

The 15 Old Testament Readings

for

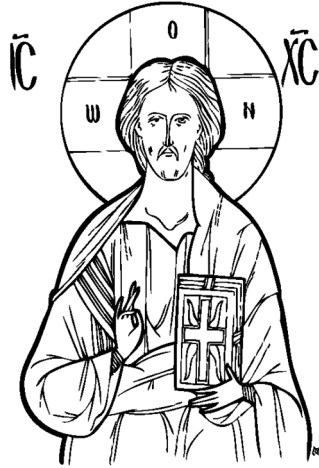
Vespers

of

Great and Holy Saturday

The OCA texts revised according to the Septuagint text.





This Reader's Book attempts to keep as much of the OCA text as possible, making revisions where there is an obvious difference between the Masoretic and Septuagint text.

For the Greek text, I consulted Η ΒΙΒΛΟΣ, Η ΠΑΛΑΙΑ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΒΔΟΜΗΚΟΝΤΑ, *The Bible, The Septuagint Old Testament*, K. M. Tsiappoutas and A. I. Koraes. Amazon, 2013.

English translations consulted were: *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, Editors, Oxford University Press, 2007; *The Lexham English Septuagint*, Ken M. Penner, General Editor, Lexham Press, 2019; and the St. Athanasius Academy Septuagint in *The Orthodox Study Bible*, 2008.

For pericopes from Isaiah, *The Book of Isaiah from Codex Alexandrinus*, translated by R.R. Ottley [bibletranslation.ws/download/Ottley_Isaiah_LXX-vols_1_2.pdf] was the primary translation consulted.

Pericopes from Genesis are my translation.

Lexicons used were: *Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint, Expanded Edition*, Bernard A. Taylor with word definitions by Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, 2009, and *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 1957.

It might be appropriate for these pages to be inserted in a fitting binder, making a "Reader's Book" which would be placed on a stand before the Shroud. Having a large book, used by each reader, would, I believe, add dignity to the readings, much like using the *Apostolos* and the Gospel book.

Richard (John) Staats
Great Lent, 2024

#1

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from Genesis. [1:1-13]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was unseen and without form, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was rushing over the face of the water.

And God said, “Let there be light!” And there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

And God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water and let it separate the water from the water.” And it was so. God made the firmament, and God separated the water which was under the firmament from the water which was above the firmament. And God called the firmament Heaven. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

And God said, “Let the water under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. And the water that was under the heavens was gathered into its place, and the dry land was seen. And God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

And God said, “Let the earth put forth pastureland vegetation, sowing seed according to kind and according to its likeness, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind upon the earth.” And it was so. The earth brought forth pastureland vegetation, sowing seed according to its kind and according to its likeness, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind upon the earth. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.




#2

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah. [60:1-16]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

hine! Shine, O Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will appear upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And kings shall walk in your light, and nations in your brightness.

Lift up your eyes about and see; your children all gathered together. Behold, all your sons have come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. Then you shall see and be amazed, and your heart shall be in wonder, because the wealth of the sea and of nations and of peoples shall be turned to you. A multitude of camels shall come to you, and camels of Mid'i-an and of Ē'phah will cover you, all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the salvation of the Lord. All the flocks of Kē'dar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Ne·bā'·i·oth shall come to you, and acceptable sacrifices shall be offered upon my altar, and my house of prayer shall be glorified.

Who are these that fly like clouds, and like doves with their young? The islands waited for me, and the ships of Tar'shish among the first, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and gold with them, for the holy Name of the Lord, and because the Holy One of Israel is glorious.

Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I smote you, but in my mercy I loved you. And your gates shall be opened continually—day and night they shall not be shut—that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led captive in procession. For the nations and kings that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste. The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, with cypress and pine and cedar together, to beautify my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

[continue on next page]

The sons of those who oppressed you and provoked you shall come to you in fear; and you shall be called, “City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.”

Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one to help you, I shall make eternal rejoicing for you, a joy from age to age. You shall suck the milk of nations, and shall eat the wealth of kings, and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the God of Israel.



#3

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from Exodus. [12:1-11]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth day of this month, let every man take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for each household; and if the household is too small for a lamb, then a man and his neighbor next to his house shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take him from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep him until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the sons of Israel shall kill him toward evening. Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat them.

They shall eat the meat this night, roasted by fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. You shall not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted by fire; the head with the legs and inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning, neither shall you break any of his bones. Anything that remains until the morning you shall burn with fire. In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staffs in your hands. And you shall eat it in haste—it is the Lord’s Pascha.”



