this blessedness includes “freedom and courage and indescribable joy, strength and health, clarity of thought and a quiet conscience, consecration and thanksgiving to God, love for one’s neighbour and a sense of life. In brief : light, joy, strength – these are the blessings that he whose sin is forgiven feels on earth”.

✚ See Psalm 84:3 ; Romans 4:7.

✚ About “*blessed*” : see verse 2 ; see also the note about “*blessed*” on Psalm 1:1, and on Psalm 5:13.

✚ About “*lawless acts*” : see the note about “*lawless acts*” on Psalm 25:10.

✠ About “*forgiven*” : as Saint Cyril of Jerusalem prepares catechumens for reception into the Church, he explains that when the time comes for their illumination in Holy Baptism, their sins will be completely washed away. He prays that on the Last Day, they, forgiven, purified and glorified, may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

✧ Both Saint Augustine of Hippo and Theodore of Mopsuestia caution us not to presume on the Lord’s mercy and the Grace of the Holy Spirit through having confidence in any supposed merit in our righteousness. Forgiveness comes to us from the Lord, not through our merit, but through His compassion. Indeed, we ought to give thanks constantly to the Lord for His mercy.

✧ See verse 5 ; see the note about “*forgive*” on Psalm 24:18.

✠ About “*sins have been covered up*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo explains that these words can well refer to the Apostle Nathaniel, and to the encounter between him and the Saviour. Saint Augustine reminds us that the Lord does not give condemnation towards us, but rather compassion, which is why the Lord covers our sins. It also explains why there is no guile in the Apostle Nathaniel. The apostle has accepted the compassionate forgiveness. The sins are out of sight. (See John 1:48.) He further points out the difference between those who do and those who do not confess their sins. He reminds us of the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14). Those who refuse to confess their sins make excuses for them, or pretend that they do not exist. Their sins fester as a concealed and ignored wound. However, those who do confess their sins are honest before the Lord. Their sins can be healed by the Divine Physician, and they can become healthy, pure, and guileless.

✧ Saint Cyril of Jerusalem prays that we all see the great Day in Divine Light that never ends ; that we be enabled to lift up our hearts to heavenly things ; that we may drink the Christ-bearing waters ; that we may join the angelic hosts in glorifying God ; that in having our sins forgiven and covered, we may enter paradise in glory.

✧ It is written that Saint Macarius the Great became a “god on earth”, because just as the Lord protects the word in His infinite love and patience, so Saint Macarius would cover the sins of others as though he did not notice them, nor hear them. This means that Saint Macarius was a good example of a person who has grown up in the Lord through “theosis”. Saint Athanasius says in his *Discourse Against the Arians* : “the Son of God became Man so that we might become God” (Psalm 81:6 ; John 10:34 ; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

✧ Saint Poëmen the Great answered a question about whether it is right to conceal the sin of a brother. He responded that whenever we conceal the fault of our brother, God conceals our fault. However, if we reveal the fault of our brother, the Lord will reveal ours also.

✧ See 1 Peter 4:8.

✠ About “*sins*” : see verses 2, 5 ; see also the note about “*sin*” on Psalm 9:36.

✠ About “*covered up*” : see verse 5. See also 2 Moses 15:5, 10 (Matins Canticle 1) ; Psalms 43:16, 20 ; 54:6 ; 68:8, 11 ; 77:53 ; 79:11 ; 84:3 ; 103:9 ; 105:11, 17 ; 139:10 ; Habakkuk 3:3 (Matins Canticle 4).

2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD will reckon no sin,/ nor is there any deceit in his mouth ;

V 2 About "*blessed*" : see the note about "*blessed*" on verse 1.

✠ About "*Lord*" : see verses 10, 11 ; see the note about "*Lord*" on Psalm 1:2.

✠ About "*reckon no sin*" : Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that if the Lord were to take account of our sins, we would all perish. Such is His love for us that He instead reconciled us through overcoming our sins and forgiving them. He furthermore forgot the reckoning of the sins and He enabled us to become His friends (see 2 Corinthians 5:19).

✧ See Psalm 129:3-4 ; Romans 4:8.

✠ About "*sin*" : see the note about "*sins*" on verse 1.

