

**THE 3rd DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET ZEPHANIAH
AT VESPERS**

At "Lord, I have cried ...," three Stichera of the prophet, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":

N.B. If Alleluia is to be chanted at Matins instead of "God is the Lord ...," then the Stichera of the Theotokos below are chanted first at "Lord, I have cried ...," followed by those of the prophet.

As a divine prophet, * a proclaimer and herald * of the words of God, * having received the radiance of the splendor of the Godhead * through the purity of thy mind, * thou wast revealed to be a divinely inspired mouth of the Spirit. * Proclaiming things shown to thee by Him, * and relating to all the nations * the salvation given to mankind * and the kingdom of Christ, O all-honored one, * entreat Him ** to save and enlighten our souls.

O divinely inspired one, who shinest forth, * as is meet, in the vision of God, * honored with a chief place among the prophets and with grace, * and deemed worthy of divine blessedness, * possessed now of thy boldness toward the Supremely good One * and sympathy, * cease thou never to pray * on behalf of those who praise thee with faith * and honor thee as one of godly eloquence, * honorable and pleasing to God, * that He deliver us from misfortunes ** and save our souls.

Thou hast shown forth, O Immortal One, * Thy prophet * as an animate cloud * pouring forth water unto life which is truly everlasting, * having sent him forth * and richly bestowed upon him the all-holy Spirit, * Who is consubstantial with Thee, the Almighty Father, * and Thy Son, * Who shone forth from Thine Essence, * whereby he prophesied the saving Advent * of Christ our God ** and proclaimed salvation to all the nations.

And three Stichera of the Theotokos, in Tone IV & the same melody:

As the intercessor for our whole race, * O most immaculate Theotokos, * from every attack of the enemy * save those who piously worship thine Offspring; * for we have all now acquired thee * as a help, refuge and confirmation, * and a mediatrix before Christ, the Lord and Master. * Him do thou entreat, we pray thee, * that He grant the world peace * and remission of sins ** unto those who have recourse to thy protection.

Behold, I expose to thee the sores of my soul * and show thee the grievous stripes * which the robbers, * my wicked thoughts * and the tumults of the demons, * have inflicted upon me. * O all-immaculate Lady, * who hast given birth unto the Healer of men's souls and bodies, * do thou grant me healing thereof, * pouring forth the oil * of thy tender compassion and goodness, ** unto the good disposition of salvation and health.

I do not cover my wicked deeds, * for, wretch that I am, I have acquired all things which God hateth: * I have defiled my flesh, spirit and mind * by impious thoughts, * vile deeds and words; * with tongue I condemn sinners, * while I myself commit worse things, O Theotokos. * Grant me correction of all these things, * that, having rid myself of mine evil habits, * I may fall down and weep * over what I have wickedly done ** in the course of my life.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV & the same melody:

In that I have fallen into the abyss of many offenses, * wretch that I am, * because of my slothfulness, despondency and ignorance, * I am now held fast by despair. * Be thou my help and purification * and my salvation, O most pure one, * readily granting me consolation; * and I beseech thee, implore and fall down before thee, * and with faith cry out to thee, * that I not utterly appear ** to be the plaything of the deceiver.

Or this Stavrotheotokion, in Tone IV & the same melody:

Lament Me not, O Mother, * beholding thy Son and God hanging upon the Tree, * Who suspended the earth freely upon the waters * and fashioned all creation; * for I shall arise and glorify Myself, * and shall break the might of the kingdom of hell, * destroy its power, * and deliver those who have been bound * by its villainy, * in that I am compassionate; * and I shall lead them to my Father, ** as I love mankind.

Troparion, in Tone II:

Celebrating the memory of Thy Prophet Zephaniah, O Lord, * through him we entreat Thee: ** Save Thou our souls!

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, that of the prophet, the acrostic whereof is: "May the glory of Zephaniah illumine me," a composition of Theophanes, in Tone VI:

ODE I

Irmos: When Israel walked on foot in the sea as on dry land, * on seeing their pursuer Pharaoh drowned, * they cried: * Let us sing to God * a song of victory.

We beseech thee, O prophet, who standest before the throne of God, that thou earnestly entreat Him to grant enlightenment to us who with faith hymn thine honored memory.

Thou hast been shown to be a divine instrument containing enlightenment and the gifts of the divine Spirit, O all-wise Zephaniah; wherefore, rejoicing, we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

Theotokion: The Sun which shone forth from thy holy womb, O Lady, illumineth all the earth with most brilliant rays; and enlightened thereby, we honor thee as the Mother of God.

ODE III

Irmos: There is none as holy as Thee, * O Lord my God, * who hast exalted the horn of The faithful O good One, * and strengthened us upon the rock * of Thy confession.

He Who, as God, seeth all things, O blessed and right wondrous one, in a godly manner manifestly revealed and showed thee the knowledge of the future and what is to be.

Having strengthened thy mind with the boldness of piety, O blessed one, thou didst bow thyself down before the divine Spirit and received divine inspirations.

Theotokion: Behold, with faith all generations call thee blessed who, in a manner transcending nature, hast given birth in the flesh within time unto the timeless Word, yet remained a virgin.

Sedalion, in Tone VI: Spec. Mel.: "The portals of compassion...":

Having cleansed thy mind of defilement, O all-wise one, thou didst make it a divine mirror reflecting the rays of the Spirit of God; and now, rejoicing, thou hast departed unto the Source of effulgence, O prophet Zephaniah.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion in Tone VI:

Groaning from my heart and inmost parts do I offer thee, O all-immaculate one, asking thine aid, which is accompanied by good. Have mercy upon my greatly suffering soul. Move thou the most merciful God to pity, that He deliver me from damnation and the lake of fire, O thou who alone art blessed.

