

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

See endnotes before using. The Exodus and Daniel readings should be taken from the Holy Week books (Ruthenian Church).

First Reading - Genesis 1:1-13 (ESV)

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: *A reading from the Book of Genesis.*

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. ¹²The 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. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

End of First Reading

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Second Reading - Isaiah 60:1-16

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For 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.

³And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

⁴Lift up your eyes all around, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from afar,
and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and exult,
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A 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 bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

⁷All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you;
the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;
they shall come up with acceptance on my altar,
and I will beautify my beautiful house.

⁸Who are these that fly like a cloud,
and like doves to their windows?

⁹For the coastlands shall hope for me,
the ships of Tarshish first,
to bring your children from afar,
their silver and gold with them,
for the name of the LORD your God,
and for the Holy One of Israel,
because he has made you beautiful.

¹⁰Foreigners shall build up your walls,
and their kings shall minister to you;

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for in my wrath I struck you,
but in my favor I have had mercy on you.
¹¹Your gates shall be open continually;
day and night they shall not be shut,
that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations,
with their kings led in procession.
¹²For the nation and kingdom
that will not serve you shall perish;
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.
¹³The 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.
¹⁴The sons of those who afflicted 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.

¹⁵Whereas you have been forsaken and hated,
with no one passing through,
I will make you majestic forever,
a joy from age to age.
¹⁶You shall suck the milk of nations;
you shall nurse at the breast of kings;
and you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior
and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

End of Second Reading

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Third Reading - Exodus 12:1-11

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of Exodus.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²"This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

⁷"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 it. ⁸They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.

End of Third Reading

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Fourth Reading - Jonah 1:1-16, 2:1-11, 3:1-10, 4:1-11

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jonah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me."
³But 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.

⁴But 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. ⁵Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was 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. ⁶So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish."

⁷And 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 on Jonah. ⁸Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" ⁹And 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." ¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹Then 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. ¹²He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl 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." ¹³Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. ¹⁴Therefore they called out to the LORD, "O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you." ¹⁵So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

¹Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, ²saying,

"I called out to the LORD, out of my distress,
and he answered me;

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out of the belly of Sheol I cried,
and you heard my voice.
³For you cast me into the deep,
into the heart of the seas,
and the flood surrounded me;
all your waves and your billows
passed over me.
⁴Then I said, 'I am driven away
from your sight;
Yet I shall again look
upon your holy temple.'
⁵The waters closed in over me to take my life;
the deep surrounded me;
weeds were wrapped about my head
⁶at the roots of the mountains.
I went down to the land
whose bars closed upon me forever;
yet you brought up my life from the pit,
O LORD my God.
⁷When my life was fainting away,
I remembered the LORD,
and my prayer came to you,
into your holy temple.
⁸Those who pay regard to vain idols
forsake their hope of steadfast love.
⁹But I with the voice of thanksgiving
will sacrifice to you;
what I have vowed I will pay.
Salvation belongs to the LORD!"

¹⁰And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.
Jonah ³

¹Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ²"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." ³So 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. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

⁶The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷And he issued a 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, ⁸but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone

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turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. ⁹Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."

¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

¹But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. ²And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O 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 you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. ³Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

⁵Jonah 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. ⁶Now 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. ⁷But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on 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." ⁹But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

End of Fourth Reading

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Fifth Reading - Joshua 5:10-15

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joshua.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹⁰While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹²And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

¹³When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing 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?" ¹⁴And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" ¹⁵And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

End of Fifth Reading

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Sixth Reading - Exodus 13:20-15:19

Take from official book. The translation below is from the ESV.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: *A reading from the Book of Exodus.*

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

²⁰And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. ²¹And 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. ²²The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

¹Then the LORD said to Moses, ²"Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. ³For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' ⁴And 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.

⁵When 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?" ⁶So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, ⁷and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. ⁸And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. ⁹The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

¹⁰When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹They 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? ¹²Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." ¹³And 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. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

¹⁵The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷And I will harden the hearts of

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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. ¹⁸And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

¹⁹Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, ²⁰coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

²¹Then 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. ²²And 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. ²³The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, ²⁵clogging 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."

²⁶Then 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." ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. ²⁹But 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.

