

THE LAMENTATIONS of Holy Saturday

First Stasis

Tone V

<http://www.orthodox.net/services/lamentations-of-holy-saturday.html>

<http://www.orthodox.net/services/lamentations-of-holy-saturday.pdf>

<http://www.orthodox.net/services/lamentations-of-holy-saturday.doc>

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

In a grave they laid Thee, * O my life and my Christ; * and the armies of the angels were sore amazed, * as they sang the praise of Thy submissive love.

***Blessed are they that search out His testimonies;
with their whole heart shall they seek after Him.***

How, O Life, canst Thou die? * Or abide in a grave? * For thou dost destroy the kingdom of death, O Lord, * and Thou raisest up the dead of Hades' realm.

For they that work iniquity have not walked in His ways.

Now we magnify Thee, * O Lord Jesus, our King; * and we venerate Thy Passion and Burial, * whereby from corruption's bowels are we redeemed.

***Thou hast enjoined Thy commandments,
that we should keep them most diligently.***

Thou Who didst establish * the earth's bounds dost now dwell * in a small grave, O my Jesus, Thou King of all, * Who dost call the dead to leave their graves and rise.

Would that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes.

O my dear Christ Jesus, * King and Ruler of all, * why to them that dwelt in Hades didst Thou descend? * Was it not to set the race of mortals free?

Then shall I not be ashamed, when I look on all Thy commandments.

Lo, the Sov'reign Ruler * of creation is dead * and is buried in a tomb never used before, * He that emptied all the graves of all their dead.

I will confess Thee with uprightness of heart,

when I have learned the judgments of Thy righteousness.

In a grave they laid Thee, * O my Life and my Christ. * Yet, behold now, by Thy death, death is stricken down, * and Thou pourest forth life's streams for all the world.

I will keep thy statutes; do not utterly forsake me.

Thou, O Christ, wast numbered * with men of evil deeds * as one evil, and didst also deliver us * from the ancient schemer's evil works and deeds.

Wherewithal shall a young man correct his way? By keeping Thy words.

Lo, how fair His beauty! * Never man was so fair! * Yet how doth He seem a dead man bereft of form, * though all nature's beauty had Him as its source.

With my whole heart have I sought after Thee,

cast me not away from Thy commandments.

How could Hell, O Saviour, * bear Thy Presence divine, * and not rather be demolished in utter gloom, * blinded by the splendor of Thy dazzling light?

In my heart have I hid Thy sayings that I might not sin against Thee.

O my sweet Lord, Jesus, * my Salvation, my Light: * How art Thou now hid within a dark sepulchre? * Lo, Thy burial surpasseth human speech.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

Angel-kind, O Master, * and the bodiless host * cannot understand the mystery, O my Christ, * of Thy burial ineffable and strange.

With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Thy mouth.

Lo, how strange these wonders, * deeds amazing and new; * for the Giver of my life is borne lifeless forth * by the hands of weeping Joseph to His rest.

***In the way of Thy testimonies have I found delight,
as much as in all riches.***

O Christ Jesus, Saviour, * in the grave Thou wast laid; * yet Thou didst not leave the bosom of Thy Father, Lord. * Lo, what strange and awesome wonders we behold!

On Thy commandments will I ponder, and I will understand Thy ways.

Unto all creation * wast Thou made known, O Christ, * as the true King of the firmament and the earth, * even though Thou wast enclosed in a small grave.

On Thy statutes will I meditate; I will not forget Thy words.

When, O Christ our Maker, * Thou wast laid in Thy tomb, * the foundation stones of Hades with ruin shook, * and the graves of mortal men were opened wide.

Give reward unto Thy servant, quicken me and I will keep Thy words.

He that holdeth all things * in the grasp of His hand, * in the flesh is now held dead in the depths of earth, * thereby freeing all the dead from Hades grasp.

O unveil mine eyes, and I shall perceive wondrous things out of Thy law.

Thou, my Life, O Saviour, * from corruption didst rise, * having died, and therefore dwelling among the dead, * and didst shatter the strong bolts of Hades hold.

I am a sojourner on the earth, hide not from me Thy commandments.

As a lamp of light beneath * a bushel is hid, * so now also in the earth is God's flesh concealed, * and doth drive away the gloom from Hades' realm

My soul hath longed to desire Thy judgments at all times.

Nicodemus, Joseph * and the bodiless hosts * come together now to bear Thee, the Infinite, * in their arms into a narrow grave of stone.

***Thou hast rebuked the proud;
cursed are they that decline from Thy commandments.***

By Thy willing death and * burial in the earth, * Fount of life, O Jesus, life didst Thou grant to me * who was dead in bitter and most grievous sins.

***Remove from me reproach and contempt,
for after Thy testimonies have I sought.***

By Thy willing Passion, * all creation was changed; * for it knew Thee, O my Jesus and Word of God, * as its Saviour and Redeemer from all debts.

***For princes sat and they spake against me,
but Thy servant pondered on Thy statutes.***

All-devouring Hades, * on receiving within * as a mortal Him that is the firm Rock of Life, * did spew forth the dead swallowed from ancient times.

