

# September 5

## Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Zechariah, the Father of the Forerunner

(5th Class)

### VESPERS

*Stichera for the Apostles (Tone 6)*

6. Having received the heavenly power of the Paraclete, the Apostles of Christ drove back the hordes of the enemy. They put the wise to shame and triumphed over kings, though they were unskilled and unlettered, fighting without shields or weapons, armed only with the Gospel. By the word of truth, they worked wonders and brought the nations to obedience to Christ; and they now boldly intercede on behalf of our souls.
5. For love of You, the glorious Apostles renounced themselves and followed after You wholeheartedly. Taking up their cross in Your footsteps, in obedience to Your command, they abandoned the earth and received Heaven as their inheritance, bringing the nations to knowledge of You, O Lord. Having become Your companions forever, they now boldly intercede on behalf of our souls.
4. Having spent my whole life in negligence, I have come to its end without bearing any fruit, carrying only the painful burden of my evil deeds, O God of all goodness. O Lover of Mankind, blot them out by the power of Your love. Grant me compunction and a saving conversion at the prayers of Your Apostles, O my God, whom I offer to You as intercessors together with the Woman who gave You birth.

*For Zechariah (Tone 4)*

3. Clothed in your holy vestments and your anointing, you ministered before God like an angel, O Zechariah, prophet all worthy of our praise, serving as a mediator between creatures and their Creator. You openly received the revelation of the Holy Spirit; thus we call you blessed as we celebrate your holy feast today, singing the glory of the Savior.
2. O Zechariah, divinely inspired Prophet, you beheld the Son, coeternal to the Father, as an Infant born of the Virgin. Of your own son, you clearly foretold, "You shall be the prophet preparing the way for God!" With him, we call you blessed, O God-bearer filled with eternal joy, and we reverently celebrate your feast.
1. You were the incarnate Temple, the living dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, O illustrious Prophet. As you approached your God with a pure heart in the midst of the Temple, you ended your course, slaughtered unjustly in martyrdom, O wondrous Zechariah. Thus you were lifted up to the heavenly Temple where, with the price of your blood, you beg forgiveness for the faithful who venerate you.
- v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

*Doxastikon (Tone 8)*

Robed in your vestments as a priest of the Law, you served in the priesthood of Aaron. In the middle of the Temple, you clearly saw the form of an angel, O blessed Zechariah. Thus, as is right, we sing of your death, celebrating you with hymns as the branch from which, despite old age, flowered the illustrious John. Intercede for our salvation before the compassionate God.

- now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

At the prayers of the Mother who bore You, preserve the flock You redeemed by Your blood. Protect it from hostile threats, O compassionate Lord, so that we may glorify Your infinite condescension as we sing to You, O our God.

*"O Joyful Light..." Prokimenon of Wednesday evening.*

**APOSTICHA** (*Tone 8*)

1. O wonder which fills us with amazement! The Archangel who stands before God in the heights of Heaven comes to the holy servant Zechariah to announce the conception of the Forerunner, born of a barren woman in her old age. Ineffable is Your Providence, O Lord! By it, save our souls, O compassionate Christ!

All: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; He has come to His people and set them free.

2. O wonder which fills us with amazement! The silencing of the Old Testament and the announcement of the New are both clearly prophesied by the muteness of Zechariah. Passing through the fulfillment of the Law in silence, he clearly manifests the light of grace. Wise is Your Providence, O Lord! By it, guard us, O almighty Lover of Mankind!

All: You, my child, shall be called the Prophet of the Most High.

3. O wonder which fills us with amazement! Zechariah is seen bearing a triple crown, O Lord, because of his fidelity as a priest, his excellence as a martyr, and his mission as a prophet announcing Your coming. Immeasurable is the richness of Your gifts! By them, make us worthy of Your Kingdom, O Christ, our Beloved!

All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

*Doxastikon (Tone 2)*

In your priestly purity, you entered into the Holy of Holies, robed in your sacred vestments. In all innocence, you ministered before God, following the prescriptions of the Law, like Aaron. Like Moses, you led the tribes of Israel in the pure ringing of golden bells. Likewise, you were put to death; but your just blood was a saving remedy for us, a perfume of sweet fragrance, which opened the way to pass to eternal life. Thrice-blessed Zechariah, husband of Elizabeth, father of John, ceaselessly intercede for our souls before God.

- now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

The multitude of my offenses truly reaches above my head, O spotless virgin, and in the multiplication of my sins, I carry too heavy a burden, wretched and incorrigible as I am. But by your fervent intercession, hasten to save me, for in you, sinners rediscover the way.

**TROPARION OF ZECHERIAH (Tone 4)**

Arrayed as a priest, O wise Zechariah, you offered a worthy holocaust in proper priestly manner according to God's Law. You became a shining light and a seer of the mysteries, bearing within you clearly the markings of grace, O perfectly wise one! You were killed by the sword in God's Temple. O prophet of God, together with the Forerunner, beseech Him that He may save our souls!

v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

**THEOTOKION OF THURSDAY (Tone 4)**

O Virgin Theotokos, we acknowledge that the Word of the Father, Christ our God, was incarnate of you, the only pure one, the only blessed one. Wherefore we sing to you a hymn of praise and we exalt you.