

The Old Testament Readings
from
Wednesday in Cheesefare Week
to
Holy Thursday

According to the Septuagint¹



Icon of the Prophets from on high

*Edited by
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¹Based on Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash) translation, www.archdiocese.ca/content/yearly-sanctoral-and-festal-readings-prophecies-law-and-wisdom-vespers-and-other-services; the *Lectionary Bible of the Orthodox Church* (St. Ignatius Orthodox Press, Zeeland, MI, 2023); and *Lexham English Septuagint* (Lexham Press, Bellingham, WA 2019). Greek texts consulted: the Church of Greece text [[Ἡ ΠΑΛΑΙΑ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ \(ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟ ΤΩΝ ΕΒΔΟΜΗΚΟΝΤΑ\)](#)]; and [The Book of Isaiah according to the Septuagint \(Codex Alexandrinus\)](#).

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WEDNESDAY OF CHEESEFARE WEEK (the week preceding Great Lent)

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Joel 2:12-27

The LORD¹ your God says: “Turn to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with lamentation. Rend your hearts, rather than your garments.”

Return to *the* LORD your God, because he is merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and full of mercy, and relenting from sending evils. Who knows? He may turn and relent, and leave you with a blessing, a sacrifice and drink offering for *the* LORD your God.

Trumpet *with*² a trumpet in Sion! Sanctify a fast and proclaim a solemn service! Gather *the* people, sanctify an assembly, bring *the* aged, gather nursing infants! Let a bridegroom come from his bedroom, and a bride from her inner room! Between the porch and the altar, let the priests, those ministering to the Lord, weep, saying, “Spare your people, LORD, and do not give over your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Do not give the nations cause to say, ‘Where is their God?’”

So *the* LORD became jealous for his land and spared his people. And *the* LORD answered his people, saying, “Look! I am sending you the wheat and the wine and the olive oil,³ and you will be filled with them. I will no longer make you a disgrace among the nations. And I will chase away from you the *army* from the north, and I will banish him to a dry land, his front into the eastern sea and his rear-guard into the western sea. His decay will rise, and his stench will go up, because he magnified his works.”

Be of good courage, O earth! Rejoice and be glad, because *the* LORD has done great things! Be of good courage, you cattle in the field, because the plains of the wilderness have budded. Timber has borne its fruit, a vine and a fig tree have yielded their strength. You children of Sion, rejoice and delight in the Lord your God, because he has given you food for righteousness, and he will send you his rain, with the early and later rains, as before. The threshing floors will be full of wheat, and the winepresses will overflow with wine and olive oil!

“So I will repay you for the years which the locust, and the caterpillar, and the mildew and the cankerworm have eaten, my great army which I sent against you. Eating, you will eat and be satisfied, and you will praise the Name of *the* LORD your God for the things he has done to you, and my people will no longer be ashamed. And you will know that I AM *is* among the people of Israel, and that I *am the* LORD your God, and that there is no one else beside me. My people will never be ashamed again.”

¹ When *the* LORD is used, it indicates that the article is absent, meaning this is God’s name; in Hebrew, this would have been YHWH; in LXX, Κύριος.

² *Italicized* word means that this word is not in the Greek text but is added to the English translation.

³ *the wheat, the wine, the oil*, article is present indicating a particular kind of wheat, wine, and oil, that is, these are sent by God. Compare blessing of wheat, wine, and oil at Vespers.

AT VESPERS:

Joel 3:12-21¹

“Let all the nations rouse themselves and go up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations,” says *the* LORD. Bring forth sickles, because a harvest is ripe. Go in, trample *the grapes*, for the winepress is full. Overflow the vats, for their wickedness is multiplied. Noises have echoed in the valley of judgment, because *the* day of *the* LORD is near in the valley of judgment. The sun and the moon will be darkened, and the stars will withdraw their light. Then the Lord will shout from Sion and his voice will be heard from Jerusalem, and the heavens and earth will be shaken, but the Lord will spare his people, and will strengthen the children of Israel. And you will know that I *am the* LORD your God, the One dwelling in Sion, on my holy mountain. Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will not pass through her anymore.

And it shall be on that day that the mountains will drop sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and the brooks of Judah will flow with water, and a fountain will flow from *the* house of *the* LORD, and water the valley of reeds. Egypt will be ruined, and Edom will become an empty plain, for the injustices done to the sons of Judah, shedding righteous blood in their land. But Judah will be inhabited unto the ages, and Jerusalem for all generations. I will avenge their blood, and will by no means let it go unpunished, and *the* LORD will tent in Sion.

FRIDAY OF CHEESEFARE WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Zechariah (Zacharias) 8:7-17

This is what *the* LORD Pantocrator,² says: “See! I am saving my people from the east country and the west country. I will bring them in, and they will dwell in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”

This is what *the* LORD Pantocrator, says: “Let your hands be strong, those hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets in these days, from the day that the foundation was laid for the temple of *the* LORD Pantocrator, and from the time that the temple was built. Before those days, the wages of men could yield no profit, and there could be no hire of livestock, and there could be no peace because of the affliction to those who were coming and going. I turned all men loose, each one against his neighbor.

“But now I will not do to the remnant of this nation what I did in those days,” says *the* LORD Pantocrator. “Instead, I will show peace. The vine will produce its fruit, and the land will produce its harvest, and the sky will give its dew. And I will give to the remnant of my people all these things as an inheritance. As you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, it will happen that I will save you. Stop being afraid. Let your hands be strong.”

¹ Chapter 4:12 in Church of Greece text and *St. Athanasius Academy Septuagint of the Orthodox Study Bible*.

² Κύριος παντοκράτωρ, *pantocrator* means “Almighty, All Powerful, All Sovereign.” This is Zechariah’s favorite name for God.

This is what *the* LORD Pantocrator, says: “As I thought to afflict you when your fathers provoked me,” says *the* LORD Pantocrator, “and I did not relent; now I have prepared in these days to bless Jerusalem and the house of Judah. Stop being afraid. These are the things you must do: speak the truth, all of you, to your neighbor. Judge with true and peaceful judgment in your gates. Do not plan evil in your heart, any of you, against your neighbor. Do not love a false oath. I hate all these things,” says *the* LORD Pantocrator.

AT VESPER:

Zechariah (Zacharias) 8:19-23

This is what *the* LORD Pantocrator, says: “The fourth fast, and the fifth fast, and the seventh fast, and the tenth fast will become joy for the house of Judah, and gladness and for good feasts, and you will rejoice, and you will love the truth and peace.”

This is what *the* LORD Pantocrator, says: “Many people will yet come, and the citizens of many cities. The citizens of five cities will come together to one city, saying, ‘Let us go and pray to *the* LORD, and seek the face of *the* LORD Pantocrator. I will go also.’” And many people and many nations will come to seek the face of *the* LORD Pantocrator in Jerusalem, and to obtain *the* LORD’S favor.

This is what *the* LORD Pantocrator, says: “In those days, my word will be fulfilled if ten men from all the languages of the nations should take hold—even take hold of the fringe of a Jewish man’s garment, saying, ‘We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you!’”

MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 1:1-20

A vision which Isaiah, son of Amos saw, which he saw against Judea and against Jerusalem, in *the* reign of Uzziah and Jotham and Achaz and Hezekiah, who reigned over Judea.

Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, because *the* LORD has spoken. I begot sons and raised them, but they rejected me. An ox knows its owner, and a donkey his lord’s¹ manger, but Israel has not known me, and the people have not understood me.

Ah, *you* sinful nation! A people full of sins, an evil seed, lawless sons! You have deserted the Lord and provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. Why would you still be smitten as you add iniquity to iniquity? *The* whole head is in pain and *the* whole heart is in grief. From feet to head there is no wholeness, nothing but wound, or bruise, or festering sore; it is not possible to apply ointment, or oil, or bandages.

Your land is deserted; your cities are burned with fire; *as for* your country, foreigners devour it before your eyes, and it has become desolate, overthrown by foreign peoples. Daughter Sion² will be abandoned like a tent in a vineyard, and like a garden watcher’s hut

¹ lord’s = *kyriou*.

² A term of endearment for Jerusalem.

in a cucumber patch, like a city besieged. And if *the* LORD sabaoth¹ not left us seed, we would have become like Sodom and would have been made like Gomorrah.

Hear *the* word of *the* LORD, O rulers of Sodom! Pay attention to the law of God, O people of Gomorrah! “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?” says *the* LORD. “I am full of burnt offerings of rams. I do not want *the* fat of rams, and *the* blood of bulls and he-goats, not even if you come to appear before me. For who asked these things from your hands? You shall not continue trampling my courts! If you should bring fine flour, it would be pointless. *Your* incense is an abomination to me. I cannot endure your new moon *festivals* and Sabbaths and high days. My soul hates your fasting and holidays, as well as new moons and your feasts. You have become excess to me; I will no longer forgive your sins. When you stretch out your hands to me, I will turn away my eyes from you; and even if you multiply supplication, I will not listen to you, because your hands are full of blood.

“Bathe² yourselves and become clean! Put away the evils from your souls before my eyes; stop doing your evil deeds; learn to do good; seek out fair justice; rescue *the one* being wronged; judge for an orphan and do justice to a widow.

And come, let us argue it out,” says *the* LORD; “and if your sins are as scarlet, I will make them white as snow, and if they are like crimson, I will make them white as wool. And if you are willing and will listen to me, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you are not willing, and will not listen to me, a sword will devour you!” For the mouth of *the* LORD has spoken these things.

AT VESPER:

Genesis 1:1-13

In *the* beginning GOD³ made the heaven and the earth. And the earth was invisible and empty, and darkness was upon the abyss, and *the* Spirit of God was rushing above the water. And GOD said, “Let light come into being,” and light came into being. And GOD saw the light, that *it* was good. And GOD separated between the light and between the darkness. And GOD named the light Day, and the darkness he named Night; and it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, one day.

Then GOD said, “Let a dome come into being in *the* midst of the water, and let it be a separator in the midst of water and water.” And it became so. And GOD made the dome, and GOD made a separation in the midst of the water, which was under the dome, and of the water that was above the dome. And GOD named the dome Sky. And GOD saw that *it* was good, and it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a second day.

Then GOD said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered together into one gathering, and let the dry land be seen.” And it became so. And the water that was under the sky was

¹ LORD sabaoth, Κύριος σαβαώθ, a favorite term for Isaiah, often translated as “Lord of hosts.” σαβαώθ means “of the powers/hosts,” so there is no need to add “of” before it. As *Sierra Nevada* means “snow-covered mountains,” it is unnecessary to say, “Sierra Nevada mountains.”

² *bathe*, λούσασθε, aorist imperative implies “do it at once;” this word means to “bathe the whole body, not just the extremities.” It is the same word used to describe Pharaoh’s daughter (Exodus 2:5), Bathsheba’s bathing (2 Kingdoms [2 Samuel] 11:2), and Elisha’s command to Naaman (4th Kingdoms [2 Kings] 5:10).

³ When GOD appears in the text, the article is present in the Greek, reading literally *the God*.

gathered into their gatherings, and the dry land was seen. And GOD named the dry land Earth, and the gatherings of the waters he named Seas. And GOD saw that *it* was good.

Then GOD said, “Let the earth bring forth plants for fodder, seed propagating according to kind and according to likeness, and *the* fruit-bearing tree producing fruit whose seed is in itself according to kind on the earth.” And it became so. And the earth brought forth plants for fodder, seed propagating according to kind and according to likeness, and *the* fruit-bearing tree producing fruit whose seed was in itself according to kind on the earth. And GOD saw that *it* was good. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a third day.

Proverbs 1:1-20

Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, who reigned in Israel: for knowing wisdom and instruction, and for understanding words of prudence, and for grasping subtlety of words, understanding true righteousness, and for directing judgement, so that he might give cunning to the innocent, and both perception and insight to a young child. For a wise *person* hearing these will become wiser, while the *one* having understanding will gain guidance, and will understand both a parable and an obscure word, and *the* sayings and riddles of *the* wise.

The beginning of wisdom is *the* fear of *the* LORD,¹ and understanding is good for all those practicing it, and piety towards God is the beginning of perception; but *the* ungodly will despise wisdom and instruction.

Listen, son, to your father’s instruction and do not reject your mother’s rules. For you will receive a crown of graces for your head and a golden collar about your neck. Son, do not let godless *men* lead you astray, nor be willing, if they invite you, saying, “Come with us, share in bloodshed, and let us hide a righteous man in *the* earth unjustly, and let us swallow him down alive just like hades, and remove his memory from *the* earth. Let us lay hold on his valuable property, and let us fill our houses with spoils. So, cast your lot in with us, and let us all obtain a common purse, and let there be one wallet for us.” Do not go in *the* way with them, but turn aside your foot from their paths, for their feet run to wickedness and are swift to shed blood. For nets are not spread before birds without reason. For those participating in murder store up evils for themselves and the overthrow of lawless men is evil. These are the ways of all those accomplishing lawless deeds, for by ungodliness they take away their own soul.

Wisdom is praised in *the* streets, and she speaks boldly in *the* squares.

TUESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 1:19—2:3a

Thus says *the* LORD, “If you are willing and will listen to me, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you are not willing, and will not listen to me, a sword will devour you!” For the mouth of *the* LORD has spoken these things.

¹ LORD follows Church of Greece; Codex Vaticanus reads *God*.

How did *the* faithful city Sion become a harlot! She was *once* full of justice, and in her righteousness lodged—but now murderers! Your silver is worthless; your tavern-keepers mix wine with water; your rulers are disobedient: *they are* companions of thieves, loving bribes, running after a reward, not judging for orphans, and not attending to *the* widows' cause.

Because of this, *thus* says *the* LORD, the Sovereign of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel,¹ “Woe to the mighty *ones* in Jerusalem, for my wrath will not cease among my adversaries, and I will execute judgement on my enemies. And I will turn my hand against you, and I will refine you into something pure; but the disobedient I will destroy, and remove all the lawless from you, and I will humble all the proud. And I will establish your judges as before, and your counsellors as from the beginning. And after these things you shall be called, ‘City of righteousness, mother-city, faithful Sion,’ for her captivity will be saved with judgement and with mercy. But the lawless and the sinners will be crushed together, and those forsaking the Lord will be brought to an end since they will be utterly ashamed of their idols which they wished for, and will be utterly ashamed for their orchards which they desired. For they shall be like a terebinth *tree* having lost its leaves, and like an garden without water. And so their strength will be a stalk of flax, and their works like sparks of fire, and the lawless and the sinners will be burnt up together, and there shall be no one to quench *the* fire.”

The word which came from *the* LORD to Isaiah, son of Amos, concerning Judea and concerning Jerusalem. In the last days the mountain of the Lord will be clearly seen, and the house of GOD *will be* on the peaks of the mountains, and it will be exalted high above the hills. And all nations will come to it, and many nations will journey and say, “Come and let us go up to the mountain of *the* LORD, and into the house of the God of Jacob, and he will proclaim his way to us, and we shall walk in it.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 1:14-23

And GOD said, “Let light-giving bodies come into being on the dome of the sky for illumination of the earth, to separate between the day and between the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years; and let them be for illumination on the dome of the sky, so as to give light upon the earth.” And it became so. And GOD made the two great luminaries, the greater luminary to rule the day, and the lesser luminary to rule the night and the stars. And GOD set them on the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, and to rule the day and the night, and to separate between the light and between the darkness. And GOD saw that *they* were good. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a fourth day.

And GOD said, “Let the waters bring forth living creeping things, and birds flying above the earth beneath the dome of the sky.” And it became so. And GOD made the great sea monsters, and all creatures among creeping things which the waters brought forth according to their kind, and every winged bird according to kind. And GOD saw that *they* were good. And GOD blessed them, saying, “Begin increasing and multiplying and filling the

¹ *the Mighty...of Israel* is found in the Church of Greece text, but not in most LXX mss.

waters in the seas, and let the birds begin multiplying upon the earth.” And it became evening, and it became morning, a fifth day.

Proverbs 1:20-33

Wisdom sings hymns of praise in *the* streets, and she speaks boldly in the squares. On *the* tops of *the* walls she proclaims, and in *the* gates of *the* mighty she takes her seat; and at *the* gates of *the* city she boldly declares, “As long as *the* innocent hold fast to righteousness, they will not be disgraced; but the foolish, being lovers of pride, after becoming ungodly, hated perception, and have become subject to reproofs.

“Look! I shall bring forth for you a saying with my breath, and I shall teach you my word. Since I kept calling and you did not listen, and I spoke at length and you were not paying attention, but you made my counsels of no effect, and you paid no attention to my reproofs. Therefore, I too shall laugh at your destruction, and I will rejoice when ruin comes upon you. And when confusion arrives suddenly for you, and destruction will come like a whirlwind, and when trouble and siege come upon you, or when ruin comes to you. For it will be when you call upon me, that I will not listen to you; *the* wicked will seek me, and not find me. For they hated wisdom, and did not choose the word¹ of the Lord, neither did they wish to attend to my counsels, but they mocked my rebukes. Therefore they will eat the fruits of their own way, and will be filled with their own ungodliness. For in return for their injuring children,² they will be murdered, and scrutiny will destroy *the* ungodly. But the one listening to me will dwell in hope and will be at ease, without fear of any evil.”

WEDNESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 2:3b-11

The word that came to Isaiah: A law will come forth out of Sion, and *the* Word of *the* LORD out of Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations and rebuke many people, and they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into sickles, and nation will no longer take up sword against nation, and they shall in no way learn to wage war anymore.

And now, O house of Jacob, come, let us walk to the light of *the* LORD. For he has left his people, the house of Israel, because their country has been filled with divinations as at the beginning, like the country of foreigners,³ and many foreign children were born to them. For their country was filled with silver and gold, and countless treasures; and the land was filled with horses, and innumerable chariots. And the land was filled with abominations, the works of their hands, and they bowed down to things their own fingers had made. And one bowed down, and a great man was humbled, and I will in no way forgive them!

And now, enter into the rocks and hide yourselves in the earth from before the fear of *the* LORD and from the glory of his strength, when he rises up to smite the earth. For the eyes

¹ *word of the Lord* follows Church of Greece and *LES*; others read *fear of the Lord*.

² *injuring children* = *ēdikoun nēpious*, could also be translated as “acting unjustly to the innocent / simple.”

³ *strangers* = *allóphuloi*, is used in many places of the OT meaning the Philistines.

of *the* LORD are exalted, but man is lowly, and the exaltation of men will be humbled, and *the* LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 1:24—2:3

And GOD said, “Let the earth bring forth a living creature according to kind, tetrapods, and creeping things, and wild animals of the earth according to kind.” And it became so. And GOD made the wild animals of the earth according to kind, and the livestock according to their kind, and all the creeping things of the earth according to their kind. And God saw that *they* were good.

Then GOD said, “Let us make humanity according to our image and according to *our* likeness, and let them rule the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and the livestock, and all the earth, and all the creeping things, those creeping on the earth.”

And GOD made the human being,
according to God’s image he made him,
male and female made he them.

And GOD blessed them, saying, “Begin increasing and multiplying and filling the earth, and become lord over her, and rule the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and all the livestock, and all the earth, and all the creeping things, those creeping on the earth.”

And GOD said, “See, I have given to you every sowable herb propagating seed that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has in itself fruit of sowable seed shall become food for you and for all the wild animals of the earth, and for all the birds of the sky, and for every creeping thing which creeps on the earth, the one having in itself a soul of life. Every green plant will be for food.” And it became so. And GOD saw all the things which he had made, and behold, *they* were very good! And it became evening, and it became morning, a sixth day.

And so, the sky and the earth and all their ornamentation were completed. And on the sixth day,¹ GOD finished his works, the things that he made, and he rested from all his works which he had made on the seventh day. And GOD blessed the seventh day and sanctified her, because on her he rested from all his works that GOD had begun to make.