✠ About "*nor is there any deceit in his mouth*" : Saint Augustine of Hippo reminds us that if we do have deceit in our mouth, then in fact we say one thing and mean or do another thing. This is guile, when people pretend to be righteous, but they are in fact unrighteous. He refers us to the Lord's rebuke of the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:27. Then, he refers us to Matthew 21:19 in the same vein. Saint Augustine of Hippo yet more reminds us of the guilelessness of the Apostle Nathaniel as an example of lack of deceit. Further, He assures us that the leaves of the fig tree under which the apostle rested were not so dense as to obscure the vision of the Lord's love which is able to see the truth of ourselves, and the condition of our hearts.

✧ See John 1:47-48 ; Apocalypse 14:5.

✠ About "*deceit*" : see the note about "*deceit*" on Psalm 9:28.

✧ Cassiodorus underlines the importance of acknowledging, of admitting our sin, rather than regarding ourselves (or even proclaiming ourselves) to be holy. Such false self-aggrandisement is a human sickness. It is crucial that we seek the truth, that we seek to please the Lord, and not ourselves.

3 for I have been silent./ My bones became old, because of my crying out the whole day long ;

V 3 About this verse : Saint Augustine of Hippo draws our attention to the apparent contradiction of silence and crying out at the same time. He explains (with reference to the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14) that the silence can refer to not speaking about something which would help us, but speaking openly about what would harm us ; about not speaking about the confession of sin, but loudly crying out about virtuous behaviour. Saint Augustine of Hippo then suggests that it is for this

reason that the bones become old. If we would rather speak openly about our sins and not speak about our virtues, then our bones would become refreshed. When we insist on being self-sufficient, and not depending upon the Lord for our sustenance and assistance, we become mired in decrepitude. We are renewed by the forgiveness of our sins. If we look at ourselves truthfully, and we admit our wrong and repulsive acts, then we can be healed.

✧ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) likens the silence to a patient (on a sickbed), who refused to confess his sins. As a consequence, he uttered one sustained outcry from a pain-racked body.

✧ About *"I have been silent"* : Saint Athanasius relates this to King David's inability to confess.

✧ Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore) makes a reference to the two major sins of King David in 2 Kingdoms 11 and 12. A year passed before King David confessed his two sins to Nathan [and then only after the Prophet pointedly accused him].

✧ About *"been silent"* : see Psalms 38:3 ; 49:21 ; 82:2. See also Psalm 37:14.

✧ About *"crying out"* : see the note about *"cry out"* on Psalm 4:4.

4 for by day and by night, Your hand weighed heavily upon me./ I was
turned into misery when a thorn was piercing me. *Pause*

V 4 About *"for by day ... upon me"* : Cassiodorus explains that *"by day and by night"* indicates the meaning "continuous" or "all the time". He also explains that the punishing hand is oppressive ; the avenging hand is heavy, and this condition is unceasing. By this means, the Lord brings us to compunction.

✧ About *"by day and by night"* : see the note about *"by day and by night"* on Psalm 1:2.

✧ About *"Your hand"* : see the note about *"Your hands"* on Psalm 8:7. See also Psalm 37:3.

✧ About *"I was turned ... piercing me"* : Saint Augustine of Hippo elaborates that we become miserable when we are being pricked with an evil conscience. The painful thorn points out the sin.

✧ About *"I was turned into misery"* : this phrase indicates that his wretchedness was so great that he became misery itself.

✧ About *"weighed heavily"* : see Psalm 37:5.

✧ About *"misery"* : see the note about *"misery"* on Psalm 11:6.

✧ About *"thorn"* : see the note about *"arrows"* in Psalm 37:3.

✧ About *"pause"* : see the note about *"pause"* on Psalm 2:2.

5 My sin I have made known,/ and my lawlessness I have not covered./ I said : “I shall declare against myself my lawlessness to the LORD”,/ and it is You that have forgiven the impiety of my heart. *Pause*

V 5 About “*my sin I have made known*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo shows us a nuance implied in the words of the Psalm. He mentions that King David at first was either ignorant of or forgetful of his sin. As a result, he was constantly pricked in heart. However, having seen it, he knows that if he looks at it, then the Lord will overlook it. Further, he says that it is not enough to declare my unrighteousness to the Lord, but rather, to begin by declaring it against myself.

✧ Saint Cæsarius of Arles explains to us that since we are not sinless, we must make confession of our sins. It is not that God is ignorant of our sins. Rather, because He is Good and Merciful, He asks us to do this for our own good, since He is ready to forgive the sins, and since this helps to prepare us for the Kingdom to come.

✧ Cassiodorus states that those who wrongly think that God is ignorant of their actions are behaving foolishly. He knows all things about everyone. Whatever we try to hide within the recesses of the heart is clearly visible to the Lord. Those who are aware of this accuse themselves of their sins, and they frequently confess them to the Lord so that, at the Judgement, they may face a Merciful Advocate rather than a strict Judge.