³⁰Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

¹Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,

*(Continue in music book for Holy Saturday with "Let us sing praise to the Lord..."
Byzantine Seminary Press Holy Saturday book page22)*

Editor's Note: This reading is prescribed to continue through 15:19. All of these verses are not provided in the official Byzantine Seminary Press book but are given here for completeness. I have not compared other liturgical books to verify if these verses are taken.

"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.

²The LORD is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;

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this is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him.

³The LORD is a man of war;
the LORD is his name.

⁴"Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea,
and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea.

⁵The floods covered them;
they went down into the depths like a stone.

⁶Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power,
your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.

⁷In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries;
you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble.

⁸At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up;
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

⁹The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake,
I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them.
I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.'

¹⁰You blew with your wind; the sea covered them;
they sank like lead in the mighty waters.

¹¹"Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

¹²You stretched out your right hand;
the earth swallowed them.

¹³You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed;
you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.

¹⁴The peoples have heard; they tremble;
pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.

¹⁵Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;
all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.

¹⁶Terror and dread fall upon them;
because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone,
till your people, O LORD, pass by,
till the people pass by whom you have purchased.

¹⁷You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain,
the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode,
the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.

¹⁸"The LORD will reign forever and ever."

¹⁹For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea.

End of Sixth Reading

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Seventh Reading - Zephaniah 3:8-15

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

⁸"Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD,
"for the day when I rise up to seize the prey.
For my decision is to gather nations,
to assemble kingdoms,
to pour out upon them my indignation,
all my burning anger;
for in the fire of my jealousy
all the earth shall be consumed.

⁹"For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples
to a pure speech,
that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD
and serve him with one accord.

¹⁰From beyond the rivers of Cush
my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones,
shall bring my offering.

¹¹"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.

¹²But I will leave in your midst
a people humble and lowly.
They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD,

¹³those who are left in Israel;
they shall do no injustice
and speak no lies,
nor shall there be found in their mouth
a deceitful tongue.

For they shall graze and lie down,
and none shall make them afraid."

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

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¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.

End of Seventh Reading

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Eighth Reading - 1 Kings 17:8-24

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the First Book of Kings.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

⁸Then the word of the LORD came to him, ⁹"Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." ¹⁰So 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." ¹¹And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." ¹²And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. 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." ¹³And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴For thus says the LORD the God of Israel, "The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth."'" ¹⁵And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

¹⁷After 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. ¹⁸And 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!" ¹⁹And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. ²⁰And he cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" ²¹Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this child's life come into him again." ²²And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. ²³And 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." ²⁴And 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."

End of Eighth Reading

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Ninth Reading - Isaiah 61:10-11, 62:1-5

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹⁰I 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 like a priest with a beautiful headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to sprout up before all the nations.

¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

⁴You 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.

⁵For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your sons marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

End of Ninth Reading

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Tenth Reading - Genesis 22:1-18

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of Genesis.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." ²He 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 on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, 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. ⁴On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." ⁶And 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. ⁷And 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?" ⁸Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

⁹When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." ¹²He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy 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." ¹³And 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. ¹⁴So 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."

¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

End of Tenth Reading

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

Eleventh Reading - Isaiah 61:1-9

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: *A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.*

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
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;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³to grant to those who mourn in Zion--
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment 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.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁵Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks;
foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers;
⁶but you shall be called the priests of the LORD;
they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God;
you shall eat the wealth of the nations,
and in their glory you shall boast.
⁷Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion;
instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot;
therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion;
they shall have everlasting joy.

⁸For 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.
⁹Their offspring shall be known among the nations,
and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them,
that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed.

End of Eleventh Reading

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

Twelfth Reading - 2 Kings 4:8-37

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Second Book of Kings.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

⁸One 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. ⁹And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I know that this is a holy man of God who is continually passing our way. ¹⁰Let us make a small room on the roof 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."

¹¹One day he came there, and he turned into the chamber and rested there. ¹²And he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite." When he had called her, she stood before him. ¹³And 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." ¹⁴And he said, "What then is to be done for her?" Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old." ¹⁵He said, "Call her." And when he had called her, she stood in the doorway. ¹⁶And he said, "At this season, about this time next year, you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God; do not lie to your servant." ¹⁷But the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following spring, as Elisha had said to her.

