



**The Holy Prophet Esaias
Whom the Holy Church Commemorates on May 9.**

The Prophet Esaias, the son of Amos, was descended from a royal tribe. He prophesied in the days of Ozias (who is also called Azarias), Joatham, Ahaz, and Hezekias, Kings of Judah. About 681 B.C. in the reign of Manasses, the son and successor of the pious Hezekias, when this prophet was censuring Manasses' impiety and lawlessness, he was sawn asunder with a wooden saw, and thus received a martyr's end.

Of all the Prophets, he is called the most eloquent because of the beauty and loftiness of his words. His book of prophecy, divided into sixty-eight chapters, is ranked first among the greater Prophets. The Fifth Ode of the Psalter, "Out of the night my spirit waketh at dawn unto Thee, O God..." is taken from his book. It was this holy Prophet who foretold that a Virgin would conceive in the womb (7:14); that not an ambassador, nor an angel, but our Lord Himself would save fallen man (63:9); that the Messiah would suffer, bearing our sins (ch. 53). Esaias' name means "Yah is helper."

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Dismissal Hymn of the Prophet. Second Tone

AS we celebrate the memory of Thy Prophet Esaias, O Lord, through him we beseech Thee to save our Souls.

Kontakion of the Prophet. Second Tone

HAVING received the gift of prophecy, O Prophet-martyr Esaias, herald of God, thou didst make clear to all under the sun the Incarnation of God by crying with a great voice: Behold, the Virgin shall conceive in her womb.



† THE ICON NOT MADE BY HANDS

Saint Esaias' Prophecy contains many prophecies of Christ, e.g. His birth from a Virgin, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Emmanuel" (Esaias 7:14 LXX); His compassion and suffering for us: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is dumb, so He opens not His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment is taken away: who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken away from the earth" (Esaias 53:7, 8; see Acts 8: 32, 33); and that the Lord Himself would redeem us:

"He became to them deliverance out of all their affliction:
not an ambassador, nor a messenger,
but Himself saved them,
because He loved them and spared them;
He Himself redeemed them and took them up,
and lifted them up all the days of the age" (Esaias 53: 8, 9) LXX. *
Some holy Fathers aptly name Saint Esaias the Fifth Evangelist.

* Please compare Esaias 53: 8, 9 in the text from the Septuagint above with that found in the KJV. The KJV does not use the original Hebrew text. The scholars of the Protestant Reformation used the Masoretic text. This text is in Hebrew copied by Jewish scribes from the seventh to tenth centuries A.D. With each new rescission of the Masoretic text, the Rabbis ordered all the Synagogues to destroy their copies of the previous rescission and to replace it with the new text prepared by the Masoretes.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves of Qumran in the 1950's shed new light on the history of the Hebrew text, both that on which the Septuagint translation is based and also on that used by the Masoretes. Before the birth of the Saviour, Hebrew texts of Saint Esaias' prophecy, and other books of holy Scripture, were placed in the caves of Qumran by the Essenes for safekeeping. Scholars have shown that certain texts of holy Scripture found at Qumran correspond to the Hebrew text upon which the Greek text of the Septuagint is based. Not all of the Hebrew texts unearthed at Qumran have been made available for research. The Septuagint was translated in Alexandria, Egypt in the Third Century B.C. by Jewish Scribes transported from Jerusalem to Alexandria for the purpose of this translation. Saint Symeon the God-receiver (The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord [Feb. 2]; Lk. 2: 25-38) was one of these translators.

The Jewish attempt to destroy all the copies of the early Hebrew text was unsuccessful because that text was preserved by the hand of the Lord Who used the Essenes as His helpers; the Masoretes knew nothing of the as yet unearthed content of the caves at Qumran. Today, the scrolls containing those texts are in the custody of Jewish scholars on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem.

If there is an official text for Old Testament Scripture for the Orthodox Church, it is the Septuagint. Orthodox Christians might do well to provide themselves with a copy of the Septuagint text (Greek-English).¹



¹ Please contact Saint Nectarios Press (email: orders@stnectariospress.com) for your copy of an English translation of the Septuagint. Nina Seco, the manager, can also assist you personally: please call 800-643-4233. NB: Saint Nectarios Church in Seattle, Washington is on Pacific Time.