

September 1st. Indiction. St Symeon the Stylite.

Readings at Vespers

1. The reading is from the prophecy of Isaïas. *[61:1-10]*

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim forgiveness to prisoners and sight to the blind; to declare an acceptable year of the Lord, and a day of recompense for our God; to comfort all who mourn, so that there may be given glory instead of ashes to those who mourn Zion, an anointing of joy for those who mourn, clothing of glory instead of a spirit of despondency; and they will be called a generation of righteousness, a plant of the Lord for glory. And they will rebuild everlasting deserts, those formerly quite deserted; they will raise up and renew deserted cities, deserted from generation to generation. And strangers will come shepherding your flocks, and foreigners will be your ploughmen and your vinedressers. But you will be called Priests of the Lord, ministers of our God. You will be told, 'Eat the strength of nations', and in their wealth you will be marvelled at; instead of your double shame and instead of humiliation their portion will rejoice. Therefore they will inherit their land a second time, and everlasting joy will be upon their head. For I am the Lord, who loves righteousness and hates robberies from unrighteousness; and I shall give their calf to the righteous, and I shall make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed will be known among the nations, and their offspring in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognise them, because they are a seed blessed for ever by God, and with joy they will rejoice in the Lord.

2. The reading is from Leviticus. *[26:3-12, 14-17, 19-20, 22, 33, 23-25]*

The Lord spoke to the children of Israel saying: 'If you walk in my ordinances and keep my commandments and do them, I shall give you rain in its season and the earth will give its produce and the trees of the plains their fruit. And your threshing time will overtake the vintage, and the vintage will overtake the sowing. You will eat your bread to the full and dwell in safety on your land. And I shall give peace in your land, and you will lie down, and no one will make you afraid. And I shall destroy the evil wild beasts from your lands, and war will not pass through your land. And you will pursue your enemies, and they will fall dead before you. And five of you will pursue a hundred, and a hundred

of you will pursue tens of thousands, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. And I shall look upon you, and bless you, and make you increase, and multiply you, and I shall establish my covenant with you. And you will eat what is old and very old, and bring out the old to make way for the new. And I shall set my tent among you, and my soul will not abhor you. And I shall walk among you, and I shall be your God and you will be my people. But if you will not listen to me, nor observe these ordinances of mine, but disobey them, and if your soul loathes my judgements, so that you do not keep all my commandments, I in turn shall treat you like this: I shall bring distress upon you, and you will sow your seed in vain, and your enemies will devour your labours. And I shall set my face against you, and you will fall before your enemies, and they will pursue you, and you will flee though no one pursues you; and I shall smash the arrogance of your pride. And I shall make the heaven like iron for you and your earth like solid bronze. And your strength will be in vain, and your land will not give its produce, and the trees of the field will not give their fruit. And I shall send the wild beasts of the earth against you, and they will rob you of your children, and will consume your cattle, and the sword will come against you and make you few in number. And your land will be desert and your farms will be desert, because you have walked against me crookedly, and I shall walk against you with crooked rage,' says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel.

3. The reading is from the Wisdom of Solomon. *[4:7-15]*

A just man, even if he die early, will be at rest. For an honoured old age is not so for length of time, nor is it measured by the number of years. Understanding is peoples' true grey hairs, and a ripe old age is a spotless life. Being pleasing to God, he was loved; and while living among sinners, he was taken away. He was snatched away lest wickedness pervert his understanding, or trickery deceive his soul. For the witchery of evil dims the good, and the waywardness of desire undermines an innocent mind. Made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled long years; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord; therefore he hurried him from the midst of evil. But the peoples saw and did not understand, nor did they lay such a thing to heart: that grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his presence is with his chosen ones.