✧ Evagrius of Pontus reminds us that a righteous person begins speaking by self-accusation. He adds that we ought to pray for tears, so that the wildness in our souls and hearts might be pacified.

✧ About “*sin*” : see the note about “*sins*” on verse 1.

✧ About “*lawlessness*” : see the note about “*lawlessness*” on Psalm 5:5.

✧ About “*not covered*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo encourages us not to cover our sins, but to confess them openly. It is then that the Lord will cover them.

✧ As verse four suggests, sin that is covered and hidden festers in the heart, and the resulting pain does not leave. The way to deal with this interior poison has always been not to hide the sin, but to admit it openly to the Lord, and to say “I’m sorry, please forgive me”. It is important that we allow the Lord to heal, to wash away and to cleanse the infection.

✧ Origen writes that bad thoughts are destroyed by bringing them into the open, by declaring them against ourselves, by exposing them before the Lord. It is He that destroys them, and heals us.

✧ See the note about “*sins have been covered up*” on verse 1. See also the *Orthodox Study Bible* note on Proverbs 28:14.

✧ About “*covered*” : see the notes about “*covered*” and “*sins have been covered up*” on Psalm 31:1.

✠ About *"I shall declare ... to the Lord"* : Evagrius of Pontus exhorts us to pray so that we may receive tears of compunction which may help to tame the wildness of our soul. He urges us to accuse ourselves honestly before the Lord about our sins, so that we may obtain forgiveness from Him.

✧ See Psalms 37:19 ; 50:5 ; 1 Corinthians 11:31.

✠ About *"declare against myself"* : Saint Augustine of Hippo emphasises the significance of this phrase. He comments that at that time [as also now], many people declare their lawlessness, but they do not take responsibility for it. Rather, they blame others, even stars and planets or the devil (see Psalm 140:4), but they most often blame God for making them a person who could not help but do such things. It is important that we blame only ourselves for willingly having consented to a temptation. He suggests that we use the words of Psalm 40:5 to accomplish this.

✧ Saint Symeon the New Theologian states that if we should happen to stumble, then we should blame ourselves, not the Old Adam.

✠ About *"declare"* : as is clear from the context, the use of this word shows that an open confession of sin is made. The Greek word implies that it is made in the midst of many during an assembly.

✠ About *"forgiven"* : Saint Augustine of Hippo points out the significance of the order of events in this confession. King David decided to confess his sin, and he stated his intention to do so. However, before ever he began to speak it, the Lord's ear was already in his heart, and by the time the sin was spoken, the sin had already been forgiven.

✧ Cassiodorus points out that the Lord is already aware of the impiety which is being confessed to Him by the repentant person. When we do not spare ourselves before the Lord, but confess our sins openly, the Lord, the Judge, does spare us.

✧ It may be understood, then, that as soon as I was prepared to admit my sin, there was forgiveness. An extension might be made, understanding that, because God is love, His forgiveness always awaits us ; but that we must be ready to admit to Him that we have sinned, and we must be ready, ourselves to forgive.

✧ See the note about *"forgiven"* on verse 1 ; see Matthew 6:12, 15 ; 9:2-8 ; Mark 2:3-12 ; Luke 5:18-26 ; 11:4 ; 15:11-32.

✠ About *"the impiety of my heart"* : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) points out that in the appointed chief editions of the Septuagint, *"the iniquity of my sin"*, or *"the iniquity of my heart"* is found in the Codexes Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, which are noted in the critical apparatus of the Rahlfs edition. He also points out that in the Hebrew, the words give *"You have forgiven the guilt of sin"*.

✠ About *"impiety"* : see the note about *"impiety"* on Psalm 5:11. See also the note about *"the impious"* on Psalm 1:1.

✧ Impiety has to do in part with forgetting the Lord, and abandoning His worship.

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

✠ About “*pause*” : see the note about “*pause*” on Psalm 2:2.

6 Concerning this, every holy one shall pray to You at the suitable time ;/
nevertheless, in a flood of great waters, they shall not draw near to him.

V 6 About this verse : Saint Augustine of Hippo is of the strong opinion that the second part of this verse makes a comment on the first part : that “*they*” refers to others than “*every holy one*”, and that “*not draw near to him*” refers to “*him*”, the Lord, therefore. [Other interpretations are possible : “*him*” could also refer to “*every holy one*”.] Thus, those in the flood are those who do not draw near to the Lord. He further relates these waters to Baptismal Water which the impious reject and avoid, as well as all the life-giving teachings of the Church which they reject and pervert.

