

The 15 Old Testament Readings

For Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from Genesis.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

1. Genesis 1:1-13

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

2. Isaiah 60:1-16

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms. Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebai'oth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will glorify my glorious house. Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows? For the coastlands shall wait for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your sons from far, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has glorified you. Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I smote you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut; that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste. The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons of those who oppressed you shall come bending low to you; and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic for ever, a joy from age to age. You shall suck the milk of nations, you shall suck the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from Exodus.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

3. Exodus 12:1-11

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household; and if the household is too small for a lamb, then a man and his neighbor next to his house shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take it from the sheep or from the goats; and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. Then they shall take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled with water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning, anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s passover.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Jonah.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

4. Jonah 1:1 - 4:11

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.” But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish,

away from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god; and they threw the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call upon your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we do not perish." And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And whence do you come? What is your country? And of what people are you?" And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. He said to them, "Take me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. Therefore they cried to the Lord, "We beseech thee, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood; for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee." So they took up Jonah and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying,

"I called to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and thou didst hear my voice. For thou didst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood was round about me; all thy waves and thy billows passed over me. Then I said, 'I am cast out from thy presence; how shall I again look upon thy holy temple?' The waters closed in over me, the deep was round about me; weeds were wrapped about my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me for ever; yet thou didst bring up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to thee, into thy holy temple. Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their true loyalty. But I with the voice

of thanksgiving will sacrifice to thee; what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!”

And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.” So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he cried, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. Then tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them cry mightily to God; yea, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?” When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, “I pray thee, Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repentest of evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take my life from me, I beseech thee, for it is better for me to die than to live.” And the Lord said, “Do you do well to be angry?” Then Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. And the Lord God appointed a plant, and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm which attacked the plant, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint; and he asked that he might die, and said, “It is better for me to die than to live.” But God said to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And he said, “I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.” And the Lord said, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there

are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the book of Joshua, Son of Nun.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

5. Joshua 5:10-15

While the people of Israel were encamped in Gilgal they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. And on the morrow after the passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. And the manna ceased on the morrow, when they ate of the produce of the land; and the people of Israel had manna no more, but ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man stood before him with his drawn sword in his hand; and Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” And he said, “No; but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and worshiped, and said to him, “What does my lord bid his servant?” And the commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from Exodus.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

6. Exodus 13:20 – 15:19

And they moved on from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and

by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night; the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baalzephon; you shall encamp over against it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." And they did so. When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, and took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pihahiroth, in front of Baalzephon. When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were in great fear. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord; and they said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still." The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go on dry ground through the sea. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen." Then the angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters

being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel; for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled into it, and the Lord routed the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

The Reader continues in a louder voice:

Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying: Let us sing to the Lord.

And the choir and the people respond with this refrain, sung after each of the other 19 verses of this song:

For gloriously has He been glorified.

Reader:

The horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

He was to me a Helper and Protector for salvation. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

This is my God and I will glorify Him; the God of my father, and I will exalt Him. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

The Lord brings wars to naught, the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host He cast into the sea. Let us sing unto the Lord. (Refrain)

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

(Refrain)

The floods cover them; they went down into the depths like a stone. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Thy right hand, O Lord, has been glorified in power. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Thy right hand, O Lord, has shattered the enemy, and in the greatness of Thy majesty Thou hast overthrown Thy adversaries. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Thou didst send forth Thy fury, it consumes them like stubble, and by the spirit of Thy displeasure the water parted asunder. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

The waters stood up like a wall, the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

The enemy said: "I will pursue and I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, I will satisfy my soul, I will destroy with my sword, my hand shall have dominion." Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Thou didst send Thy Spirit and the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Who is like Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee – glorified in holiness, marvelous in glory, doing wonders! Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Thou didst stretch out Thy right hand and the earth swallowed them. Thou didst lead in Thy righteousness the people whom Thou didst redeem. Let us sing unto the Lord. (Refrain)

Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; the leaders of Moab, trembling seize them; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Let trembling and fear fall upon them; because of the greatness of Thine arm, let them become as stone! Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Until Thy people pass by, O Lord, until the people pass by whom Thou hast purchased. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Thou wilt bring them in and plant them on Thy mountain, the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thine abode, Thy sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have made ready. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

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

But the children of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit! Let us sing unto the Lord! (Refrain)

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

And the Reader concludes:

For gloriously has He been glorified.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Zephaniah.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