#4

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the prophecy of Jonah. [1:1—4:11]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

Now the Word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of A·miṭ' taī, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim in it that the cry of its wickedness has come up before me.”

But Jonah rose to flee to Tar'shish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Jop'pa and found a ship going to Tar'shish. So he paid his fare and went on board to sail with them to Tar'shish, away from the presence of the Lord.

But the Lord raised up a wind upon the sea, and a mighty tempest came upon the sea, so that the ship was in danger of breaking up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. And they heaved the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the belly of the ship and was sleeping and snoring. So the captain came and said to him, “How are you snoring? Arise, call upon your God! Perhaps God will save us, and we might not perish.”

And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

Then they said to him, “Tell us, on what account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And whence do you come? What is your country, and of what people are you?”

And Jonah said to them, “I am a servant of the Lord, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

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Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, “What is this that you have done?” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

Then they said to him, “What should we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” Because the sea kept coming and grew more and more tempestuous. And Jonah said to them, “Take me up, and throw me into the sea, and the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest is upon you.”

Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea kept coming and grew more and more tempestuous against them. Therefore, they cried out to the Lord and said, “We beseech thee, O Lord, let us not perish on account of this man’s life! And lay not on us innocent blood, for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.” So they took up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made prayers.

And the Lord commanded a great whale to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights.

And Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the whale and said,

“I called out to the Lord my God in my distress, and he heard me;
out of the belly of hades I cried, and thou didst hear my voice.
Thou didst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the sea,
and rivers were round about me;
all thy waves and thy billows passed over me.
Then I said, ‘I have been cast away from thine eyes;
how shall I again look toward thy holy temple?’

“Water poured over me as far as my soul;
the deepest abyss was round about me;
my head sank into the crevices of the mountains.

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I went down into a land whose bars are everlasting barriers.
O let my life ascend from corruption, O Lord my God!
As my life was failing me, I remembered the Lord,
so let my prayer come unto thee, into thy holy sanctuary.

“Those who pay regard to vain and false idols
have forsaken their mercy.
But I, with a voice of praise and confession, will sacrifice to thee.
What I have vowed I will pay to thee,
the Lord of my salvation.”

And the Lord commanded the whale, and it cast out Jonah upon the dry land.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim in it the message that I previously told you.”

So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city before God, a journey of about three days in breadth. And Jonah began to go into the city, going about one day’s journey. And he cried out and said, “Yet three days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

Then tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe from himself, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat upon ashes. And it was proclaimed and said in Nineveh by the king and his nobles, saying, “Let neither man nor cattle, oxen nor sheep, taste anything; let them not feed, or drink water.”

So the people and animals were covered with sackcloth, and they cried mightily to God. And everyone turned from his evil way and from the injustice of his hands, saying, “Who knows, God may repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?” When God saw their actions, how they turned from their evil ways, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

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But Jonah was exceedingly grieved, and he was confused. And he prayed to the Lord and said, “Ah, Lord! Is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I had the foresight to flee to Tar’ shish; for I knew that thou art merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and the One repenting of evils. Therefore, now, O Master, O Lord, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

And the Lord said to Jonah, “Are you exceedingly grieved?”

Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down opposite the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

And the Lord God commanded a gourd, and it came up over Jonah’s head, that it might be a shade over his head, to shade him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the gourd. But when dawn came up the next day, God commanded a worm which attacked the gourd so that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun rose, God commanded a scorching east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he became disheartened and renounced his life and said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

But God said to Jonah, “Are you exceedingly grieved over the gourd?”

And Jonah said, “I am exceedingly grieved, even unto death.”

And the Lord said, “You took pity on the gourd, for which you suffered no trouble for, and you did not nurture it, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should I not have pity over Nineveh, the great city, in which dwell more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”



#5

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from Joshua. (LXX = Jesus, son of Nave) [5:10-15]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

While the people of Israel were encamped in Gilgal, they kept the pascha on the fourteenth day of the month at evening from the sunset at Jericho on the opposite side the Jordan on the plain, and they ate from the grain of the land, things unleavened and fresh. And the manna ceased on this day, after they had eaten of the produce of the land, and the people of Israel had manna no more, but they enjoyed the fruit of the land of the Phoenicians in that year.

And it happened, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man stood before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said, “Are you one of us, or on the side of our adversaries?” And he said, “As commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.”