✠ About “*concerning this*” : Saint Athanasius explains that this refers to the “*sin*” and “*lawlessness*” mentioned in verse 5.

✧ Saint Augustine of Hippo perceives that this refers to “*impiety*” [a related fault], which was the last fault mentioned in verse 5.

✠ About “*pray*” : Cassiodorus explains that prayer is the saving cure and antidote for the poisons of all sins from which we suffer.

✧ See the note about “*make my prayer*” : on Psalm 5:3.

✠ About “*suitable time*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo perceives that this “*suitable time*” will be when the New Covenant would be revealed and the Grace of Christ be made visible (see Galatians 4:4). He also refers to 2 Corinthians 6:2.

✧ Bishop Diodorus of Tarsus reminds us that the “*suitable time*” to pray and to confess sin is immediately after it occurs. He cautions us that if the sin lingers, then it quickly becomes entrenched.

✧ See Psalm 9:10, 22.

7 You are my Refuge from the affliction encompassing me./ O my
Exultation, redeem me from those surrounding me. *Pause*

V 7 About “*Refuge*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo explains that the Prophet David shows us by example how much he depends and relies upon the Lord as he wades through the turbulent waters of this world. He is

confidently aware that no supposed substitute can rescue him, and that only the Lord Himself can be his place of safety.

✧ Cassiodorus explains that this sinner fled not to any ineffective earthly refuge, but rather to God Himself who would scatter all encroaching spiritual foes.

✧ See the note about “*Refuge*” on Psalm 9:10. See also the note about “*Strength*” on Psalm 17:2.

✧ About “*affliction*” : see the note about “*affliction*” on Psalm 4:2.

✧ About “*Exultation*” : Saint Athanasius shows us that the Lord caused a light of true rejoicing to shine upon the Prophet David. By having an upright way of life through submission to God, he was delivered from attackers.

✧ Saint Augustine of Hippo explains that with the Lord as his “*Exultation*”, the Prophet David is able to dance for utter joy. At the same time, however, he is aware of the painful present state of things. Because of this joy, he is full of hope despite all the darkness and tribulation. As he asks the Lord, his “*Exultation*”, he is also quite aware that at the fulfilment of all things, there will no longer be the need for hope, since all joy and life will be a present reality.

✧ Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) perceives that this word reflects an effervescent explosion of joy on the part of the Prophet David, joy which is the exuberant consequence of his relationship of love in prayer with the Lord. He adds that it is so intimate and so immediate that this joy becomes a sort of nickname or pet-name for the Lord, a phenomenon common amongst Russian-speakers. Were the author such a Russian-speaker, the expression might have taken a form which would convey the sentiment of “*dear, sweet, beloved Exultation of my heart*”.

✧ The Greek word here means “*religious joy, religious exultation, joyful worship*”, but in this case alone in the Psalter as a title for the Lord (see also the note about “*Strength*” on Psalm 17:2). This same word, but not as a title, is found also in Psalms 47:3 ; 118:111. For general “*exultation*”, see the note about “*exultation*” on Psalm 29:6.

✧ See the note about “*exultation*” on Psalm 29:6.

✧ About “*redeem*” : see the notes about “*redeem*” on Psalm 7:3.

✧ About “*pause*” : see the note about “*pause*” on Psalm 2:2.

8 “I will make you understand, and advise you on this way in which you might walk ;/ I will fix My eyes upon you”.

V 8 About “*make you understand*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo advises us that with these words, the Lord begins His response.

✧ Cassiodorus explains that sinners have no understanding unless the Lord mercifully gives it to the repentant one. True understanding comes only from Him.

✧ About “*understand*” : see verses 1, 9. See the note about “*understand*” on Psalm 2:10.

✧ About “*way*” : see the note about “*the way*” on Psalm 1:6.

✧ About “*walk*” : see the note about “*walked*” on Psalm 1:1.

✧ About “*fix My eyes upon you*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo explains to us that as the Lord so focusses His eyes upon us, we likewise keep our eyes upon Him. Thus, in hope, we follow Him, and He keeps us from straying from the “strait and narrow”. Saint Augustine of Hippo further reassures us by giving us reference to Psalm 24:15 ; Matthew 6:31 ; 1 Peter 5:7.

✧ See the note about “*Your eyes*” on Psalm 5:6.