Proverbs 2:1-22

My son, if when you accept *the* utterance of my commandment, you hide it in yourself, your ear will obey wisdom and you will apply your heart to understanding; indeed, you will apply her to the instruction of your son. For if he calls upon wisdom and you give voice to understanding, while you seek perception with a loud voice, and if you seek her like silver, and search her out like treasures, then you will understand the fear of *the* LORD, and you

¹ *the sixth* = τῆ ἕκτῃ, *i.e.*, Friday; it is not a coincidence that Jesus was crucified on the 6th day, exclaiming, “It is finished” / Τετέλεσται (Jn 19:30, finished, συνετέλεσεν... in Gen). A new creation is thus finished on the Cross. Unfortunately, the *Orthodox Study Bible* uses the *New King James Masoretic* (Hebrew) text here, which misses this important change in number of the day. Jesus then rests from his work in the tomb on the 7th day (*cf.* hymns of Holy Saturday: *e.g.*, “This is the blessed Sabbath; this is the day of rest, on which the Only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works”).

will find knowledge of God. Because *the* LORD gives wisdom, and from his face *come* knowledge and understanding. And he treasures up salvation for those acting uprightly; he will protect their path, to guard the ways of righteous deeds, and to protect the way of those revering him. Then you will understand righteousness and judgement and direct all good courses.

For if wisdom comes into your thought, and perception seems to be good to your soul, good counsel will guard you, while holy thought will watch over you, that it may deliver you from a wicked way, and from a man speaking nothing trustworthy. Alas for those abandoning straight ways to journey in ways of darkness, rejoicing at wickednesses, being gladdened over wicked perversity, whose paths are crooked and whose tracks are bent, in order to take you far from the straight path and make you a stranger to a righteous purpose.

My son, let not wicked counsel overtake you, she who has abandoned teaching from her youth, and forgotten God's testament; for she has set her house next to death and her path next to hades with the dead. None of those journeying with her will return, nor will they take straight paths, because they do not understand years of life. For if they had journeyed on good paths, they would have found *the* smooth paths of righteousness. They will be good builders of the land, and *the* innocent will be left behind in it; because *the* upright will inhabit *the* earth, and holy ones will be left in it. *The* ways of the ungodly will perish from *the* earth, and the transgressors will be banished from her.

THURSDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 2:11-21

The eyes of *the* LORD are exalted, but man is lowly, and the exaltation of men will be humbled, and *the* LORD alone will be exalted in that day. For *the* day of *the* LORD sabaoth is against everyone who is insolent and haughty, and against everyone who is high and lofty, and they will be humbled. And against every cedar of Lebanon, of the high and lofty, and against every acorn tree of Basan, and against every high mountain, and against every high hill, and against every high tower, and against every high city wall, and against every ship of the sea and against every sight of ships of beauty. And every person shall be humbled, and the loftiness of men shall fall, and *the* Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

And they will hide all things made with *human* hands—carrying them into the caves and into the clefts of the rocks, and into the caverns of the earth—from before *the* fear of *the* LORD and from the glory of his strength when he arises to shatter the earth. For on that day, a man will cast out his abominations, the silver and gold objects which he made to worship the worthless *ones* and the bats, to enter the caverns of the solid rock and the clefts of the rocks, from before *the* fear of *the* LORD and from the glory of his strength when he arises to shatter the earth.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 2:4-19

This is the book of *the* genesis of heaven and earth when they came into being: *On* the day *the* LORD GOD made the heaven and the earth, and all green plants of *the* field before it came to be upon the earth, and all herbage of the field before it sprang up, for GOD had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no person to till the earth. But a fountain rose up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth. And GOD molded the human *body*, dust from the earth, and blew into his face *the* breath of life, and mankind became a living soul.

And GOD planted an *enclosed* paradise in Eden toward the east, and there he placed the man whom he had molded. And GOD furthermore made to spring up out of the earth all trees beautiful to sight and good for food; and the tree of life in the midst of the orchard, and the tree for knowing what is knowable of good and evil....

Now a river flows out of Eden to water the paradise. From there it divides into four sources: A name for the one is Phison; it is the one encircling all the land of Euilat, there where the gold is. Now the gold of that earth is good; the dark-red precious stones and the green stones are there also. And a name of the second river is Geon; this is the one encircling all the land of Ethiopia. And the third river is Tigris; this is the one going opposite the Assyrians. And the fourth river—it is the Euphrates.

And *the* LORD GOD took the man whom he had molded and placed him in the paradise of delight to till and keep it. And *the* LORD GOD commanded Adam, saying, “Thou shalt eat for food from all trees that are in the orchard; but ye shall not eat from the tree for knowing good and evil; for on whatever day that ye eat from it, ye shall die by death.”

And *the* LORD GOD said, “It is not good that the man is alone. We will make him a helper corresponding to him.” And so, GOD formed out of the earth all the animals of the field, and all the birds of the sky, and he brought them to Adam to see what he would name them. And anything, whatever Adam named each living creature, this was its name.

Proverbs 3:1-18

My son, do not forget my commandments, but let your heart keep my words, for they will add length of livelihood and years of life and peace to you. Do not let almsgiving and faith desert you; but suspend them from your neck, write them on the tables of your heart, and you will find grace; and take thought for what is good before *the* LORD and people. Keep having confidence in God with your whole heart, and stop being led by your own ‘wisdom.’ In all your ways get to know Wisdom, that she may rightly direct your ways, and your foot will not stumble.

Stop being clever in your own eyes; rather fear GOD and keep from every wickedness. Then there will be healing for your body and treatment for your bones.

Honor the Lord with your just labors, and offer him the first of the fruits of your righteousness, so your storehouses may be filled to abundance with grain, and your winepresses may be gushing with wine.

Son, do not treat lightly *the* LORD’s discipline, nor give up when you are rebuked by him. For *the* LORD disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he receives.

Blessed is the one having found wisdom, and the person knowing prudence. For it is better to trade for her than for treasures of gold and silver. She is more precious than valuable stones; nothing evil shall withstand her. She is well known to all those drawing near to her, and all that is precious is not worth as much as she. For length of livelihood and years of life are in her right *hand*, while in her left are wealth and honor. Righteousness comes forth from her mouth and she carries law and mercy on her tongue. Her ways are good ways, and

all her paths are in peace. She is a tree of life to all those cleaving to her, and she is security for those leaning upon her as upon *the* LORD.

FRIDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 3:1-14

Behold now, the Master, *the* LORD sabaoth, will take away from Judea and from Jerusalem the strong man and the strong woman, strength of bread and strength of water, giant and strong *man*, and a man of war, both judge and prophet, both diviner and elder, both captain of fifty and wondrous counsellor, both wise architect and understanding hearer. And I will set children as their rulers, and scoffers will lord it over them. And the people will fall, man upon man, and man upon his neighbor; the child will insult the old woman, the dishonored the honourable.

Because a man will seize his brother, or one of his own father's kinsmen, saying, "You have a garment, become our leader, and let my food be supplied by you." And answering in that day he will say, "I will not become your leader, for there is neither bread nor garment in my house. I will not be leader of this people." Because Jerusalem has been forsaken, and Judea has fallen, and their tongues are joined with lawlessness, disobeying what concerns *the* LORD; therefore their glory has now been humbled, and the shame of their face has stood against them; for their sin like that of Sodom they have declared and manifested.

Woe to their soul! because they have devised an evil counsel against themselves, saying, "Let us bind the righteous *man*, because he is burdensome to us." Therefore, they eat the products of their works. Woe to the lawless one! Evils will happen to him according to the works of his hands. O my people, your exactors glean you, and your creditors lord it over you. O my people, those calling you blest are deceiving you and are confusing the path of your feet!

But now *the* LORD will stand up for judgement, and he will make his people stand to judge them. *The* LORD himself will enter into judgment with the elders of the people and with their rulers.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 2:20—3:20

And Adam gave names to all the domestic animals, and to all the birds of the sky, and to all the beasts of the field; yet for Adam, no helper like him was found. And so GOD cast a trance upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one rib of his side and filled up flesh in its place. And GOD built the side he had taken from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam. And Adam said, "This now is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh; she shall be named 'wife,' because she was taken out of her husband." For this reason, a man will leave behind his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. And the two were naked, both Adam and his wife, and they were not ashamed.

Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals that were upon the earth, which *the* LORD GOD had made. And the serpent said to the woman, "Why is it that GOD

said, ‘Ye shall eat from any tree of the garden—?’” And said the woman to the serpent, “We shall eat from the fruit of the tree of the garden, but from the fruit of the tree, the one in the midst of the garden, GOD said, ‘Ye shall not eat from it, and you shall certainly not touch it, in order that ye might not die.’”

And said the serpent to the woman, “Not by death shall ye yourselves die; for GOD knew that on whatever day ye eat from it, your eyes would be opened, and you would be like gods, knowing good and evil.”

And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing for the eyes to look at, and it was beautiful to contemplate, and having taken from its fruit, she ate; and she also gave to her husband with her, and they ate. And the eyes of the two were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

And they heard the sound of *the* Lord GOD walking about in paradise at evening, and both Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of *the* Lord GOD in the midst of the wood of the garden. And *the* Lord GOD called Adam and said to him, “Adam, where are you?”

And he said to him, “I heard the sound of thee walking about in the garden, and I was afraid, because I am naked, and so I hid myself.”

And GOD said to him, “Who told you that you are naked, unless perhaps you have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, ‘of this one alone, do not eat from it?’”

And Adam said, “The wife, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.”

And *the* LORD GOD said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

And *the* LORD GOD said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed from all the domestic animals and from all the wild beasts, those upon the earth! Upon your chest and belly you shall go, and earth you shall eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and between the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he will carefully watch your head, and you will carefully watch his heel.”

And to the woman he said, “Multiplying, I will multiply your pains and your groaning! In pains you will bring forth children, and you will return to your husband, and he will have lordship over you.”

Then to Adam he said, “Because you obeyed the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, ‘of this one alone, not to eat from it,’ cursed is the ground in your labors! In pains you will eat from it all the days of your life! Thorns and thistles will spring up for you, and you will eat the herbage of the field. By your face’s sweat you shall eat your bread until you return to the earth from which you were taken; because earth you are and into earth you will depart!”

And Adam called the name of his wife Zoe because she is mother of the living.

Proverbs 3:19-34

GOD founded the earth with wisdom, and he prepared *the* sky with prudence. By perception, depths were broken open, and clouds dropped rains.

My son, do not let this pass by you, but *rather* keep *my* counsel and understanding, in order that your soul may live, and grace may be around your neck. And it will be healing for flesh and treatment for your bones, that you may walk trustingly in peace on all your

ways, and that your foot may in no way stumble. For if you sit down, you will be without fear, and if you sleep, you will slumber sweetly; and you shall not be afraid of terror coming upon you, neither of assaults of the godless coming at you; for the Lord will be over all your ways, and he will establish your foot, lest you be shaken.

Do not avoid doing good to one in need, whenever your hand is able to give help. Do not start saying, “Go, come back *again* tomorrow and I shall give,” while you are able to do good, for you do not know what the coming day will bring to birth. Do not begin plotting evils against your friend who lives near you and trusts you. Do not begin quarreling with someone without cause, lest he work some wickedness against you. Do not begin gaining the reproaches of wicked men, nor begin imitating their ways. For every transgressor is unclean before *the* Lord, and he does not take his seat among the righteous. God’s curse rests upon the houses of the ungodly, while the dwellings of the righteous are blessed. *The* Lord resists *the* proud, but he gives grace to *the* humble.



MONDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 4:2—5:7a

On that day GOD will shine with brightness upon the earth with counsel, to exalt and glorify the remnant of Israel. And there will be a remnant in Sion, and the remnant in Jerusalem will be called “Holy,” all those having been inscribed for life in Jerusalem; because *the* LORD will wash out the uncleanness of the sons and the daughters of Sion and will cleanse the blood from the midst of them with a spirit of judgement and a spirit of burning. And he will come, and it shall be that every place of the mountain of Sion and all the region round about her, a cloud will overshadow her by day, and will be like smoke and a light of fire burning by night, and *she* will be sheltered with all glory. And it shall be a shelter from the heat, and as a shelter and a hiding place from harshness and rain.

Let me sing now for my beloved a song of my loved one concerning my vineyard. *My* beloved had a vineyard on a hill-top, at a corner in a fertile place. And I made a hedge around it and fenced it in, and planted a vine of Sorek, I built a tower in the middle of it, and I dug out a wine vat in it, and I waited for it to bring forth a cluster of grapes, but it brought forth thorns.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem, and a man of Judea, judge between me and my vineyard. What should I yet do for my vineyard that I have not done for it? Because I waited for it to bring forth a cluster of grapes, but it brought forth thorns.

But now I will announce to you what I shall do to my vineyard: I shall take out its hedge, and it will be for plundering; and I shall pull down its wall, and it will be for trampling under foot. And I will abandon my vineyard, and it will not be pruned or dug, and thorns will come up on it, as on fallow land; and I shall command the clouds not to shower rain upon it. For the vineyard of *the* LORD sabaoth is *the* house of Israel, and a man of Judea is a beloved young plant.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 3:21—4:7

And *the* LORD GOD made tunics of skin for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them. And GOD said, “Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, perhaps he might reach out his hand and take of the tree of life and eat, and he will live unto the age.” And so, *the* LORD GOD sent him forth out of the paradise of delight to work the ground out of which he was taken. And he cast Adam out and made him dwell opposite the paradise of delight; and he posted the Cherubim and the flaming sword which turns, to guard the way to the tree of life.

And Adam knew Eve his wife, and having conceived she bore Cain and said, “I have acquired a man through GOD.” And she proceeded to bear his brother Abel. And Abel became a shepherd of sheep, but Cain was working the ground.

And it came about after some days that Cain brought an offering from the fruits of the earth to the Lord, and Able also brought from the firstborn of his sheep and of their fat portions. And GOD looked upon Able and upon his gifts, but upon Cain and upon his offerings he paid no attention. And it distressed Cain exceedingly, and he fell in countenance. And *the* LORD GOD said to Cain, “Why have you become deeply grieved, and why has your countenance fallen? If you offer rightly but do not divide rightly, have you not sinned? Calm down! Its recourse will be to you, and you will rule it.”

Proverbs 3:34—4:22

The LORD resists *the* proud, but he gives grace to *the* humble. *The* wise will inherit honor, but the ungodly have exalted disgrace.

Hear, children, instruction of a father, and pay attention, *that you may come* to know insight. For I am giving you a good gift; do not forsake my law. For I too was a son, obedient to *my* father and beloved in the sight of *my* mother. They kept teaching me and saying, “Let our word be fixed in your heart. Keep *the* commandments; do not forget or neglect the sayings of my mouth; do not forsake her, and she will cling to you; love her, and she will watch over you. Surround her with a fortifications and she will exalt you; honor her, so that she may embrace you, so that she may bestow on your head a garland of graces and may shield you with a crown of delight.”

Listen, son, and accept my words, and years of life will be multiplied for you, so that ways of living may become many for you. For I teach you ways of wisdom, and I make you go up on straight tracks. For if you journey, your steps will not be restrained; and if you run, you will not grow weary. Take hold of my instruction; do not let it go, but guard her for yourself for your life. Do not enter the ways of the ungodly, and do not covet the ways of transgressors. In whatever place they pitch camp, do not enter there, but keep away from them and pass by. For they can never sleep unless they have done evil; sleep has been taken from them, and they do not slumber. For their foods are *the* food of ungodliness, while they are drunk with wine of lawlessness. But *the* ways of the righteous shine like a light; they advance and give light until the day is fully dawned. But *the* ways of the ungodly are dark, they do not know how they are stumbling.

Son, attend to my words, and apply your ear to my teachings. So that your springs may not fail you, guard them within your heart. For life is to those finding them, and healing to all *their* flesh.

TUESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 5:7-16

Thus says *the* LORD sabaoth, “The vineyard of *the* LORD sabaoth is *the* house of Israel, and a man of Judea is a beloved young plant. I waited for *him* to bring forth judgement, but *he* brought forth iniquity, *and* not righteousness, but a cry!

“Woe to those joining house to house, and bringing field next to field, so that they may remove something of their neighbor’s! Shall ye not dwell alone on the land? For these things were heard by the ears of *the* LORD sabaoth. Even if many houses come into being, great and fair, they will become a desolation; great ones and fair, and there will be no one dwelling in them. For where ten yoke of oxen work, *the land* will produce one jar, and the one sowing twelve bushels will produce one.¹

“Woe to those rising up early in the morning and going after sikera,² those tarrying until late, for the wine will inflame them. For with harp and psaltery and drums and flutes they drink the wine, but the works of *the* LORD they disregard, and the works of his hands they do not keep in mind. Therefore my people became captive, because they know not the Lord and they have become a multitude of corpses through famine and thirst for water. And hades enlarged his appetite and has opened his mouth continually; and her glorious ones, and her great and her rich and her pestilent ones will go down. And one shall be humbled, and a man shall be dishonored, and the lofty eyes shall be humbled. But *the* LORD sabaoth shall be exalted in judgement, and GOD, the Holy One, shall be glorified in righteousness.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 4:8-15

And Cain said to Abel his brother, “Let us walk through the field.” And it happened while they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. And *the* LORD GOD said to Cain, “Where is Abel, your brother?”

And he said, “I do not know. I am not my brother’s keeper, am I?”³

And *the* LORD said, “What have you done? *The* voice of *the* blood of your brother is crying out to me from the earth. And now, you are cursed from the earth, which opened wide her mouth to receive the blood of your brother from your hand; because you will work the ground, but she will not continue to yield her strength to you. Moaning and trembling shall you be upon the earth.”

And Cain said to *the* LORD GOD, “My crime is too great for me to be forgiven! If thou art driving me out from the face of the earth today, and I will be hidden from thy face, I will be moaning and trembling upon the earth, and it will be that anyone finding me will kill me.”

¹ Codex Alexandrinus reads *six bushels will produce three measures.*

² “strong drink.”

³ This question expects “no” for an answer.

And *the* LORD GOD said to him, “Not so! Anyone who kills Cain will release seven acts of vengeance.” And *the* LORD GOD placed a sign for Cain so that none would destroy him who found him.

Proverbs 5:1-15

My son, pay attention to my wisdom, and apply your ear to my words, so that you may guard good understanding, and I shall command perception of my lips to you. Cease paying attention to a worthless woman, for honey drips from the lips of the harlot, who pleases your throat for a time; but afterwards, you will find it more bitter than gall, and sharper than a two-edged sword. For the feet of folly bring down those using her into hades with death, and her footsteps are not firmly planted, for she does not go by ways of life, but her tracks are slippery and not easy to pick out.

Now then, son, hear me, and do not make my words of no effect. Make your way far from her! Do not go near the doors of her houses, lest you give away your life to others and your livelihood to those without mercy; lest strangers be filled with your strength, while your toils come into the houses of strangers. And finally, you will repent when the flesh of your body is worn away, and you will say, ‘How I hated discipline, and my heart turned from the reproofs! I did not listen to the voice of my instructor and my teacher, nor did I apply my ear. I was almost in every evil in the midst of the church and the congregation.’

Son, drink water from your own vessels, and from the source of your own well.”

WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 5:16-25

The LORD sabaoth shall be exalted in judgement, and GOD, the Holy One, shall be glorified in righteousness. Then those having been plundered shall graze like bulls, and lambs shall feed on the wastelands of those having been taken away.

Woe to those drawing sins to themselves as on a long rope, and iniquities as on the thong of a heifer’s yoke, saying, “Let him quickly bring near what he is going to do, that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel come, that we may know it!”

Woe to those calling the evil good, and the good evil; those regarding the darkness as light and the light darkness, those regarding the bitter as sweet and the sweet bitter!

Woe to those who are wise in their own opinion, and knowledgeable in their own eyes!

Woe to your strong ones drinking wine, and your powerful ones mixing sikera, those justifying the ungodly for the sake of bribes, yet depriving the righteous one of justice! For this reason, in the same way that a reed will be burnt by a coal of fire, and be burnt up by a leaping flame, so their root will be like chaff, and their flower will go up like whirling dust; for they did not want the law of *the* LORD sabaoth, but they provoked the oracle of the Holy One of Israel. And *the* LORD sabaoth was enraged with his people, and put out his hand upon them, and struck them; and the mountains were provoked, and their carcasses became like dung in the middle of the way; and in all these things his rage has not been turned away, but his hand is still raised high.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 4:16-26

Cain went out from the face of GOD and dwelt in the land of Nod opposite Edem. And Cain knew his wife, and having conceived, she gave birth to Enoch. And *Cain* was building a city, and he named it with his son's name, Enoch.