And Joshua fell on his face upon the earth, and said to him, “What does my Master command your servant?”

And the commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Put off your sandals from your feet; for the place where you are now standing is holy.”

*[And Joshua did so.]*¹



¹ This verse is not included in the LXX.

#6

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from Exodus. [13:20—15:1]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

The people of Israel moved on from Suc' coth, and encamped at E' tham on the edge of the wilderness. Now God was going before them by day in a pillar of cloud to show them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire. The pillar of cloud during the day and the pillar of fire during the night did not depart from before all the people.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of the village between Mig'dol and the sea, opposite Ba-al-zephon. You shall camp before them by the sea. For Pharaoh will say to his people, 'The people of Israel are wandering in the land, because the wilderness has shut them in.' And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and all the Egyptians shall know that I AM is Lord."² And they did so.

And it was told to the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, sending forth the people of Israel so they are not serving us?"

So Pharaoh made ready his chariot and took all his army with him, and took six hundred picked chariots and all the horsemen of the Egyptians with officers over all of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel.

Now the people of Israel were going forth defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them and came upon them encamped by the sea; and all of Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army were in front of the village opposite Ba-al-zephon.

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² LXX = ἐγώ εἰμι Κύριος, here and following.

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and they saw the Egyptians encamped behind them, and they were in great fear.

And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, and they said to Moses, “Is it because there were no graves in the land of Egypt that you are leading us out to be put to death in this wilderness? What is this you have done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Was not this what we said to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone and let us serve the Egyptians?’ For it was better for us to be slaves to the Egyptians than to die in this wilderness.”

And Moses said to the people, “Take courage! Stand firm, and see the salvation which is from the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you will keep silence.”

The Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people of Israel to break camp. And you, lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it,³ that the people of Israel may go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And behold, I will harden the heart of Pharaoh and all the Egyptians, so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And all the Egyptians shall know that I AM is Lord, as I am getting glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

Then the Angel of God who was going before the camp of the people of Israel, rose up and moved behind them; and the pillar of cloud also lifted up from before them and stood behind them, coming between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel and stood still. And there was gloom and darkness, and the night passed without one coming near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong south wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the water was divided.

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³ St Chrysostom: “Some in fact say that [the sea] did not become one path, but the waters were divided according to the number of tribes to make many a passage for crossing over...in a twinkling of an eye, the sea behaved in contrary fashion; she divided not in one way, but she matched the number of all the tribes [of Israel]. [*Orthodox Psalter*]

And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the water being a wall to them on their right hand and a wall on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

And it came to pass, in the early morning watch, the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the camp of the Egyptians and he threw the camp of Egyptians into disarray, and he bound together the axles of their chariots, and he led them forcefully. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel! For the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians!"

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back and cover up the Egyptians, their chariots, and their horsemen." So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the water returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared. Now the Egyptians fled under the water, and the Lord shook off the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. The water returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained.

But the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst the sea, the water being a wall to them on their right hand and a wall on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw the Lord's great hand and the things he did against the Egyptians. And the people feared the Lord, and trusted in God and in his servant Moses.

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to God, and spoke, saying:

The Cantor and Choir sing the Song of Moses.

Cantor: Let us sing to the Lord!

Choir: For gloriously has he been glorified!

[Canticle continues on next page. Reading #7 begins on page 17.]

Cantor: Let us sing to the Lord!

Choir: *For gloriously has he been glorified!*

Cantor:

Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea. Let us sing unto the Lord!

He was to me a helper and protector for salvation. Let us sing....

This is my God and I will glorify him; the God of my father and I will exalt him. Let us sing...

The Lord bringing wars to nought, the Lord is his Name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea. Let us sing....

And his chosen officers are sunk in the Red Sea. Let us sing....

The floods cover them; they went down into the depths like a stone. Let us sing....

Thy right hand, O Lord, has been glorified in power. Let us sing....

Thy right hand, O Lord, has shattered the enemy, and in the greatness of thy majesty thou hast overthrown thine adversaries. Let us sing....

Thou sendest forth thy fury, it consumes them like stubble, and by the spirit of thy displeasure the water parted asunder. Let us sing....

The waters stood up like a wall, the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. Let us sing....

The enemy said, "I will pursue, and I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, I will satisfy my soul, I will destroy with my sword, my hand shall have dominion. Let us sing....

Thou didst send thy Spirit, and the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Let us sing....

Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee—glorious in holiness, marvelous in glory, doing wonders. Let us sing....

Thou didst stretch out thy right hand and the earth swallowed them up. Thou hast led in thy righteousness the people whom thou hast redeemed. Let us sing....

[Nations heard and became angry; pangs seized those dwelling among the Philistines. Let us sing...]⁴

Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed, the leaders of Moab, trembling seizes them; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. Let us sing....

⁴ This verse may have been accidentally omitted in OCA booklet. It is found in both the Hebrew and LXX texts.

Let trembling and fear fall upon them! Because of the greatness of thine arm, let them become as stone. Let us sing....

Until thy people pass by, O Lord, until the people pass by whom thou hast purchased. Let us sing....

Thou wilt bring them in and plant them on thy mountain, the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thine abode. The sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have made ready. Let us sing....

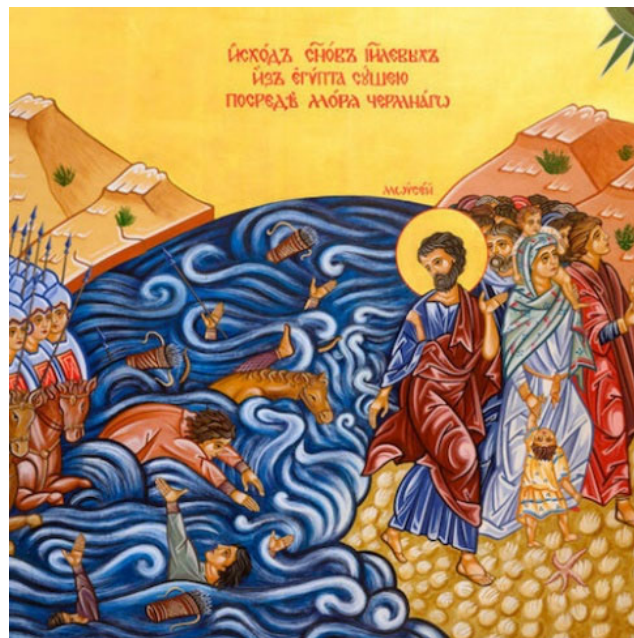
The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. For when the horse of Pharaoh with the chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the Lord brought back the water of the sea upon them. Let us sing....

But the children of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. Let us sing...

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Let us sing....

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
Let us sing unto the Lord!

Choir: For gloriously has he been glorified!



#7

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the prophecy of Zephaniah. (LXX = Sophonias) [3:8-15]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

Thus says the Lord, “Wait for me, for the day of my resurrection as a witness. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kings, in order to pour out upon them all the heat of my anger; for in the fire of my zeal all the earth shall be consumed.

“Yea, at that time I will change the speech of the peoples in its generation, so that all of them might call upon the Name of the Lord and might serve him under one yoke. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia I will bring in my dispersed ones; they shall bring my offerings. On that day you shall in no way be put to shame because of all your deeds by which you acted profanely against me, for then I will remove from you the contemptible acts of your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty upon my holy mountain.

“For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall reverence the Name of the Lord, those who are left in Israel; and they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue, for they shall pasture and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Rejoice and be delighted with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your iniquities. He has ransomed you from the hand of your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst. You shall see evil no more!



#8

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the Third Book of Kings. [17:8-24]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

Then the Word of the Lord came to Elijah: “Arise! Go to Zar’ e-phath⁵ which belongs to Sidon. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to feed you.” So he arose and went to Zar’ e-phath, to the gate of the city, and behold, a widow woman was there gathering sticks. And Elijah called to her and said, “Bring me, please, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” And as she was going to bring it, Elijah shouted after her and said, “And also, bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”

And the woman said, “The Lord your God lives, as if I have a cake! Indeed, there is only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jug, and behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my children, that we may eat it and die.”

And Elijah said to her, “Be of good courage! Go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make for yourself and your children. For thus says the Lord, ‘The jar of meal shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not fail, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.’”

And she went and did as Elijah said. And she, and he, and her children ate. The jar of meal was not spent, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to word of the Lord which he spoke by the hand of Elijah.

After these things, it happened that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; and his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sins to remembrance and to put to death my son!”

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⁵ LXX = Sarepta.

And Elijah said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her bosom and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him upon his own bed. And Elijah cried out and said, "Woe is me, O Lord! The witness of the widow with whom I sojourn, thou hast done evil by slaying her son!" Then he breathed upon the child three times, and called on the Lord and said, "O Lord my God, let this child's soul come into him again."