¹⁸When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. ¹⁹And he said to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." ²⁰And when he had lifted him and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. ²¹And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out. ²²Then she called to her husband and said, "Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again." ²³And he said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath." She said, "All is well." ²⁴Then she saddled the donkey, and she said to her servant, "Urge the animal on; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." ²⁵So 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, there is the Shunammite. ²⁶Run at once to meet her and say to her, 'Is all well with you? Is all well with your husband? Is all well with the child?'" And she answered, "All is well." ²⁷And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to push her away. But the man of God said, "Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me." ²⁸Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" ²⁹He said to Gehazi, "Tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go. If you meet anyone,

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply. And lay my staff on the face of the child." ³⁰Then 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. ³¹Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on 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 awakened."

³²When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. ³³So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. ³⁵Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. ³⁶Then he summoned Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, "Pick up your son." ³⁷She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.

End of Twelfth Reading

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

Thirteenth Reading - Isaiah 63:11-19, 64:1-5

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹¹Then he remembered the days of old,
of Moses and his people.

Where is he who brought them up out of the sea
with the shepherds of his flock?

Where is he who put in the midst of them
his Holy Spirit,

¹²who 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,

¹³who led them through the depths?
Like a horse in the desert,
they did not stumble.

¹⁴Like livestock that go down into the valley,
the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest.
So you led your people,
to make for yourself a glorious name.

¹⁵Look down from heaven and see,
from your holy and beautiful habitation.
Where are your zeal and your might?
The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion
are held back from me.

¹⁶For you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us,
and Israel does not acknowledge us;
you, O LORD, are our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is your name.

¹⁷O LORD, why do you make us wander from your ways
and harden our heart, so that we fear you not?
Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your heritage.

¹⁸Your holy people held possession for a little while;
our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary.

¹⁹We have become like those over whom you have never ruled,
like those who are not called by your name.

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

¹Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence--
²as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil--
to make your name known to your adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome things that we did not look for,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.
⁵You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember you in your ways.
Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

End of Thirteenth Reading

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

Fourteenth Reading - Jeremiah 31:31-34

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

³¹"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³²not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴And no longer shall each one 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, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

End of Fourteenth Reading

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

Fifteenth Reading - Daniel 3:1-51 (NAB)

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar had a golden statue made, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, which he set up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

² He then ordered the satraps, prefects, and governors, the counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the officials of the provinces to be summoned to the dedication of the statue which he had set up.

³The satraps, prefects, and governors, the counselors, treasurers, judges, and magistrates and all the officials of the provinces, all these came together for the dedication and stood before the statue which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁴ A herald cried out: "Nations and peoples of every language, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments, ⁵ you are ordered to fall down and worship the golden statue which King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Whoever does not fall down and worship shall be instantly cast into a white-hot furnace."

⁷ Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments, the nations and peoples of every language all fell down and worshiped the golden statue which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ At that point, some of the Chaldeans came and accused the Jews ⁹ to King Nebuchadnezzar: "O king, live forever! ¹⁰ O king, you issued a decree that everyone who heard the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments should fall down and worship the golden statue; ¹¹ whoever did not was to be cast into a white-hot furnace.

¹² There are certain Jews whom you have made administrators of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego; these men, O king, have paid no attention to you; they will not serve your god or worship the golden statue which you set up."

¹³ Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and sent for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were promptly brought before the king. ¹⁴ King Nebuchadnezzar questioned them: "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you will not serve my god, or worship the golden statue that I set up? ¹⁵ Be ready now to fall down and worship the statue I had made, whenever you hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments; otherwise, you shall be instantly cast into the white-hot furnace; and who is the God that can deliver you out of my hands?"

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Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered King Nebuchadnezzar, "There is no need for us to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If our God, whom we serve, can save us from the white-hot furnace and from your hands, O king, may he save us! ¹⁸ But even if he will not, know, O king, that we will not serve your god or worship the golden statue which you set up."