***For Thy testimonies are my meditation,
and Thy statutes are my counselors.***

Thou, O Christ, wast buried * in a tomb newly made, * thus renewing the whole nature of mortal men, * by arising from the dead as God in truth.

***My soul hath cleaved unto the earth;
quicken me according to Thy word.***

Thou, O Master, camest * down to earth, as was meet, * to save Adam; and as Thou didst not find him there, * Thou didst go down into Hades seeking him.

***My ways have I declared,
and Thou hast heard me; teach me Thy statutes.***

All the earth was troubled * and did tremble with fear, * and the morning star, O Word, hid its brilliant rays, * when they hid Thee in the earth, O Most Great Life.

***Make me to understand the way of Thy statutes,
and I will ponder on Thy wondrous works.***

As a mortal, Saviour, * Thou didst willingly die; * but all mortal men that slept didst Thou raise, O God, * from their tombs and from the mighty depth of sin.

***My soul hath slumbered from despondency,
strengthen me with Thy words.***

Thy pure Mother, weeping * bitter tears over Thee, * O my Jesus, O my Saviour, she cried to Thee, * O my Son, how can I lay Thee in the grave?

***Remove from me the way of unrighteousness,
and with Thy law have mercy on me.***

Even as the seed of * wheat is hid in the bowels * of the earth, and thereby bringeth forth ears of grain, * thus hast Thou raised Adam's mortal sons, O Word.

I have chosen the way of truth, and Thy judgments have I not forgotten.

Saviour, Thou wast hidden * 'neath the earth like the sun, * and wast covered as with shrouds by the night of death; * but more radiantly do Thou arise, O Lord.

I have cleaved to Thy testimonies, O Lord; put me not to shame.

As the moon doth cover * the whole disc of the sun, * likewise, Saviour, art Thou now hidden by the grave, * Thou Who art in mortal flesh eclipsed by death.

***The way of Thy commandments have I run,
when Thou didst enlarge my heart.***

O my Life, Christ Saviour, * having tasted of death, * Thou hast freed all mortal men from the bonds of death. * Wherefore now, Thou grantest life unto our race.

***Set before me for a law, O Lord,
the way of Thy statutes, and I will seek after it continually.***

By Thy death, O Saviour, * Thou hast led back to life * Adam who of old, by malice was made to die; * Thou wast seen as the new Adam in the flesh.

***Give me understanding, and I will search out Thy law,
and I will keep it with my whole heart.***

Seeing Thee, O Saviour, * lying dead for our sakes, * the noetic hosts of Heaven were sore amazed, * and their faces did they cover with their wings.

Guide me in the path of Thy commandments, for I have desired it.

In Thy death, O Logos, * Joseph taketh Thee down * from the Tree and doth now lay Thee in a new tomb; * but as God do Thou arise and save all men.

Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies and not unto covetousness.

Thou Who art the gladness * of the angels, O Lord, * art become the cause of sorrow and grief to them, * seeing Thee, dead in the flesh, bereft of breath.

***Turn away mine eyes that I may not see vanity,
quicken Thou me in Thy way.***

When Thou wast once lifted * on the Tree, O our God, * Thou didst lift all living mortal men with Thyself, * and didst raise all them that lie beneath the earth.

Establish for Thy servant Thine oracle unto fear of Thee.

Like a lion, Saviour, * Thou didst sleep in the flesh; * and, though dead, Thou didst arise like a lion cub, * and didst cast away the weakness of the flesh.

Remove my reproach which I have feared, for Thy judgments are good.

Thou, O Lord, Who tookest * a rib from Adam's side * and didst fashion Eve, hast been pierced in Thine own side, * and didst thereby pour forth purifying streams.

***Behold, I have longed after Thy commandments;
in Thy righteousness quicken me.***

Secretly, O Saviour, * was the lamb slain of old; * but as One forgiving, Thou wast slain openly, * purifying all creation by Thy death.

***Let Thy mercy come also upon me,
O Lord, even Thy salvation according to Thy word.***

Truly, who can tell of * this most awesome new deed? * He that governeth creation accepteth now * pains of suffering, and dieth for our sakes.

***So shall I give an answer to them that reproach me,
for I have hoped in Thy words.***

All the angels cried out * in amazement and awe: * How is it that the Bestower of life is dead? * How is that God is closed up in a tomb?

***And take not utterly out of my mouth the word of truth,
for in Thy judgments have I hoped.***

From Thy side, O Saviour, * which was pierced by the spear, * Thou didst pour forth life for me who was cast from life, * and didst thereby grant me life with Thee, O Life.

So shall I keep Thy law continually, for ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Stretched upon the blest Tree, * Thou, O Jesus, didst make * all men one, and when Thy life-giving side was pierced, * Thou didst shed forgiveness on the race of man.

***And I walked in spaciousness,
for after Thy commandments have I sought.***

Noble Joseph, Saviour, * is now stricken with awe, * and doth nobly lay Thee in the earth as one dead; * by Thine awe-inspiring form he is amazed.

And I spake of Thy testimonies before kings, and I was not ashamed.

As one dead, O Jesus, * Thy good pleasure it was * to descend beneath the earth and to lead again * from the earth to Heaven those who fell therefrom.

And I meditated on Thy commandments which I have greatly loved.