So it happened, and the child cried out. And Elijah brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son lives."

And the woman said to Elijah, "Behold, now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is true."



#9

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah. [61:10—62:5]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for he has clothed me with a garment of salvation and with a robe of gladness. He has put a garland on me like a bridegroom and he has adorned me with jewels like a bride. For as the earth brings forth her flowers, and as a garden causes its seeds to spring up, so the Lord will cause righteousness and rejoicing to spring forth before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not be silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until my righteousness goes forth as light, and my salvation as a burning torch. And nations shall see your righteousness, and kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the Lord will name. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

And you shall no longer be called Forsaken, and your land shall no more be called Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight, and your land, Inhabited; for the Lord has taken pleasure in you, and your land shall be inhabited. For as a young man lives in marriage with a virgin, so shall your sons dwell with you; and it shall be that as a bridegroom shall rejoice over his bride, so shall the Lord rejoice over you.



#10

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from Genesis. [22:1-18]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham! Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.”

And he said, “Take your beloved son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the high land, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men along with him, and his son Isaac. And after splitting the wood for the burnt offering, he arose and left, and on the third day he came to the place of which God had told him.⁶ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. Then Abraham said to his young men, “Sit here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and after worshiping, we will come again to you.”

And Abraham took the sticks of wood of the burnt offering and laid them on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife, and so they went both of them together.

And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father?” And he said, “What is it, son?” Isaac said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God will see to a sheep for a burnt offering for himself, son.”

And they went, both of them together, and after coming to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order. And having bound Isaac his son hand and foot, he laid him on the altar, upon the wood. Then Abraham put forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

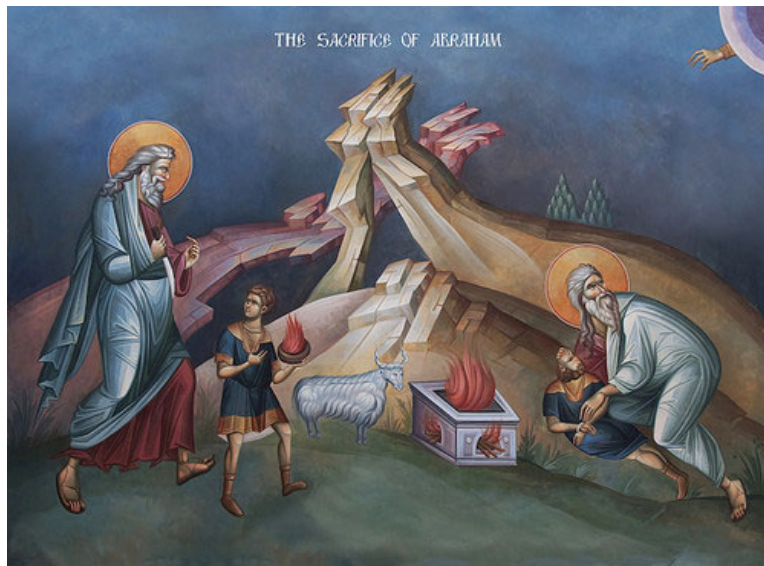
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⁶ This punctuation follows the Church of Greece text, *NETS*, and *Lexham Septuagint*.

But the Angel of the Lord called to him from the heavens, and said to him, “Abraham! Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.” And the Angel of the Lord said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, and you have not spared your beloved son for my sake.”

And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up as a burnt offering instead of Isaac his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, The Lord has seen; as they say today, “On the mountain the Lord was seen.”

And the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from the heavens, and said, “‘By myself I have sworn,’ says the Lord, ‘because you have done this, and have not spared your beloved son for my sake, blessing I will indeed bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.’”



#11

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah. [61:1-19]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to proclaim an acceptable year of the Lord, and a day of recompense. To comfort all who mourn—to grant to those who mourn in Zion glory instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, a robe of glory instead of a spirit of weariness; and they shall be called generations of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall renew the desolate cities, places devastated for generations.

Strangers shall come, shepherding your flocks, and foreigners shall be your plowmen and vine-dressers; but you shall be called priests of the Lord, liturgical ministers of God. You shall eat the strength of the nations, and in their riches you shall be admired. Instead of shame, you shall have a double portion; instead of dishonor, you shall rejoice in your lot. Therefore, they shall inherit the land a second time, and above their heads shall be everlasting joy.

