

Great Vespers ~ Saturday ~ 01-06-2024 ~

Theophany of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ (transferred)

✠ *Blessed is the Man is not sung* ✠

Vesperal Stichera: Resurrection Tone 2

(Service Book Page 33 - 35)

10. *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may confess Thy name:*

9. *For the righteous shall await me, until Thou recompense me:*

8. *Out of the depths have I cried to Thee O Lord; Lord hear my voice:*

7. *Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications:*

6. *If Thou, Lord shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness:* When the Forerunner saw Him who is our Illumination, Who doth illuminate every man, coming to be baptized, his soul rejoiced, and his hand trembled. Then, pointing to Him he said to the people, Behold the Rescuer of Israel, Who delivereth us from corruption. Wherefore, O Christ our God, Who art sinless; glory to Thee.

5. *Because of Thy Name have I waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited upon Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord:* When the Forerunner saw Him who is our Illumination, Who doth illuminate every man, coming to be baptized, his soul rejoiced, and his hand trembled. Then, pointing to Him he said to the people, Behold the Rescuer of Israel, Who delivereth us from corruption. Wherefore, O Christ our God, Who art sinless; glory to Thee.

4. *From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord:* The hosts of the angels trembled when they beheld our Redeemer being baptized by a servant, and testified to by the presence of the Spirit, while a heavenly voice from the Father cried, saying, Verily, this One on whom the Forerunner placeth his hands, is My beloved Son in Whom I am well Pleased. Wherefore, O Christ our God, glory to Thee.

3. *For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is abundant redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities:* The hosts of the angels trembled when they beheld our Redeemer being baptized by a servant, and testified to by the presence of the Spirit, while a heavenly voice from the Father cried, saying, Verily, this One on whom the Forerunner placeth his hands, is My beloved Son in Whom I am well Pleased. Wherefore, O Christ our God, glory to Thee.

2. *Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people:* The courses of the Jordan received Thee, O Fountain; and the Comforter descended in the likeness of a dove. Yea, He who bowed the heavens, boweth His own head; and the clay crieth unto the Potter, saying, How dost Thou command me to do what is more exalted than my station? It is I who need to be baptized by Thee. Wherefore, O Christ God, Who art sinless, glory to Thee.

1. *For His mercy is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever:* When Thou didst choose to save lost man, Thou didst not disdain to put on the likeness of a servant; for it was meet for Thee, O Lord God, to accept what is ours for our sakes; for when Thou wast baptized in the flesh, O Redeemer, Thou didst make us worthy of forgiveness. Wherefore, we cry to Thee, O Christ our benevolent God, glory to Thee.

Glory ... Spirit;; Now ... Ages. Amen. (Theophany Tone 2): Thou didst bow Thy head to the Forerunner, thereby crushing the heads of the dragons. And having stood in the streams, Thou didst illuminate the whole creation. Wherefore, let it glorify Thee, O Saviour, Thou Illumination of our souls.

The Evening Prokeimenon

(Service Book Page 36 following "O Gladsome Light")

Dn: The Evening Prokeimenon

Rdr: *The Evening Prokeimenon is in the 6th Tone: The Lord is King and hath clothed Himself with majesty.*

People: *The Lord is King and hath clothed Himself with majesty.*

- ✠ *The Lord is clothed and has girded Himself with strength (R)*
- ✠ *For He has established the world which shall not be moved (R)*
- ✠ *Holiness adorns Thy house, O Lord forever (R)*
- ✠ *The Lord is King / and hath clothed Himself with majesty.*

✠ *Entrance with Gospel, O Gladsome Light, OT, Epistle and Gospel Readings (see separate sheet)✠*

Litia

(Following the Prayer of the Bowing of Heads in the Service Book on Page 40)

(Tone 4): He who covers Himself with light as with a garment has granted for our sakes to become as we are. Today He is covered by the streams of the Jordan, though He has no need to be cleansed by them: but through the cleansing that He himself receives wonder! He bestows regeneration on us! He refashions without shattering, and without fire, He casts anew, and He saves those who are enlightened in Him, Christ our God, the Savior of our souls.

John the Baptist saw You draw near, Who cleanse the sin of the world by spirit and by fire. He cried aloud in fear and trembling, and said: I dare not touch Your immaculate head. Sanctify me, Master, by Your epiphany, only Lover of mankind!

Come, let us go as the wise virgins, and meet the Master who has appeared: for as a bridegroom He has come forth to John. The Jordan, seeing You, was driven back in fear; John cried out: I dare not touch Your immortal head. The Spirit came down in the form of a dove, hallowing the waters, and a voice called from on high: This is my Son who has come into the world to save mankind. O Lord, glory to You.