7. Zephaniah 3:8-15

“Therefore wait for me,” says the Lord, “for the day when I arise as a witness. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all the heat of my anger; for in the fire of my jealous wrath all the earth shall be consumed. “Yea, at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering. “On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain. For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord, those who are

left in Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall pasture and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.” Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has cast out your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Third Book of Kings.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

8. 3 [1 in KJV] Kings 17:8-24

Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah, “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” And she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a cruse; and now, I am gathering a couple of sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” And Elijah said to her, “Fear not; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel, ‘The jar of meal shall not be spent, and the cruse of oil shall not fail, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.’” And she went and did as Elijah said; and she, and he, and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not spent, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke by Elijah. After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; and his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!” And he said to her, “Give me your son.” And he took him from her bosom, and carried him up into the upper chamber, where he lodged, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried to the Lord, “O Lord my God, hast

thou brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?” Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord, “O Lord my God, let this child’s soul come into him again.” And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and delivered him to his mother; and Elijah said, “See, your son lives.” And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.”

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

9. Isaiah 61:10-62:5

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her vindication goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from Genesis.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

10. Genesis 22:1-18

After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; and he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the ass; I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.” And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. Then Abraham put forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.” He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place The Lord will provide; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.” And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

11. Isaiah 61:1-9

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. Aliens shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; but you shall be called the priests of the Lord, men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. Instead of your shame you shall have a double portion, instead of dishonor you shall rejoice in your lot; therefore in your land you shall possess a double portion; yours shall be everlasting joy. For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Fourth Book of Kings.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

12. 4 [2 in KJV] Kings 4:8-37

One day Elisha went on to Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to eat some food. So whenever he passed that way, he would turn in there to eat food. And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, who is continually passing our way. Let us make a small roof chamber with walls, and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there." One day he came there, and he turned into the chamber and rested there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite." When he had called her, she stood before him. And he said to him, "Say now to her, See, you have taken all this trouble for us; what is to be done for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?" She answered, "I dwell among my own people." And he said, "What then is to be done for her?" Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old." He said, "Call her." And when he had called her, she stood in the doorway. And he said, "At this season, when the time comes round, you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God; do not lie to your maidservant." But the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following spring, as Elisha had said to her. When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. And he said to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." And when he had lifted him, and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. Then she called to her husband, and said, "Send me one of the servants and one of the asses, that I may quickly go to the man of God, and come back again." And he said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath." She said, "It will be well." Then she saddled the ass, and she said to her servant, "Urge the beast on; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." So she set out, and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her coming, he said to Gehazi his servant, "Look, yonder is the Shunammite; run at once to meet her, and say to her, Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?" And she answered, "It is well." And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to thrust her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress; and the Lord has hidden it from me, and has not told me." Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?" He said to Gehazi, "Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet any one, do not salute him; and if any one salutes you, do not reply; and lay my staff upon the face of the child." Then the mother of the child said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her. Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff upon the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life.

Therefore he returned to meet him, and told him, “The child has not awaked.” When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. So he went in and shut the door upon the two of them, and prayed to the Lord. Then he went up and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. Then he got up again, and walked once to and fro in the house, and went up, and stretched himself upon him; the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. Then he summoned Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, “Take up your son.” She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took up her son and went out.

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

13. Isaiah 63:11-64:5

Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant. Where is he who brought up out of the sea the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his holy Spirit, who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So thou didst lead thy people, to make for thyself a glorious name. Look down from heaven and see, from thy holy and glorious habitation. Where are thy zeal and thy might? The yearning of thy heart and thy compassion are withheld from me. For thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is thy name. O Lord, why dost thou make us err from thy ways and harden our heart, so that we fear thee not? Return for the sake of thy servants, the tribes of thy heritage. Thy holy people possessed thy sanctuary a little while; our adversaries have trodden it down. We have become like those over whom thou hast never ruled, like those who are not called by thy name. O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to

boil— to make thy name known to thy adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains quaked at thy presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides thee, who works for those who wait for him. Thou meetest him that joyfully works righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways. Behold, thou wast angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Jeremiah

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

14. Jeremiah 31:31-34

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Priest (Deacon): Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Daniel.

Priest (Deacon): Let us attend.

