

THE 5th DAY OF THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET ZACHARIAS
THE FATHER OF THE HONORABLE FORERUNNER JOHN THE BAPTIST
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” we chant 6 Stichera of the holy prophet, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast granted a sign ...”:

With the oil of anointing and holy vesture upon thyself, * O ever-memorable Zacharias, * thou didst minister unto God like an angel, * mediating, O blessed one, * between the Creator and His creation, * and manifestly receiving the words of the divine Spirit. * Wherefore, we call thee blessed, * and celebrate today thy holy festival, ** glorifying the Savior. (Twice)

O divinely inspired Zacharias, * thou didst behold born of a maiden * a Babe Who is co-beginningless with the Father; * and unto thine own child thou dost prophecy manifestly beforehand: * “A prophet shalt thou truly be, * preparing His ways!” * With him we call thee blessed * and in a sacred manner we celebrate thine honored festival, ** O most noetically rich God-bearer. (Twice)

Thou wast the living and animate temple * of the divine Spirit; * and, ministering unto God * with a pure heart, O glorious one, * in the midst of the temple thou wast unjustly slain, * finishing thy godly course in martyrdom, O right-glorious one. * Wherefore, with thine own blood * thou hast entered into the temple of heaven, ** entreating cleansing for our souls. (Twice)

Glory ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone VIII:

Truly arrayed in the vestments of the priesthood of the law, thou didst serve according to the order of Aaron; and, standing in the temple, thou didst clearly behold the countenance of the angel, O most blessed one. Wherefore, hymning thy repose as is meet, O Zacharias, we all praise with songs thee who, in thine old age, begat the glorious John. Entreat thou the merciful God for us, that we be saved.

Both now ..., the Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “O most glorious wonder ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: “**W**hat is this sight which I see, * which mine eyes behold, O Master? * How is it that Thou Who dost sustain all creation, * art lifted up upon the Tree and diest, * granting life unto all? * thus said the Theotokos weeping, * upon seeing God and man * Who had shone forth ineffably from her ** hanging upon the Cross.

On the Aposticha, Glory ..., in Tone II:

As a pure priest thou didst enter into the holy of holies and, clad in sacred vesture, didst blamelessly minister unto God, observing the law like Aaron and leading the tribes of Israel like Moses, in the pure signaling of the little bells. Wherefore, thou wast slain. But thy righteous blood hath become for us a saving healing, and like

fragrant myrrh it openeth deaf ears to the way of everlasting life. O thrice blessed Zacharias, father of John the Baptist and husband of Elizabeth: pray thou earnestly on behalf of our souls.

Both now ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “When from the tree ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: When the unblemished ewe-lamb beheld her Lamb * willingly led as a man to the slaughter, * she said, weeping: * “Dost Thou now hasten to leave me childless * who gave Thee birth O Christ,? * What is this that Thou hast done, O Redeemer of all? * Even so I will hymn and glorify Thine extreme goodness, * which is beyond understanding and all telling, ** O Lover of mankind!”

Troparion of the holy prophet, in Tone IV:

Arrayed in the vesture of the priesthood, * and in accordance with the law, * thou didst offer the sacrifice of oblation in a sacred manner O all-wise one, * and wast manifestly a beacon and seer of sacred mysteries, * who bore within thyself the tokens of grace, * and thou wast slain by the sword in the Temple of God O prophet of Christ, ** together with the forerunner entreat Him that our souls be saved.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion:

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, without the martyria, and the canon of the holy prophet, with 6 Troparia; the composition of Theophanes in Tone I.

ODE I

Irmos: Having passed through the water as upon dry land, * and having escaped the malice of the Egyptians, * the Israelites cried aloud: * Unto our God and Redeemer let us sing.

By thy mediation, O prophet, impart unto me the grace of the Spirit, to help me praise thy memory, crying out: Let us chant unto our Redeemer and God!

Thy life was found to be blameless, and thou wast arrayed in the vesture of the priesthood and the luminous splendors of prophecy, O divinely eloquent and blessed one.

Having thy head adorned with the crown of the law, O Zacharias, thou wast shown to be sacred, crying aloud: Let us chant unto our Redeemer and God!

Theotokion: Clad in the vestment of the full-length tunic like Aaron, thou didst receive the Maiden who sprouted forth from the root of Jesse and bore the Redeemer in her womb.

ODE III

Irmos: O Lord, thou art the confirmation of those who flee to Thee, * Thou art the Light of those in darkness, * and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

When thou didst offer the incense of the covenant, O high priest, then didst thou receive the prophetic proclamation of the Forerunner.

The priesthood anointed thee with oil to serve as a priest, like Aaron. Wherefore, thou wast deemed worthy to behold the angel.