To Enoch was born Gaïdád, and Gaïdád begot Maiel, Maiel and begot Mathousala, and Mathousala begot Lamech.

And Lamech took for himself two wives; the name of the one was Ada and the name of the second Sella. And Ada gave birth to Jobel; he was the father of tent dwellers and cattle raisers; and the name of his brother was Joubal; it was he who introduced the harp and lyre. And Sella also gave birth to Thobel, and he was a smith, a bronze smith of bronze and iron; and Thobel's sister was Noema.

Now Lamech said to his own wives, "Ada and Sella, hear my voice; wives of Lamech, give ear to my words, because I have killed a man for wounding me, and a youth for bruising me. Because seven times vengeance has been exacted by Cain, but by Lamech seventy times seven".

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and having conceived, she gave birth to a son, and named his name Seth, saying, "For GOD has raised up for me other seed in place of Abel, whom Cain killed." And to Seth there was a son; he named his name Enos; he hoped to call on the Name of *the* LORD GOD.

Proverbs 5:15—6:3

Son, drink water from your own vessels, and from the source of your own well. Do not¹ let the waters from your source overflow for you, nor let your waters go through your streets. Let them be for you alone, and let no stranger share with you. Let your source of water be solely your own and be glad together with the wife of your youth. Let *the* fawn of love and *the* colt of your graces be your companion, and let her be considered your own, and let her be with you at every moment; for living in the company of her love, you will achieve much.

Stop lingering with a *woman* belonging to another, neither be held in the arms of woman not your own; for the ways of a man are before *the* eyes of GOD, and he keeps watch on all his tracks. Iniquities ensnare a man, and each one is bound with ropes of his own sins. This man dies with *the* uninstructed, and he has been cast out of *the* abundance of his own livelihood, and has perished through folly.

Son, if you give surety for your friend, you will entrust your hand to an enemy; for a man's own lips are a strong snare, and he is caught by the lips of his own mouth. Do, *my* son, what I command you, and save yourself.

¹ Follows Church of Greece text; some LXX mss omit "not," reading, "Let the waters..."

THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 6:1-12

It came to pass in the year that Uzziah¹ the king died, I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne, and the house was full of his splendor. And Seraphim stood round about him; one had six wings and *the* other had six wings, and with two they were covering the face, and with two they were covering the feet, and with two they were flying. And they cried out one to the other and said, “Holy, holy, holy is *the* LORD sabaoth! The whole earth is full of his glory.”

And the lintel was lifted up at the sound that they were shouting, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, “Ah, wretch that I am! Because I have been pricked to the heart! Because being a man and having unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of people having unclean lips; yet I have seen the King, *the* LORD sabaoth, with my own eyes!”

And one of the Seraphim was sent to me, and in his hand he had a coal of fire which he had taken from the altar with the tongs, and he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips, and it will take away your iniquities, and will purify your sins.”

And I heard the voice of *the* LORD saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go to this people?”

And I said, “Look, I am *here*. Send me.”

And he said, “Go, and say to this people, ‘You will hear by hearing, but in no way understand; and looking, you will look, but in no way see;’ for the heart of this people has become fat, and with their ears they have become hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn back, and I would heal them.”

And I said, “Until when, Lord?”

And he said, “Until cities are deserted because they are not inhabited, and houses, because there are no people, and the land shall be left a desert. And after these things, GOD will take the people far away, and those having been left on the land will be multiplied.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 5:1-24

This is the book of *the* genesis of mankind. On the day GOD made Adam, he made him according to *the* divine image; male and female he made them, and he blessed them; and he named his name Adam on the day he made them. Adam lived two hundred and thirty years and begot a son according to his form and according to his image, and he named his name Seth. The days of Adam which he lived after begetting Seth were seven hundred, and he begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Adam, which he lived, were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

Seth lived two hundred and five years and begot Enos. And Seth lived after begetting Enos seven hundred and seven years, and he begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

¹ LXX = Ozias.

And Enos lived one hundred and ninety years and begot Cainan. And Enos lived seven hundred and fifteen years after begetting Cainan, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years and he died.

And Cainan lived one hundred and seventy years and begot Maliliél. And Cainan lived seven hundred and forty years after begetting Maliliél and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died.

And Maliliél lived one hundred and sixty-five years and begot Jared. And Maliliél lived after begetting Jared for seven hundred and thirty years and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Maliliél were eight hundred and ninety-five years and he died.

And Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years and begot Enoch. And Jared lived after begetting Enoch eight hundred years and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died.

And Enoch lived one hundred and sixty-five years and begot Mathousala. And Enoch was well pleasing to GOD after begetting Mathousala and he begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch was well pleasing to GOD, and he was not to be found, because GOD translated him.

Proverbs 6:3-20

Son, do what I command you and save yourself. For you have come into the hands of wicked men because of your friend. Stop being fainthearted, but stir up your friend for whom you have given surety. Do not give sleep to your eyes, and do not slumber with your eyelids, that you may save yourself like a gazelle from a noose and like a bird from a snare.

Go to the ant, *you* lazybones. See his ways and imitate him, and become wiser than him; for without having any cultivated land, nor anyone to compel him, nor being under any master, he prepares food for himself in the summer and lays aside a great quantity at harvest.

Or go to the honeybee and learn what a worker she is, and how seriously she does her work, whose products kings and commoners use for their health. Indeed, she is desired and held in honor by all; and though she is weak in her strength, she has become outstanding by honoring wisdom.

Until when, lazybones, will you lie down? When will you be roused from sleep? You sleep a little, you sit a little, you have a short doze, you fold your arms over your chest a little. Then poverty will come upon you like a wicked traveler and want like good runner. But if you are diligent, your harvest will come like a fountain, while poverty will desert you like a bad runner.

A foolish and a lawless man journeys by ways that are not good, and he winks with his eye, signals with his foot, teaches by pointing with his fingers. With a twisted heart he devises evils; at every moment such a person is stirring up troubles for a city. Therefore, his destruction is coming suddenly—a deep wound and incurable fracture. He will be crushed through impurity of soul because he rejoices in everything which GOD hates: an eye of a haughty one, an unjust tongue, hands spilling the blood of a righteous *person*, a heart contriving wicked schemes, and feet hurrying to do wrong. A false witness kindles lies and unleashes discord among kindred.

Son, keep your father's laws, and do not spurn your mother's rules.

FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 7:1-14

It came to pass in the days of Achaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rasim, king of Aram, and Peka, son of King Romelias of Israel, came up to make war on Jerusalem, but they were unable to take her by siege. And it was reported to the house of David saying, "Aram has made an agreement with Ephraim." And Achaz's soul was distraught, along with the soul of his people, *in the same way as when* a tree in a forest is shaken by a wind.

And *the* LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out to meet Achaz, you and your remaining son, Jasoub, at the pool of the upper road of the Fuller's Field. And you are to say to him, 'Remain quiet and cease being afraid, neither let your soul be weakened because of these two smoking brands of wood; for when the anger of my rage comes, I shall heal again.' And *as for* the son of Aram and the son of Romelias: Because they have taken evil counsel concerning you, saying, 'Let us go up against Judea, and having spoken with them, we shall turn them to us, and we shall make the son of Tabeal king over them;'¹ thus says *the* LORD sabaoth, 'This plan shall certainly not come to pass, it shall not be. Surely the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rasim; but yet within sixty-five years the kingdom of Ephraim will cease from being a people. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Romelias; and if you do believe, neither will you understand.'

And *the* LORD spoke again to Achaz, saying, "Ask a sign for yourself from *the* LORD your God in the height or in the depth."

And Achaz said, "I shall not ask, nor shall I tempt *the* LORD."

And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it not a little thing for you to provoke a fight with men? How then do you provoke a fight with *the* LORD? Because of this, *the* LORD himself shall give you a sign."

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 5:32—6:8

When Noah was five hundred years old, he begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japhet. And it came to pass when human beings began to become numerous on the earth, that daughters were born to them. Now when the sons of GOD¹ saw the daughters of human beings, that they were fair, they took wives for themselves from all whom they had chosen.

And *the* LORD GOD said, "My spirit shall not abide in these human beings forever, because they are flesh; but their days shall be one hundred and twenty years."²

Now the giants were upon the earth in those days and afterwards. When the sons of GOD were going into the daughters of human beings, they begot offspring for themselves. These were the giants of old, the men of renown.

¹ In Job 1:6—MT reads "sons of the God;" LXX reads "the angels of the God." This might be a clue that these were *angels* of God; therefore, there was a mixture of natures between the angelic and human beings—not kosher!

² God limits the time for *these* people (6:3) and gives them "a period of one hundred and twenty years to come to repentance."—St Jerome.

Now *the* LORD GOD, seeing that the wickednesses of mankind had multiplied upon the earth, and that everyone in his heart thinks intently upon evil things all his days, then GOD laid it to heart that he had made mankind upon the earth, and he took thought. And GOD said, “I will wipe away mankind, whom I made, from off of the earth, from human to cattle, and from reptiles to the birds of the sky, because I have repented that I made them.” But Noah found grace before *the* LORD GOD.

Proverbs 6:20—7:1

Son, keep your father’s laws, and do not spurn your mother’s rules, but attach them to your soul continually, and hang then like a chain round your neck. When you walk, bring it along and let it be with you; when you sleep, let it guard you, so that it may talk with you when you wake. Because a commandment of *the* law is a lamp and a light, a way of life, and reproof and instruction to keep you from a married woman and from the slander of a strange tongue. Let not desire for beauty conquer you, and do not be trapped by your eyes, nor captivated by her eyelashes; for *the* price of a harlot is about that of one loaf of bread, and a woman of men hunts for a precious soul.

Can anyone bind fire in his bosom without burning his clothes? Or can anyone tread on coals of fire without burning his feet? So is the one who goes into a married woman; he will not be held innocent, nor will anyone who touches her.

There is nothing remarkable if someone is caught stealing, for he steals to fill his soul when he is hungry; but if he is caught, he will repay sevenfold, and will deliver himself by giving up all his goods. But the adulterer, through lack of sense, brings destruction on his soul; he bears both pain and dishonor, and his disgrace will never be wiped out. For the wrath of her husband is filled full of jealousy; he will not spare in a day of judgement, neither will he exchange his enmity for any ransom, nor will he be reconciled by many gifts.

Son, guard my words, hide my commandments with you. Son, honor the Lord, and you will be strong; fear no other but him.



MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 8:13—9:7

Sanctify *the* LORD himself, and he himself shall be your fear. For if you¹ trust in him, he will be for your sanctuary, and you will not encounter him as a stumbling stone, nor as a falling from a rock. But the house of Jacob is in a snare, and those sitting in Jerusalem are in a pit. Because of this, many among them will become powerless, and will fall and be crushed, and people who are in safety will draw near and will be taken.

Then those sealing up the law so that they might not learn shall become manifest. And one will say, ‘I will wait for GOD who has turned away his face from the house of Jacob, and I shall trust in him. Behold, here I am, and the children whom God has given me, and they

¹ *you...your* are singular in LXX.

shall become signs and wonders in the house of Israel from *the* LORD sabaoth, the One dwelling on the mountain of Sion.’

And if they say to you, ‘Seek out ventriloquists, and those speaking from the earth, and those speaking emptiness, the babblers uttering sounds out of their bellies, shall a nation not seek out its own god?’ Why do they seek out the dead concerning the living? For he gave the law as a help,¹ that they should not speak like this, concerning which there are no gifts to give.

And a harsh famine will come upon you, and it shall be that when you are hungry, you shall be grieved, and speak ill of the ruler and your ancestral customs, and they will look up into the heavens above, and they will look on the earth below; and behold: dire distress and darkness, tribulation, and misery, and darkness, so that they cannot see. And the one being in distress will not be dismayed until a season.

Drink² this first, do this quickly, country of Zebulon, the land of Nephthalim by way of *the* sea, and the rest of the inhabitants of the seashore and beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the parts of Judea.

The people sitting³ in darkness, see a great Light! Those dwelling in *the* land and shadow of death, a Light will shine on you! The majority of the people whom you brought back in your joy will also rejoice before you, like those rejoicing at the harvest and in the same way as those dividing the spoil. Because the yoke that lay upon them, and the rod that was on their neck, shall be taken away; for *the* LORD has scattered the rod of those demanding payment as in the day of Madiam. For they shall pay restitution for every robe that has been collected by deceit and every garment with exchange; and they will be willing *to do so*, even if they had been burnt by fire.

Because a child has been born for us, and a son has been given to us, whose sovereignty was upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Angel of great counsel, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, the One having authority, Prince of Peace, Father of the Age to come; for I shall bring peace upon the rulers, peace, and health by him. Great is his rule, and his peace has no boundary upon the throne of David and his kingdom, to establish her and uphold her with justice and with righteousness from henceforth and unto the age. The zeal of *the* LORD sabaoth will do all these things.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 6:9-22

Now this is the genealogy of Noah: Noah was a righteous man, being perfect in his generation; Noah was well pleasing to GOD. And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, Japheth.

Now the earth was morally corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with wrongdoing. And *the* LORD GOD saw the earth, and it was ruined, because all flesh was corrupting its way upon the earth.

And *the* LORD GOD said to Noah, “The season of all humankind has come before me, because the earth has become full of wrongdoing through them; so behold, I am going to ruin them

¹ This phrase is included in the Anaphora of St. Basil.

² *Drink* = πίε, follows Codex Alexandrinus, Church of Greece and others. Some other LXX mss read, *Do* = ποίει.

³ Follows Codex Alexandrinus; others read, *walking*.

and the earth. Therefore, make for yourself an ark of squared timber; you shall make the ark with squared compartments and shall smear it inside and outside with bitumen. And thus you shall make the ark: the length of the ark three hundred cubits and the width fifty cubits and its height thirty cubits. You shall make the ark, bringing it together, and you shall finish it to a cubit above, and you shall make the door in the side. You shall make it with a ground floor, with two stories, and with three stories you will make it.

And as for me, behold, I am going to bring the cataclysm¹—water upon the earth—to destroy under heaven all flesh in which is a breath of life, and as many as there are on the earth shall perish. And I will establish my covenant with you, and you will come into the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives together with you. And of all the domestic animals, and of all the creeping things, and of all the wild animals, and of all flesh, two by two, you shall bring some of them all into the ark in order to keep them alive together with yourself; they shall be male and female. Of all the winged birds according to kind, and of all the domestic animals according to kind, and of all the creeping things that creep upon the ground according to their kind, two by two, some of them all shall enter with you, male and female, to be kept alive together with you. And you shall take for yourself some of all the provisions which you will eat, and shall gather them to yourself, and they shall be for you and for them to eat.”

And Noah did all things that the Lord God commanded him.

Proverbs 8:1-21

Son, proclaim wisdom, so that prudence may obey you, for she is on high peaks, and she stands in the midst of the paths. She takes her seat by the gates of the powerful, and in the entrances she sings hymn: “You people, I summon you, and I utter my voice to the sons of men. You innocent, be aware of cunning, and you that are untaught, take heart. Hearken to me, for I speak solemn things, and shall open correct things from my lips; because my throat will meditate truth, while lying lips are an abomination before me. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; nothing crooked or twisted is in them. They are all present to those understanding, and upright to those finding knowledge.

“Accept instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than tried gold; for wisdom is better than valuable stones, all that is precious is not equal to her worth.

“I, wisdom, have made counsel my dwelling, and I have called upon knowledge and understanding. *The* fear of *the* LORD hates unrighteousness, also arrogance, and pride, and ways of evil people; I hate the perverted ways of the wicked. Mine is counsel, mine is safety, mine is prudence, mine is strength. Through me, kings will reign, and the powerful will write righteousness; through me, nobles become noble, and through me despots hold sway on earth. I love those who are my friends, while those seeking me will find me.

“Wealth and honor are mine, and the possession of many things and righteousness. To gather my fruit is far better than gold and precious stone! My produce is better than choice silver! I walk in ways of justice, and I pass my time amid paths of what is right, so that I may divide possessions to those loving me and fill their storehouses with good things.”

¹ *cataclysm*, transliteration of Greek, *kataklysmos*

TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 9:9—10:4

Thus says *the* LORD, “All the people of Ephraim will know, and those sitting in Samaria, saying with insolence and an exalted heart, ‘Bricks have fallen, but come, let us hew stones and cut down sycamores and cedars, and let us build a tower.’”

But GOD will strike those rising on mount Sion against them, and their enemies he will scatter: Syria from the rising of the sun, and the Greeks from the setting of the sun, those devouring Israel with their whole mouth. For all this his rage is not turned away, but his hand is still upraised.

But the people did not turn until they were struck, and they did not seek the Lord. So *the* LORD has taken away from Israel head and tail, great and small, in one day—an elder and respecters of persons (this is the head), and a prophet teaching things that are unlawful (this one is the tail). And those calling this people blest will keep leading them astray, and they lead them astray that they may gulp them down.

Because of this, GOD will not rejoice over their young men, nor will he have mercy on their orphans and on their widows; because all are lawless and evil, and every mouth speaks unrighteous things. For all this, his rage was not turned away, but his hand is still upraised.

And iniquity will burn like a fire, and like dry grass it will be devoured by fire; and it will burn in the thickets of the wood, and all that is round about the hills will be devoured. Because of the fierce anger of *the* LORD, the whole land has been burned, and the people will be as though burnt up by fire. A man will not have mercy on his brother, but he will turn aside to the right, because he will be hungry, and he will eat from the left, but will by no means be filled by eating the flesh of his arm. For Manasses will eat of Ephraim and Ephraim of Manasses, because together they will besiege Judea. For all this, his rage was not turned away, but his hand is still upraised.

Woe to those who write evil! For in writing they write evil, turning aside the cause of beggars, snatching judgement from the paupers of my people, so that widows are for spoil and orphans for plunder. And what will they do in the day of visitation? For trouble will come to you from afar; and to whom will flee for help? And where will you abandon your glory so as not to fall into captivity? For all this, his rage was not turned away, but his hand is still upraised.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 7:1-5

And *the* LORD GOD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen you as righteous before me in this generation. And from the clean domestic animals, bring in for yourself, seven by seven, male and female, and from the unclean animals, two by two, male and female; and from the clean birds of the sky, seven by seven, male and female, and from the unclean birds, two by two, male and female, to sustain offspring upon all the earth. For within seven more days I am going to bring rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, and everything that rises up, which I have made, I will wipe out from the face of the earth. And Noah did all that *the* LORD GOD had commanded him.

Proverbs 8:32—9:11

Son, hear me, and blessed are those guarding my ways, hearing instruction and being made wise and not stopped up.¹ Blessed *the* man who will listen to me, and a person who will guard my ways, keeping vigil at my doors day by day, keeping watch at the doorposts of my entrances—because my ways are ways to life, and grace is prepared from *the* LORD. Those sinning against me act impiously against their own souls, and those hating me love death.

Wisdom has built herself a house and supported it with seven pillars. She has slaughtered her own sacrifices, and mixed her wine in the bowl, and prepared her table. She sent out her servants summoning with a loud proclamation to the feast, saying, “Whoever is foolish, let him turn to me.” And to those lacking wisdom she said, “Come, eat my bread, and drink wine I have mixed for you. Abandon folly, and you will reign unto the ages; and seek insight and correct your understanding with knowledge.”

One who corrects wicked people will gain dishonor for himself. One rebuking an impious person will find fault with himself. Do not rebuke wicked people, for they hate you. Rebuke a wise person and he will love you. Give a wise person an opportunity to learn and he will be wiser; teach a righteous person and he will increase learning. *The* beginning of wisdom is the fear of *the* LORD, and the counsel of Saints is understanding, for to know the law is the sign of a good mind. In this way you will live for a long time, and years will be added to your life.

WEDNESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 10:12-20

It shall be when *the* LORD has accomplished doing all things on the mountain of Sion and in Jerusalem, he will bring *his wrath* upon the great mind, the ruler of the Assyrians, and upon the height of the glory of his eyes. For he said,

“By *my* strength I shall act, and in the wisdom of my understanding, I shall remove *the* boundaries of nations, and I shall plunder their strength. And I shall shake inhabited cities, and I shall capture the whole inhabited world with *my* hand like a nest, and I shall take away *its inhabitants* like the eggs that have been abandoned, and there is none who will escape from me or contradict me.”

An axe will not be glorified without someone to cut with it, will it? Or will a saw be exalted without someone to draw it, like one lifting up a rod or staff. But it shall not be so! Rather, *the* LORD sabaoth will send dishonor against your honor, and a burning fire will be kindled against your glory. And the Light of Israel will become a fire, and he will sanctify him with burning fire, and devour the wood like grass. On that day he will consume the mountains, and the hills, and the forests, and will devour *them* from soul to flesh; and the one fleeing will be like one fleeing from a burning flame; and those having been left behind shall be a *small* number, and a child will write them.

And it shall be in that day that the remnant of Israel will no longer be added to, and the saved of Jacob shall no longer trust those having wronged them, but they will trust in GOD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

¹ This verse is found in the Church of Greece text, but not in other LXX manuscripts.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 7:6-9

Now Noah was six hundred years old, and the cataclysm of the water came upon the earth. And Noah, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives went with him into the ark because of the water of the cataclysm. And from the birds, and from the clean domestic animals, and from the domestic animals that are not clean, and from all the creeping things that are on the earth, two by two, went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as GOD had commanded Noah.¹

Proverbs 9:12-18

Son, if you become wise for yourself, you will also be wise for your neighbors; but if you prove wicked, you will endure wickedness alone. One relying on falsehoods will shepherd winds, and he will pursue flying birds; for he has left the ways of his own vineyard, while he has made the axes of his field go astray. He walks through a waterless desert and a land appointed to drought; he gathers barrenness with his hands.

A foolish and insolent woman, knowing not shame, comes to lack a morsel of *bread*. She sits on a bench at the doors of her house, openly in the streets, inviting the passersby and those going straight on their ways: "Whichever of you is most foolish, let him turn aside to me; and I urge those lacking prudence, saying, 'Take the secret bread of pleasure and drink the sweet water of theft.'"

But he does not know that those born of earth are destroyed by her, and he encounters a trap of hades. But hurry away! Do not tarry in the place, and do not rest your eye on her; for thus you will pass through strange water, and pass over a strange river. Keep away from strange water and do not drink of a strange well, that you may live a long time and that years may be added to your life.

THURSDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 11:10-13a, 16b, 12:1-2

In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, even the one rising up to rule nations; in him nations will hope, and his rest will be honor.

And in that day, it shall be that *the* LORD will again reveal his hand to be zealous for the remnant that is left of the people, whatever will have been left by the Assyrians, and from Egypt, and Babylonia, and Ethiopia, and from *the* Elamites, and from *the* rising of *the* sun, and from Arabia. And he will raise a sign for the nations, and shall gather the lost ones of Israel, and the scattered of Judea he will gather from the four corners of the earth. And the

¹ "God granted 100 years while the ark was being made to that generation, and still they did not repent. God summoned beasts they had never seen, and still they showed no remorse. He established a state of peace between the predatory animals and those being preyed upon, and still they had no awe. After Noah and every creature had entered the ark, God delayed yet seven more days for them, leaving the door of the ark open to them. Although those of that generation saw all this, they were still not persuaded to renounce their evil deeds."
—St Ephraim.

yoke¹ of Ephraim will be removed, and the enemies of Judea perish. And it shall be for Israel as on the day when he came out of Egypt.

And you will say on that day, “I will praise thee, LORD because thou wast angry with me, but thou didst turn away thy wrath and had mercy on me. Behold! my GOD, my saviour, *the* LORD, I shall trust in him, and shall not be afraid, because *the* LORD is my glory, and my praise, and he has become my salvation.”

AT VESPER:

Genesis 7:11—8:3

In the six hundredth year in the life of Noah, the second month, on the twenty-seventh² of the month, on that day burst forth all the fountains of the abyss, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. And the rain came on the earth for forty days and forty nights. On this day Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, the sons of Noah, and the wife of Noah, and the three wives of his sons with him, entered the ark. And all the wild animals according to kind, and all the domestic animals according to kind, and every creeping thing moving on the earth according to kind, and every bird according to kind, came into the ark to Noah, two by two, male and female, of all flesh in which there is a breath of life. And those that were coming in, male and female of all flesh, went in as GOD had commanded Noah, and *the* LORD GOD closed the ark upon him.

And the cataclysm came for forty days and forty nights upon the earth, and the water increased and bore up the ark, and it was raised up from the earth. And the water was prevailing and greatly increasing on the earth, and the ark was being carried along upon the water. And the water was prevailing exceedingly on the earth, and it covered all the high mountains, the ones that were under the sky; the water was raised up fifteen cubits above and covered all the high mountains. And all flesh that moves on the earth—of birds and of domestic animals and of wild animals—died, also every creeping thing that moves on the earth and every human being. And all things having a breath of life, and everything, those being on the dry land, died. And he wiped out everything that rises, which was on the face of the earth, from human beings to domestic animal, from creeping things to the birds of the sky, were wiped out from the earth; and only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. And the water was raised up on the earth one hundred fifty days.

And GOD remembered Noah and all the wild animals, and all the domestic animals, and the birds, and all the creeping things that were with him in the ark, and GOD brought a wind upon the earth, and the water subsided, and the fountains of the abyss and the floodgates of the sky were covered over. And the rain from the sky was restrained and the water receded continually from the earth. At the end of one hundred fifty days the water was giving way and diminishing.

¹ Codex Alexandrinus reads ζυγός, yoke; all others read ζήλος, “jealousy.”

² *twenty-seventh* follows LXX; MT (and OSB) read *seventeenth*.

Proverbs 10:1-22

A wise son brings gladness to a father, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother. Treasures will not benefit *the* lawless, but righteousness will rescue from death.

The Lord will not let a righteous soul starve, but *the* life of *the* ungodly he will overturn. Poverty humbles a man,¹ but *the* hands of the courageous enrich.

A son, having been instructed, will be wise, and he will use the foolish as a servant. A thoughtful son is saved from heat, but a lawless son is blasted by the wind at harvest.

A blessing of *the* LORD is upon the head of the righteous, but untimely grief will cover *the* mouth of *the* ungodly. *The* memory of *the* righteous is with praises, but *the* name of *the* ungodly is extinguished.

One wise in heart will accept commandments, but one unguarded in lips will be overthrown in his perversity. One walking simply walks trustingly, but one perverting his ways will be known. One winking with *his* eyes with trickery, gathers griefs for men;² while one reproving with boldness makes peace.

A source of life is in *the* hands of a righteous one, but destruction will cover *the* mouth of *the* ungodly. Hatred rouses strife, while friendship covers all those not loving strife.

One pouring forth wisdom from his lips smites a heartless man as with a rod. *The* wise will conceal perception, but the mouth of *the* hasty brings ruin near.

The possession of *the* rich is a strong city; but poverty is the ruin of *the* ungodly. *The* works of *the* righteous produce life, but *the* fruits of *the* ungodly produce sins.

Discipline guards ways of righteous life, but instruction without rebuke leads astray. Righteous lips conceal enmity, but those uttering insults are very foolish. By much talking you will not escape sin, but by restraining your lips you will be thoughtful. *The* tongue of *the* righteous is choice silver, but *the* heart of *the* ungodly will fail. *The* lips of *the* righteous know exalted things, but the foolish die in want.

A blessing of *the* LORD is on *the* head of a righteous person; it enriches, and grief will by no means be added to *the* heart.

FRIDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 13:2-13

A vision which Isaiah saw against Babylon. On a mountain of the plain raise a signal; lift up *your* voice to them! Cease being afraid! Encourage *them* with a hand; open, you rulers. It is I who give order and I lead them, those having been sanctified,³ and it is I who summon them. Giants are coming to fulfil my wrath, at the same time rejoicing and insulting.

A voice of many nations on the mountains, like that of many nations! A voice of kings and nations gathered together. *The* LORD sabaoth has commanded a nation in arms to come from a land far away, from the furthest foundation of heaven— *the* LORD and his armed men—to destroy the whole inhabited world.

¹ gender specific, male.

² gender specific.

³ Codex Vaticanus omits *those having been sanctified*.

Wail, all of you, for *the day of the LORD* is near, and a crushing will come from GOD. Because of this, every hand will grow feeble, and every human soul will shrink back, and the elders will be troubled, and pangs like those of a woman in childbirth will grip them. And they will mourn one to another and be amazed, and will change their face like a flame.

Look! *the day of the LORD* is coming, a *day* without healing, of wrath and anger, to make the inhabited world a desert, and to destroy sinners from her. For the stars of heaven and Orion and all the cosmos¹ of heaven will not give light, and there will be darkness when the sun rises, and the moon will not give her light. And I shall command evils for the whole inhabited world, and for the ungodly their sins. And I shall destroy *the arrogance of the lawless*, and shall humble *the insolence of the arrogant*.

And those having been left behind will be more precious than unsmelted gold; and the person will be more precious than the stone of Ophir. For the heavens will be enraged and the earth be shaken from her foundations because of the fierce anger of *the LORD sabaoth* on *the day* when his wrath comes upon her.

AT VESPER:

Genesis 8:4-21

In the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh² of the month, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat.³ Now the water continued diminishing until the tenth month; then in the eleventh month, on the first of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

And it came to pass after forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made, and he sent out the raven to see if the water had subsided; and going out, he did not return until the water was dried up from the earth.

And he sent out the dove from him to see if the water had subsided from the face of the earth. And not finding a resting place for her feet, the dove returned to him into the ark, because water was on the whole face of the earth; and extending his hand, he took her and brought her to himself into the ark. And having waited yet another seven days, again he sent forth the dove from the ark, and the dove returned to him toward evening, bearing in her beak an olive leaf, a dry twig,⁴ and Noah knew that the water had subsided from the earth. And having waited yet another seven days, again he sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

And it came to pass in the six hundred first year in the life of Noah, the first month, on the first of the month, *that* the water disappeared from the earth. And Noah uncovered the roof of the ark that he had made, and he saw that the water had disappeared from the face of the earth. Then in the second month, on the twenty-seventh of the month, the earth was dry.

And *the LORD GOD* spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you, and bring out with you all the wild animals that are

¹ transliteration of Greek, κόσμος.

² LXX reading; OSB used NKJ Hebrew text here and following; eleventh month is LXX.

³ In the Peshitta, the Bible used by St. Ephraim of Syria, Noah's Ark landed in the "mountains of Qardu."

⁴ This is quoted in the Blessing of Oil at Baptisms: "O Lord and Master... who didst send unto those in the ark of Noah thy dove, bearing in her beak a twig of olive, the token of reconciliation...the foreshadowing of the mystery of grace...."

with you, and all flesh, from birds to domestic animals, and every creeping thing that moves on the earth, and begin increasing and multiplying upon the earth.”

And Noah went out, and his wife, and his sons and his sons’ wives with him, and all the wild animals, and all the domestic animals, and every bird, and every creeping thing that moves on the earth, went out of the ark according to their kind.

And Noah built an altar to the Lord¹ and took from all the clean domestic animals and from all the clean birds and offered whole burnt offerings on the altar. And *the* LORD GOD smelled a sweet smell of fragrance,² and *the* LORD GOD, after he had thought it over, said, “I will not curse the earth again because of the deeds of humans, for the peoples’ mind is focused attentively to evil things from youth; and so, I will not again smite all living flesh, as I have done.”

Proverbs 10:31—11:12

The mouth of *the* righteous distils wisdom, but *the* tongue of *the* unrighteous will perish. *The* lips of righteous men³ distil grace, but *the* mouth of *the* ungodly turns *people* away.

False balances are an abomination before *the* LORD, but a just weight is acceptable to him. Wherever pride enters, there will also be disgrace; but *the* mouth of *the* humble meditates wisdom. [*The* perfection of *the* upright will guide them, and *the* overthrow of *the* rebellious will spoil them. Possessions will profit nothing in a day of wrath, but righteousness will deliver from death.]⁴

When a righteous *person* dies, he leaves regret, but destruction of *the* ungodly is speedy and brings joy.

Righteousness cuts out blameless ways, but ungodliness falls in with unrighteousness. *The* righteousness of upright men delivers them, but transgressors are caught by their destruction.

When a righteous man has come to his end, hope does not perish, but the boast of the ungodly perishes.

A righteous *person* escapes from a trap, and in his place the ungodly is handed over. In *the* mouth of the ungodly is a snare for citizens; but *the* perception of the righteous is prosperous. By the good deeds of the righteous, a city prospers, [and in *the* loss of *the* ungodly there is rejoicing. By *the* blessing of the upright, a city will be exalted,] but by *the* mouth of *the* ungodly it was overthrown.

One lacking in sense sneers at citizens, but a man of prudence brings stillness.



¹ *the* Lord follows Church of Greece text; Codex Vaticanus reads *God*.

² *cf.* Litany before the Lord’s Prayer: “That our God...receiving them upon his holy, heavenly, and ideal altar as a sweet spiritual fragrance....”

³ Gender specific.

⁴ Bracketed verses are footnotes in the Church of Greece text but are omitted in most LXX mss.

MONDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 14:24-32

Thus says *the* LORD sabaoth, “As I have spoken, thus shall it be, and in the way I have planned, thus shall it remain: to destroy the Assyrians from my land and from my mountains, and they will be for trampling down, and their yoke shall be stripped from off them, and their renown shall be stripped off from their shoulders.”

This is the plan which *the* LORD has planned against the whole inhabited world, and this is his hand that is uplifted against all nations of the world. For what the holy GOD has planned, who will scatter? And who will turn away his uplifted hand?

In the year that King Ahaz died there came this word: “May you not rejoice, all you foreigners, that the yoke of the one having struck you is broken; for from a serpent’s seed there will come a race of asps, and their offspring will come forth as flying serpents. And beggars will be fed through him, and paupers will rest in peace. But he will wipe out thy seed by famine and thy remnant he will wipe out.

“Wail, O gates of cities! Wail, O troubled cities, all foreigners, because from the north smoke is coming, and there is no way to continue. And what will kings of nations answer? That ‘*the* LORD has founded Sion, and through him the humble of the people will be saved’.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 8:21—9:7

And *the* LORD GOD smelled a sweet smell of fragrance, and *the* LORD GOD, after he had thought it over, said, “I will not curse the earth again because of the deeds of humans, for the peoples’ mind is focused attentively to evil things from youth; and so, I will not again smite all living flesh, as I have done. During all the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and spring, day and night will not cease.”

And GOD blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, “Be increasing and multiplying and filling the earth, and become lord over her. And the trembling and fear of you will be on all the animals of the earth, on all the birds of the sky, and on all the things moving on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea; I have given them under your hand. And all creeping things that are alive you shall have for food; like grassy herbs, I have given you all things. Only you shall not eat meat with *the* blood of life. For indeed, the blood of your lives I will seek out: from *the* hand of all the animals I will seek it out, and from *the* hand of a fellow human I will seek out the life of a human. As for the one shedding human blood, in return for this blood shall it be shed, because in the divine image I made humankind. But you, begin increasing and multiplying and filling the earth, and become lord over her.”

Proverbs 11:19—12:6

A righteous son is born for life, but the pursuit of the ungodly *leads* to death. Perverted ways are an abomination to *the* LORD, but all being blameless in their ways are acceptable to him. One putting hand to hands unjustly will not go unpunished, but the one sowing righteousness will receive faithful recompense.

Like an earring in a pig's snout, so is beauty in an evil-minded woman.

All *the* desires of the righteous are good, but *the* hope of *the* ungodly will perish.

There are those sowing abroad their livelihood and making it more; but there are those gathering them in and receive less.

All simple souls are blessed, but a passionate man¹ is not respectable.

May the one hoarding grain leave it for the nations, but blessing be on *the* head of the one sharing it.

One devising good *things* seeks good grace, but as for one seeking out evil, it will seize him. One trusting in wealth will fall, but one helping the righteous is the one who will rise. One not dealing graciously with his own household will inherit wind, but a foolish *person* will serve *the* wise.

From *the* fruit of righteousness grows a tree of life, but souls of transgressors are cut off unripe. If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly one and sinner appear?²

One loving instruction loves sense, but one hating rebuke is a fool. Better is one having found grace from *the* LORD, but a lawless man will be passed over in silence. A person will not succeed through lawlessness, but the roots of the righteous will not be pulled up.

A virtuous wife is a crown for her husband; but like a worm in wood, so an evil wife destroys a husband.

The thoughts of the righteous are judgements, but the ungodly devise deceits. The words of *the* ungodly are deceitful, but *the* mouth of *the* upright will rescue them.

TUESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 25:1-9

LORD my God, I will glorify thee, I will hymn thy Name, because thou hast done wondrous deeds—a counsel ancient and true. So be it, LORD! Because thou hast made cities a dust heap, fortified cities, so that foundations should not fall.³ Let the city of the ungodly never be built unto the age! Therefore, the poor people will bless thee, and cities of those having suffered wrong will bless thee; for thou hast become a helper to every humble city, and a protection to those downhearted because of poverty; from evil people shalt thou deliver them—a protection for the thirsty and a breath for people having been wronged, like downhearted people thirsting in Sion because of ungodly people, to whom thou didst hand us over.

And *the* LORD sabaoth will make a *feast* for all the nations on this mountain. They will drink gladness, they will drink wine, they will anoint themselves with myrrh. On this mountain, hand on all these things to the nations, for this counsel is upon all the nations.

Death, having been strong, swallowed *them* down; but again *the* LORD GOD has taken away every tear from every face. He has taken away the shame of the people from all the earth, for the mouth of *the* LORD has spoken.

¹ Gender specific.

² This verse is quoted in 1 Peter 4:18.

³ Follows Codex Vaticanus and Church of Greece text; others omit "not."

And they will say in that day, “Behold, our GOD, in whom we kept hoping, and we rejoiced, and he will save us. This is *the* LORD, we waited from him, and we were rejoicing, and we shall delight in our salvation.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 9:8-17

GOD spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, “As for me, behold, I am establishing my covenant with you and with your seed after you, and with every creature living with you, from birds and from domestic animals, and for all the animals of the earth, those having come out of the ark. And I will establish my covenant with you, and never again shall all flesh die by the water of the cataclysm, and no more shall there be a cataclysm of water to destroy all the earth.”

And *the* LORD GOD said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant, which I give, between me and you and between every living creature that is with you, for everlasting generations: I am setting my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a covenant sign between me and the earth. And it shall be that when I gather clouds over the earth, my bow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant that is between me and you, and between every living creature among all flesh, and the water shall never again become a cataclysm to wipe out all flesh. And the bow will be in the cloud, and I will see it to remember the everlasting covenant between me and between every living creature among all flesh that is on the earth.” And GOD said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have made between me and between all flesh that is on the earth.”

Proverbs 12:8-22

The mouth of one with understanding is praised by a man,¹ but the dull of heart is mocked. Better a man in dishonor, being a slave to himself, than one conferring honor upon himself while lacking bread.

A righteous *person* takes pity on the souls of his domestic animals, but the feelings of the ungodly are without mercy.

One working his own land will be filled with bread, but those pursuing vanities lack sense. One whose pleasure is in banquets of wine will leave behind disgrace in his own strongholds.

The desires of *the* ungodly are evil, but the roots of the godly are strongly set. A sinner falls into snares through sin of *the* lips, but a righteous person escapes them.

One looking with gentleness will find mercy, but one being contentious in the gates will afflict souls. From fruits of *the* mouth *the* soul of a man will be filled with blessings, and the recompense of his lips will be given him.

