

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Genesis

God said to Abraham: "Sarai thy wife- her name shall not be called Sarai; Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her and give thee a son of her, and I will bless him, and he shall become nations, and kings of nations shall be of him." And Abraham fell upon his face, and spake in his mind saying: "Shall there be a child to one who is a hundred years old, and shall Sarah, who is ninety years old bear?" And God said to Abraham: "Yea, behold, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant." And Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in days. And Sarah laughed within herself, saying: "The thing hath not yet happened to me, even until now, and my lord is old." And the Lord God said to Abraham: "Why is it that Sarah hath laughed in herself, saying: 'Shall I then indeed bear? But I am grown old.' Shall anything be impossible with the Lord?" And the Lord God visited Sarah, as He said, and the Lord did to Sarah, as He spake. And Abraham circumcised his son on the eighth day, as the Lord God commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him. And Sarah said: "The Lord hath made laughter for me, for whosoever shall hear shall rejoice with me. " And she said: "Who shall say to Abraham that Sarah suckles a child? For I have borne a child in mine old age." And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day his son Isaac was weaned.

A Reading from the Book of Judges

In those days, there was a man of the tribe of Dan, and his name was Manoah, and his wife was barren and bore not. And an angel of the Lord appeared to the woman, and said to her: "Behold, thou art barren; yet thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bear a son. But now be very cautious, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat no unclean thing. For, lo! Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bear a son. And there shall come no razor upon his head, and the child shall be consecrated to God from birth." And the woman went, and spake to her husband, saying: "A man of God came to me, and his appearance was as of an angel of God, exceeding bright. And he said: 'Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bear a son. And now

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drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat no unclean thing; for the child shall be consecrated to God from his birth even unto the day of his death." And Manoah prayed to God and said: "O Lord, let the man of God, whom Thou didst send to me, come to us again, and enlighten us as to what we should do when the child is born." And the angel of the Lord came to Manoah and said: "Of all things concerning which I spoke to the woman, she shall beware. She shall eat of nothing that cometh of the vine yielding wine, and let her not drink wine or strong liquor." And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord: "What is thy name, that when what thou hast said will come to pass, we may glorify thee?" And the angel of the Lord said to him: "Wherefore dost thou thus ask after my name, whereas it is awesome?" And the angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife.

A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

Thus saith the Lord: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith God. Speak, ye priests, to the heart of Jerusalem; comfort her, for her humiliation is accomplished, her sin is put away: for she hath received from the Lord's hand double the amount of her sins. The voice of one is heard crying in the wilderness: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God." O thou who bringest good tidings to Sion, go thou up upon the high mountain; lift up thy voice with strength, O thou who bringest glad tidings to Jerusalem. Lift it up; fear not. I, the Lord God, I will hearken to the poor of Israel, and will not forsake them. But I will open rivers on the mountains, and fountains in the midst of the plain; I will make the desert into a meadow, and a thirsty land springs of water. Let heaven rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness; let the earth bring forth and blossom with mercy, and let righteousness shine forth likewise. Utter aloud a voice of joy, and it shall be heard; proclaim it even unto the ends of the earth. Say ye that the Lord hath delivered His servant Jacob. And if they shall thirst, He shall lead them through the desert; He shall bring forth water for them out of the rock. Be glad, thou barren woman who bearest not; break forth and cry. O thou who dost not travail: for more are the children of the desolate than of her who hath a husband.

Reader: In the 1st Tone-Ye mountains, put forth sweetness

Ye mountains put forth sweetness! /

Ye hills, leap up like lambs! /

For the Forerunner of the Lord, who loosed the muteness of his father at his birth, /

hath been born of Elizabeth, desiring to make his abode with us. /

Wherefore, we cry aloud to him: /

O thou who baptized Christ, entreat Him, that our souls be saved!

O voice who art a sign from God, /

candlestand of the Light, /

Forerunner of the Lord, thou to whom witness is borne by Christ, /

thou foremost of the prophets: /

Make supplication in behalf of the world, /

and be thou especially mindful of thy flock, //

that it be preserved unharmed.

Thou wast a preacher of the Word and Lamb of God, /

O prophet and Forerunner John. /

Thou foretellest things to come, and dost prophesy unto the ends of the earth: /

Behold, the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world, //

and granteth great mercy unto all!

Reader: Glory, in the 5th Tone:

The image shows a musical score for a reader. It consists of two staves, a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The melody is written on the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spi - - - - rit." The word "Spi" is followed by four dashes, indicating a long note or a pause. The music is in a simple, liturgical style.

Today Elizabeth giveth birth to the ultimate prophet, /
the first of the apostles, /
the earthly angel and heavenly man, /
the voice of the Word, /
the soldier and Forerunner of Christ, /
who leapt up beforehand in token of the promise, /
and before his birth proclaimed the Sun of righteousness; /
and she rejoiceth. /
Zechariah is astonished in his old age, /
putting aside his silence like a bond imposed upon him; /
and as the father of the voice he doth manifestly prophesy: /
"For thou, O child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High /
and shalt go forth to prepare the way for Him.: /
Wherefore, O angel, prophet, apostle, warrior, /
Forerunner, baptizer, preacher and instructor of repentance: /
As the voice of the Light and Word, //
pray thou unceasingly for us who keep thy memory with faith.

Reader: Both now, in the same tone.

Both now and ever and unto the a - ges of a - - - - ges. A-men.

Thou art the temple and portal, /
 The palace and throne of the King, /
 O most honored Virgin, /
 Through whom Christ the Lord, my Deliverer, /
 Who is the Sun of righteousness, /
 hath revealed Himself unto those who sleep in darkness, /
 Desiring to enlighten /
 that which He fashioned by His own hand in His image. /
 Wherefore, O most lauded one, /
 as thou hast acquired maternal boldness before Him, //
 Entreat Him without ceasing that our souls be saved.