Zacharias begat John, the dawn which announced to the whole world Thee, the noetic Sun, O Savior.

Theotokion: Set my life aright, O all-pure Birthgiver of God, thou life which filled with light the house of Zacharias.

Sessional Hymn of the holy prophet, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "That which hath been commanded ...":

Having ministered to God as a priest according to the law, O Zacharias, thou wast shown to the whole world as a pillar of light, prophesying that Christ would come forth from the Virgin, incarnate of the Holy Spirit, the Orient from the heights of righteousness, Who doth illumine all the world, direct our feet to the ways of peace, and save our race, thou didst say.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

O thou who hast given birth to the immutable God, * by thy maternal supplications * make steadfast my heart which is ever-changing due to sin, * slothfulness and the attacks of the deceiver; * that in thanksgiving I also may glorify thee O good one. * O all-immaculate Mary, Birthgiver of God, * have mercy on the flock ** which thou hast acquired.

Stavrotheotokion in Tone IV: Ever protected by the Cross of thy Son and God, O Virgin, we vanquish the assaults and wiles of the demons, hymning thee who art truly the Theotokos; and all generations bless thee with love, O most pure one, as thou didst foretell. Wherefore, by thy supplications grant us forgiveness of sins.

ODE IV

Irmos: O Lord, I have heard the mystery of Thy dispensation; * I have considered Thy works, * and I have glorified Thy Divinity.

Thy prophet, O Master, faithfully ministered unto Thee with the symbols of the law and was deemed worthy of the grace to perceive Thy truth.

Thou, the most brilliant and most blessed one, didst receive light through darkest light; for through the law grace hath now been added unto thee.

The divine Gabriel, who standeth before God, announced and revealed to thee the manifestation of the voice and Forerunner of the Word, O blessed one.

Theotokion: The Fashioner of creation, Who loosed the barrenness of Elizabeth, found thee, O Virgin, to be a pure habitation, and dwelt therein.

ODE V

Irmos: Rising early we cry to Thee, O Lord; * save us, for Thou art our God, * and we know none other besides Thee.

Upon thy head, O prophet, was the mitre placed which bore the impress of the true and divine priesthood.

Creation rejoiceth in thine offspring, O high priest; for thou didst beget the preacher of repentance.

Thou didst lead a life adorned, for with Elizabeth thou didst keep all the commandments of the Lord.

Theotokion: Thy tongue is directed toward hymnody, O divinely eloquent one; for thou didst behold her who knoweth not wedlock bearing a Child within her womb.

ODE VI

Irmos: O Thou that putteth on light as a garment * grant me also a robe of light, * O All-merciful Christ, our God.

He who served the shadow of the law was shown to be a preacher of grace, O our Savior; for he was deemed worthy to behold Thine incarnation.

Adorned with words of judgment, O sacred Zacharias, thou didst receive the ever-existing Word bearing flesh.

Thou wast shown to serve God in the temple as a right wondrous priest, O divinely inspired initiate of the mysteries of God.

Theotokion: Thou wast recognized by the prophetess Elizabeth, O Virgin Mother of God, bearing the beginningless Word and Savior in thy womb.

Kontakion of the holy prophet, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: “Today the Virgin ...”:

Today Zacharias, the prophet and high priest of the Most High, * the father of the Forerunner, * setteth the table of his memorial, * feeding the faithful; * for he hath distributed the food of righteousness unto all. * Wherefore, he hath reposed * as a divine initiate ** of the mysteries of the grace of God.

Ikos: **T**he high priest of the law was bound to silence by the voice of an angel, for within the barren and chaste Elizabeth, the angel of the coming of Christ, the prophet and initiate of the mysteries was to come forth. By his nativity, the grace, deliverance, universal reconciliation and renewal of our nature was to be revealed. By Him Who giveth fruit from the barren womb, the Son Who hath appeared from the Virgin, the divine initiate of the mysteries of the grace of God and his preaching of the Lamb was to be made manifest.

ODE VII

Irmos: **T**he Hebrew children in the furnace * boldly trampled upon the flames, * changing the fire into dew, they cried aloud: * ‘Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, throughout the ages’.

When the voice of one crying in the wilderness came forth from the barren woman supra-naturally, he loosed the bonds of thy tongue that thou couldst cry: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, throughout the ages!

The Forerunner, the beloved friend of the Bridegroom, was born of a barren woman, manifestly proclaiming the birthgiving of the Virgin unto those who cry out with faith: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, throughout the ages!

O thrice-blessed Zacharias, thou wast wholly a divine instrument of the Spirit, and didst proclaim thy son to be a prophet, who crieth: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, throughout the ages!