Though, O sweetest Jesus, * Thou wast seen as one dead, * yet alive, as God, Thou didst bring again from earth * unto Heaven all of them that fell therefrom.

And I lifted up my hands to Thy commandments which I have loved.

Though we see Thee as dead, * yet Thou livest as God, * and dost give new life to mortal men who had died; * hence, my deadness hast Thou thereby put to death.

And I pondered on Thy statutes.

O, how full that joy was! * O, how great that delight! * wherewith Thou didst fill all them that were held by Hell, * when Thou shonest forth Thy light in those dark depths.

***Remember Thy words to Thy servant,
wherein Thou hast made me to hope.***

I adore Thy Passion, * Thine entombing I praise, * and I magnify Thy might, O Thou Friend of man; * from corruptive passions have they set me free.

***This hath comforted me in my humiliation,
for Thine oracle hath quickened me.***

A sword flashed against Thee, * O Christ, Saviour and Lord, * and the mighty one's cursed sword was then greatly dulled; * yea, and even Eden's sword was put to flight.

***The proud have transgressed exceedingly,
but from Thy law have I not declined.***

When the Ewe that bare Him, * saw them slaying her Lamb, * overcome by grievous torment she wailed aloud, * and moved all the flock to join her bitter cries.

I remembered Thy judgments of old, O Lord, and was comforted.

Though Thou art now buried * in a tomb made of stone, * and though Thou dost now go down into Hell, O Christ, * Thou dost lay Hell bare and emptiest the tombs.

***Despondency took hold upon me
because of the sinners who forsake Thy law.***

Thou that of Thine own will * didst descend 'neath the earth, * and didst quicken mortal men that had died of old, * in the Father's glory Thou didst lead them forth.

Thy statutes were my songs in the place of my sojourning.

For our sakes, One Person * of the Trinity came * and endured a painful death in the flesh for all; * hence, the sun doth tremble and the earth doth quake.

I remembered Thy name in the night, O Lord, and I kept Thy law.

Born of bitter water, * the descendants and sons * of the tribe of Judah laid Jesus in a pit, * though with manna He had fed and nourished them.

This hath happened unto me because I sought after Thy statutes.

Christ, the Judge, was brought to * an unjust judge for us; * and by him was He condemned to an unjust death * which He suffered on the Wood of the blest Cross.

Thou art my portion, O Lord; I said that I would keep Thy law.

O blood-guilty people, * insolent Israel, * how could ye redeem Barabbas, that lawless thief, * and deliver up the Saviour to the Cross?

I entreated Thy countenance with my whole heart:

Have mercy on me according to Thy word.

Thou that madest Adam * from the earth with Thy hand, * thou becamest man by nature for his own sake, * and wast crucified for him of Thine own will.

I have thought on Thy ways,

and I have turned my feet back to Thy testimonies.

Down to dreaded Hades * Thou descendedst, O Word, * in obedience to Thy Father's will, O Lord, * and didst raise up all the race of mortal men.

I made ready, and I was not troubled,

that I might keep Thy commandments.

Gone the Light the world knew! * Gone the Light that was mine! * O my Jesus, my Beloved and Desired One! * So the Virgin spake lamenting in her grief.

The cords of sinners have entangled me,

but Thy law have I not forgotten.

O Vindictive people, * murderous and corrupt, * come behold the linen sheet of the risen Christ * and the face-cloth which have put you all to shame.

***At midnight I arose to give thanks unto Thee
for the judgments of Thy righteousness.***

Come, O foul disciple, * filled with murder and gall, * show thou unto me the cause of thy wickedness, * whereby thou didst prove a traitor to my Christ.

***I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee,
and with them that keep Thy commandments.***

Feigning love for mankind, * for a price thou didst sell * Him that is the fragrant Myrrh, O remorseless one, * O most pestilent and utterly blind fool.

The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy; teach me Thy statutes.

What price wast thou given * for the Heavenly Myrrh? * What didst thou gain in return for the Precious One? * O accursed Satan, frenzy is thy lot.

***Thou hast dealt graciously with Thy servant, O Lord,
according to Thy word.***

If thou didst love poor men, * and didst truly regret * the myrrh poured out from a soul as an offering, * how, for coins, couldst thou sell Him that dawned forth light?

***Goodness and discipline and knowledge teach Thou me,
for in Thy commandments have I believed.***

Word and God eternal, * O my Joy and Delight, * how shall I endure Thy three-day entombment, Lord? * My maternal bowels are rent with grief for Thee.

***Before I was humbled, I transgressed;
therefore Thy saying have I kept.***

“Who will give me water * and the wellspring of tears?” * So the Virgin wed to God cried with loud lament, * “that for my sweet Jesus I may rightly mourn.”

Thou art good, O Lord, and in Thy goodness teach me Thy statutes.

O ye hills and valleys, * all ye mountains and dales, * and thou multitude of mankind, weep and lament, * crying Woe! with me, the Mother of our God.

***Multiplied against me hath been the unrighteousness of the proud;
but as for me, with my whole heart will I search out Thy commandments.***

When shall I behold Thee, * O my Saviour and God, * the Eternal Light, my Joy and my heart's Delight, * thus the Virgin cried out in her great distress.