¹⁹ Nebuchadnezzar's face became livid with utter rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times more than usual ²⁰ and had some of the strongest men in his army bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and cast them into the white-hot furnace. ²¹ They were bound and cast into the white-hot furnace with their coats, hats, shoes and other garments, ²² for the king's order was urgent. So huge a fire was kindled in the furnace that the flames devoured the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into it.

²³ But these three fell, bound, into the midst of the white-hot furnace. ²⁴ They walked about in the flames, singing to God and blessing the Lord.

²⁵ In the fire Azariah stood up and prayed aloud:

²⁶ "Blessed are you, and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and glorious forever is your name.

²⁷ For you are just in all you have done; all your deeds are faultless, all your ways right, and all your judgments proper.

²⁸ You have executed proper judgments in all that you have brought upon us and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our fathers. By a proper judgment you have done all this because of our sins;

²⁹ For we have sinned and transgressed by departing from you, and we have done every kind of evil.

³⁰ Your commandments we have not heeded or observed, nor have we done as you ordered us for our good.

³¹ Therefore all you have brought upon us, all you have done to us, you have done by a proper judgment.

³² You have handed us over to our enemies, lawless and hateful rebels; to an unjust king, the worst in all the world.

³³ Now we cannot open our mouths; we, your servants, who revere you, have become a shame and a reproach.

³⁴ For your name's sake, do not deliver us up forever, or make void your covenant.

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
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³⁵ Do not take away your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham, your beloved, Isaac your servant, and Israel your holy one,

³⁶ To whom you promised to multiply their offspring like the stars of heaven, or the sand on the shore of the sea.

³⁷ For we are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other nation, brought low everywhere in the world this day because of our sins.

³⁸ We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader, no holocaust, sacrifice, oblation, or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you.

³⁹ But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received;

⁴⁰ As though it were holocausts of rams and bullocks, or thousands of fat lambs, So let our sacrifice be in your presence today as we follow you unreservedly; for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame.

⁴¹ And now we follow you with our whole heart, we fear you and we pray to you.

⁴² Do not let us be put to shame, but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.

⁴³ Deliver us by your wonders, and bring glory to your name, O Lord:

⁴⁴ Let all those be routed who inflict evils on your servants; Let them be shamed and powerless, and their strength broken;

⁴⁵ Let them know that you alone are the Lord God, glorious over the whole world."

⁴⁶ Now the king's men who had thrown them in continued to stoke the furnace with brimstone, pitch, tow, and faggots. ⁴⁷ The flames rose forty-nine cubits above the furnace, ⁴⁸ and spread out, burning the Chaldeans nearby. ⁴⁹ But the angel of the Lord went down into the furnace with Azariah and his companions, drove the fiery flames out of the furnace, ⁵⁰ and made the inside of the furnace as though a dew-laden breeze were blowing through it. The fire in no way touched them or caused them pain or harm.

⁵¹ Then these three in the furnace with one voice sang, glorifying and blessing God:

(Continue in music book for Holy Saturday with "Sing praise to the Lord...." Byzantine Seminary Press Holy Saturday book page26)

Great and Holy Saturday: Vespers and Divine Liturgy
Old Testament Readings (Total 15)

The readings may be chanted or recited. The sixth and fifteenth readings should be chanted (these two readings are the minimum two that must be taken).

First Reading - Genesis 1:1-13

Second Reading - Isaiah 60:1-16

Third Reading - Exodus 12:1-11

Fourth Reading - Jonah 1:1-16, 2:1-11, 3:1-10, 4:1-11

Fifth Reading - Joshua 5:10-15

Sixth Reading - Exodus 13:20-15:19

Seventh Reading - Zephaniah 3:8-15

Eighth Reading - 1 Kings 17:8-24

Ninth Reading - Isaiah 61:10-11, 62:1-5

Tenth Reading - Genesis 22:1-18

Eleventh Reading - Isaiah 61:1-9

Twelfth Reading - 2 Kings 4:8-37

Thirteenth Reading - Isaiah 63:11-19, 64:1-5

Fourteenth Reading - Jeremiah 31:31-34

Fifteenth Reading - Daniel 3:1-51

Texts are from the English Standard Version of the Bible. Exceptions are the Sixth and Fifteenth readings which are New American Bible.

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