Reader:

15. Daniel 3:1-23

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to assemble the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, were assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live for ever! You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no heed to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up." Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good; but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up." Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abed'nego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he ordered certain mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their mantles, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were cast into the burning fiery furnace. Because the king's order was strict and the furnace very hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

And they walked in the midst of the fire, praising God, and blessing the Lord. Then Azarias stood up, and prayed on this manner; and opening his mouth in the midst of the fire said, Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers: thy name is worthy to be praised and glorified for evermore: For thou art righteous in all the things that thou hast done to us: yea, true are all thy works, thy ways are right, and all thy judgments truth. In all the things that thou hast brought upon us, and upon the holy city of our fathers, even Jerusalem, thou hast executed true judgment: for according to truth and judgment didst thou bring all these things upon us because of our sins. For we have sinned and committed iniquity, departing from thee. In all things have we trespassed, and not obeyed thy commandments, nor kept them, neither done as thou hast commanded us, that it might go well with us. Wherefore all that thou hast brought upon us, and every thing that thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment. And thou didst deliver us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful forsakers of God, and to an unjust king, and the most wicked in all the world. And now we cannot open our mouths, we are become a shame and reproach to thy servants; and to them that worship thee. Yet deliver us not up wholly, for thy name's sake, neither disannul thou thy covenant: And cause not thy mercy to depart from us, for thy beloved Abraham's sake, for thy servant Issac's sake, and for thy holy Israel's sake; To whom thou hast spoken and promised, that thou wouldest multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that lieth upon the seashore. For we, O Lord, are become less than any nation, and be kept under this day in all the world because of our sins. Neither is there at this time prince, or prophet, or leader, or burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place to sacrifice before thee, and to find mercy. Nevertheless in a contrite heart and an humble spirit let us be accepted. Like as in the burnt offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs: so let our sacrifice be in thy sight this day, and grant that we may wholly go after thee: for they shall not be confounded that put their trust in thee. And now we follow thee with all our heart, we fear thee, and seek thy face. Put us not to shame: but deal with us after thy lovingkindness, and according to the multitude of thy mercies. Deliver us also according to

thy marvellous works, and give glory to thy name, O Lord: and let all them that do thy servants hurt be ashamed; And let them be confounded in all their power and might, and let their strength be broken; And let them know that thou art God, the only God, and glorious over the whole world. And the king's servants, that put them in, ceased not to make the oven hot with rosin, pitch, tow, and small wood; So that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits. And it passed through, and burned those Chaldeans it found about the furnace. But the angel of the Lord came down into the oven together with Azarias and his fellows, and smote the flame of the fire out of the oven; And made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them. Then the three, as out of one mouth, praised, glorified, and blessed, God in the furnace, saying, Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers: and to be praised and exalted above all for ever. And blessed is thy glorious and holy name: and to be praised and exalted above all for ever. Blessed art thou in the temple of thine holy glory: and to be praised and glorified above all for ever. Blessed art thou that beholdest the depths, and sittest upon the cherubims: and to be praised and exalted above all for ever. Blessed art thou on the glorious throne of thy kingdom: and to be praised and glorified above all for ever. Blessed art thou in the firmament of heaven: and above all to be praised and glorified for ever.

We all stand up and sing this refrain:

Praise the Lord! Sing and exalt Him throughout all the ages!

The Reader continues with the rest of the verses, with the refrain being sung by the choir and people after each verse.

Bless the Lord, all works of the Lord! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ye heavens! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ye Angels of the Lord! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, all waters above the heavens! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, all powers! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, sun and moon! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, stars of heaven! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, all rain and dew! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, all winds! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, fire and hail! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, winter cold and summer heat! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, dews and snows! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, nights and days! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, light and darkness! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ice and cold! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, frosts and snows! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, lightning and clouds! (Refrain)

Let the earth bless the Lord! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, mountains and hills! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, all things that grow on the earth! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ye springs! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, seas and rivers! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ye whales and all creatures that move in the waters! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, all birds of the air! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, all beasts and cattle! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ye sons of men! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, O Israel! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ye priests of the Lord! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ye servants of the Lord! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, spirits and souls of the righteous! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, ye who are holy and humble in heart! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, Ananiah, Azariah, and Mishael! (Refrain)

Bless the Lord, Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs of the Lord! (Refrain)

Let us bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Lord. (Refrain)

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. (Refrain)

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

And the Reader concludes:

Praise the Lord! Sing and exalt Him throughout all the ages!

(Refrain)

Notes

1. The texts are based on Revised Standard Version (RSV).
2. The song of the three youth taken from:
 - [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_\(King_James\)/Prayer_of_Azarias_and_Hymn_of_the_Three_Children](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Bible_(King_James)/Prayer_of_Azarias_and_Hymn_of_the_Three_Children)
3. Reference service materials used:
 - <https://oca.org/liturgics/service-texts>
 - https://nynjoca.org/files/Music/Holy%20Week/Holy_Saturday_15_Old_Testament_Readings.pdf
 - <https://orthodox.net.nz/files/Holy-Saturday-Readings.pdf>