



## **FOREFEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**

**January 2**

### **THE HYMN**

**Kathisma II Matins**

*Today the voice of Isaiah is fulfilled, which said: Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight His paths! For the voice of John, the Lover of the desert, resounds as a trumpet calling us all together to behold a strange wonder!*

### **THE SERMON**

**Fulfillment Of The Prophecies**

Christianity is a liturgical religion. The Church is first of all a worshipping community. Worship comes first, doctrine and discipline second." This historical statement by the late Fr. George Florovsky expresses the vitality of the services of our Church for the life of every member. Church services are inextricably linked to our salvation. As part of the dynamic liturgical tradition of the Church, there are specific services aimed at preparing us for an approaching great feast that relates to the life of Christ and presents some kind of soteriological (related to our salvation) significance for us. These services are called "fore-feasts" and initiate us beforehand to the spiritual meaning of the impending great feast.

The Church, in the hymns of the feasts, insists on the testimony and faith of the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Holy Fathers of the Church. Thus, in the hymn set out above, the entire pattern of the Feast of Theophany as prefigured by the Prophets of the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament is set out in a few select lines.



**GREEK ORTHODOX  
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The main purpose of the hymnographer is to prepare the people of God to receive the illustrious Lord of Glory. The liturgical life thus becomes a continuous journey of luminescence, aimed at encountering the Word of God. The most glorious and fleshless Creator takes on flesh and enters the history of the world for the purpose of interacting with humankind in a visible manner. God's plan for our salvation is basically being retold in the prayers and hymns of the Church.

Therefore, in this hymn, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight." John the Baptist invites us, according to Isaiah, to prepare to welcome the Lord in the Jordan River, to prepare to celebrate the revelatory event of Theophany.

With the Nativity, Circumcision, and Baptism of Christ, humankind and the entire world receive sanctification, blessing, and rejuvenation from God. They return to their original connection to God, according to their purpose. The earth is sanctified by the Holy Nativity of Christ. The heavens shine from the Glory of God's Incarnate Word. The waters are blessed by His bodily Baptism. The animal kingdom is pacified in the presence of the Holy Infant. And humankind is able to re-establish the lost communion with God.

We are called as faithful members of the Church to prepare ourselves to celebrate this great Feast of Theophany by participating in Church services, by praying, by studying the relevant passages of the Bible, and especially by partaking in the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. As unworthy as we are, God calls us to Him and offers us the opportunity to sanctify us, to remit our sins, and to bestow on us life eternal. All of this He provides out of love for us.