

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

✧ See the note about “lament” in the introduction to Psalm 3.

✠ This Psalm is associated with Resurrectional Vigil. Verse 9 is used at the Divine Liturgy, such as in the priest’s prayer after the First Antiphon, and in the Prayer Before the Ambo, in the Tropar of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and in many other services. It is used (verses 1, 6) as the Prokeimenon of the Sunday Divine Liturgy. It is used (verses 1, 6) as the Prokeimenon of the Divine Liturgy of the Third Sunday of Pascha.

✠ Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea tells us that Psalm 27 refers to Christ, and most particularly to that prayer which He prayed at the time of His Passion.

✠ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrihus explains that this psalm, like those preceeding it, deal with the betrayals endured by the Prophet David. His example is an encouragement to others who suffer similarly. Like the Prophet David, it is possible for those who are intent on persevering to petition the Lord, and to receive His help, protection, support, and guidance.

✠ Bishop Diodore of Tarsus opines that this psalm alludes also to the illness and recovery of King Hezekiah (4 Kingdoms 20).

✠ *The Orthodox Study Bible* indicates that this psalm prepares for the Death, and Resurrection of Christ.

“Supplication in times of testing”

“God the Protection and Salvation of His Anointed”

“A prayer of faith with thanksgiving”

1 Of David.

V 1 About the Inscription : the Masoretic (Hebrew) text gives only “Of David”. “Of David” gives the same meaning as “By David”.

✧ About “*of David*” : see Psalms 25:1 ; 26:1 ; 144:1.

[Πρὸς σέ, Κύριε

Ad te, Domine]

To You, O LORD, I cried out./ O my God, do not pass me by in silence ;/
lest You pass me by in silence,/ and I shall become like those going down
into the pit.

✠ Saint Athanasius encourages us to sing Psalm 27 at such times as when we are under attack in some way. He exhorts us not to pay attention either to the attack or to our own human weaknesses, but rather unceasingly to cry out to God.

✠ About “*To You, O Lord, I cried out*” : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus explains that this psalm and the psalms which come before it are helpful to anyone who is suffering from catastrophes. As did the Prophet David, such sufferers may cry out to the Lord and receive His help.

* Origen reminds us that many others have called out to the Lord similarly, including Moses, Aaron, and Joshua son of Nun. He reminds us also that God speaks to us interiorly, and that righteous thoughts come from Him. Further, alluding to Luke 11:28 (also Matthew 7:24 and James 1:22), he says that the one who hears the word of the Lord and does it becomes holy.

❖ See the note about “*cried out*” on Psalm 17:42.

✠ About “*Lord*” : see verses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 ; see the note about “*Lord*” on Psalm 1:2.

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

✠ About “*pass ... silence*” : this phrase expresses a Greek verb : see Psalms 34:22 ; 38:13 ; 49:3 ; 108:1.

✠ About “*going down into the pit*” : see Psalms 29:4 ; 87:5 ; 142:7 ; Ezekiel 31:14.

✠ About “*the pit*” : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrihus perceives that the Prophet David uses this word to refer to death and the grave, since a grave is dug in the manner of a pit. Should God pass him by in silence as though He did not know him, he would not then exist.

✧ “*The pit*” is a synonym for Hadēs (in Hebrew, Sheol). It implies corruption, destruction, the place of the dead. See the note about “*Hadēs*” on Psalm 6:6.

✧ About “*the pit*” : see the note on Psalm 6:6 ; see also Psalms 29:4 ; 39:3 ; 87:5, 7 ; 142:7.

2 Hear the voice of my supplication when I beseech You,/ when I raise my
hands towards Your holy temple.

V 2 About “*voice of my supplication*” : see verse 6 ; see the note about “*voice of my supplication*” on Psalm 5:3.

✧ About “*voice*” : see the note about “*voice*” on Psalm 3:5.

✧ About “*supplication*” : see the notes about “*supplication*” on Psalm 5:3.

✧ About “*beseech*” : the meaning of this verb is an urgent, fervent request. “*Implore*” and “*entreat*” are synonyms. “*Supplicate*”, a possible synonym, implies to beg with humility (see Psalm 63:2 ; Daniel 6:12).