The ways of fools are right in their own eyes, but a wise person listens to advice. A fool immediately makes his anger known, but a prudent person hides his own disgrace. A righteous one declares plain truth, but the witness of unjust things is deceitful.

¹ Gender specific.

There are those wounding when they speak as with a sword, but *the* tongues of *the* wise bring healing.

Truthful lips establish testimony, but a hasty witness has an unjust tongue. Deceit is in *the* heart of one devising wickedness, but those wishing for peace will rejoice.

Nothing unjust will be pleasing to a righteous man, but the ungodly will be filled with evils. Lying lips are an abomination to *the* LORD, but one acting faithfully is accepted by him.

WEDNESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 26:21—27:9

Behold, *the* LORD from his holy *place* is bringing his wrath upon those dwelling upon the earth, and the earth will reveal her blood, and will not cover those having been slain upon her.

On that day GOD will bring his holy, great, and strong sword upon the dragon, *that* fleeing serpent—upon the dragon, *that* crooked serpent—and he will destroy the dragon.

On that day *there shall be* a beautiful vineyard, a desire to begin a *song* concerning her. I am a strong city, a city besieged; in vain shall I water her, for she will be captured by night, and by day her wall shall fall. There is not a *city* that has not taken hold of her. Who will set me to guard stubble in a field? Because of this enmity, I have set her aside. Therefore because of this *the* LORD has done all the things, whatever he appointed. I have been burnt up.

Those dwelling in her will cry out; “Let us make peace with him, let us make peace!” Those who are coming are *the* children of Jacob; they will sprout, and Israel will blossom, and the inhabited world will be filled with his fruit.

He shall not be smitten as he himself smote, shall he?¹ and as he himself destroyed, he shall not be destroyed, shall he? Fighting and reviling, he will send them away. Thou wast the one having devised with a harsh spirit to destroy them with a spirit of rage, wast thou not?² On account of this, the lawlessness of Jacob will be taken away, and this will be his blessing, when I have taken away his sin, when they have broken all the stones of the altars in pieces like fine dust, and their *sacred* groves will certainly not remain, and their idols will be cut down like distant forest.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 9:18—10:1

Now these are the sons of Noah, those having come out of the ark: Shem, Ham, Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three are *the* sons of Noah; from these, people were scattered abroad over all the earth.

And Noah was the first to be a farmer of *the* land, and he planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk and lay naked in his dwelling. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and after going out, he told his two brothers outside. And

¹ These expects “no” for an answer.

² This expects “yes” for an answer.

Shem and Japheth, after taking the robe and putting it on both their backs, walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father; and with their face backwards they did not see the nakedness of their father.

But Noah awoke from the wine and realized what his younger son had done to him, and he said, “Cursed be Canaan! A household slave he shall be to his brothers.” And he said, “Blessed be *the* LORD, the God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his household slave. May GOD make room for Japheth, and may he dwell in the houses of Shem, and let Canaan be their servant boy”.

And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died. These are the generations of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth, and sons were born to them after the flood.

Proverbs 12:23—13:9

A man¹ of understanding is a throne of perception, but *the* heart of fools will encounter curses. *The* hand of chosen ones will easily obtain might, but *the* deceitful will be for prey. Dreadful news troubles *the* heart of a righteous man, but a good message gladdens it.

A just arbitrator will his own friend, but the opinions of the ungodly are unfair. Evil things will pursue sinners, while the way of the ungodly will lead them astray. *The* deceitful will not catch any wild game, but a pure man is a precious possession. In ways of righteousness is life, but ways of those bearing grudges *lead* to death.

A wise son is obedient to *his* father, but a disobedient son is on course to destruction.

From fruits of righteousness shall a good person eat, but souls of transgressors will perish unripen. One guarding his own mouth will preserve his own soul, but the one having rash lips will bring terror upon himself. Every idle person lives with desires, but hands of *the* brave are diligent.

A righteous person hates an unjust word, but *the* ungodly is put to shame and will not have boldness to speak. [Righteousness guards the innocent, while sin makes the impious worthless.]²

There are those enriching themselves, though they have nothing, and there are those humbling themselves amid great wealth. A man’s own wealth is a ransom of a life, but *the* poor does not undergo threatening. There is always light for *the* righteous, but it is quenched for the ungodly. Deceitful souls go astray in sins, but *the* righteous show pity and mercy.

THURSDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 28:14-22

Hear *the* word of *the* LORD, you afflicted men³ and rulers of this people which is in Jerusalem. Because you said, “We have made a covenant with hades and agreements with

¹ Gender specific throughout.

² Bracketed verse is not included in the Church of Greece text.

³ Gender specific.

death. If a raging storm passes by, it will certainly not come upon us. We have made falsehood our hope, and by falsehood we will be sheltered.”

On account of this, thus says *the* LORD, *the* Lord,¹ “Behold, I will set into the foundations of Sion a costly, chosen Stone, a precious cornerstone into her foundations. And the one believing in him will never be put to shame. And I will turn judgement for a hope, and my compassion will become balances. And as for you trusting vainly in falsehood—the storm will not pass you by, lest it also removes your covenant of death. And your hope regarding hades will in no way remain. If a raging storm comes against you, you will be trampled down by it. When it passes by, it will seize you, because early in *the* morning it will pass by day, and in the night, it will be an evil expectation. Learn to hear!”

We are distressed, unable to fight, and we are too weak for us to be assembled. *The* LORD will raise up like a mountain of ungodly ones, and he will be in the valley of Gibeon; with fury he will do his work—a work of bitterness. While his wrath will do what is unheard of, and his bitterness will be unheard of. As for you, do not rejoice, nor let your bonds be strong, because I have heard from *the* LORD sabaoth about things to be accomplished and cut short, which he will do over the whole earth.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 10:32—11:9

These are tribes of *the* sons of Noah according to their generations, according to their nations. From these the islands of the nations were scattered on the earth after the cataclysm.

And the whole earth was of one tongue and one voice for all. And it came to pass as they moved from *the* east that they found a plain in *the* land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And one man said to the other, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them in fire.” And brick became as stone for them, and bitumen as mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower, whose top will reach as far as the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves before we are scattered over *the* face of the whole earth.”

And *the* LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the humans² had built. And the Lord said, “Behold, they are all one race and one language, and they have begun to do this, and now nothing of all that they want to do will fail. Come, and let us go down and confound their speech there, so that each one may not understand the language of *his* neighbor.” And *the* LORD scattered them from that place over *the* face of *the* whole earth. And they left off building the city and the tower. Because of this, they called her name “Confusion,” because there *the* LORD confused the lips of *the* whole earth, and it was from there that *the* LORD scattered them over *the* face of *the* whole earth.

¹ This double use of *Kyrios*, *Kyrios*, is found in the Church of Greece text and Codex Vaticanus. *Kyrios* is used only once in Codex Alexandrinus.

² Literally, “sons of men.”

Proverbs 13:19—14:6

Desires of *the* godly sweeten a soul, but works of *the* ungodly are far from knowledge. One walking with *the* wise will be wise, but one walking with fools will be known as *one*. Evil things will pursue sinners, but good things will overtake the righteous.

A good man will make *his* sons' sons heirs, but *the* wealth of *the* ungodly will be laid up for *the* righteous. *The* righteous will spend many years in wealth, but *the* unjust will suddenly perish. One sparing the rod hates his own son, but one loving *him* disciplines him with care.

A righteous person eating satisfies his soul, but *the* souls ungodly are in want.

Wise women build homes, but a foolish one razes it to the ground with her own hands.

One walking uprightly fears the Lord, but one being devious in his ways will be dishonored. From a mouth of fools comes a rod of pride, but lips of *the* wise will guard them.

Where there are no oxen, mangers are clean, but where there is much produce, *the* strength of an ox is manifest. A faithful witness will not lie, but an unjust witness kindles lies. You will look for wisdom from the wicked and will not find, but knowledge is easily available from the prudent.

FRIDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 29:13-23

Thus says *the* LORD, “These people draw near me; they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me, and in vain they bow to me, teaching human commands and teachings. Because of this, look! I will start to remove this people, and I will remove them, and I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and *the* understanding of those understanding I will conceal.

Woe to those making their counsel deep and not by *the* LORD! Woe to those making their plans secretly, whose deeds are in *the* dark! And they will say, ‘Who has seen us?’ and ‘Who will know us, or what we do?’ You will be reckoned as potter’s clay, will you not?¹ What is fashioned will not say to the one who fashions it, ‘You did not fashion me,’ will it? Or will the thing made say to its maker, ‘You did not make me wisely,’ will it?”²

Is it not yet a little while and Lebanon shall be changed *to be* like the mountain of Carmel, and Carmel shall be reckoned as a forest? And in that day *the* deaf will hear *the* words of a scroll, and as for those in the darkness and those in the fog, *the* eyes of *the* blind will see, and beggars will rejoice with gladness because of *the* LORD, and those without hope among people will be filled with joy! *The* transgressor has failed and the arrogant has perished, and those transgressing wickedly have been destroyed, even those making people sin by word. And they will make all those reproving in *the* gates a cause of stumbling, and they have turned aside the just among the unjust.

Because of this, thus says *the* LORD concerning the house of Jacob, whom he set apart out of Abraham, “Jacob will not now be ashamed, nor will Israel change his countenance. But

¹ This question expects “yes” for an answer.

² These two questions expect “no” for an answer.

when their sons see my works, because of me they will hallow my Name, and will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and will fear the God of Israel.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 12:1-7

The LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your land and from your kindred and from the house of your father and go into the land that I will show you. And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and you will be blessed. I will bless those blessing you, and those cursing you I will curse; and in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed.”

So Abram went, as *the* LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sara his wife, and Lot, his brother’s son, and all their possessions which they had gathered, and every person that they had gathered in Haran; and they set out to go to the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan. And Abram journeyed through the length of the land to the place at Shechem, to the high oak. At that time the Canaanites inhabited the land. And *the* LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “To your seed I will give this land.” And he built there an altar to *the* LORD, who had appeared to him.

Proverbs 14:15-26a

A guileless *one* believes all words, but *the* prudent comes to repentance. A wise *one* feared and turned away from evil, but the fool, trusting in himself, mixes with *the* ungodly.

A person of quick temper acts thoughtlessly, but *one who is* prudent endures many things. Fools will have wickedness as their portion, but a prudent man¹ will take hold of understanding. Evil *people* will bow before good *people*, and *the* impious will serve at *the* gates of *the* righteous. Friends will hate poor friends, but friends of *the* rich are many.

One dishonoring paupers commits sins, but one having mercy on beggars is blessed. Those going astray devise evils, but *the* good devise mercy and truth. Devisers of evils do not understand mercy and faithfulness but acts of mercy and faithfulness are with devisers of good. With everyone who is careful there is abundance, but the pleasure seeker and callous will be in want. A crown of the wise is their wealth,² but occupation of fools is wicked. A faithful witness will rescue a soul from evils, but a deceitful *person* kindles lies. In fear of *the* LORD is hope of strength, and he leaves to his children a support of peace.



¹ Gender specific.

² Follows Church of Greece text; others read, “is a prudent person.”
support of peace also follows Church of Greece text.

MONDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 37:33—38:6

Thus says *the* LORD concerning *the* king of *the* Assyrians, “He shall never enter into this city, nor ever shoot an arrow against her, nor ever come before her with a shield, nor ever cast up a siege ramp around her. But by the way he came, by the same he shall return, and into this city he shall certainly not ever come.” Thus says *the* LORD, “I will hold a shield before this city to save her, for my own sake, and on account of my servant David.”

And an angel of *the* LORD went out and struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand out of the camp of the Assyrians, and when they arose in *the* early morning, they found all *the* dead *bodies*. Then Senachereim, king of *the* Assyrians, turned and departed, and dwelt in Nineveh. As he was bowing down to his tutelary god in the house of Nasarach, his sons Adramelech and Sarasar struck him down with swords and they escaped into the land of Armenia. Asordan his son reigned instead of him.

And it came to pass at that time that Ezekias became sick and was at *the* point of death. And the prophet Isaias, son of Amos, came to him and said to him, “Thus says *the* LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die. You will not live.’”

Then Ezekias turned his face to the wall, and prayed to *the* LORD, saying, “Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you in truth with a true heart, and have done what is pleasing in your sight.” And Ezekias wept with great weeping.

Then *the* word of *the* LORD came to Isaias, “Go and say to Ezekias, ‘Thus says *the* LORD, the God of your father David, “I have heard your prayer, and I have seen your tears. Behold, I am adding fifteen years to your time, and I will preserve you from *the* hand of the king of Assyria and hold a shield before this city.’””

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 13:12-18

Abram settled in *the* land of Canaan, but Lot settled in a city of the people round about and pitched his tent in Sodom. Now the people who were in Sodom were wicked, exceedingly sinful before GOD.

And GOD said to Abram after Lot had separated from him, “Raise your eyes, and look from the place where you are now, northward and southward and eastward and seaward; because all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed unto the ages. And I will make your seed like the sand of the earth. If anyone can count the sand of the earth, your seed will also be counted. Rise up, walk through the land, both unto the length and the breadth of her, because I will give it to you and to your seed unto the ages.” So moving his tent, Abram came and settled by the oak of Mambre, which was at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord.

Proverbs 14:27—15:4

The ordinance of *the* LORD is a fountain of life; it makes one to turn away from snares of death.

In a populous nation is a king’s glory, but in the failing of people is the ruin of a ruler.

A man¹ slow to anger has great understanding, but one having a hasty temper is mightily foolish. A meek-spirited man is a physician of hearts, but a sensitive heart is a moth to bones.

The one cheating a pauper provokes his Maker, but the one honoring him takes pity on beggars.

By his evildoing, an ungodly *person* will be driven away, but one trusting in his own piety is righteous. Wisdom takes her rest in the good heart of a man, but in *the* heart of fools she is not discerned.

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sins diminish tribes.

An understanding servant has the king's favor, while by his good behavior he removes disgrace.

Anger slays even wise *people*, but a submissive answer turns away wrath, and a harsh word stirs up anger. *The* tongue of *the* wise knows what is good, but *the* mouth of fools declares wickedness.

The eyes of *the* LORD in all places to keep watch on both *the* wicked and *the* good.

A tongue *which* heals is a tree of life, and one watching over it will be filled with *the* Spirit.

TUESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 40:18-31a

To whom have ye likened *the* LORD, and to what likeness have ye likened him? A craftsman has not made an image, nor has a goldsmith melted gold, gilded it over and made a likeness of him, has he?² For a craftsman chooses wood that will not rot, and wisely seeks how he should set up an image so that it may not be shaken.

Will ye not know? Will ye not hear? It was declared to you from the beginning, was it not? Ye have known the foundations of the earth, have ye not? *He is* the One holding fast the circle of the earth, and those dwelling on her are like locusts; the One having set up the heavens like a canopy, and stretched it out like a tent to dwell in; the One having appointed rulers to rule for naught, having made the earth as nothing.

For they shall not sow, nor shall they plant, and their root shall not take root in the earth. He breathed upon them, and they withered, and a squall will carry them off like brushwood.

Now therefore, "To whom have ye likened me, that I should be exalted?" said the Holy One. Lift up your eyes to the height and see: Who has displayed all these things? The One bringing forth his array by number will call them all by name. Because of his great glory and by might of strength, nothing has escaped thy notice.

For do not say, Jacob, and why have you said, Israel, "My way has been concealed from GOD, and my GOD has taken away my judgment and has stood aloof!" And now, hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The eternal GOD, the God having formed the ends of the earth, will not hunger, nor grow weary, nor is there any searching of his understanding--giving strength to the hungry, and pain to those not suffering. For youths will hunger and young men will grow weary, and the chosen will be powerless. But those waiting for GOD

¹ Gender specific.

² This question expects "no" for an answer.

will renew their strength. They shall put forth wings like eagles; they shall run, and not become weary; they shall walk, and shall not hunger.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 15:1-15

Now a saying of *the* LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Cease being afraid, Abram, I am shielding you. Your reward will be exceedingly great.”

But Abram said, “Master LORD, what will you give me? For I am departing childless; but as for the son of Masek, my homeborn female slave, he is Damascus Eliezer.” And Abram said, “Since thou hast not given me any offspring, my home-born slave will inherit from me.”

And immediately the voice of *the* LORD came to him saying, “This one will not inherit, but one who will come forth from you, he will inherit from you.” And he led him outside and said to him, “Look up to the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And he said, “Thus shall your seed be.” And Abram believed GOD and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. And he said to him, “I am GOD, the One having brought you out of *the* land of *the* Chaldeans so as to give you this land as your inheritance.”

But he said, “Master LORD, according to what will I know that I will inherit it?”

And he said to him, “Take for me a three-year-old heifer, and a three-year-old she-goat, and a three-year-old ram, and a dove, and a pigeon.”

And Abram gathered all these and split them down the middle and laid the halves opposite one another, but he did not split the birds. And birds of prey came down on the divided carcasses, and Abram sat with them.

About sunset a trance fell on Abram, and look! a great dark fear was falling on him, and it was said to Abram, “You will surely know that your seed will be a sojourner in a land not their own, and they will enslave them, and ill treat them, and humiliate them for four hundred years. But I will judge the nation whomever they will be slave to. But after these things they will come out here with much baggage. But you will go to your fathers in peace, nourished in a good old age.”

Proverbs 15:7-19

The lips of *the* wise are bound by discretion, but hearts of fools are not securely steadfast.

Sacrifices of *the* ungodly are an abomination to *the* LORD, but prayers of *the* upright are acceptable to him. An abomination to *the* LORD are *the* ways of *the* ungodly, but those pursuing righteousness he loves.

The instruction of *the* innocent is known by those passing by, but those hating reproofs come to their end disgracefully. Hades and destruction are manifested to the Lord; how much more then shall human hearts be also!

An un instructed person will not like those rebuking him, neither will he converse with *the* wise. When a heart is glad, a face is cheerful; but when it is in sorrows, a face is sad. An upright heart seeks discretion, but a mouth of *the* un instructed will know evils. The eyes of the wicked look for evils all the time, but the good are always still.

It is better to have a small portion with fear of *the* LORD than great treasures without fear. Better is entertainment of vegetables with friendship and kindness than a serving of calves with enmity.

An irate man¹ stirs up fights, but a long-suffering one calms even an imminent fight. A long-suffering man extinguishes quarrels, but an ungodly one rather stirs them up. The ways of the idle are strewn with thorns, but those of the hardworking are smoothed.

WEDNESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 41:4b-14

Thus says *the* LORD, “I, God, am first and for what is coming, I AM.² Nations saw and were afraid; the ends of the earth drew near and came together, each one judging to help his neighbor and his brother, and he will say, ‘The craftsman has become strong and the bronze smith striking with the hammer and forging things together.’ Then he will say, ‘It is a good join, and they have strengthened them with nails, they will fix them, and they will not be moved.’

“But you, Israel, my servant Jacob, whom I have chosen, seed of Abraham, whom I loved, on whom I took hold of from the ends of the earth, and called you from her watchtowers, and I said to you, ‘Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and I have not abandoned thee. Cease being afraid, for I am with you. Cease being dismayed, for I AM is thy GOD, the One having strengthened thee, and I have helped thee, and made thee safe with my righteous right *hand*.

“Behold, all those opposing thee will be put to shame and turned back, for they will be as though they did not exist, and all thy adversaries will perish. Thou wilt seek them and not find the men raging against thee; for they will be as though they did not exist, for those making war on thee will cease to be, because I am thy GOD, the One giving might to thy right *hand* and saying to thee, ‘Cease being afraid, Jacob, O Israel few in number. I have helped thee,’ says thy GOD, the One having ransomed thee, O Israel.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 17:1-9

Abram came to be ninety-nine years old, and *the* LORD appeared to him and said, “I AM is your GOD; be well-pleasing before me and be blameless, and I will establish my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you greatly.”

And Abram fell on his face. and GOD spoke to him saying, “As for me, behold, my covenant is with you, and you will be a father of many nations. And no longer will your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, because I have made you a father of many nations. And I will increase you very greatly, and I will make nations from you, and kings will come forth from you. And I will set my covenant between me and your seed after you to all generations for an eternal covenant, to be your God and that of your seed after you.

