

The 15 Old Testament Readings

#1

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from Genesis (1:1-13).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then 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, the first day. And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome 'Sky'. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky 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. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

#2

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah (60:1-16).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness shall cover the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought 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 Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall be acceptable 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 children from far away, 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 struck you down, but in My favour I have had mercy on you. Your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut, so that nations shall bring you their wealth, 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 glorify where My feet rest. The descendants 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 forever, a joy from age to age. You shall suck the milk of nations, you shall suck the breasts of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Saviour and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

#3

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from Exodus (12:1-11).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: "This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. 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. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord."

#4

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Jonah (1:1- 4: 11).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, 'Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.' But Jonah set out 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 his 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 such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold

of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. The captain came and said to him, 'What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.'

The sailors said to one another, 'Come, let us cast lots, so that we may know on whose account this calamity has come upon us.' So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, 'Tell us why this calamity has come upon us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?' 'I am a Hebrew,' he replied. 'I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, Who made the sea and the dry land.' Then the men were even more 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 so. Then they said to him, 'What shall we do to you, that the sea may quieten down for us?' For the sea was growing more and more tempestuous. He said to them, 'Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quieten down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great storm 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 stormy against them. Then they cried out to the Lord, 'Please, O Lord, we pray, do not let us perish on account of this man's life. Do not make us guilty of innocent blood; for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.' So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. But the Lord provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 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 You heard my voice. 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. Then I said, "I am driven away from Your sight; how shall I look again upon Your holy temple?" The waters closed in over me; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped around my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me for ever; yet You brought up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God. As my life was ebbing away, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to You, into Your holy temple. Those who worship vain idols forsake their true loyalty. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to You; what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!' Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land. The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 'Get up,

go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: 'By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knows? God may relent and change His mind; He may turn from His fierce anger, so that we do not perish.' When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed His mind about the calamity that He had said He would bring upon them; and He did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, 'O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that You are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.' And the Lord said, 'Is it right for you to be angry?' Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city. The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?' And he said, 'Yes, angry enough to die.' Then the Lord said, 'You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labour and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?'

#5

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from Joshua (5:10-15).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: While the Israelites were encamped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year. Once when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, 'Are you one of us, or one of our adversaries?' He replied, 'Neither; but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped, and he said to him, 'What do you command your servant, my lord?' The commander of the army of the Lord said to Joshua, 'Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so.

#6

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from Exodus (13:20-15:1).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: They set out from Succoth, and camped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. Then the Lord said to Moses: 'Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baalzephon; you shall camp opposite it, by the sea. Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has

closed in on them.' I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, so that I will gain glory for Myself over Pharaoh and all his army; 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 minds of Pharaoh and his officials were changed towards the people, and they said, 'What have we done, letting Israel leave our service?' So he had his chariot made ready, and took his army with him; he took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the Israelites, who were going out boldly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, his chariot drivers and his army; they overtook them camped by the sea, by Pihahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told 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.' But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish 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 keep still.' Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for Myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.' The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots,

and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.' Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord, and spoke saying:

Reader: (in a loud voice) Let us sing to the Lord:

#7

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Zephaniah (3:8-15).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: 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 passion all the earth shall be consumed. 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, My scattered ones, shall bring My offering. On that day you shall not be put to shame because of all 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 – the remnant of Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths. Then they will pasture and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid. Sing aloud, O daughter Zion! Shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you, He has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

#8

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from Third Book of Kings
(1 Kings 17:8-24 or LXX, III Kings 17:8-24).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.' So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he

came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, 'Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.' As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, 'Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.' But 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 jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.' Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.' She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that He spoke by Elijah. After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. She then 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!' But he said to her, 'Give me your son.' He took him from her bosom, carried him up into the upper chamber where he was lodging, and laid him on his own bed. He cried out to the Lord, 'O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I am staying, by killing her son?' Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried out to the Lord, 'O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again.' The Lord listened to the voice of Elijah; the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. Elijah took the child, brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and gave him to his mother; then Elijah said, 'See, your son is alive.' So 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.'

#9

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah (61:10-62:5).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being 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 up 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 shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that 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 young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

#10

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from Genesis (22:1-18).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' 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 on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And

he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God Himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together. When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.' And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.' 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 make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed My voice.'

#11

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah (61:1-19).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for 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. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display His glory. 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. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines; but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. Because their shame was double, and dishonour was proclaimed as their lot, therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs. For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; 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 among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.

#12

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from Fourth Book of Kings
(2 Kings 4:8-27 or LXX, IV Kings 4:8-27).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: One day Elisha was passing through Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to have a meal. So whenever he passed that way, he would stop there for a meal. She said to her husband, 'Look, I am sure that this man who regularly passes our way is a holy man of God. 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 he can stay there whenever he comes to us.' One day when he came there, he went up to the chamber and lay down there. He said to his servant Gehazi, 'Call the Shunammite woman.' When he had called her, she stood before him. He said to him, 'Say to her: "Since you have taken all this trouble for us, what may 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 live among my own people.' He said, 'What then may be done for her?' Gehazi answered, 'Well, she has no son, and her husband is old.' He said, 'Call her.' When he had called her, she stood at the door. He said, 'At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son.' She replied, 'No, my lord, O man of God; do not deceive your servant.' The woman conceived and bore a son at that season, in due time, as Elisha had declared to her. When the child was older, he

went out one day to his father among the reapers. He complained to his father, 'Oh, my head, my head!' The father said to his servant, 'Carry him to his mother.' He carried him and brought him to his mother; the child sat on her lap until noon, and he died. She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, closed the door on him, and left. Then she called to her husband, and said, 'Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again.' He said, 'Why go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.' She said, 'It will be all right.' Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, 'Urge the animal on; do not hold back 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, there is the Shunammite woman; run at once to meet her, and say to her, "Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?"' She answered, 'It is all right.' When she came to the man of God at the mountain, she caught hold of his feet. Gehazi approached to push her away. But the man of God said, 'Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress; the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me.'