9 Do not be like a horse and a mule,/ in which there is no understanding ;/ with bridle and bit may you hold in the jaws/ of those not drawing near to you.

V 9 About this verse : the way of the believer must be different from the world, that is, exemplary – not fearful, rebellious, and stubborn, but lovingly, freely, obedient.

✧ About “*Do not ... understanding*” : Saint Ambrose asks why we would behave in an obstinate and stubborn manner, obeying the whims of appetite, and thus dishonour ourselves. In doing so, we deprive ourselves of the Lord’s gift of intelligence, and we separate ourselves from the Lord’s will. It is not sensible, nor reasonable. Saint Ambrose of Milan writes much the same.

✧ Saint Augustine of Hippo comments that the sinner wishes to be as an unbroken animal, and so has to be restrained. Such a person is better off accepting the restraint and formation, since obstinate resistance results in being left to one’s own devices. [King David has had in his own life his own good and personal experience of allowing the Lord to tame such an unbridled person.] Saint Augustine of Hippo again exhorts us to allow the Lord to tame us, to humble us, and to enable us to cease defending and justifying our sinful, rebellious behaviour.

✧ Saint Cæsarius of Arles warns us against irrationally living dissipated in passions, to which we become enslaved.

✧ About “*understanding*” : see the note on verse 8.

10 Many are the scourges of the sinner,/ but mercy shall surround the one hoping on the LORD.

V 10 About “*scourges*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo points out that the “*scourges*” refer to the sharp corrections required for a person who is rebellious, unrepentant, and self-willed. He likens such a person to certain animals which can only be left in the wild. He expresses the hope that all would accept the Lord’s correction and the benefits that accrue from it, just as did the Prophet David. It is to our own advantage that we accept the Lord’s formation and direction, so that we may in our hearts know the Lord’s way without need of correction.

✧ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) explains that “*scourges*” refer to the lashes from a whip.

✧ See Psalms 34:15 ; 37:18 ; 38:11 ; 88:33 ; 90:10. See also Psalm 72: 5, 14 (verb).

✧ About “*sinner*” : see the note about “*sinner*” on Psalm 1:1.

✧ See also the note about “*sin*” on Psalm 4:5.

✧ About “*mercy ... Lord*” : see Psalm 32:22.

✧ About “*mercy*” : Saint Augustine of Hippo explains that the Lord expresses His love for us by surrounding us with His mercy in the context of our suffering. If we trust Him, we will surely perceive it.

✧ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrillus equates “*mercy*” with Grace, and he reminds us of the words of the Apostle, “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

✧ See the note about “*mercy*” on Psalm 5:8.

✧ About “*hoping*” : see the note about “*hope*” on Psalm 4:6. See also the notes on Psalms 30:2, 15 ; 32:22.

✧ About “*Lord*” : see the note about “*Lord*” on verse 2.

11 Be glad in the LORD and exult, O you righteous ;/ and boast, all you upright in heart.

V 11 About this verse : Saint Augustine of Hippo exhorts us to exult not in ourselves, but in the Lord. Since we understand that the right way of life is in obedience to the Lord, he encourages us with the Apostle to boast in the Lord (see Galatians 6:14), so that we may be exalted in Him. If our hearts are aright in the Lord, then despite any and every tribulation, we will hold tightly to the Lord and trust in His love. If our hearts are distorted, then we will tend to blame Him for all our troubles, doubt that He truly governs the world, deny that He is righteous, or deny His existence. Thus, we do not find healing and consolation, but only anger and bitterness.

✧ Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore) explains that human beings were created to be full of joy, to bear the fruits of Grace and forgiveness, and in holiness to live in right relations with God and with all creation.

✧ See Psalms 32:1 ; 63:11 ; 96:12.

✧ About *"be glad in the Lord"* : Cassiodorus comments that it is necessary that the righteous be glad only in the Lord. In Him alone is there unending delight.

✧ See the note about *"may they be glad"* on Psalm 5:12. See also Philippians 4:4.

✧ About *"Lord"* : see the note about *"Lord"* on verse 2.

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

✧ About *"the righteous"* : see the note about *"the righteous"* on Psalm 1:5, and the note on Psalm 30:2.

✧ About *"boast"* : see the note about *"boast"* on Psalm 5:12.

✧ 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.

O Holy God,

You grant blessing in remitting transgressions to those who confess You.

Hear the vows of Your servants ;

and, having crushed the barb of sin,

flood us with spiritual exultation. — Roman