***Curdled like milk is their heart; but as for me,
in Thy law have I meditated.***

Though accepting cutting * as the Chief Cornerstone, * yet, O Saviour, as the Wellspring of endless life, * Thou dost pour forth living water for all men.

***It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me,
that I might learn Thy statutes.***

As from one spring only * are we given to drink * of the two-fold river which gushed forth from Thy side, * and we reap the fruit of everlasting life.

The law of Thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.

In the grave didst Thou will * to be seen as one dead; * but Thou livest and shalt raise up all mortal men * by Thy Resurrection, as Thou hast foretold.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Word of God, we hymn Thee. * God of all things art Thou, * with Thy Father and Thy Spirit Most Holy praised; * and we glorify Thy burial divine.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

All we call thee blessed, * Theotokos most pure, * and with faithful hearts we honour the burial * suffered three days by thy Son Who is our God.

In a grave they laid Thee, * O my life and my
Christ; * and the armies of the angels were sore
amazed, * as they sang the praise of Thy
submissive love.

After the First stasis of the Lamentations, there is a small litany:

The Small Ectenia

Deacon: Again and again, in peace let us pray to the Lord.

Chanters: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Chanters: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Calling to remembrance our most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ our God.

Chanters: To Thee O Lord.

Priest: For blessed is thy name and glorified is Thy Kingdom, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Chanters: Amen.

As we begin the second stasis of the Lamentations, the deacon performs the lesser censing (the four sides of the tomb on which is the Epitaphion, the principal icons on the iconostasis, and the people).

Second Stasis

Tone V

Right it is indeed, * Life-bestowing Lord, to magnify Thee; * for upon the Cross were Thy most pure hands outspread, * and the strength of our dread foe hast Thou destroyed.

***Thy hands have made me and fashioned me;
give me understanding and I will learn Thy commandments.***

Right it is indeed, * Maker of all things, to magnify Thee; * for by Thy dear Passion have we all now attained * unto blest dispassion and deliverance.

***They that fear Thee shall see me and be glad,
for on Thy words have I set my hope.***

Earth with trembling shook, * and the sun concealed his face with darkness; * for the light unwaning that hath shone forth from Thee, * with Thy Body sank to darkness and the grave.

***I have known, O Lord, that Thy judgments are righteousness,
and with truth hast Thou humbled me.***

Thou hast slept, O Christ, * in the grave the sleep that is life-giving, * and hast raised up with Thyself the whole race of man * from the grievous and most heavy sleep of sin.

***Let now Thy mercy be my comfort,
according to Thy saying unto Thy servant.***

Of all womankind, * I alone gave birth to Thee without pain, * said the most pure Virgin; Lo, now I must endure * pain unbearable at Thy great suffering.

***Let Thy compassions come upon me and I shall live,
for Thy law is my meditation.***

All the seraphim * shuddered when they saw Thee, O my Saviour, * Who above art with the Father inseparable, * though Thou liest dead within the earth below.

***Let the proud be put to shame,
for unjustly have they transgressed against me;
but as for me, I will ponder on Thy commandments.***

Lo, the temple's veil * was once rent at Thy dread crucifixion * and the stars above in heaven did hide their light, * seeing Thee, the Sun, now hidden in the earth.

***Let those that fear Thee return unto me,
and those that know Thy testimonies.***

By a word alone, * Thou didst form the earth in the beginning; * yet now as a dead man, Thou art hid in the earth. * O ye heavens, shake with fear at this dread sight.

***Let my heart be blameless in Thy statutes,
that I may not be put to shame.***

Thou, Who with Thy hand * didst create man, hast sunk in earth's bosom, * that by Thine almighty power and strength, O Sun, * Thou might'st raise the multitude of fallen men.

My soul fainteth for Thy salvation; on Thy words have I set my hope.

Come, let us now sing * sacred dirges to our Christ Who dieth, * as once the myrrh-bearing women did sing to Him, * that with them we all might hear the word: Rejoice!

***Mine eyes are grown dim with waiting for Thine oracle;
they say: When wilt Thou comfort me?***

Truly, Thou, O Word, * art as myrrh most precious which is poured forth. * Wherefore, unto Thee, Who art the true Living God, * the myrrh-bearing women brought most precious myrrh.

For I am become like a wine-skin in the frost;

yet Thy statutes have I not forgotten.

At Thy burial, * Thou, O Christ, didst shatter Hell's kingdom. * Wherefore, by Thy death, hast Thou thus put death to death, * to **redeem** out of corruption those of earth.

How many are the days of Thy servant?

When wilt Thou execute judgment for me on them that persecute me?

God's Wisdom, Who poured * streams of life upon all mortal nature, * pierceth to the very vitals of Hades' realms, * thereby quickening all those held in the grave.

Transgressors have told me fables, but they are not like Thy law, O Lord.

That I may renew * man's corrupted and subverted nature, * gladly in my flesh do I now take death on Me. * Wherefore, Mother, be not stricken with lament.

All Thy commandments are truth.

Without a cause have men persecuted me; do Thou help me.

Setting 'neath the earth, * O Thou Sun of Righteousness, my Jesus, * Thou didst raise up all the dead as it were from sleep, * and didst drive away the gloomy dark of Hell.