Theotokion: **Z**acharias, beholding thee, recognized thee as the fulfillment of the law, the chief object of all prophecy, O Maiden, and he cried aloud: Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, O most pure one!

ODE VIII

Irmos: **G**lorified in the holy mountain, * the Lord revealed the mystery of the Ever-Virgin unto Moses * in the flames of the burning bush: * praise ye and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

Thou wast shown to be a prophet of the truth, for thou didst prepare John the Forerunner to tread first the paths of Christ, O blessed high priest. Him do we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Giving voice in speech, thou didst bless the Master, the Lord of glory Who hath bestowed salvation upon us, Who shone forth upon us in the flesh from David. Him do we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Thou was deemed worthy of great gifts, O divinely revealed one, begetting the Forerunner, the greatest of all the prophets, who hymneth and supremely exalteth the Lord throughout all ages.

Theotokion: **R**ejoicing, Zacharias, the high priest and preacher of God, paid homage to the Virgin and Mother who beareth the Lord of creation. Her do we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

ODE IX

Irmos: **S**aved by thee, O pure Virgin, * we confess thee to be truly the Theotokos, * and together with the choirs of the bodiless hosts * thee do we magnify.

Thou wast filled with the inspiration of the Comforter and wast the beginning of the blessing of the Lord, O divinely wise initiate of the sacred mysteries, divinely blessed one.

Perceiving the fulfillment of the archangel's words, O all-famed and divinely eloquent one, thou didst straightway move thy tongue to blessing.

Thou wast adorned with crowns of suffering and the priesthood and with the enlightenment of prophecy, O most blessed Zacharias, divinely eloquent one.

Theotokion: **A**s thou art the dwelling-place of the Light, O Virgin, illumine my soul which hath been darkened by the passions, and by thy supplications deliver me from the outermost darkness.

Exapostilarion of the holy prophet:

Spec. Mel.: "O Light immutable ...":

At first, thou wast struck mute in the holy of holies, by the voice of the angel, for the springing forth from thee of the voice of one crying in the wilderness; and now thou art silent for his sake, slain, O Zacharias, before the holy of holies.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion:

Having shone forth eternally, Light from Light, before the morning star, O Word, Thou didst come forth as Light, immutably, under time, from Thy Mother, illumining the ends of the world with radiant effulgence, as Thou art the Light of the world.

At the Stichera, Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Offering sacrifices in accordance with the law, O Zacharias, thou didst willingly present thy holy soul to God, Who wast born in the flesh, as a whole-burnt offering in the Holy of Holies, when thou wast slain like a lamb by the sword, between the temple and the altar.

Both now ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “O Lord, before the tribunal ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: **O** Lord, when the sun beheld Thee * the Sun of righteousness, hanging upon the Tree, * it hid its rays, and the light of the moon was changed to darkness; * and Thine all-immaculate Mother ** was pierced in the depths of her soul.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from the Oktoechos, and 4, from ODE III of the canon of the holy prophet.

When thou didst offer the incense of the covenant, O high priest, then didst thou receive the prophetic proclamation of the Forerunner.

The priesthood anointed thee with oil to serve as a priest, like Aaron. Wherefore, thou wast deemed worthy to behold the angel.

Zacharias begat John, the dawn which announced to the whole world Thee, the noetic Sun, O Savior.

Theotokion: **S**et my life aright, O all-pure Birthgiver of God, thou life which filled with light the house of Zacharias.

Troparion of the holy prophet, in Tone IV:

Ararrayed in the vesture of the priesthood, * and in accordance with the law, * thou didst offer the sacrifice of oblation in a sacred manner O all-wise one, * and wast manifestly a beacon and seer of sacred mysteries, * who bore within thyself the tokens of grace, * and thou wast slain by the sword in the Temple of God O prophet of Christ, ** together with the forerunner entreat Him that our souls be saved.

Kontakion of the holy prophet, in Tone III:

Today Zacharias, the prophet and high priest of the Most High, * the father of the Forerunner, * setteth the table of his memorial, * feeding the faithful; * for he hath distributed the food of righteousness unto all. * Wherefore, he hath reposed * as a divine initiate ** of the mysteries of the grace of God.

Prokeimenon, in Tone VII: The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord, * and shall hope in Him.

Verse: Hearken, O God, unto my prayer, when I make supplication unto Thee.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, §314 (HEB.6: 13-20)

Brethren: When God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth

into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Alleluia, in Tone VII: A light hath dawned for the righteous man, and gladness for the upright of heart.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, § 96 (MT. 23: 29-39)

The Lord said unto the Jews who came unto Him: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnessed unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zechariah son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.