

February 2nd. The Meeting of the Lord.

Readings at Vespers

(1) The Reading is from Exodus. *[12:51- 13:16 and selection from Leviticus and Numbers]*

The Lord spoke to Moses on the day on which he brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, saying, ‘Sanctify to me every first-born, first produced, that opens the womb among the children of Israel.’ And Moses went, and gathered all the people, and said, ‘Remember this day, on which you came out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery, for the Lord has brought us out from there with a mighty hand. And keep his law. And it shall be that when the Lord God brings you into the land of the Canaanites, in the way that he swore to your fathers, you shall set apart every firstborn that opens the womb; the males to the Lord. And it shall be that if after this your son asks you, saying, “What is this?” then you will say to him, “God brought us out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery, with a mighty hand. And when Pharaoh hardened his heart against sending us out, the Lord slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of humans to the first-born of animals. This is why I sacrifice everything male that opens the womb, and every first-born of my sons I will redeem.” And it will be for an immovable sign before your eyes, because thus said the Lord God Almighty, “All the first-born of your sons you will give to me. And it shall be that everyone who gives birth to a male child shall circumcise the flesh of its foreskin on the eighth day. And for thirty three days he will not come into the sanctuary of God to the Priest, until the days of purification are completed. And after this he will offer to the Lord an unblemished yearling lamb for a whole burnt offering, and a young pigeon or turtle dove to the Priest in front of the doors of the Tent of Witness. Or instead of these he will offer to the Lord two young pigeons or two turtle doves, and the Priest will make atonement for him. Because these have been offered to me as an offering out of all the children of Israel, and I have taken them and sanctified them for myself in place of the first-born of the Egyptians, on the day when I struck every first-born in the land of Egypt from human to beast of burden,” said God the Most High, the Holy One of Israel.’

(2) The Reading is from the Prophecy of Esaiās. [6:,1-12]

It came to pass in the year that King Ozias died, that I saw the Lord, seated on a high and exalted throne, and the house was full of his glory. And Seraphim stood around him, the one having six wings and the other having six wings, and with two they covered their faces and with two they covered their feet and with two they flew. And one cried to the other, and they said, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Sabaoth. The whole earth is full of his glory.’ The lintel was lifted up at the voice with which they cried, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, ‘Woe is me! For I am pricked to the heart, because I, being human and having unclean lips, dwell among a people having unclean lips, and with my eyes I have seen the King, the Lord Sabaoth.’ And one of the Seraphim was sent to me, and in his hand he held a burning coal, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips and it will take away your iniquities and cleanse your sins.’ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go to this people?’ And I said, ‘See, here am I: send me.’ And he said, ‘Go, and say to this people, “Hearing, you will hear and not understand, and seeing, you will see and not perceive.” For the heart of this people has grown fat, and they have heard with heavy ears and they have shut their eyes, lest perhaps they perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn back, and I will heal them.’ And I said, ‘Until when, O Lord?’ And he said, ‘Until the cities are deserted from being uninhabited and the houses from there being no people, and the land will be abandoned as desert. And after this God will remove the people far away, and those who are left behind will be multiplied on the land.’

(3) The Reading is from the Prophecy of Esaiās. [19:1,3-5,12,16,19-21]

See, the Lord will be seated on a light cloud, and will come to Egypt, and the idols of Egypt will be shaken at his presence and their heart will be discomfited within them. ‘And their spirit will be troubled within them, and I will frustrate their counsel, and hand Egypt over into the hands of harsh lords,’ for the Holy Master, the Lord Sabaoth, says these things. And the Egyptians will drink water that is beside the sea, while the river will fail and be dried up. Thus says the Lord, ‘Where now are your wise men? Let them declare to you and let them say to you what the Lord Sabaoth has planned against Egypt.’ On that day the Egyptians will be in fear and trembling in the presence of the hand of the Lord Sabaoth, which he will bring against them. And there will be an Altar to the Lord in the land of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at its border. And it will be for a sign for ever to the Lord Sabaoth in the land of Egypt, because they will cry to the Lord, and the Lord will send them a man who will save them. And the Lord will be known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day, and they will offer sacrifice and gift, and they will make vows and pay them to the Lord.