They well nigh made an end of me on the earth;

but as for me, I forsook not Thy commandments.

The life-giving Seed * of two natures on this day is planted * in the furrows of the earth watered by our tears; * but tomorrow It shall blossom forth with life.

According to Thy mercy quicken me,

and I will keep the testimonies of Thy mouth.

Adam, who did fall * and is now raised, was terrified greatly * when God did walk in the Garden of Paradise, * but rejoiced when He came down to those in Hell.

For ever, O Lord, Thy word abideth in heaven.

She that gave Thee birth * poured libations of tears for Thee, Christ God, * when Thou, in the flesh, wast laid in a tomb of stone; * and she cried: Arise, O Christ, as Thou didst say.

Unto generation and generation is Thy truth;

Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and it abideth.

Joseph laid Thee in * a new tomb secretly, O my Saviour, * chanting God-befitting dirges most piously, * which were mingled with the voices of lament.

By Thine ordinance doth the day abide, for all things are Thy servants.

Nailed upon the Cross, * Thou wast pierced, and thus Thy Mother saw Thee, * and was smitten with the nails of most bitter grief, * and her soul itself was pierced as with a sword.

If Thy law had not been my meditation,

then should I have perished in my humiliation.

When Thy Mother saw * Thee, the sweetness of all, being watered * with a bitter potion, she wept most bitterly * with a countenance besprinkled with warm tears.

I will never forget Thy statutes, for in them hast Thou quickened me.

I am rent with grief, * and my heart with woe is torn and broken, * as I see Thee slain unjustly, O Word of God. * So bewailing Him, His all-pure Mother cried.

I am Thine, save me; for after Thy statutes have I sought.

Ah, those eyes so sweet, * and Thy lips, O Word, how shall I close them? * How shall I entomb Thee as doth befit the dead? * So cried Joseph, overcome with holy fear.

Sinners have waited for me to destroy me;

but Thy testimonies have I understood.

Dirges at the tomb * did blest Joseph sing with Nicodemus, * chanting unto Christ, Who hath now been put to death; * and in song with them are joined the seraphim.

Of all perfection have I seen the outcome;

exceeding spacious is Thy commandment.

Sun of Righteousness, * Thou dost set beneath the earth, O Saviour. * Hence, the Moon that gave Thee birth was eclipsed by grief; * for she suffered the bereavement of Thy light.

***O how I have loved Thy law, O Lord!
the whole day long it is my meditation.***

When Hades beheld * Thee, the Life-giver, he greatly shuddered; * for Thou didst despoil and rob him of all his wealth, * and didst raise up all the dead from ages past.

***Above mine enemies hast Thou made me wise in Thy commandment,
for it is mine for ever.***

Radiantly the Sun * shineth forth after the night is passed by; * and Thou, Logos, on arising after Thy death, * shalt as from a bridal chamber brightly shine.

***Above all that teach me have I gained understanding,
for Thy testimonies are my meditation.***

When the earth received * Thee, O Fashioner, into her bosom, * she was rent with fear, O Saviour, and quaked in fright, * and by these her quakings did she rouse the dead.

***Above mine elders have I received understanding,
for after Thy commandments have I sought.***

Wrapping Thee, O Christ, * in myrrh oils in a manner unwonted, * Nicodemus and the most noble Joseph cried: * Be thou terrified and quake with fear, O earth.

***From every way that is evil have I restrained my feet
that I might keep Thy words.***

Lo, when Thou didst set, * the sun's light set with Thee, O Light-maker; * all creation was then seized in the bonds of fear, * and proclaimed Thee as the Maker of all things.

From Thy judgments have I not declined, for Thou hast set a law for me.

Stone that man hath hewn *doth conceal the Cornerstone of Promise; * and a mortal man doth hide God within a grave, * as if God were mortal: shake with fear, O earth!

How sweet to my palate are Thy sayings!

More sweet than honey to my mouth.

O my Son, behold * Thy well-loved disciple and Thy Mother; * let us, as aforetime, hear Thy sweet voice again. * So with plenteous tears His most pure Mother cried.

***From Thy commandments have I gained understanding;
therefore have I hated every way of unrighteousness.***

Though the Jews, O Word, * nailed Thee to the Cross, Thou didst not slay them; * rather, as the blest Bestower of life, O Lord, * Thou didst even raise their dead from Hades' bonds.

Thy law is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my paths.

In Thy suffering, * neither form, O Word, was Thine, nor beauty; * but when Thou didst rise up Thou didst illuminate * and shed beauty on all men with rays divine.

I have sworn and resolved

that I will keep the judgments of Thy righteousness.

In the flesh didst Thou *set beneath the earth, Thou, the Unwaning * Morning Star, and lo, the sun could not bear the sight, * and was darkened, even in the midst of day.

I was humbled exceedingly; O Lord, quicken me according to Thy word.

Both the sun and moon * were completely darkened, O my Saviour, * thus portraying servants fain and obedient, * who have clothed themselves in black from their great grief.

***The free-will offerings of my mouth be Thou now pleased to receive,
O Lord, and teach me Thy judgments.***

The centurion * knew Thee as God even when they slew Thee. * How then, O my God, dare I touch Thee with my hands? * I do shudder. Thus the noble Joseph cried.