#13

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah (63:11-64:5).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: Then they remembered the days of old, of Moses His servant. Where is the One Who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is the One Who put within them His holy spirit, Who caused His glorious arm to march 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. Thus You led Your people, to make for Yourself a glorious name. Look down from heaven and see, from Your holy and glorious habitation. Where are Your zeal and Your might? The yearning of Your heart and Your compassion? They are withheld from me. For 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. Why, O Lord, do You make us stray from Your ways and harden our heart, so that we do not fear You? Turn back for the sake of Your servants, for the sake of the tribes that are Your heritage. Your holy people took possession for a little while; but now our adversaries have trampled down Your sanctuary. We have long been like those whom You do not rule, like those not called by Your name. O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at Your presence – as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil – to make Your name known to Your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at Your presence! When You did awesome deeds that we did not expect, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides You, Who works for those who wait for Him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember You in Your ways. But You were angry, and we sinned; because You hid Yourself we transgressed.

#14

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Jeremiah (31:31-34).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt – a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that 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 on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, '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 remember their sin no more.

#15

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Daniel (3:1-57).

Priest: Let us attend!

Reader: In his eighteenth year, King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue whose height was sixty cubits and whose width was six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent for the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counsellors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to assemble and come to the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. So the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counsellors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, assembled for the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. When they were standing before the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, 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, drum, and entire musical ensemble, you are to fall down and worship the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.' Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshipped the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Accordingly, at this time certain Chaldeans came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, 'O king, live for ever! You, O king, have made a decree, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, shall fall down and worship the golden statue, and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These pay no heed to you, O king. They do not serve your gods and they do not worship the golden statue that you have set up.' Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar said to them, 'Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach,

and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, 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 present a defence to you in this matter. If our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let Him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.' Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace to be heated up seven times more than was customary, and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. Because the king's command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire. And they walked about in the midst of the flames, singing hymns to God and blessing the Lord. Then Abednego stood and offered this prayer; in the midst of the fire he opened his mouth and said:

"Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and worthy of praise; and Your name is glorified forever. For You are just in all that You have done to us, and all Your works are true and Your ways right, and all Your judgements are truth. You have executed true judgements in all that You have brought upon us and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our fathers, for in truth and justice You have brought all this upon us because of our sins. For we have sinfully and lawlessly departed from You, and have sinned in all things and have not obeyed Your commandments; we have not observed them or done them, as You have commanded us that it might go well with us. So all that You have brought upon us, and all that You have done to us, You have done in true judgement. You have given us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful rebels, and to an unjust king, the most wicked in all the world. And now we cannot open our mouths; shame and disgrace have befallen Your servants and worshippers. For Your name's sake do not give us up utterly, and do not break Your

covenant, and do not withdraw Your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham Your beloved and for the sake of Isaac Your servant and Israel Your holy one, to whom You promised to make their descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the shore of the sea. For we, O Lord, have become fewer than any nation, and are brought low this day in all the world because of our sins. And at this time there is no prince, or prophet, or leader; no burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense; no place to make an offering before You or to find mercy. Yet with a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted, as though it were with burnt offerings of rams and bulls, and with tens of thousands of fat lambs; such may our sacrifice be in Your sight this day, and may we wholly follow You, for there will be no shame for those who trust in You. And now with all our heart we follow You, we fear You and seek Your face. Do not put us to shame, but deal with us in Your forbearance and in Your abundant mercy. Deliver us in accordance with Your marvellous works, and give glory to Your name, O Lord! Let all who do harm to Your servants be put to shame; them be disgraced and deprived of all power and dominion, and let their strength be broken. Let them know that You are the Lord, the only God, glorious over the whole world.”

Now the king’s servants who threw them in did not cease feeding the furnace fires with naphtha, pitch, tow, and brush. And the flame streamed out above the furnace forty-nine cubits, and it broke through and burned those of the Chaldeans whom it caught about in the furnace. But the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace to be with Abednego and his companions, and drove the fiery flame out of the furnace, and made the midst of the furnace like a moist whistling wind, so that the fire did not touch them at all or hurt or trouble them. Then the three, as with one mouth, praised and glorified and blessed God in the furnace saying: “Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and to be praised and highly exalted forever; and blessed is Your glorious, holy name, and to be highly praised and highly exalted forever. Blessed are You in the temple of Your holy glory, and to be extolled and highly glorified forever. Blessed are You, Who sit upon cherubim and look upon the deeps, and to be praised and highly exalted forever. Blessed are You upon the throne of Your kingdom, and to be extolled and highly exalted forever. Blessed are You in the firmament of heaven,...

Reader: *(in a loud voice)* ...and to be sung and glorified forever.