¹ Gender specific, here and following.

² I AM is *ego eimi*, God’s Name given to Moses.

And I will give you and your seed after you the land on which you are dwelling as a foreigner, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I shall be God for them.”

And GOD said to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your seed after to all their generations.”

Proverbs 15:20—16:9 (LXX verse numbers)

A wise son is joy to his father, but a foolish son scorns his mother. *The* paths of a senseless person lack understanding, but a prudent man walks a straight course.

Those not honoring an assembly postpone deliberation, but in *the* hearts of those deliberating, counsel remains; in no way will the wicked person obey it, neither will he ever say anything appropriate or for the common good.

The thoughts of a wise person are ways of life, so that turning aside, he might be saved from hades.

The LORD pulls down houses of *the* haughty, but he establishes *the* border of widows. An unrighteous thought is an abomination to *the* LORD, but sayings of *the* pure are revered.

One receiving bribes destroys himself, but a person hating to take bribes is saved. By almsgiving and faithful dealings, sins are cleansed, but by fear of *the* LORD, everyone turns from evil.

Hearts of *the* righteous meditate faithfulness, but a mouth of *the* ungodly answers with wicked words. *The* ways of righteous persons are acceptable to *the* LORD, and through them even enemies become friends. GOD is far away from *the* ungodly, but he hearkens to prayers of *the* righteous.

Better a small income with righteousness than abundant produce with unrighteousness. Let *the* heart of a man consider righteous things, so that his steps may be set right by GOD. An eye seeing rightly rejoices *the* heart, while good news nourishes bones.

One rejecting instruction hates himself, but one heeding reproofs loves his own soul. Fear of God is instruction and wisdom, and *the* beginning of honor will answer it.

All the works of the humble are manifest with GOD, while the ungodly will perish in an evil day. Everyone being proud-hearted is unclean before God, and one wrongfully joining hands with hand will not be deemed innocent. *The* beginning of a good way is to do righteous things, and they are more acceptable to God than sacrificing sacrifices. One seeking the Lord will find knowledge with righteousness, and those seeking him rightly will find peace. All the works of the Lord are with righteousness, but the ungodly is kept for an evil day.

THURSDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 42:5-16

Thus says *the* LORD, the God having made the heavens and pitched them like a tent, the One having established the earth and the things therein, and gave breath to the people upon her, and spirit to those treading thereon, “I, *the* LORD GOD, have called thee in righteousness, and I will hold fast thy hand and give thee strength, and I have given thee as a covenant of a race, for a light to nations, to open the eyes of *the* blind, to lead out those having been bound from their chains, and those sitting in darkness out of a prison. I am *the* LORD GOD;

this is my Name. I will not give my glory to another, nor my praises to the carved statues. The things from the beginning—behold!—have come, and new things which I announce, even before the sprang up, were revealed to you.”

Sing unto the Lord a new hymn, you his dominion! Glorify his Name from the end of the earth, all you going down to the sea and sail upon her, all islands and those inhabiting them. Let *the* wilderness be glad and her villages, hamlets, and those inhabitants of Kedar. Those dwelling in Petra will rejoice, from peaks of the mountains they will shout; they will give glory to GOD, they will declare his majesty in the islands.

The LORD, the God of the powers will come forth and crush war; he will arouse his zeal and cry out against his enemies with strength. “I have kept silent; shall I also keep being silent always and hold my peace? I have endured like a woman in childbirth! I will amaze and wither at the same time. I will lay waste to mountains and hills, and all their grass wither,¹ and I will make rivers into islands and dry up pools. And I will bring *the* blind by a way they did not know, and I will make them tread paths of which they had no knowledge. I will make the darkness into light for them, and the crooked places into straight. These are the things I will do, and I will not abandon them.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 18:20-33

The LORD said, “The cry of Sodom and Gomorra has been increased before me, and their sins are exceedingly great. So, I will go down and will see if they completely correspond to their cry which comes to me, but if not—so that I will know.”

And having turned away from there, the men² went to Sodom, but Abraham was still standing before *the* LORD. And after approaching *him*, Abraham said, “Thou wilt not destroy the righteous with the godless, and the righteous be as the godless, wilt thou?³ If there are fifty righteous in the city, wilt thou destroy them? Thou wilt spare the whole place for the sake of fifty righteous, if there are in it, wilt thou not?⁴ By no means should thou act in this way, to slay a righteous *person* with an ungodly *one*. By no means! The One judging the whole earth, thou shalt do what is just, shalt thou not?”

The LORD said, “If there are fifty righteous in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole city and the whole place for their sake.”

And Abraham said in reply, “Now I have begun to speak to my Lord, I who am but earth and ashes. If there should be less than fifty righteous, but forty-five, will you destroy the whole city for the sake of those five?”

And he said, “I will certainly not destroy, if I find there forty-five.”

And he continued to speak to him and said, “But if there are found there forty?”

And he said, “I will certainly not destroy for the sake of the forty.”

And he said, “Pardon *me*, LORD, if I speak. If thirty are found there?”

And he said, “I will certainly not destroy for the sake of the thirty.”

And he said, “Since I am able to speak to the Lord; if there be found there twenty?”

¹ Follows Church of Greece text and Codex Vaticanus; omitted in Codex Alexandrinus.

² Gender specific

³ This question expects “no” for an answer.

⁴ This and the following question expects “yes” for an answer.

And he said, "I will certainly not destroy if I find twenty there."

And he said, "Pardon *me*, LORD, if I speak yet once more. If ten be found there?"

And he said, "I will certainly not destroy for the sake of ten."

Then the Lord departed when he had left off speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Proverbs 16:17b—17:17

The one accepting instruction will be among good things, while the one heeding reproofs will be made wise. One guarding his own ways preserves his own soul, and one loving his life will restrain his mouth.

Pride goes before destruction, and folly before a fall. Better one of meek spirit with humility than one dividing spoils with *the* proud.

One having understanding in business is a discoverer of good things, while one trusting in God is most blessed. They call the wise and understanding worthless, while those being sweet in speech will be listened to more. Understanding is a source of life to its possessors, but *the* instruction of the foolish is evil.

The heart of *the* wise will discern things from his own mouth, and on his lips he will carry knowledge. Good words are honeycombs, and its sweetness is a healing of the soul.

There are ways that seem right to a man;¹ their ends, however, look on the depth of hades. A man at labors works for himself and forces out his own ruin; the perverse, however, carries ruin on his own mouth. A foolish man digs up evils for himself and treasures up fire on his own lips. A perverse man spreads evils and will light a torch of guile with evils and separates friends. A lawless man puts friends to the test and leads them by ways that are not good. One fixing his eyes will consider perverse things, and his lips define all evils. Such a one is a furnace of wickedness.

Old age is a crown of boasting, but it is found in ways of righteousness. Better a long-suffering man than a strong one, and one governing his temper is better than one seizing a city. All things come into the lap of the unrighteous, but all that is righteous come from *the* Lord.

Better a morsel with pleasure in peace than a house full of many good things and unjust sacrifices with conflict. A wise servant will hold sway over foolish masters and will share portions among brothers.

As silver and gold are tested in a furnace, so are chosen hearts with *the* Lord. A wicked *person* obeys a tongue of transgressors, but a righteous *one* does not give heed to false lips.

One laughing at a beggar provokes the One having made him, and one rejoicing over someone being destroyed will not be regarded innocent; but one showing compassion will find mercy.

Children's children are a crown for *the* old, and their fathers are the children's boast. The faithful has the whole world of riches, but the unfaithful has not a penny.² Faithful lips will not suit a fool, nor lying lips *the* righteous. For those using it, instruction is a reward of graces, and wherever it turns, it will prosper.

¹ Gender specific, here and following.

² Literally, an obol, one-sixth of a drachma, the smallest coin.

One concealing injustices seeks friendship; but one hating to conceal them will separate friends and kinsfolk. A threat crushes a heart of a prudent *person*, but a fool when flogged perceives nothing.

Every wicked person stirs up strife, but the Lord will send out against him a merciless angel. Care will befall a man of sense, but fools will discuss evil things. Whoever rewards evils for good things, evils will not be removed from his house.

A rule of justice gives authority to words, but conflict and strife precede poverty. One judging the unjust to be just and the just to be unjust, is unclean and abominable to God. Why should a fool have money? For a senseless *person* is unable to purchase wisdom. One making his house high is seeking ruin, while one too crooked to learn will fall into evils. At every moment you should have a friend, and let brothers be useful in times of need.

FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 45:11-17

Thus says *the* LORD GOD, the Holy One of Israel, the One having made the things that are to come, “Ask me about my sons and about my daughters, and command me about the works of my hands. I made *the* earth and mankind upon her; with my hand I established the heavens, I gave commandment to all the stars. I raised him up as a king with righteousness, and all his ways are upright. This one will build my city and turn back the captivity of my people, not with ransoms nor with gifts,” says *the* LORD sabaoth.

Thus says *the* LORD sabaoth, “Egypt has toiled, and *the* merchandise of *the* Ethiopians and the Sabeans, men¹ of lofty stature, will come over to thee, and they will be thy servants and follow behind thee, bound with manacles, and pay homage to thee and make their prayer unto thee, because God is in thee, and we knew it not, and there is no God beside thee. For thou art God and we knew it not, O GOD of Israel, *our* Savior. All those resisting him will be put to shame and disgraced, and they will walk in shame. Be renewing yourselves before me, O islands. Israel is being saved by *the* LORD with an eternal salvation; they will not be put to shame, neither will they be turned back again unto the age.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 22:1-18

Now it came to pass after these things that GOD tested² Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham! Abraham!”

And he said, “Behold, *here* I am.

Then *GOD* said, “Take now your son, the beloved, whom you love, Isaac, and go into the land of the hills and offer him there as a whole burnt offering upon one of the mountains, whichever I tell you.”

And rising up early in the morning, Abraham saddled his donkey; and he took with him two of his young men and Isaac his son, and having split wood for a whole burnt offering,

¹ Gender specific.

² tested = *epeirase*, “to discover what kind of a person someone is.”

rising up, he went forth and came to the place that GOD had told him on the third day. And, after lifting up his eyes, Abraham saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, “Sit down here with the donkey while I and the lad will go over there, and after we have worshipped, we will come back to you.”

Then Abraham took the wood of the whole burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son.¹ Then he took with *his* hand both the fire and the sacrificial knife, and the two walked on together.

And Isaac said to Abraham his father, “Father?”

And *Abraham* said, “What is it, child?”

And *Isaac* said, “Behold, the fire and the firewood—where is a sheep for a whole burnt offering?”

And Abraham said, “GOD will see for himself to a sheep for a whole burnt offering, child.”

And the two of them walked on together, and they came upon the place which GOD had told him. And Abraham built the altar there and placed the wood in order; and after binding Isaac his son hand and foot, he laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand to take the sacrificial knife to slay his son. But an angel of *the* LORD called to him from the heavens and said, “Abraham! Abraham!”

And he said, “Behold, *here* I am.”

And he said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, neither do anything to him; for now I know that you fear GOD, and you have not spared your son, the beloved, on my account.”

And having looked up, Abraham saw *with* his eyes, and behold, a ram being held fast in a Sa-bek² bush by the horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up a burnt offering instead of Isaac his son. And Abraham called the name of that place, “*The* LORD saw,” so that today they might say, “On the mountain *the* LORD might be seen.”

And an angel of *the* LORD called to Abraham a second time out of the heavens, saying, “By myself I have sworn, says *the* LORD, because you did this thing, and did not spare your son, the beloved, on my account, I will certainly bless you with blessings, and multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the sky and as the sand on the shore of the sea; and your seed shall inherit the cities of their enemies; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you obeyed my voice.”

Proverbs 17:17b—18:5

Let brothers be useful in time of need, for this they are born. A foolish man³ claps and rejoices at himself, as also one standing surety for his own friends. One loving sin rejoices at conflicts, [and exalting his mouth, he seeks destruction].⁴ The hard-hearted does not meet with good things. A man of fickle tongue will fall into evils, and a foolish heart is grief for its owner.

A father does not rejoice over a son without instruction, but a prudent son gladdens his mother. A glad heart creates good health, but the bones of a sorrowful man dry up. *The* ways of one unjustly taking gifts in his bosom do not prosper, and *the* ungodly perverts ways of righteousness. *The* face of a wise man is intelligent, but the eyes of the fool roam

¹ Isaac carries the firewood on which he is to be sacrificed just as Jesus carries the cross on which he will be sacrificed.

² Sabek = Σαβεκ, translit. of Hebrew סבך meaning *thicket*.

³ Gender specific.

⁴ The Church of Greece text has this in brackets, but it is missing in most LXX texts (my translation).

to *the* ends of *the* earth. A foolish son is anger for his father and grief for her having brought him forth.

To punish a righteous man is not good, neither is it holy to plot against righteous rulers. One forbearing to utter a harsh word is intelligent, and a long-suffering man is discreet. Wisdom will be imputed to a fool asking for wisdom, but one holding his peace will seem to be prudent.

A man wishing to be parted from friends seeks excuses, but at every moment he will be subject to reproach. One lacking sense has no need of wisdom, rather he is led by folly. Whenever the ungodly comes into a depth of evils, he shows contempt, and dishonor and reproach come upon him. A word in a man's heart is deep water, and a river and a source of life well up. To have respect for *the* face of *the* ungodly is not good, neither is it holy to pervert what is right in rendering judgement.



MONDAY BEFORE PALM SUNDAY (6th Week of Great Lent)

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 48:17—49:4

Thus says *the* LORD, the One having delivered thee, the Holy One of Israel: “I AM is thy God. I have shown thee how to find the way wherein thou shouldest go. And if thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, thy peace would have been like a river, and thy righteousness like *the* waves of a sea; thy seed would have been like the sand, and offspring of thy womb like the dust of the earth. Now neither wilt thou ever be utterly destroyed, nor wilt thy name ever perish before me.

“Go forth from Babylon, fleeing from the Chaldeans; declare this with a shout of joy, and let this be heard! Proclaim it to *the* end of the earth; say ye, ‘*The* LORD has delivered his servant Jacob!’”

And if they thirst, he will bring them through the desert; he will bring forth for them water out of *the* rock; *the* rock will be split open and water will gush out, and my people will drink.

“There is no joy,’ says *the* LORD, ‘for the ungodly.’”

“Listen to me, O islands and attend, O nations. For a long time it will stand,” says *the* LORD.

From my mother's womb he called my name, and made my mouth like a sharp sword, and he hid me under the shelter of his hand; he made me like a chosen arrow, and in his quiver he hid me. And he said to me, “Thou art my servant, O Israel, and in thee I will be glorified.” And I said, “I have labored in vain, and I have given my strength for nothing and for futility; on account of this, my judgement is with *the* LORD, and my toil before my GOD.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 27:1-41

Now it came to pass when Isaac had grown old and his eyes were becoming too blind to see, that he then called Esau his older son, and said to him, "My son."

And he answered, "Here I am."

And he said, "Look, I have grown old, and I know not the day of my death. Now then, take your equipment, both quiver and bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me, and prepare for me savory food, such as I like, and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die."

Now Rebecca heard Isaac speaking to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game for his father. And Rebecca said to Jacob her younger son, "Behold, I heard your father speaking to Esau your brother saying, 'Bring me game, and prepare for me savory food, in order that when I have eaten it, I may bless you in *the* presence of *the* Lord before I die'. Now therefore, son, hear me as I command you, and go to the sheep; from there fetch me two young goats, fine and tender, and I will make them into savory food for your father, such as he likes; and you shall bring it to your father and he will eat, so that your father may bless you before he dies."

But Jacob said to Rebecca his mother, "My brother Esau is a hairy man, while I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him, and will bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing."

His mother said to him, "Upon me be your curse, child; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me." So going, he went and took them and brought them to his mother; and his mother prepared savory food, such as his father used to like. Then Rebecca, after taking the long robe of Esau, her elder son, the fine one which was with her in the house, and put it on Jacob her younger son, and the skins of the young goats she put upon his arms and upon the exposed part of his neck; and she gave the savory food and the loaves of leavened bread which she had prepared into the hands of her son Jacob. And he took them to his father, and said, "Father."

And he said, "Behold, it is I; who are you, child?"

And Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your first-born. I have done according to what you commanded me; now arise, sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."

But Isaac said to his son, "What is this that you have found so quickly, child?"

He answered, "That which *the* LORD your God delivered up before me."

Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near, that I may feel you, child, to know whether you are my son Esau or not."

So Jacob drew near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is *the* voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like the hands of Esau his brother; so he blessed him, and said, "Are you my son Esau?"

He answered, "I am".

Then he said, "Bring it to me, and I will eat of your game, child, so that my soul may bless you." And he brought it to him, and he ate. And he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, child." So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the scent of his flowing robe, and blessed him, and said,

“Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of an abundant field
which *the* LORD has blessed!
And may GOD give you of the dew of the sky,
and of the fatness of the earth, and abundance of grain and wine.
Let nations serve you, and rulers bow down to you.
Become lord over your brother,
and your father’s sons will bow down to you.
The one cursing you is cursed,
and the one blessing you is blessed.”

And it happened after Isaac had finished blessing Jacob his son, that this happened: when Jacob had gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from the hunt. He also prepared savory food and brought it to his father, and he said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of the game of his son, that your soul may bless me.”

And Isaac his father said to him, “Who are you?”

He answered, “I am your son, the first-born, Esau.”

Then Isaac was amazed with great amazement, and said, “Who, then, was the one who hunted game for me and brought it to me, and I ate of all of it before you came, and I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed?”

Now it happened when Esau heard the sayings of his father Isaac, he cried out with a great and bitter cry, and said, “Please, bless me also, father!”

But he said, “Your brother, coming with guile, took away your blessing.”

And *Esau* said, “Rightly he was named Jacob! For behold, he has outwitted me this second time. He took my birthright, and now he has taken my blessing.” Then Esau said to his father, “You have a blessing left for me, do you not, father?”¹

Isaac answered Esau, “If I have made him your lord, and all his brothers his servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him, what then can I do for you, child?”

But Esau said to his father, “You do not have *only* one blessing, do you, father?² Please, bless me also, father.”

But Isaac was cut to the quick, and Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then Isaac his father answered him and said,

“Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be,
and away from the dew of the sky from on high.
And you shall live by your sword,
and you shall serve your brother;
but the time will come when you will bring him down
and shall loose his yoke from your neck.”

And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him.

Proverbs 19:16-25

The one keeping a commandment guards his own soul, but the one despising his own ways will perish.

One being merciful to beggars lends to God, and it will be given back him in accordance with his gift.

¹ Expects “yes” for an answer.

² Expects “no” for an answer.

Discipline your son, for thus there will be good hope; do not be exalted to hubris in your soul.

A man¹ thinking evil will pay a great penalty, and if he commits injury, he will even add to his soul.

Listen, son, to the instruction of your father, so that you may become wise in your last days. Many are *the* thoughts in *the* heart of a man, but the counsel of the Lord endures unto the age. Acts of mercy are fruit for a man, and a righteous beggar is better than a rich liar.

Fear of *the* LORD leads to life for a man, but one without fear will encamp in places where knowledge does not visit.

One hiding his hands in his bosom unjustly will never bring them to his mouth. When a pestilent *person* is being scourged, a fool becomes more astute; but if you chastise a prudent man, he will understand knowledge.

TUESDAY BEFORE PALM SUNDAY

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 49:6b-10

The LORD said to me, “Behold, I have given thee for a covenant for a race, for a light for nations, that thou mayst become salvation unto *the* ends of the earth.”

Thus says *the* LORD, the One having delivered thee, the God of Israel, “Sanctify the one despising his own soul, the one abhorred by the nations, by the slaves of the rulers. Kings shall see him, and rulers will arise and will bow before him on account of *the* LORD; for the Holy One of Israel is faithful, and I myself have chosen thee.”