My soul is in Thy hands continually, and Thy law have I not forgotten.

Adam fell asleep, * and he brought forth from his side all men's death; * but by Thy repose and slumber, O Word of God, * from Thy side life hath poured forth for all the world.

***Sinners have set a snare for me,
yet from Thy commandment have I not strayed.***

Sleeping not for long, * Thou didst quicken them that slept in death's bonds; * and when Thou wast risen, Thou madest to arise * them that slept from ages past, O Most Good One.

***I have inherited Thy testimonies for ever,
for they are the rejoicing of my heart.***

O Life-giving Vine, * Thou wast taken from the earth, O Master, * yet the wine of our salvation hast Thou poured forth. * Yea, I glorify Thy Passion and Thy Cross.

***I have inclined my heart
to perform Thy statutes for ever for a recompense.***

When the leaders of * all the angels saw Thee, blood-stained, naked, * and condemned to death by mortals, how could they bear * Thy vain crucifiers' daring insolence?

Transgressors have I hated, but Thy law have I loved.

O perverted race, * vagabondish Jews: The Temple's raising * was made known to you aforetime. For what cause, then, * do ye now condemn and scourge the Saviour, Christ?

My helper and my protector art Thou; on Thy words have I set my hope.

With mockery's robe * did ye clothe Him Who governeth all things * and hath filled the heavens with stars of splendrous light, * and hath wondrously adorned and made the earth.

***Depart from me, ye evil-doers,
and I will search out the commandments of my God.***

Like a pelican * with Thy side, O Word, by wounding riven, * hast Thou made Thy children that were once dead to live, * by besprinkling them with moisture rich with Life.

***Uphold me according to Thy saying and quicken me,
and turn me not away in shame from mine expectation.***

Joshua the son of Nun * made the sun stop as he smote the heathen; * as for Thee, Lord, Thou didst darken and hide its rays, * when the prince of darkness fell before Thy might.

***Help me, and I shall be saved;
and I will meditate on Thy statutes continually.***

O merciful Christ, * Thou remainest in the Father's bosom, * and wast well-pleased to become mortal man for us, *
and didst go down unto Hades, O my God.

***Thou hast set at nought all that depart from Thy statutes,
for unrighteous is their inward thought.***

He that hung the earth * in the midst of the waters was taken * and crucified, and laid without breath in the earth * which quaked grievously, unable to endure.

***I have reckoned as transgressors all the sinners of the earth,
therefore have I loved Thy testimonies.***

Woe is me, my Son! * wept the one who knew not wedlock, saying: * Lo, I see Thee now condemned to hang on the Cross, * Thee Whom I had hoped to see a mighty king.

***Nail down my flesh with the fear of Thee,
for of Thy judgments am I afraid.***

Thus spake Gabriel * when, descending on wing, he brought tidings, * and of my Son Jesus he did say unto me * that His Kingdom shall endure forevermore.

***I have wrought judgment and righteousness;
O give me not up to them that wrong me.***

Woe! The Prophecy * of the elder Symeon findeth fulfillment; * for the sword whereof he spake hath now pierced my heart, * rending me with sorrow, O Emmanuel.

Receive Thy servant unto good, let not the proud falsely accuse me.

Surely, O ye Jews, * be ye put to shame, at least, by all them * that were raised from death by Him Who doth grant us life, * Whom ye sought to slay with malice and ill will.

***Mine eyes have failed with waiting for Thy salvation,
and for the word of Thy righteousness.***

Seeing Thee, O Christ, * the Unwaning and Unseen Light, lying * hidden in a grave, without breath or comeliness, * the sun hid his face behind a veil of gloom.

***Deal with Thy servant according to Thy mercy,
and teach me Thy statutes.***

Wailing bitter tears, * Word of God, Thy spotless Mother mourned Thee, * when she saw that Thou wast laid in a grave of stone, * O Ineffable and Everlasting God.

***I am Thy servant; give me understanding,
and I shall know Thy testimonies.***

Witnessing Thy death, * Thy supremely undefiled Mother * cried with bitter grief, O Christ, and she said to Thee: * Tarry not among the dead, O Life of all.

It is time for the Lord to act; for they have dispersed Thy law.

Hades, that dead foe, * shook with terror when he looked upon Thee, * O Daystar of Glory, only Immortal Lord; * and he yielded up his captives then in haste.

Therefore have I loved Thy commandments more than gold and topaz.

Now do we behold * a most great and awful sight, O Saviour: * Thou Who art the Cause of life, dost submit to death, * wishing to grant life to all mankind, O God.

Therefore I directed myself according to all Thy commandments;

every way that is unrighteous have I hated.

Thou art pierced, O Lord, * in Thy side, and Thy hands are nailed also, * healing by Thy side our wound and the greediness * and insatiety of our ancestors' hands.

Wonderful are Thy testimonies;

therefore hath my soul searched them out.

Over Rachel's son, * ev'ry house lamented in days gone by; * now over the Virgin's Son all the choir of * blest disciples and His Mother weep with grief.

The unfolding of Thy words will give light and understanding unto babes.

Earthen hands now smite * Thee upon the cheek, O Christ my Saviour, * Thee Who by Thy hands hast formed man and fashioned him, * and hast crushed the grinding teeth of the vile beast.

