

**THE 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**A**s 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 shown to be the divinely inspired mouth of the Spirit. \* Proclaiming the things shown to thee by Him \* and relating to all the nations \* the salvation given to men \* and the kingdom of Christ, O most 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 vouchsafed divine blessedness, \* possessed now of thy boldness toward the All-good One \* and sympathy, \* cease thou never to pray \* in behalf of them that 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.

**T**hou 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 the same melody and tone:**

**A**s the intercessor for our whole race, \* O most immaculate Theotokos, \* from every attack of the enemy \* save them that 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 them that have recourse to thy protection.

**B**ehold, 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 most immaculate Mistress, \* who gavest birth unto the Healer of men's souls and bodies, \* do thou grant me healing thereof, \* pouring forth the oil \* of thy lovingkindness 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 and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:**

**I**n 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 all-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 delight of the deceiver.

**Or this Stavrotheotokion, in the same tone and melody:**

**L**ament 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 them that 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:**

**C**elebrating the memory of Thy prophet Zephaniah, O Lord, through him do 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 traversed the deep on foot as on dry land, beholding the persecutor Pharaoh drowned, they cried out: Let us chant unto 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 most wise Zephaniah; wherefore, rejoicing, we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

**Theotokion:** The Sun which shone forth from thy holy womb, O Mistress, 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 holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast exalted the horn of Thy faithful, O Good One, and hast established us upon the rock of Thy confession.

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

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

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

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

Having cleansed thy mind of defilement, O most 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 and ever ..., Theotokion:*

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:

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 Lord, the holy Church doth sing in godly manner, crying out 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 He hath freed us from slavery.

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

**Theotokion: O** most pure Mary, still thou the tumult of the passions of my mind and the storm of temptations, as thou gavest birth unto the Wellspring of dispassion, O Virgin Mother.

**ODE V**

**Irmos: With Thy divine light, O Good One, do Thou illumine the souls of them that with love wake at dawn to Thee, I pray, that they may know Thee, O Word of God, to be the true God, Who doth call them forth from the gloom 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 forth as 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 birth giving, O all-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 storm of temptations, fleeing to Thy calm haven I cry unto Thee: Lead 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 shine 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 falsehood 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 most lauded 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:** The Angel made the furnace put forth dew for the venerable children, and the command of God, consuming the Chaldeans, compelled the tyrant to cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

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

Shown forth as 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: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

**Theotokion:** Desiring in His divine will to restore man, the Word, Who of old gaveth all things existence, made His abode within thy womb, O pure and blessed one, who gayest birth unto God in the flesh.

### ODE VIII

**Irmos:** From the flame didst Thou pour forth dew upon the venerable ones, and didst consume the sacrifice of the righteous with water; for Thou, O Christ, dost do all things whatsoever Thou willest. Thee do we exalt supremely for 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 in behalf of them that 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 all-pure one, thou didst abolish the unrestrained tyranny of death, slaying it. Wherefore, we hymn thee for all ages.

### ODE IX

**Irmos:** It is not possible for men to see God, upon Whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but, through thee, O all-pure one, the incarnate Word appeared unto men; and, magnifying Him with the armies of heaven, we call thee blessed.

**T**hou madest thine abode in the land of the meek, where, since thy repose, thou beholdest the splendors of the angels, O most wise Zephaniah, thou prophet of God, shining with grace in that thou art meek. Wherefore, rejoicing, we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

**R**adiantly beholding the fulfillment of thy prophecies, O all-glorious one, we marvel at the grace given thee and the purity of thy mind, and we are struck with wonder by thy soul, O godly one.

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