Or this Stavrotheotokion in Tone VI:

The ever-virgin Maiden who gaveth birth unto Thee, O Christ, beholding Thee suspended upon the Cross for our sake, was wounded heart and soul by the sword of grief, and wept, lamenting maternally. By her supplications have mercy upon us, O Merciful One.

ODE IV

Irmos: Christ is my power, * my God and my Lord, * the holy Church divinely singeth, * crying with a pure mind, * keeping festival in the Lord.

The Lord of all appeared to us in accordance with thy prophecy, O blessed one, calling all to knowledge of Him; and freeing us from slavery.

Illumined by grace, thou didst make proclamation, speaking to those who bow low to labor beneath the one yoke, who follow the Faith and serve the Lord.

Theotokion: O all-pure Mary, still thou the tumult of the passions of my mind and the storm of temptations, as thou hast given birth unto the Wellspring of dispassion, O Virgin Mother.

ODE V

Irmos: Illumine with Thy divine light, I pray, O Good One, * the souls of those who with love rise early to pray to Thee, * that they may know Thee, O Word of God, * as the true God, * Who recalleth us from the darkness of sin.

By thine entreaties, O blessed and glorious prophet, convert me from unrighteousness to virtue, and from the captivity of the passions lead me to the light of piety.

Having enlightened thy soul with the comeliness of the virtues, thou didst show it to be pleasing to the splendors of the divine Spirit, by Whom thou hast been enriched by the grace of prophecy.

Theotokion: In many forms the words of the prophets proclaim thy birthgiving, O most pure one; and we, beholding now their fulfillment, truly declare thee to be the Theotokos.

ODE VI

Irmos: Beholding the sea of life surging with the flood of temptations, * I run to Thy calm haven, and cry to Thee: * Raise up my life from corruption, * O Most Merciful One.

Receiving the rays of the Spirit through revelation, O glorious one, like a mirror thou didst reflect the splendors of divine prophecy upon the world, prophesying the things of the future as though they were present.

The King hath come! Rejoice and adorn thyself, O Zion, beholding Him! He hath enlightened the world with the brilliant rays of His divinity and hath put the delusion of the demons to shame!

Theotokion: In thy womb the Only-begotten of the Father united Himself to flesh of clay; He Who is One Person of two natures issued forth from thee without corruption, preserving thy pure virginity intact, O all-hymned one.

Kontakion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared ...":

Thou wast shown to be brilliant by the divine Spirit, O prophet Zephaniah, * proclaiming the coming of God: * Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion! * Proclaim Him, O Jerusalem! ** Behold, thy King cometh to save mankind!

ODE VII

Irmos: An Angel made the furnace sprinkle dew on the holy Children. * But the command of God consumed the Chaldeans * and prevailed upon the tyrant to cry: * O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

Thy memory hath shone upon the world like the sun, illumining with the grace of thy prophecy those who with faith chant together: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Revealed to be like a cloud heavy laden with showers, thou didst let fall upon us a shower of divine knowledge from the springs of salvation, O blessed one, whereby we are enlightened to cry out: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: Desiring in His divine will to restore mankind, the Word, Who of old gave existence to all things, made His abode within thy womb, O pure and blessed one, who hast given birth to God in the flesh.

ODE VIII

Irmos: Thou didst make flame sprinkle the Saints with dew, * and didst burn the sacrifice of a righteous man with water. * For Thou alone, O Christ, dost do all as Thou willest, * and Thee do we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Offered wholly to the Almighty, thou wast instructed in the mysteries by way of foreknowledge, teaching the Gentiles in accordance with God's providence. Wherefore, we hymn thee, O divinely eloquent prophet.

Offer up a hymn of supplication on behalf of those who hymn thee, O divinely blessed one, and put an end to the turmoil of temptations, that we may hymn thee, O divinely eloquent prophet.

Theotokion: Giving birth to God, the Lord and Bestower of life, O most pure one, thou didst abolish the unrestrained tyranny of death, slaying it. Wherefore, we hymn thee throughout all ages.

ODE IX

Irmos: It is impossible for mankind to see God * upon Whom the orders of Angels dare not gaze; * but through thee, O all-pure one, * did the Word Incarnate become a man * and with the Heavenly Hosts * Him we magnify and thee we call blessed.

Thou madest thine abode in the land of the meek, where, after thy repose, thou dost behold the splendors of the angels, O all-wise Zephaniah, thou prophet of God, shining with grace in that thou art meek. Wherefore, rejoicing, we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

Radiantly beholding the fulfillment of thy prophecies, O most glorious one, we marvel at the grace given thee and the purity of thy mind, and we are struck with wonder at thy godly soul.

Theotokion: **N**o other like thee hath ever been given to us from generations of old, O all-immaculate Mother of God; for thou, alone of all, hast incomparable sanctity and purity. Wherefore, thou didst receive within thyself God incarnate.

AT LITURGY

Troparion of the prophet, in Tone II:

Celebrating the memory of Thy Prophet Zephaniah, O Lord, * through him we entreat Thee: ** Save Thou our souls!

Kontakion of the prophet, in Tone IV:

Thou wast shown to be brilliant by the divine Spirit, O prophet Zephaniah, * proclaiming the coming of God: * Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion! * Proclaim Him, O Jerusalem! ** Behold, thy King cometh to save mankind!