I opened my mouth and drew in my breath,

for I longed for Thy commandments.

With our hymns, O Christ, * we, Thy faithful people, now acclaim Thy * holy Crucifixion and Thy blest Burial; * for Thy Burial hath ransomed us from death.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

O Eternal God, * Word co-unoriginate, and Spirit: * Stablish Thou the faith and strength of the Orthodox * against heresy and error, O Good One.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Birthgiver of Life, * O most blameless and most holy Virgin: * Quell every offense within our most Holy Church, * blessing us with peace forever, O Good Maid.

Right it is indeed, * Life-bestowing Lord, to magnify Thee; * for upon the Cross were Thy most pure hands outspread, * and the strength of our dread foe hast Thou destroyed.

After the Second stasis of the Lamentations, there is a small litany:

The Small Ectenia

Deacon: Again and again, in peace let us pray to the Lord.

Chanters: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Chanters: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Calling to remembrance our most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ our God.

Chanters: To Thee O Lord.

Priest: For holy art Thou, our God, Who does rest upon the glorious throne of the cherubim, and to Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thine eternal Father and Thy most holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Chanters: Amen.

As we begin the third stasis of the Lamentations, the deacon performs the lesser censing (the four sides of the tomb on which is the Epitaphion, the principal icons on the iconostasis, and the people).

Third Stasis

Tone III

Every generation * chanteth hymns of praise at
* Thy burial, O Christ God.

***Look upon me and have mercy on me,
according to the judgment of them that love Thy name.***

The Arimathaeon, * took Thee from the Cross and * did lay Thee in a new grave.

***My steps do Thou direct according to Thy saying,
and let no iniquity have dominion over me.***

Women, bringing spices, * came with loving forethought, * Thy due of myrrh to give Thee.

***Deliver me from the false accusation of men,
and I will keep Thy commandments.***

Come, all things created, * let us sing a dirge-hymn * to honour our Creator.

Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant, and teach me Thy statutes.

With myrrh and true knowledge, * let us, like the women, * anoint as dead the Living.

***Mine eyes have poured forth streams of waters,
because I kept not Thy law.***

O thrice-blessed Joseph, * bury now the Body * of Christ the Life-bestower.

Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments.

Those He fed with manna * lifted heels of spurning * against their Benefactor.

***Thou hast ordained as Thy testimonies
exceeding righteousness and truth.***

Those He fed with manna * bring the Saviour gall and * vinegar intermingled.

***My zeal for Thee hath made me to pine away,
because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words.***

O, the utter folly, * brimming with Christ's murder, * of them that slew the prophets.

***Thine oracle is tried with fire to the uttermost,
and Thy servant hath loved it.***

Taught the inner myst'ries, * he, the mindless servant, * betrayed the Depth of Wisdom.

***I am young and accounted as nothing,
yet Thy statutes have I not forgotten.***

He that sold his Saviour * sold himself as captive, * that crafty traitor, Judas.

Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is truth.

As Solomon spake saying: * The mouth of lawless Jews is * a yawning pit and chasm.

***Tribulations and necessities have found me,
Thy commandments are my meditation.***

In the crooked pathways * of the lawless Jews snares * and countless traps lay hidden.

***Thy testimonies are righteousness for ever;
give me understanding and I shall live.***

Helped by Nicodemus, * Joseph doth entomb now * the Body of his Maker.

I have cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord,

and I will seek after Thy statutes.

Life-bestowing Saviour, * to Thy might be glory; * for Thou hast vanquished Hades.

I have cried unto Thee; save me, and I will keep Thy testimonies.

When the most pure Virgin * saw Thee prone, O Logos, * a mother's dirge she sang Thee.

I arose in the dead of night and I cried; on Thy words have I set my hope.

O, my most sweet Springtime! * O, my Son beloved, * wither doth fade Thy beauty?

***Mine eyes woke before the morning
that I might meditate on Thy sayings.***

Song of lamentation * poured from Thy pure Mother, * when Thou, O Word, wast slaughtered.

***Hear my voice, O Lord, according to Thy mercy;
according to Thy judgment, quicken me.***

Women to anoint Him * with their myrrh, are come now * to Christ, Who is Divine Myrrh.

***They have drawn nigh that lawlessly persecute me,
but from Thy law are they far removed.***

By Thy death, O Lord God, * death itself hast Thou slain * by Thy divine dominion.

Near art Thou, O Lord, and all Thy ways are truth.

Deceived is the deceiver; * deceived man is now ransomed, * my God, through Thy great wisdom.

***From the beginning I have known from Thy testimonies
that Thou hast founded them for ever.***

The traitor was cast headlong * into the depths of Hades * and pit of vile corruption.

Behold my humiliation and rescue me, for Thy law have I not forgotten.

The ways of the thrice-wretched * and perverted Judas * are fraught with snares and pitfalls.

Judge my cause and redeem me; for Thy word's sake quicken me.

Son of God and Logos, * all Thy crucifiers, * O King of all, have perished.

Far from sinners is salvation, for they have not sought after Thy statutes.

In the pit of death and * corruption, all blood-guilty * men shall be cast to perish.