✧ About “*raise my hands*” : the raising of hands in praise, prayer, supplication and blessing is an ancient bodily position which normally accompanied prayer. Such prayer is liturgical and personal, corporate and private. This physical posture in prayer is exemplified in various forms of iconography, but the most known such icons are those of the Mother of God of the Sign (*Platytera*). She is portrayed with her arms lifted up to the sides, and her womb carries her son, Jesus the Christ, who is blessing. She intercedes to the Lord for the world, for all creation. Moreover, by this very position, and the visibility of Christ Incarnate in her womb, she shows us also that this position demonstrates readiness to receive Divine Grace. This position is often called *orans* or *orant*, the Latin word for praying or pleading. In it, the arms are out-stretched to either side, with the palms up. This posture also imitates that of Christ Himself at His crucifixion on the Cross for the salvation of those who by believing become temples of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20), as Saint Augustine said. This physical position of Christ (which He voluntarily accepted as He was thus nailed) is understood to demonstrate His embracing and forgiving of those who tortured and killed Him, and also His praying for them. Christians generally continued to use this posture which had been inherited from Old Covenant times, and there are many references to it in the New Testament, earlier Christian monastic literature, and the lives of the saints (such as Saint Arsenius the Great). In modern times, it is mostly some Mediterranean Orthodox Christians who continue this practice to some extent, while amongst other Orthodox Christians, this practice is limited to the stance of the priests during certain parts of the Divine Liturgy. Nevertheless, there is nothing that inhibits any Orthodox Christian from praying in this attitude at any time, even now.

✧ Origen explains that if we have our treasure in Heaven, then the enemy is overcome when we, like Moses, raise our hands as we pray. Indeed, he wrote that it is needful to raise our hands when we pray.

✧ See 2 Moses 17:11, 12 ; 3 Moses 9:22 ; 5 Moses 32:40 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 3 Kingdoms 8:20, 53 ; Nehemiah 8:6 ; 2 Maccabees 3:20 ; Psalms 43:21 ; 62:5 ; 67:32 ; 87:10 ; 118:48 ; 133:2 ; 140:2 ; 142:6 ; Isaiah 1:15 ; Lamentations 2:19 ; 2:27 ; Daniel 12:7 ; Luke 24:5 ; 1 Timothy 2:8.

✧ About “*temple*” : see the note about “*temple*” on Psalm 5:8.

✧ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus points out that although at that time the Temple in Jerusalem was not yet built, the Tabernacle was present nevertheless, and that the Prophet David uses the word Temple for it regardless, since the Divine manifestation occurred there.

3 Do not drag my soul away together with sinners ; together with workers of unrighteousness do not destroy me :/ those speaking of peace with their neighbours,/ but there are bad things in their hearts.

V 3 About "*do not drag ... destroy me*" : this chiasmic structure is a form of repetition with a reversal in grammatical order is a device of poetic intensification.

✠ About "*drag*" : see Psalm 9:30.

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

✠ About "*sinner*" : see the note about "*sinnings*" on Psalm 1:1. See also the note about "*sin*" on Psalm 4:5.

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

✠ About "*do not destroy*" : see the note about "*do not destroy*" on Psalm 25:9.

✠ About "*destroy*" : see the note on Psalm 5:7.

✠ About "*speaking of peace ... hearts*" : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrillus interprets the Prophet David as advising us not to have any involvement with intentionally duplicitous persons : those who say one thing and do another, those who do not practice what they preach.

✧ Saint Bede of Jarrow reminds us that the Descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove at the baptism of Christ is a good reminder to us all that it is only when we are simple, and at peace with others, that we can receive the Holy Spirit. Further, he reminds us of the peaceful and loving nature of doves, in comparison with that of ravens who can sometimes behave lovingly, but then tear flesh. "A dove, which by nature is innocent of the tearing of the flesh, most suitably fits those innocents who pursue peace and sanctity with everyone".

✧ See the note about "*double heart*" on Psalm 11:3. See also Psalms 34:20 ; 54:22 ; 61:5 ; Proverbs 26:24-25 ; Jeremiah 6:14 ; 9:7 ; Ezekiel 13:10.

✠ About "*neighbours*" : see the note about "*neighbour*" on Psalm 11:3.

✠ About "*bad things*" : see the note about "*bad things*" on Psalm 26:5.