Thus says *the* LORD, “In an acceptable time I heard thee, and in a day of salvation I helped thee, and I [fashioned thee I and]² gave thee for a covenant for nations, to establish the earth, to inherit a desolate heritage, saying to those in chains, ‘Come out’, and to those in the darkness, ‘Be revealed.’” They shall feed along all *their* ways, and on all paths shall be their pasture. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither scorching wind nor the sun shall smite them, but the One having mercy on them will comfort them, and through springs of water shall he lead them.

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 31:3-16

The LORD said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your father and to your kindred, and I will be with you.”

Jacob sent and called Leah and Rachel into the field where his flocks were and said to them, “I see that the face of your father is not as it was towards me yesterday and the third day, but the God of my father was with me. You yourselves also know that I have served your father with all my strength, but your father has cheated me and changed my wages of ten lambs, but GOD did not permit him to do evil to me. If he should say, ‘The spotted shall be your wages,’ then all the sheep will be spotted; and if he should say, ‘The white shall be

¹ Gender specific throughout.

² Bracketed words are found in Codex Vaticanus and Church of Greece text, but not in Codex Alexandrinus or *NETS*.

your wages,' then all the sheep will bare white *ones*. Thus, GOD has taken away all your father's livestock, and has given them to me. And it came to pass, when the sheep had conceived and were with young, I saw with my eyes in a dream, and behold, the he-goats and the rams mounting the ewes and the she-goats were striped, spotted, and mottled with ash-colored spots. Then the Angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob!' and I said, 'What is it?' And he said, 'Look up with your eyes and see, the he-goats and rams mounting the ewes and the she-goats are striped, spotted, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I AM *is* GOD, the One having appeared to you in a divine place, there where you anointed a pillar to me and made a vow to me. Now therefore arise, and go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth, and I will be with you.'"

Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "There is no part or inheritance left to us in our father's house, is there?¹ We are reckoned by him as foreigners, are we not?² For he has sold us, and he has been consumed with devouring the money given for us. All the wealth and the honor which GOD has taken away from our father shall be for us and our children. Now therefore, whatever GOD has told you, do."

Proverbs 21:3-21

Son, to do what is right and to speak truth is more pleasing to God than blood of sacrifices. An arrogant *person* is bold in heart in hubris, and *the* lamp of *the* ungodly is sin.

One gathering treasures with a lying tongue pursues futility and goes towards a snare of death. Destruction shall be entertained by *the* ungodly because they are unwilling to do things that are right. GOD sends crooked ways to the crooked, for pure and right are his works.

It is better to dwell in a corner under *the* sky than in plastered walls with injustice and in a shared house.

The soul of *the* ungodly will not be pitied by anyone.

When an undisciplined person is suffering financial loss, the innocent becomes more prudent; but when a wise *one* understands, he will receive knowledge. A righteous person understands *the* hearts of *the* ungodly and despises *the* ungodly in *their* wicked deeds.

One stopping his ears from hearing *the* weak will also cry out himself, and there shall be no one to listen.

A secret gift turns away anger, but one refraining from giving *gifts* rouses strong wrath. It is a joy to *the* righteous to do judgement, but a holy person is unclean to evildoers.

A man³ straying from *the* way of justice will rest in the congregation of giants. A poor man loves joy, making friends of wine and olive oil in abundance, while a transgressor is an off scouring of a righteous one.

It is better to dwell in a desert land than *to live* with a quarrelsome, talkative, and quick-tempered wife.

A desirable treasure will rest upon *the* mouth of *the* wise; but foolish men will swallow it up. *The* way of righteousness and mercy will find life and honor.

¹ Expects "no" for an answer.

² Expects "yes" for an answer.

³ Gender specific.

WEDNESDAY BEFORE PALM SUNDAY

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 58:1-11a

Thus says *the* LORD, “Cry out with strength and spare not! Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare to my people their sins, and to the house of Jacob their iniquities. Day by day they seek me and desire to know my way. Like a people having practiced righteousness and having not abandoned the judgment of their God, they now ask me for righteous judgment, and desire to draw near to God, saying, ‘Why is it that we have fasted, and thou sawest not? *Why have we* humbled our souls, and thou didst not perceive it?’

“It is because in the days of your fasts you find your desires, and you abuse all those under your power. If you fast for quarrels and fights, and smite a humble *one* with your fists, why do you fast before me as you do today, for your voice to be heard in clamor?

“This is not the fast I have chosen, and a day for a person to humble his soul, not even if thou bend down thy neck like a ring, and spread sackcloth and ashes under thee, not even so shall you call it an acceptable fast.

“I did not choose such a fast,” says *the* LORD, “instead, loosen all bonds of iniquity, untie knots of hard bargains, send those having been weakened away with forgiveness, and cancel every unjust account. Break your bread for *one* who is hungry and lead beggars without shelter into your house; if you see someone naked, clothe him, and you are not to disregard the relations of your own seed.

“Then thy light will break forth as *the* dawn, and thy healing speedily spring forth; and thy righteousness will go before you, and the brightness of GOD will cover thee. Then thou wilt cry out, and GOD will hear you. While thou art still speaking, he will say, ‘Behold, I am near. If you remove from yourself a bond, and stretching out of hands, and murmuring speech, and if you give the bread from your soul to *the* hungry, and satisfy a humbled soul, then thy light will spring up in darkness, and thy darkness will be as noonday, and thy GOD will be with thee thru all things.’¹

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 43:26-31; 45:1-6

Joseph came into the palace and *his brothers* brought to him the gifts which they had in their hands into the palace; and they bowed down before him, face to the ground. And he asked them, “How are you?” and he said to them, “Is your father, the old man of whom you spoke, well? Is he still alive?”

And they said, “Your servant, our father, is well; he is still alive.”

And he said, “That man is blessed by GOD.” And bowing down, they prostrated before him. And lifting up his eyes, Joseph saw his Benjamin brother, born of the same mother, and said, “Is this your younger brother, whom you said you would bring to me?” And he said, “GOD have mercy on you, child.” Then Joseph was deeply troubled, for his insides were twisting up over his brother, and he was feeling the need to weep; so going into his private chamber, he wept there. And after washing his face, he came out and controlled himself.

¹ thru all things, διαπαντός.

And Joseph could not tolerate all those attending him, and he said, “Send everyone away from me.” And so no one attended Joseph when he was making himself known to his brethren. And he cried aloud with weeping. Now all the Egyptians heard, and it became heard in Pharaoh’s house.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph.¹ Is my father still alive?” And his brothers could not answer him, for they were deeply troubled. And so Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near me,” and they came near. And he said, “I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Now then, do not be grieved, neither let it seem hard to you that you sold me here, because GOD sent me before you for life. For this is *the* second year there is famine in the land, and there are still five years left, in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. For GOD sent me before you that a remnant might be left for you on earth and to nourish a great remnant of you. Now therefore, it was not you that sent me here, but GOD, and he has made me like a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler of all *the* land of Egypt. Hurry, therefore, go up to my father, and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says, “GOD has made me lord of all *the* land of Egypt; come down therefore to me, and do not remain there. And you shall dwell in *the* land of Gesem² of Arabia, and you shall be near me, you and your sons, and the sons of your sons, your sheep and your oxen, and whatever is yours; and I will nourish you there – for there are still five years of famine – lest you and your sons, and all your possessions be wiped out.’” Look, your own eyes can see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin can see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. Proclaim, therefore, to my father all my honor in Egypt, and everything you have seen, and make haste to bring my father down here.”

And falling upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, he wept on him; and Benjamin wept on his neck. And kissing all his brothers, he wept upon them. And after this, his brothers spoke to him. And the report was carried into Pharaoh’s house, saying, “Joseph’s brothers have come!” And Pharaoh rejoiced with his retinue.

Proverbs 21:23—22:4

The one guarding his mouth and the tongue keeps his soul from affliction.

An arrogant, self-willed and boastful person is called a pest, and one contemplating evil is a transgressor. Desires kill a sluggard, for his hands choose not to do anything.

An ungodly person longs for evil desires all day, but *the* righteous is ungrudgingly merciful and compassionate.

Sacrifices of *the* ungodly are an abomination to *the* LORD, for they offer them lawlessly.

A false witness will perish, but an obedient man³ will speak cautiously. An ungodly man brazenly resists with *his* face, but the upright himself understands his ways. There is no wisdom, there is no courage, there is no counsel for the ungodly.

A horse is prepared for the day of war, but help is from *the* LORD.

A good name is better than great wealth, while good favor is above silver and gold.

A rich person and a beggar met together, but *the* LORD made them both. An intelligent person, seeing a bad person severely chastised, is himself disciplined, but the foolish pass by and are punished.

¹ Codex Vaticanus adds here, *your brother, who was sold into Egypt*, as in following verse.

² Gesem is the LXX name for Goshen.

³ Gender specific.

The offspring of wisdom is *the* fear of *the* LORD and wealth, and honor, and life.

THURSDAY BEFORE PALM SUNDAY

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 65:8-16a

Thus says *the* LORD, “As when the grape shall be found in the cluster, they will say, ‘Do not destroy it; for a blessing of *the* LORD¹ is in it,’ so will I do for the sake of the one serving me; for *the* sake of this one I will never destroy them all. And I will lead out the seed that comes from Jacob and that from Judah, and he shall inherit my holy mountain, and my chosen ones shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And there shall be in the forest folds of flocks, and *the* valley of Achor will become a resting for herds, for my people, those having sought me.

But you are those having deserted me, forgetting my holy mountain, and preparing a table for the demon, filling up a drink-offering to *the goddess* Tyche.² I will hand you over to *the* sword, you shall all fall by slaughter, because I called you, and you hearkened not; I spoke, and you ignored *me*; and you did what was evil in my sight and chose the things I did not will.”

On account of this, thus says *the* LORD, “Behold, those serving me shall eat, while *the rest of you* shall go hungry. Behold, those serving me shall drink, while you shall go thirsty. Behold, those serving me shall rejoice, while you shall be ashamed. Behold, those serving me shall exult with joy, while you shall cry because of the pain of your heart, and howl from the affliction of your spirit! For you shall leave behind your name for *the* satisfaction of my chosen ones, but *the* LORD shall do away with you; but those serving me shall be called by a new name, which shall be blessed upon the earth; for they shall bless the true GOD.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 46:1-7

Israel departed, he and all that he had, and came to the Well of the Oath, and there he sacrificed a sacrifice to the God of his father Isaac. And GOD spoke to Israel in a vision of the night, saying, “Jacob, Jacob!” and he said, “What is it?”

And he says³ to him, “I AM *is* the God of your fathers; stop being afraid to go down into Egypt, for there will I make you into a great nation. And I myself will go down into Egypt with you, and I will bring you up in *the* end, and Joseph will place his hands on your eyes.”⁴

¹ Codex Alexandrinus and *NETS*; other LXX ms. including Church of Greece text, omit *of the Lord*.

² LXX = Τύχη, “Luck, Fortune,” was the presiding tutelary deity who governed the fortune and prosperity of a city, its destiny [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyche].

³ *says*, λέγει, is narrative present tense.

⁴ Joseph will be the one to close his father’s eyes when he dies. “As soon as the last breath was drawn, the eyes of the dead were closed by the oldest or *the most distinguished son....*” [www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3842-burial], italics added.

And Jacob rose up from the Well of the Oath; and the sons of Israel took up their father, and the baggage, and their wives on the wagons which Joseph¹ had sent to take him. And after taking up their goods, and all the property which they had acquired in *the* land of Canaan, they came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him, sons, and sons of his sons with him, daughters, and daughters of his daughters, and all his seed he brought into Egypt.

Proverbs 23:15—24:5

Son, if your heart is wise, you will gladden my heart also; and your lips, if they are upright, will continue speaking with my lips.

Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be in fear of *the* LORD all day long. For if you keep these things, you will have posterity, and your hope will not depart.

Listen, son, and become wise, and rightly direct the thoughts of your heart. Do not be a winebibber, neither prolong yourself in shared meal or purchasing of meats; for every drunkard and everyone having relations with prostitutes will become needy, and every idler will dress in rags and tatters.

Listen, son, to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother because she has grown old. Buy truth, but do not sell wisdom, instruction, and understanding. ²A righteous father brings up well, and his soul rejoices over a wise son. Let father and mother rejoice over you and let her having brought you forth be glad.

Son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways. For a foreign house is a perforated wine cask, and something foreign is a narrow well. For such a one will perish suddenly, and every transgressor will be destroyed.

Who has despair? Who has turmoil? Who has disputes? And who has nausea and gossip? Who has needless bruises? Whose eyes are blood-shot? These belong to those spending long hours over wine, do they not? to those hunting to find drinking parties, do they not? Do not get drunk with wine, but talk with righteous people, and converse in public places. For if you fix your eyes on drinking bowls and cups, you will afterwards walk around more naked than a pestle! Finally, such a person lies prostrate like someone bitten by a snake, and poison is spread through him as by a horned serpent.

Whenever your eyes see another's wife, then your mouth will speak dishonest things. And you will lie down like someone on the high seas, or a helmsman in a great storm. And you will say, 'They hit me, but I was not hurt; they made fun of me, but I did not realize it. When will it be morning, so that I may go and look for companions to go with?'

Son, do not envy wicked men,³ neither long to be with them, for their heart meditates lies, and their lips speak mischief. A house is built by wisdom and is erected by understanding. The storerooms are filled by discernment with all precious and excellent wealth.

A wise person is better than *the* strong, and a man having prudence than one having a large estate.

¹ *Joseph* follows LXX; *OSB* uses *NKJV* Hebrew text for this pericope.

² This verse is found in the Church of Greece text but is omitted in other LXX mss.

³ Gender specific.

FRIDAY BEFORE PALM SUNDAY

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Isaiah 66:10-24

Exult, O Jerusalem, and celebrate a festival in her, all you loving her! Rejoice together with her with joy, all you now grieving over her, that you may nurse and be satisfied from *the* breast of her consolation, so that by much nursing, you may delight yourselves from the entrance of her glory. Because this is what *the* LORD says, “Behold, I myself turn to them like a river of peace, and like an overflowing torrent flooding *the* glory of nations. Their children will be carried upon shoulders and comforted upon knees. As whomsoever a mother comforts, so will I also comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”

And you will see, and your heart will rejoice, and your bones will spring up like grass; and the hand of *the* LORD will be known by those bowing down before¹ him, but he will threaten those disobeying him. For, behold, *the* LORD will come like a fire, and his chariots like a whirlwind, to render vengeance with wrath, and utter rejection with a flame of fire. For by the fire of *the* LORD shall all the earth be judged, and all flesh by his sword. Many will be wounded by *the* LORD. Those sanctifying and purifying themselves for the gardens, eating swine’s flesh, and the abominable things, and the mouse in the porches, will perish together,” said *the* LORD.

“And I know their works and their thoughts. I am coming to assemble all the nations and tongues, and they will come and will see my splendor. And I will leave signs on them, and I will send out those of them having been saved to the nations, to Tharsis, and Phut, and Lud, and Mesech, and to Tubal, and to Greece, and to the islands far away—to those who have not heard my name, nor seen my splendor, and they will declare my glory among the nations.

“And they shall bring your kindred out of all the nations as a gift to *the* LORD, with horses, and chariots, in liters with awnings drawn by mules, into the holy city Jerusalem,” said *the* LORD, “so that the sons of Israel might bring their sacrifices to me with psalms into the house of *the* LORD. And I will take from them priests and Levites for myself,” says *the* LORD.

“For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I am making, remain before me,” says *the* LORD, “so shall your seed and your name endure. And it shall be, from New Moon to New Moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh will come to bow down before me in Jerusalem,” said *the* LORD. “And they will go forth and see the corpses of the people having transgressed against me, for their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched, and they will become a spectacle to all flesh.”

AT VESPERS:

Genesis 49:33—50:26

After Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, drawing his feet up into the bed he breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

And Joseph, falling upon his father’s face, wept over him and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants, the embalmers, to prepare his father for burial, and the

¹ This follows Codex Alexandrinus and *NETS*; others read *those fearing him*.

embalmers embalmed Israel. And they completed forty days for him, for this is the number of days for burial; and Egypt mourned him for seventy days.

And when the days of mourning were over, Joseph spoke to Pharaoh's princes, saying, "If I have found favor in your sight, speak concerning me into the ears of Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swear an oath, saying, "In the sepulcher which I dug out for myself in the land of Canaan, there you are to bury me." Now therefore, I will go up and bury my father and come back again.'"

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Go up, bury your father, as he made you swear."

So Joseph went up to bury his father. And all Pharaoh's servants went up with him, and the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and Joseph's whole household, and his brothers, and all his father's house. But they left behind their kindred and their sheep and their cattle in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him also chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great company.

And they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they lamented him with a great and intense lamentation, and he made a mourning for his father for seven days. And the inhabitants of the land of Canaan saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, and said, "This is a great mourning for the Egyptians." Therefore, they called the name of the place, "Mourning-of-Egypt," which is beyond Jordan."

And his sons did for him just as he had instructed them, and they carried him up into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the double cave, the cave Abraham had bought for possession of a burial place from Ephrim the Hittite, facing Mambre. And Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and those having gone up with him to bury his father.

Now Joseph's brothers, seeing that their father had died, they said, "Joseph will not bear a grudge against us and requite us a requital for all the evils that we showed him, will he?" So approaching Joseph they said, "Your father made an oath before he died, saying, 'Say thus to Joseph: "Forgive them their injustice and fault, seeing that they showed you evil things, and now accept the injustice of the servants of the God of your father.'"

And Joseph wept as they were speaking to him. And coming before him they said, "Here we are, your household servants." And Joseph said to them, "Cease being afraid, for I am God's. You plotted against me for evil things, but God deliberated concerning me for good things, so that a numerous people might be fed, so that it might come to be as today." And he said to them, "Have no fear. It is I who will sustain you and your households." And he reassured them and spoke to their heart.

And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his brothers and his father's whole entire household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw the children of Ephraim to the third generation, and the sons of Machir the son of Manasse were born on Joseph's thighs.

And Joseph spoke to his brothers, saying, "I am about to die, but God will visit you with a visitation and bring you up out of this land to the land that God swore to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "In the time of the visitation with which God will visit you, then you will also carry up my bones from here together with you."

And Joseph breathed his last at one hundred and ten years of age, and they honored him with funeral rites and placed him in the coffin in Egypt.

Proverbs 31:8-31 (MT numbering)

Open your mouth with the word of God, and judge all things fairly. Open your mouth and judge justly, and defend the beggar and the weak.

A diligent¹ wife who can find? Indeed, such a wife is more precious than costly stones. The heart of her husband has confidence in her: such a wife will not be in need of fine spoils, for she produces good things for her husband all her life long. Winding off wool and flax, she makes it serviceable with her hands. She is like a ship trading from afar, and she gathers her wealth.

And she gets up during the night and gives food to her household, and tasks to her maidservants. Having considered a farm, she bought it, and with the wrists of her hands she planted her purchase. Having strongly girds her loins, she sets her arms to work. She knows by experience that working is good, and her lamp is not extinguished all night.

She reaches out her arms to what is profitable, and applies her hands to the spindle. She opens her hands to the beggars, and extends fruit to the needy.

Her husband is not anxious about matters at home when he delays somewhere, for all those with her are clothed. She makes outer garments of double thickness for her husband, and garments of fine linen and purple for herself. Her husband becomes an object of admiration in the gates when he sits in council with the senior inhabitants of the land. She makes fine linens and sells them to the Phoenicians, and girdles to the Canaanites.

She opens her mouth with care and with propriety, and keeps control over her tongue. She is clothed in strength and dignity, and she rejoiced in her last days.

The ways of her household are careful, and she does not eat the bread of idleness. She opens her mouth wisely, and in accordance with law. And her generosity raised up her children, and they grow rich, and her husband praises her: “Many daughters have gained wealth, many have done mighty things; but you, you have exceeded and surpassed them all.”

Charms are false, and a woman's beauty is worthless, but a woman of understanding is blessed; indeed, let her praise the fear *the* LORD. Give her of the fruit of her lips, and let her husband be praised in the gates.. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her husband be praised in the gates.



¹ *andreían* = diligent, brave, virtuous, vigorous, courageous.