***Thy compassions are many, O Lord;
according to Thy judgment quicken me.***

Son of God, Almighty, * O my God and Maker, * whence came Thy will to suffer?

***Many are they that persecute me and afflict me;
from Thy testimonies have I not declined.***

When the Heifer saw Thee * on the Cross suspended, * she cried out: O my Youngling!

***I beheld men acting foolishly and I pined away,
because they kept not Thy sayings.***

Joseph and the blessed * disciple Nicodemus * tend the life-giving Body.

***Behold, how I have loved Thy commandments;
O Lord, in Thy mercy, quicken me.***

Cries of woe the Maiden * wailed with fervent weeping; * for her heart was now pierced through.

***The beginning of Thy words is truth,
and all the judgments of Thy righteousness endure for ever.***

Light more dear than seeing, * O, my most sweet Child, * how doth a tomb now hide Thee?

***Princes have persecuted me without a cause,
and because of Thy words my heart hath been afraid.***

Lament not, O my Mother, * I endure the Passion * to set free Eve and Adam.

I will rejoice in Thy sayings as one that findeth great spoil.

O, my Son, I praise Thee * for Thy great compassion * which moved Thee thus to suffer.

Unrighteousness have I hated and abhorred, but Thy law have I loved.

Vinegar and gall wast * Thou given, thus annulling * the tasting of the banned fruit.

***Seven times a day have I praised Thee
for the judgments of Thy righteousness.***

Thou Who led'st Thy people * with a cloud-like pillar * art now led to a scaffold.

***Much peace have they that love Thy law,
and for them there is no stumbling-block.***

Lo, myrrh-bearing women * to Thy tomb, O Saviour, * are come their myrrh to offer.

I awaited Thy salvation, O Lord, and Thy commandments have I loved.

Rise, O Lord of Mercy, * raising us up also * who languish deep in Hades.

My soul hath kept Thy testimonies and hath loved them exceedingly.

Rise, O Life-Bestower, * cried out she that bare Thee, * even Thy weeping Mother.

***I have kept Thy commandments and Thy testimonies,
for all my ways are before Thee, O Lord.***

Hasten, Word, to rise now * and release from sorrow * the spotless Maid that bare Thee.

***Let my supplication draw nigh before Thee, O Lord;
according to Thine oracle give me understanding.***

All the hosts of Heaven * stood with fear, confounded, * beholding Thy dead Body.

***Let my petition come before Thee, O Lord;
according to Thine oracle deliver me.***

To them that laud Thy Passion * with faith and love, O Saviour, * grant them their sins' forgiveness.

My lips shall pour forth a hymn when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes.

O sight most strange and awesome! * How doth earth conceal Thee, * O Word of God and Saviour?

***My tongue shall speak of Thy sayings,
for all Thy commandments are righteousness.***

Once a Joseph bare Thee * into exile, Saviour; * another doth inter Thee.

Let Thy hand be for saving me, for I have chosen Thy commandments.

Weeping and lamenting, * Thy most holy Mother * doth mourn Thee, my slain Saviour.

I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord, and Thy law is my meditation.

Minds must tremble seeing, * O Maker of creation, * Thy strange and dire entombment.

My soul shall live and shall praise Thee, and Thy judgments will help me.

Myrrh the women sprinkled, * bearing stores of spices, * to grace Thy tomb ere dawning.

I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost;

O seek Thy servant, for I have not forgotten Thy commandments.

Grant unto Thy Church peace, * by Thy Resurrection, * and to Thy flock salvation.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

O Thou Triune Godhead, * Father, Son, and Spirit, * upon Thy world have mercy.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Grant that we who serve thee * may see the Resurrection * of thy Son, O blest Virgin.

Every generation * chanteth hymns of praise at
* Thy burial, O Christ God.

After the Third stasis of the Lamentations:

The Evlogitaria

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, * teach me Thy statutes.

The assembly of angels was amazed, * beholding Thee numbered among the dead; * yet, O Savior, * destroying the stronghold of death, * and with Thyself raising up Adam, * and freeing all from hades.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, * teach me Thy statutes.

Why mingle ye myrrh with tears of pity, * O ye women disciples? * Thus the radiant angel within the tomb * addressed the myrrh-bearing women; * behold the tomb and understand, * for the Savior is risen from the tomb.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, * teach me Thy statutes.

Very early * the myrrh-bearing women hastened * unto Thy tomb, lamenting, * but the angel stood before them and said: * the time for lamentation is passed, weep not, * but tell of the Resurrection to the apostles.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, * teach me Thy statutes.

The myrrh-bearing women, * with myrrh came to Thy tomb, O Savior, bewailing, * but the angel addressed them, saying: * Why number ye the living among the dead, * for as God * He is risen from the tomb.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the Holy Spirit.

Let us worship the Father, * and His Son, and the Holy Spirit, * the Holy Trinity, * one in essence, * crying with the Seraphim: * Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, O Lord.

Both now and ever, * and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

In bringing forth the Giver of life, * thou hast delivered Adam from sin, O Virgin, * and hast brought joy to Eve * instead of sorrow; * and those fallen from life * have thereunto been restored, * by Him Who of thee was incarnate, God and man.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. *Thrice.*