Christ is baptized: He comes up from the waters, bringing the world with him. He sees the heavens opened which Adam had closed against himself and his posterity. The Spirit bears witness to His divinity, hastening to His own nature; and a voice comes from heaven, for He to whom this testimony is given has come down from heaven, and He is the Savior of our souls.

The hand of the Baptist trembled, when it touched Your immaculate head: the River Jordan turned back, not daring to minister to You. For how could that which stood in awe of Joshua the son of Nun not be afraid before Joshua's creator? But You, Savior, have fulfilled all that was appointed, so that You might save the world by Your epiphany, only Lover of mankind!

Glory ... Spirit; (Tone 8): Lord, in Your desire to fulfill what You appointed from eternity, You have received ministers from all the creation at this, Your mystery: Gabriel from among the angels, the Virgin from among men, the Star from the heavens, and Jordan from the waters; and in its stream You have washed away the transgression of the world. O Savior, glory to You.

Now ... Ages. Amen. (Tone 8): Today the creation is enlightened. Today all nature is glad: things of heaven, and things on earth. Angels and men come together, for where the King is present, there also His army goes. Let us run, then, to the Jordan; let us all see how John baptizes a sinless and uncreated head. And therefore let us together cry aloud, echoing the voice of the apostle: The Grace of God bringing salvation to all men has appeared, shining on the faithful and granting them great mercy.

Aposticha Tone 2

(Service Book Page 40 following the Prayer of the Bowing of Heads)

O Christ God, when John saw thee advancing to him in the Jordan, he cried, saying, How hast thou come to thy servant, O thou spotless Lord? In whose Name shall I baptize thee? In the Name of the Father? For thou dost bear it in thee. In the Name of the Son? For thou art the incarnate One? In the Name of the Holy Spirit? For thou hast known how to grant him to believers by the mouth? Wherefore, O God manifest, have mercy upon us.

The sea saw and fled. Jordan was driven back. The waters beheld thee, O God, the waters beheld thee and feared; for verily, the cherubim dare not gaze upon thy glory, nor the seraphim stare at thee; but they stand in fear; for of them are some that bear, and some that glorify thy might. Wherefore, with them, O compassionate One, we proclaim thy praise, saying, O manifest God, have mercy upon us.

What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou didst flee? And thou, O Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Today the Maker of heaven and earth cometh in the flesh to the Jordan seeking baptism, though he is sinless, to purify the world from the error of the adversary: and the Lord of all is baptized by a servant, granting mankind cleansing by water. Wherefore, let us cry unto him, saying, O our appearing God: glory to thee.

(Tone 8) Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Verily, the shining lamp, born of a barren woman, when he saw the Sun radiant from the Virgin, seeking baptism in the Jordan, cried out to him in fear and joy, saying, Sanctify thou me, O Master, by thy divine Epiphany.

Troparia

(Service Book Page 42 following The Trisagion Prayers)

Tone 2 Resurrection: When Thou O Lord wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee and called Thee His beloved Son! And the Spirit in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His Word. O Christ our God, who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee. (3x)

History of the Celebration of Epiphany

THE EVENTS of the Baptism of Jesus Christ and the appearance of the Holy Trinity, as they are recorded in the Bible, were held with reverence and admiration over the period of the years. With the end of the persecutions, the contents of these events were developed in the observance of the feast of Epiphany which is called the Feast of Lights. The origin of the observance of the celebration of the Epiphany is to be found in the activities of Gnosticism. Its fundamental principle is the idea that individual salvation comes through knowledge, gnosis, rather than through faith or works.

The 6th of January was designated as the feast day of Epiphany because on that day was the birthday of Aeon, the patron god of Alexandria. The Gnostics had designated Christ as one of the Aeons in their elaborate system.

In opposition to these heretics, it appears that the Orthodox Church acted to protect its followers from this falsification by defining the Theophany of the Holy Trinity, that is, the appearance of God during the Baptism of Christ. The earliest definite evidence of this celebration is given by Ammianus Marcellinus where this pagan Roman historian mentions that Julian the Apostate participated in this feastday in Vienne of Gaul. The Orthodox Church gave to this Feast its correct significance and meaning and celebrated purposely this Feast on the same date to counteract the false celebration of the Gnostics. In all probability, Epiphany was introduced to Gaul, with its Greek name, by St. Athanasius (336), coming from Alexandria ...

<http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/article8383.asp>