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

4 Give to them, O LORD, in accordance with their works,/ and in accordance with the evil of their purposes./ In accordance with the works of their hands, give to them :/ render to them their recompense ;

V 4 About “*Lord*” : see the note about “*Lord*” on verse 1.

✧ About “*works*” : see the note about “*works*” (human) on Psalm 9:17. About “*works*” (of sinners) : see Psalm 105:35, 39.

✧ About “*evil*” (noun) : see the the notes about “*evil*” on Psalms 5:5 ; 7:10.

✧ About “*purposes*” : see the note about “*purposes*” on Psalm 9:12.

✧ About “*In accordance ... recompense*” : these two phrases in chiasmic formation are a form of poetic intensification.

✧ About “*works ... hands*” : see the note on Psalm 9:17.

✧ About “*recompense*” : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrhus comments that we ought not to dare to think that the righteous Prophet David is cursing his enemies here. Rather, he asks for a righteous and due repayment and that they be caught in their own schemes that they have devised against him (see the notes on Psalm 7:16).

✧ The word “*recompense*” has a negative application in this verse. In such cases, the meaning tends more towards “making amends”, or even “retribution”.

✧ See the note on Psalm 30:24 about “*requite*”, which has a different nuance of a similar negative meaning.

✧ Saint Jerome of Bethlehem suggests that if the unrighteous will not understand through blessings then they will learn through sufferings.

✧ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) suggests that the word here means “pay them back with their own deeds”, or “give them a taste of their own medicine” (see also Matthew 7:2).

✧ See also 2 Kingdoms 3:39 ; Psalm 136:8 ; Lamentations 3:61 ; 2 Timothy 4:14. See also the note on Psalm 18:12 (positive “*recompense*”). See also Matthew 16:27 ; 2 Corinthians 11:15 ; 1 Peter 1:17 ; Apocalypse 20:12 ; 22:12 (unclassified “*recompense*”).

5 for they have not understood about the works of the LORD,/ nor about
the works of His hands./ You will pull them down, and You will not
rebuild them.

V 5 About this verse : Saint Augustine, with reference to Christ, comments that the ecclesiastical officials of His time could not and would not understand the meaning of the visible words and deeds of Christ [although many did]. Because these obstinate authorities instead trapped and tortured Him, they brought on their own downfall. Using the voice of Christ, he adds the prayer that God not allow harm to come to Him, nor to His Church, in the repeated attacks against her.

✧ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that ignorance has consequences, and most especially if the ignorance is a refusal to understand. He also says that it is therefore possible to be lost while knowing the Scriptures (Matthew 22:29).

✧ This verse has a similar meaning to Psalm 48:13.

✧ About *"they have not understood"* : see 5 Moses 32:29 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 48:13, 21 ; 81:5 ; 91:7 ; 105:7.

✧ See also the note about *"understanding"* on Psalm 13:2 .

✧ About *"understood"* : see the note about *"understand"* on Psalm 2:10.

✧ About *"works of the Lord"* : see the note about *"works"* (of God) on Psalm 8:4.

✧ About *"Lord"* : see the note about *"Lord"* on verse 1.

✧ About *"works of His hands"* : see the note about *"works of Your hands"* on Psalm 8:7.

✧ About *"pull down"* : see the note about *"pulled down"* on Psalm 9:7.

✧ About *"not rebuild"* : this indicates that the ruination is permanent.

✧ See Isaiah 5:12.

6 Blessed be the LORD,/ for He has heard the voice of my supplication.

V 6 About *"blessed be the Lord"* : see the note about *"blessed be my God"* on Psalm 17:47.

✧ About *"blessed"* : see the note about *"blessed"* on Psalm 1:1.

✧ About *"Lord"* : see the note about *"Lord"* on verse 1.

✧ About *"voice of my supplication"* : see the notes on verse 2.

✧ About *"supplication"* : see the notes about *"voice of my supplication"* and *"supplication"* on Psalm 5:3.

7 The LORD is my Helper and my Protector :/ on Him has my heart hoped ;/ I have been helped, and my flesh has flourished ;/ and with my will shall I confess Him.

V 7 About this verse : the Prophet David confesses that the Lord helps him in the midst of suffering ; He protects him with immortality in resurrection as his flesh flowers afresh. He is determined freely and fearlessly to confess the Lord in harmony with the Law.