For I AM is the Lord, who loves justice and hates robberies obtained by wrongdoing. I will give their labor to the righteous, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring in the midst of the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the people whom God has blessed, and they shall rejoice with rejoicing because of the Lord.




#12

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the Fourth Book of Kings. [4:8-37]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

ne day Elisha went to Shū'nem, where there was a wealthy woman, and she prevailed on him to eat some bread. So it was that whenever he passed that way, he turned aside to eat there. And the woman said to her husband, "Behold; indeed I perceive that this is a holy man of God, who is continually passing our way. Let us now make a roof chamber for him, a small place, and let us put for him there a bed, and a table, and a chair, and a lamp-stand, so that whenever he comes to us, he can turn aside there."

Now it happened one day that he came there and turned aside into the chamber and rested there. And he said to Gehá'zi his servant, "Call this Shu'namite woman to me." And he called her, and she stood before him. And he said to Gehá'zi, "Say now to her, 'Look, you amazed us with all this care! What should I do for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?'" She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

And he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehá'zi, his servant, answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old." He called her, and she stood in the doorway. And Elisha said to her, "At this season, when the time comes around, you shall have embraced a son."

But she said, "No, my lord, do not deceive your maidservant." But the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following spring, as Elisha had said to her.

And the child grew, and it happened that he went out to his father among the reapers, and he said to his father, "O my head, my head!"

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The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." And he brought him to his mother, and the child fell asleep on her knees till noon, and then he died. And she carried him up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door upon him and went out.

Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again."

And he said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath."

She said, "Peace." Then she saddled the donkey, and said to her servant, "Lead on! Do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you. Come on! You shall go and come to the man of God at Mount Carmel."

And it happened that Elisha saw her coming, and he said to Gehá'zi his servant, "Look, there indeed is that Shu'namite woman! Run at once to meet her, and you shall say, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the boy?'" And she answered, "It is well."

And she came to Elisha at the mountain, and she took hold of his feet. And Gehá'zi came to thrust her away. But Elisha said, "Let her alone, for her soul is in bitter distress, and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me."

Then she said, "I did not ask my lord for a son, did I? I said, 'Do not deceive me,' did I not?"

And Elisha said to Gehá'zi, "Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet anyone, do not bless him; and if anyone blesses you, do not reply; and you shall lay my staff upon the face of the child."

Then the mother of the child said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, as if I will not go with you." And so, Elisha arose and followed after her.

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Now Gehá'zi went on ahead of her and laid the staff upon the face of the child, but there was no sound or hearing. Therefore, he returned to meet her, and told her, "The boy has not awakened."

And Elisha came into the house, and behold, the child was lying dead on his bed. So Elisha went into the house and shut the door upon the two of them, and prayed to the Lord. Then he went up and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and stretched himself upon him, and the flesh of the child became warm. And he got up and walked to and fro in the house and went up and stretched himself upon the child seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

Then Elisha summoned Gehá'zi and said, "Call this Shu'namite woman." So he called her. And when she came to him, Elisha said, "Take up your son." And the woman came in and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took up her son and went out.



#13

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.⁷ [63:11—64:5a]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

Where is the One who brings up from the sea the shepherd of the sheep? Where is the One who put in the midst of them the Holy Spirit, the One having led Moses with his right hand, his glorious arm? He overpowered the water by his presence to make for himself an everlasting Name. He led them through the depths like a horse through a desert, and they did not grow weary. Like cattle going through a plain, the Spirit from the Lord came down and guided them. So thou didst lead thy people to make for thyself a glorious Name.

Turn from the heavens and look from thy holy habitation and from thy glory. Where are thy zeal and thy might? Where is the abundance of thy mercy and thy compassions that thou hast withheld from us? For thou art our Father, though Abraham did not know us, and Israel did not acknowledge us; but thou, O Lord, our Father, redeem us! From the beginning thy Name is upon us.

O Lord, why didst thou make us stray from thy ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear thee not? Return for the sake of thy servants, the tribes of thy heritage, so that we might inherit a small portion of thy holy mountain. Our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary! We have become as we were from the beginning, when thou didst not rule over us, and we were not called by thy Name.

If thou wouldst rend the heavens, trembling will seize the mountains at thy presence, and they would melt like beeswax melts before a fire—and fire would consume thine adversaries, and thy Name would be known among thine adversaries! Nations would be troubled by thy presence! When thou doest glorious things, trembling shall seize the mountains before thee.