**Holy Week:
Old Testament Readings for Bridegroom Services**

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

At Matins: Matthew 21:18-43

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Ezekiel 1:1-20

On the fifth day of the fourth month of the thirtieth year, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, it happened that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. On the fifth day of the month, it was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity. A word of *the* LORD came to Ezekiel, son of Buzi the priest, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and *the* LORD'S hand was upon me.

And I looked, and behold, a driving spirit¹ was coming from the north, and a vast cloud on it. There was brightness all around it, and flashing fire as with lightning. In the middle of it there was the appearance of amber in the fire, and brightness in it. And in the midst of it was the likeness of four living creatures. This was their appearance: they had the likeness of a human being.² Each had four faces, and each had four wings. Their legs were straight, and their feet had wings. There were sparks like gleaming brass, and their wings were light in weight. A human hand was under their wings on their four sides. Their faces did not turn as they went; they faced straight forward. Their faces had the likeness of a human being; on the right side, there was a face of a lion; on the left side, a face of a calf; and the face of an eagle. The four had their wings spread out overhead. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the one of another, while two covered their bodies. Each one went straight forward; wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning back. In the midst of the living creatures there was an appearance like burning coals in a fire, like lamps turning among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and lightning flashed from out of the fire.

And I looked, and behold, there were four wheels on the ground near the living creatures, one wheel for each of them. The wheels had the appearance of precious stones; and the four had the same likeness, something like a wheel within a wheel. They moved in their four directions, not turning as they went. Their backs were high and did not turn. I saw their backs, all four of them, covered with eyes. When the living creatures moved, the wheels moved beside them; and when the living creatures lifted off the earth, the wheels lifted off. Wherever the cloud happened to be, the spirit also went up. The wheels were lifted up with them, because the spirit of life was in the wheels.

¹ spirit = pneuma; this can also be translated as *wind* or *breath*. However, this might be a reference to Genesis 1:1 where the Spirit of God rushes above the deep.

² *anthrōpou*, a human being, a man as opposed to an animal.

AT VESPERS with Presanctified Liturgy:

Exodus 1:1-20

These are the names of the sons of Israel who had entered into Egypt with Jacob their father. Each with their whole household went in: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judas, Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher, (Joseph was already in Egypt). Now all the souls from Jacob were seventy-five. Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the children of Israel increased and multiplied and became numerous and were growing very, very strong, and so the land was filled with them.

Now another king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. Now he said to his nation, "Look, the race of the sons of Israel is a great multitude and is becoming stronger than we. Come then, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they be multiplied, and, whenever war happens to us, these also shall be added to the enemies, and after going to war against us, they shall depart from the land."

So he set taskmasters over them in order to afflict them in the tasks. And they built fortified cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Rameses and On, which is Heliopolis. But as much as they were humbling them, by so much the more they kept becoming more numerous and stronger, and the Egyptians were disgusted with the sons of Israel. And so the Egyptians kept oppressing the sons of Israel forcefully, and were grievously afflicting their life by the harsh labor in mixing clay and making bricks and all the tasks in the fields, according to all the tasks in which they were enslaving them with force.

And the king of the Egyptians spoke to the Hebrews' midwives, to one of them whose name was Sephora, and the name of the second was Puah, and he said, "Whenever you act as midwives to the Hebrew women and they should be at the birthing stage, if then it be a male, kill him, but if a female, let her live."

But the midwives feared God and they did not do as the king of Egypt instructed them and tried to keep the males alive. Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why is it that you have done this thing and tried to keep the males alive?"

The midwives then said to Pharaoh, "The Hebrew women are not like the women of Egypt, for they give birth before the midwives go in to them; indeed, they have already given birth."

Now God was dealing well with the midwives, and the people kept multiplying and becoming very strong.

Job 1:1-12

There was a certain man in the territory of *Ausitis*¹ named Job, and that man was true, blameless, righteous, and God-fearing, keeping far from every evil thing. Now there were born to him seven sons and three daughters. And his livestock included seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred grazing female donkeys, and very many household servants, and he had great works on the land. And that man was the best born of men from the east.

Now his sons used to gather together to make a banquet each day, bringing along also their three sisters to eat and drink with them. And when the days of the banquet were finished, Job would send and purify them, rising up each morning and offering for them a

¹ LXX reading; Hebrew is *Uz*.

sacrifice according to their number, one bull-calf for a sin-offering for their souls—for Job said, “In case my sons have thought evil things in their minds toward God.” So Job would always do this.

And when the set day came, then look! the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the devil¹ came along with them. And the Lord said to the devil, “Where have you been?”

And answering, the devil said to the Lord, “I have come, after going around the earth and walking about what lies beneath heaven.”

And the Lord said to him, “Did you give thought to your disposition against my servant Job—because there is no one of those on the earth like him, a man who is blameless, truthful, and God-fearing, keeping away from every evil deed?”

Then the devil answered and said before the Lord, “It is not for nothing that Job worships the Lord, is it?² You have put a fence around things external to him, both what is within his household as well as what is outside of all that belong to him, have you not? You blessed the works of his hands, and his livestock you increased on the earth. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has. Surely he will bless³ you to your face!”

Then the Lord said to the devil, “Look, all that he has I am giving into your powers, but do not touch him.”

So the devil went out from *the* LORD.

Gospel: Matthew 24:3-35

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

At Matins: Matthew 22:15—23:39

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Ezekiel 1:21-28

When the living creatures moved, the wheels moved beside them; and when the living creatures lifted off the earth, the wheels lifted off. Wherever the cloud happened to be, the spirit also went up. The wheels were lifted up with them, because the spirit of life was in the wheels.

Over the heads of the living creatures was the likeness of a dome,⁴ shining like crystal, spread out over their wings above. Their wings were spread out under the dome, each one reaching to the other. Each creature had two wings covering their bodies. I kept hearing the sound of their wings when they moved, and it sounded like rushing water. When they stood still, they let their wings down.

And behold! a voice came from above the dome over their heads. Like an appearance of a stone of sapphire with the likeness of a throne on it. Above the likeness of a throne, there

¹ *diabolos*, literally, “to throw apart,” also translated as “the devil, the accuser, the slanderer; enemy, adversary.”

² This question expects “no” for an answer. The following question expects “yes” for an answer.

³ *bless you* is understood by modern commentators to be an euphemism meaning *curse you*. As Orthodox Christians, however, we take the wording of the Septuagint seriously by saying, “Glory to God for all things!”

⁴ *steréoma*, literally, “a firmness, a solid part; a dome; a firmament.”

was the likeness of a human being. Above what appeared like the loins, I saw something like amber; below it, I saw an appearance of fire, with brightness shining all around. The brightness was like a rainbow gleaming from the clouds on a rainy day. This was the appearance of the likeness of *the* LORD's majesty.

AT VESPERS with Presanctified Liturgy: .

Exodus 2:5-10

Now Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe herself in the river, and her attendants were walking along beside the river. Upon seeing the basket in the marsh, she sent her devoted attendant, and she picked it up. Now when she opened it, she saw a *male* child crying in the basket, and Pharaoh's daughter spared it and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' sons."

And his sister, *who had been watching from a distance*,¹ said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Do you wish that I summon for you a nursing woman from the Hebrews, and she shall nurse the child for you?" Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go!" And the girl went and summoned the boy's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take care of this child for me, and nurse him for me, and I myself will give you your pay."

So the woman took the child and was nursing him. Now when the boy grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became to her for a son. And she named his name Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."²

Job 1:13-22

So it was, when it was the set day, Job's sons and daughters were drinking wine in their eldest brother's house. And lo, a messenger came to Job and said to him, "The yokes of oxen were plowing, and the she-donkeys were feeding beside them, and raiders came and carried them off, and they killed the servants with daggers, but when I alone escaped, I came to tell you."

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said to Job, "Fire fell from the sky and burned up the sheep, and also consumed the shepherds, and when I alone escaped, I came to tell you."

While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said to Job, "Horsemen formed three columns against us, and they surrounded the camels and carried them off and killed the servants with daggers, but I alone escaped, and I came to tell you."

While he was still speaking, another messenger came, saying to Job, "As your sons and daughters were eating and drinking at their elder brother's, suddenly a great wind came from the desert and struck the four corners of the house, and the house fell on your children, and they died, but I alone escaped, and I came to tell you."

So, standing up, Job tore his clothes and saved the hair of his head, and falling on the ground, he lay prostrate and said, "I came naked from my mother's belly; naked also shall I return there. The Lord gave; the Lord has taken away. As it seemed good to the Lord, so it turned out. Blessed be the Name of *the* LORD."

¹ this is taken from verse 4 to supply additional information.

² "The name *Moses*, from an Egyptian word meaning 'to beget a child'...is here explained by a Hebrew verb meaning 'to draw out'." [Footnote, p. 68, *The Oxford Annotated Bible*].

In all these things that were happening to him Job did not sin at all before the Lord, and he did not attribute any thoughtlessness to God.

Gospel: Matthew 24:36—26:2

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

At Matins: John 12:17-50

AT THE SIXTH HOUR: Ezekiel 2:3—3:3

The LORD said to me, “Son of man, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have provoked me. They and their fathers have sinned against me to this day. You will say to them, ‘Hear what *the LORD* says.’ Whether they hear or tremble—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that you are a prophet among them.

“Son of man, do not fear them or be distressed by their faces, because they will rise up against you in rage, and surround you like scorpions. Do not fear their words, and do not be dismayed at their presence, because they are a rebellious people. You will speak my words to them, whether they hear or tremble, because they are a rebellious people.

“Son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious, like the rebellious house. Open your mouth, and eat what I give you.”

And I looked, and behold, a hand stretched out to me holding a scroll. He unrolled it before me, and on the front and back of it was written words of lamentation, a mournful song, and sorrow. He said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll, and go speak to the children of Israel.” So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. He said to me, “Son of man, your mouth eats this scroll, and your belly will be filled with it.” Then I ate it, and in my mouth it was as sweet as honey.

AT VESPERS with Presanctified Liturgy:

Exodus 2:11-22

Now it came to pass in the course of those many days, Moses having become fully grown, went out to his brothers, the sons of Israel. And as he observed their toil, he saw an Egyptian man beating some Hebrew from his own brothers, the sons of Israel. Now when he looked around this way and that, he saw no one, and after striking the Egyptian, he hid him in the sand.

Now when he went out on the next day, he saw two Hebrew men fighting, and he said to the one who was in the wrong, “Why are you beating your fellow?” But he said, “Who appointed you ruler and judge over us? You do not intend to kill me in the same way you killed the Egyptian yesterday, do you?” Then Moses was afraid and said, “Has this matter perhaps become so well known?”

Now Pharaoh heard about this matter, and he was seeking to kill Moses. So Moses fled from Pharaoh’s presence and settled in the land of Midian. Now when he came into the land of Midian, he sat upon the well.

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters who were shepherding the sheep of their father, Jethro.¹ So when they arrived, they kept drawing water until they filled the troughs to water their father's sheep. But the shepherds coming by, were driving them away. But Moses got up and rescued them and drew water for them and watered their sheep.

Now they arrived back to Reuel,² their father, and he said to them, "Why is it that you were quick to arrive today?" And the women said, "An Egyptian man rescued us from the shepherds and drew water for us and watered the sheep."

And he said to his daughters, "And where is he? And for what reason have you left this man behind like this? Invite him then in order that he might eat bread."

Now Moses stayed with the man, and he gave Sephora, his daughter, to Moses for a wife. Now when she conceived in the womb, the woman bore a son, and Moses called his name Gersam, saying, "Because I am a resident alien in a foreign land."

[Sephora conceived again and gave birth to a second son, and Moses called his name Eliezer, saying, "The God of my father is my helper, and has delivered me from Pharaoh's hand."³]

Job 2:1-10

Now it happened, when it was the set day and the angels of God came to present themselves before *the* LORD, the devil also came among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to the devil, "Where are you coming from?"

And the devil said before the Lord, "I have come, after traversing what lies beneath heaven and walking about all things."

And the Lord said, "So, did you notice my servant Job—that there is no one of those on the earth like him, a man who is blameless, truthful, and God-fearing, keeping away from every evil deed? And he still maintains his innocence, though you said to destroy his possessions for no reason."

Then the devil continued and said to the Lord, "Skin for skin; whatever a person has he will use to pay for his life. However, stretch out your hand, and touch his bones and his flesh. Surely he will bless you to your face!"

And the Lord said to the devil, "Very well, I am handing him over to you; only spare his soul."

So the devil went out from the Lord, and he struck Job with a grievous festering sore from his feet to his head. And *Job* took a potsherd, so he could scrape away the pus, and he sat on the dung heap outside the city.

Then after a long time had passed, his wife said to him, "How long will you persist and say, 'Look, I will hang on a little longer, while I wait for the hope of my deliverance?' Behold, your legacy has vanished from the earth—sons and daughters—my womb's birth pangs and labors, for whom I wearied myself with hardship in vain. And you? You sit in the refuse of worms as you spend the night in the open air. As for me, I am one that wanders about and a hired servant, from place to place and house to house, waiting for when the sun will set

¹ LXX = Jothor.

² LXX = Ragouel. The difference in the father's name may be two different traditions woven together here.

³ From Exodus 18:4. This is found in the *Lectionary Bible* as the final verse for this reading. See footnote in *Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 87 for a good explanation for this addition.

so I can rest from the distresses and griefs that now beset me. Say some word now to *the* LORD and die!”

But Job looked up and said to her, “You have spoken like one of the foolish women. If we received good things from *the* LORD’s hand, shall we not bear the bad?” In all these things that happened to him, Job did not sin at all with his lips before God.

Gospel: Matthew 26:6-16

HOLY THURSDAY

At Matins: Luke 22:1-39

At the First Hour:

Jeremiah 11:18—12:5, 9b-11, 14-15

LORD, make it known to me, and I will know. Then I saw their ways of living. But I, like an innocent lamb being led to be sacrificed, did not know, *for* they devised an evil scheme against me, saying, “Come, and let us put wood into his bread, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name will be remembered no more.”

LORD, when thou judgest righteously, when thou triest kidneys and heart, let me see thy vengeance on them, because I have revealed my plea of right.

Therefore, this is what *the* LORD says regarding the men of Anathoth, those seeking my soul, and saying, “You shall not at all prophesy in the Name of *the* LORD; otherwise you will die by our hands!”—“Behold, I will pay them a visit! Their young men shall die by *the* sword, and their sons and their daughter shall come to their end by famine, and there shall be no remnant of them, because I will bring evil upon the inhabitants of Anathoth in the year of their visitation.”

Righteous art thou, LORD, because I will plead my case to thee, but let me speak of justice to thee. Why is it, that the way of the ungodly prospers? Why did all those committing act of faithlessness thrive? Thou didst plant them, and they took root; they bore children and produced fruit; thou art near to their mouths but far from their kidneys! But thou, LORD, thou knowest me; thou hast tested my heart before thee. Set them apart for a day of their slaughter! How long will the land mourn, and all the grass of the field wither from the wickedness of those living in her? Animals and birds are utterly destroyed, because they said, “GOD will not see our ways.” Your feet are running, and they are failing you; how will you prepare against horses? And you trusted in a land of peace; how will you fare against the insolence of the Jordan?

Go, gather all the wild animals of the field, and let them come to devour her. Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard! They have defiled my portion. They have rendered my desired portion a desolate wilderness. On my account the whole land was ruined with annihilation, because there is no man¹ who lays it to heart.

Because this is what *the* LORD says concerning all the evil neighbors, those touching my heritage that I have allotted to my people Israel: “Behold, I am tearing them from their land, and I will cast Judah out from among them. And it shall be after I have cast them out, I will

¹ gender specific.

turn and have mercy on them, and I will settle them, each in his heritage and each in his land.”

AT VESPERS with Divine Liturgy of St. Basil:

Exodus 19:10-19

The LORD said to Moses, “When you go down, testify solemnly to the people, and purify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be prepared for the third day. For on the third day, *the* LORD will descend upon the mountain of Sinai before all the people. And you shall set limits for the people round about, saying, ‘Watch yourselves, that you do not go onto the mountain or touch it. Anyone touching the mountain shall die by death. No hand shall touch him *who does this*, so he shall be stoned with stones or shot with an arrow. Whether animal or whether human, it shall not live.’ Whenever the thunders and the trumpets and the cloud leave the mountain, they shall come up on the mountain.”

And Moses came down from the mountain to the people and consecrated them, and they washed their clothes. And he said to the people, “Prepare! For three days do not go near *your wife*.”

And it happened on the third day, when it was toward dawn, thunders and lightning and a dark cloud were occurring upon the mountain of Sinai! The sound of the trumpet was ringing loudly, and all the people in the camp were terrified. But Moses led the people out from the camp for a meeting with GOD, and they stood near, below the mountain. Now the mountain of Sinai was smoking in its entirety, because GOD had descended upon it in fire, and the smoke was rising up like the smoke of a furnace. And all the people were very astonished. Now the sounds of the trumpet were increasing, becoming much louder. Moses was speaking, and GOD answered him with a voice.

Job 38:1-23, 42:1-5

The Lord said to Job through a whirlwind and clouds: “Who is this hiding counsel from me but confines words in his heart and thinks to hide them from me? Gird up your loins like a man, and I will question you, and as for you, answer me!

“Where were you when I was laying the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you are endowed with understanding! Who determined its measures, if you know? Or who was it who stretched a measuring line upon it? Or upon what have its rings been fastened? And who is he who cast a cornerstone upon it? When the stars were made, all my angels praised me with a loud voice.

“Again, I shut up the sea with gates, when it quivered with eagerness, coming from its mother’s womb; and I made the cloud its clothing, and with mist I swaddled it. Indeed, I prescribed bounds for it, setting bars and gates around it. And I said to it, ‘This far you may come, but you shall not go beyond; rather, your waves shall be broken up within you.

“Was it by you that I instructed the morning light, and the morning star saw its post, to take hold of earth’s edges, to shake the impious off it? Or perhaps it was you who took clay soil and formed a living creature, and endowed him with speech and placed him on earth? Or was it you who removed the light from the impious and crushed the arm of the proud?

“And did you go to the source of the sea and walk in the tracks of the deep? Have the gates of death opened to you out of fear, and the gatekeepers of hades cower when they saw you? Or perhaps you have been advised of the breadth of what is under heaven? Do tell me how much it is.

“And in what kind of land does the light dwell, and what kind is the place of darkness? If you might lead me to their boarders, and you know their paths, then I would know that you were born then, and the number of your years is great!

“Have you gone to the storehouses of the snow, and have you seen the storehouses of the hail? But it is at your disposal for a time of enemies, for a day of war and battle.”

So Job replied to the Lord and said: “I know that thou canst do anything, and nothing is impossible for thee. For who is the one hiding counsel from thee, and being sparing with words, imagines to hid them from thee as well? But who will tell me what I did not know, great and marvelous things that I did not understand? Now hear me, LORD, that I too may speak; then I will question thee, and thou shalt teach me! Indeed, hearing by the ear I heard of thee before; but now my eyes have seen thee.”

Isaiah 50:4-11

The LORD gives me a tongue of instruction, that I may perceive in season when it is necessary to speak a word. He set me early in the morning; he added to me an ear to hear, and the instruction of *the* LORD opens my ears, and I do not disobey nor contradict it. I have given my back to scourges and my cheeks to blows, and I did not turn my face from the shame of spittings; and *the* LORD became my helper. Because of this, I was not shamed, but I set my face like solid rock, and I realized that I should not be ashamed, because the One justifying me draws near.

Who is the one contending with me? Let him stand up to confront me. Who is the one contending with me? Let him come near me. Look, *the* LORD will help me. Who will harm me? See, all of you will become old like a garment, to be devoured as by a moth.

Who among you fears *the* LORD? Let him obey his servant’s voice. Those walking in darkness have no light. Trust in the Name of *the* LORD and stay yourselves upon God!

Look! All of you kindle a fire and make the flame stronger. Walk by the light of your fire, and the flame which you have kindled. It is because of me that this came upon you, and you will fall asleep in sorrow.