✧ This verse in particular can be seen to be looking forwards, to the Resurrection of Christ, especially when associated with the words in the introduction to this psalm.

✠ About “*the Lord is my Helper*” : this phrase is found in various places in the Psalter. Affirming one of the characteristics of the Lord, and using “*Helper*” as a title, this phrase modulates in other places to replace “*Helper*” with other words, such as “*Protector*”.

⌘ About “*Lord*” : see the note about “*Lord*” on verse 1.

✧ About “*Helper*” : see the note about “*Helper*” on Psalm 9:10. In this case, “*Helper*” is used as a sort of title for the Lord ; see the notes about “*Helper*” on Psalm 17:2, 3.

✠ About “*Protector*” : see notes about capitalisation on Psalm 17:2, and about “*Protector*” on Psalm 17:3.

✠ About “heart” : see the note about “heart” on Psalm 4:3.

✠ About “*hoped*” : see the note about “*hope*” on Psalm 4:6.

✠ About “helped” : see the note about “helped” on Psalm 21:12.

✠ About “*flesh*” : see the note about “*flesh*” on Psalm 15:9.

✠ About “*flourished*” : Father P Reardon explains that the flourishing of the Resurrection of Christ is not a mere return to life in the flesh, but rather a transformation of the fleshly body into an incorruptible, spiritual body which is yet material. The matter of this body will never again die. The Risen Christ was not a “shade” or “spirit”. In the Resurrection, His Body is of spiritual material which does not die. Father P Reardon refers us to Luke 24:39, 42, 43 ; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.

✧ See Psalms 71:16 ; 89:6 ; 91:13, 14 ; 102:15 ; 131:18.

⌘ About “*my will*” (noun): this is the sole case of “*will*” in human terms.

✠ About “confess” : see the note about “confess” on Psalm 6:6.

8 The LORD is the Strength of His people,/ and the Protector of the
 salvations of His christ.

V 8 About “*Lord*” : see the note about “*Lord*” on verse 1.

✠ About “*Strength*” : in this psalm, “*Strength*” is used as a sort of title for the Lord. For other examples of this sort of usage, see the notes on Psalms 17:2, 3 ; 24:14.

- ✠ About “*people*” : see verse 9 ; see the note about “*people*” on Psalm 2:1.
 - ✠ About “*Protector*” : see the note about “*Protector*” on verse 7.
 - ✠ About “*salvations*” : see the note about “*salvations*” on Psalm 17:51. See the note about “*salvation*” on Psalm 3:9.
 - ✠ About “*christ*” : see the note about “*christ*” on Psalm 2:2.
- ✧ Saint Jerome of Bethlehem opines that everyone who has been baptised into Christ has become His anointed, as in the hymn at Holy Baptism, “As many as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ”.
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9 Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance ;/ shepherd them, and lift them up until the age.

V 9 About this verse : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrihus emphasises for us the nobility of the Prophet King David as he appropriately prays for his people. Even though he had been pursued by his predecessor Saul and the people of Israel, he intercedes for their salvation, and for their exaltation. He did not pay attention to the disservice to himself, but rather to the future repentance of his people who would lovingly serve the Lord, which he foresaw.

- ✠ About “*save*” : see the note about “*save*” on Psalm 3:8.
 - ✠ About “*people*” : see verse 8.
 - ✠ About “*bless*” : see the note about “*bless*” on Psalm 5:13.
 - ✠ About “*inheritance*” : the *Orthodox Study Bible* mentions that “*inheritance*” may refer to that inheritance which Christ won for Himself, that is, the Church.
- ✧ See the notes about “*inheritance*” on Psalm 2:8.
- ✠ About “*shepherd*” : see the note about “*shepherd*” on Psalm 2:9.
 - ✠ About “*lift ... up*” : see the note about “*lifted up*” on Psalm 8:2.
 - ✠ About “*until the age*” : see the note about “*unto the ages*” on Psalm 5:12.
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O God most strong, the Strength of all :
 save Your people from those going down into the pit,
 and thus fasten us to Your holy temple in unity of spirit ;
 that in our hearts we may hold peace,

which we offer on our lips to our neighbour. — Roman