[continue on next page]

⁷ This follows Codex Vaticanus which differs from the Church of Greece text and Codex Alexandrinus.

From of old we have not heard, and our eyes have not seen a god besides thee and thy works, which thou shalt do for those awaiting thy mercy. For he will meet with those working righteousness, and they shall remember thy ways.



#14

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the prophecy of Jeremiah. [LXX 38:31-34; MT 31:31-34]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

Thus declares the Lord, “Behold, the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, for they did not abide in my covenant, and I disregarded them,” declares the Lord. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord. “Giving, I will put my laws into their mind, and I will write them upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall become my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” proclaims the Lord; “for I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”



#15

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A Reading from the prophecy of Daniel. [LXX 3:1-57]

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader:

In his eighteenth year, King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the providence of Babylon. Then he sent to assemble the sārtraps, the generals, and the governors, the local rulers, the magistrates, the justices, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the sārtraps, the generals, and the governors, the local rulers, the magistrates, the justices, and all the officials of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before the image.

And the herald proclaimed aloud with might, “It is commanded to you, O peoples, tribes, and languages, that whenever you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trīgon, and harp, and every kind of musical instrument, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.”

Therefore, whenever all the people would hear the sound of the horn, both pipe and lyre, trīgon and harp, and every kind of musical instruments, all the peoples, tribes, and languages, would fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

At that time, certain Chaldean men came forward and accused the Judeans to King Nebuchadnezzar and said, “O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trīgon, and harp, and every kind of musical instrument, shall fall down and worship the golden image; and whoever does not fall down and worship the golden image shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

[continue on next page]

“There are certain Judean men whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shad’rach [*called in Hebrew, An·a·nī·as*],⁸ Mē’shach [*called Mish’a·el*], and A·bed’ne·gō [*called Az·a·rī·ah*]. These men, O king, pay no heed to your decree. They do not serve your gods and they do not offer divine service to the golden image which you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadneẓzar in furious rage commanded that Shad’rach, Mē’shach, and A·bed’ne·gō be brought in. When they were brought before the king, Nebuchadneẓzar said to them, “Is it true, O Shad’rach, Mē’shach, and A·bed’ne·gō, that you do not serve my gods nor offer divine service to the golden image which I have set up? Now, if you are ready when you hear sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trīgon, and harp, and every kind of musical instrument, to fall down and offer divine service to the image which I have made.... But if you do not offer divine service, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hand?”

Then Shad’rach, Mē’shach, and A·bed’ne·gō answered King Nebuchadneẓzar, “O king, we have no need to answer you in this matter, for there is a God to whom we offer divine service in the heavens, able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hands, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not offer divine service to your gods or fall down before the golden image which you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadneẓzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shad’rach, Mē’shach, and A·bed’ne·gō. He ordered the furnace to be heated sevenfold until it was fully heated. And he ordered mighty men of strength to bind Shad’rach, Mē’shach, and A·bed’ne·gō, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound together in their trousers, their hats and leggings, and they were cast into the burning fiery furnace.

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⁸ See Daniel 1:7. Although not found in the text here, these names are included for clarification since the names change back to the original Hebrew names in the Song of the Three Young Men.

Because the king's order was strict, the furnace was heated excessively, and these three men, Shad' rach, Mē' shach, and A·bed' ne·gō, fell down, bound, into the middle of the burning fiery furnace.

And they were walking about in the midst of the flames, singing hymns to God and blessing the Lord. Then Az·a·rī' ah stood and offered this prayer. In the midst of the fire, he opened his mouth and said:

(It is appropriate for the people to prostrate while the following is being read.)

“Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and worthy of praise;
and thy Name is glorified unto the ages!

For thou art just in all that thou hast done to us,
and all thy works are true and thy ways right,
and all thy judgments are truth.

Thou hast executed true judgments in all that thou hast brought upon us,
and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our fathers,
for in truth and justice thou hast brought all these things upon us
on account of our sins.

“For we have sinned and broken thy law in turning away from thee,
and have sinned grievously in all things.

And we have not obeyed thy commandments,
we have not observed them or done them as thou commanded us,
in order that it might go well with us.

So all that thou hast brought upon us, and all that thou hast done to us,
thou hast done in true judgment.

Thou hast handed us over into the power of our lawless enemies
and hateful rebels,

and to an unjust king,
and the most wicked in all the world.

“And now we cannot open our mouths;
shame and disgrace have befallen thy servants
and those worshipping thee.

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For thy Name' sake, do not now give us up utterly
and do not break thy covenant!

Do not withdraw thy mercy from us,
for the sake of Abraham, thy beloved,
and for the sake of Isaac, thy servant,
and Israel, thy holy one,
to whom thou didst promise to multiply their seed
like the stars of the heavens,
and as the sand on the shore of the sea.

“For we, O Master, have become fewer than any nation,
and have been humbled today in all the world because of our sins.
And at this time there is no ruler, or prophet, or leader,
no burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense;
no place to make an offering before thee and to find mercy.

“Yet with a crushed soul and a spirit of humility,
may we be accepted
as though it were with whole burnt offerings of rams and bulls,
and with tens of thousands of fattened lambs.
Thus let our sacrifice be in thy sight today,
and may we wholly follow thee,
because there is no shame for those who trust in thee.

“And now, with our whole heart we follow thee,
we fear thee and seek thy face.
Do not put us to shame,
but deal with us in thy forbearance,
and according to thine abundant mercy!
Deliver us in accordance with thy marvelous works,
and give glory to thy Name, O Lord!
Let all those doing evil to thy servants
be put to shame and be disgraced!

[continue on next page]

Let them be deprived of all exercise of power,
and let their strength be broken!
Let them know that thou alone art the Lord, the only God,
glorious over the inhabited world.”

(The people rise.)

Now the king’s servants who threw them in did not cease feeding the furnace fires with naphtha, pitch, flax, and brushwood. And the flame streamed out above the furnace forty-nine cubits in height and broke through and set on fire those Chaldeans whom it caught near the furnace.

But the Angel of the Lord came down to be with Azariah and his companions in the furnace, and drove the fiery flame out of the furnace, and made the middle of the furnace like a moist whistling wind inside, so that the fire did not touch them at all, or hurt, or trouble them.

Then the three, as with one mouth, began to hymn and glorify and bless God in the furnace, saying:

“Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers,
and to be praised and highly exalted throughout all the ages.
And blessed is thy glorious, holy Name,
and to be praised and highly exalted throughout all the ages.
Blessed art thou in the sanctuary of thy holy glory,
and to be praised and highly exalted throughout all the ages.
Blessed art thou who lookest upon the deeps, sitting upon the cherubim,
and to be praised and highly exalted throughout all the ages.
Blessed art thou upon the throne of thy Kingdom,
and to be praised and highly exalted throughout all the ages.
Blessed art thou in the firmament of the heavens,
and to be praised and highly exalted throughout all the ages.”

The Cantor and Choir sing the Song of the Three Young Men:

Choir: Praise the Lord, sing and exalt him throughout all the ages!

Cantor:

Bless the Lord, all works of the Lord.

Bless the Lord, you heavens,
Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord.
Bless the Lord, all waters above the heavens.
Bless the Lord, all powers.
Bless the Lord, sun and moon.
Bless the Lord, stars of heaven.
Bless the Lord, all rain and dew.
Bless the Lord, all winds.
Bless the Lord, winter cold and summer heat.
Bless the Lord, dews and snows.
Bless the Lord, nights and days.
Bless the Lord, light and darkness.
Bless the Lord, ice and cold.
Bless the Lord, frosts and snows.
Bless the Lord, lightnings and clouds.
Let the earth bless the Lord.
Bless the Lord, mountains and hills.
Bless the Lord, all things that grow on the earth.
Bless the Lord, your springs.
Bless the Lord, seas and rivers.
Bless the Lord, you whales, and all creatures that move in the waters.
Bless the Lord, all birds of the air.
Bless the Lord, all beasts and cattle.
Bless the Lord, you sons of men.
Bless the Lord, O Israel.
Bless the Lord, you priests of the Lord.
Bless the Lord, you servants of the Lord.
Bless the Lord, spirits and souls of the righteous.
Bless the Lord, you who are holy and humble in heart.
Bless the Lord, Ananiah, Azariah, and Mishael.
[For he has taken us out from hades and saved us from the hand of death.]⁹

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⁹ This verse is not included in the OCA booklet, but it is in the Church of Greece text and seems a fitting end to this pericope.

Bless the Lord, apostles, prophets, and martyrs of the Lord.

We bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

We praise, bless, and worship the Lord, singing and exalting him throughout the ages.

Praise the Lord, sing and exalt him throughout all the ages!

Choir: Praise the Lord, sing and exalt him throughout all the ages!

