

January 5

A. Forefeast of Theophany

The church hymns for this day have: "You have shown forth in the flesh from a Virgin in Bethlehem, now you hasten towards Jordan", "grant to all the faithful the salvation that comes through Baptism in Christ: for in this way it cleanses Adam, raises the fallen, humiliates the deposed torturer, opens the heavens, causes the Divine Spirit to descend, and grants incorruption to the communicants". "Let all the earth rejoice, let heaven be glad, let the world leap for joy, let the rivers clap their hands, let the springs and lakes and the deeps of the sea rejoice with them, for Christ is come to cleanse Adam", "Being Himself the Bestower of light, Jesus, not needing to be baptized, in the flesh descends into the stream of Jordan, wishing to enlighten those existing in darkness. Let us go fervently in faith to meet Him", "let us joyfully welcome Him with pure intention".

Troparion, tone 4

**Of old, the River Jordan turned back
Before Elisha's mantle at Elijah's ascension.
The waters were made to part in two
So the wet surface became a dry path.
This was truly a symbol of baptism
In which we cross through mortal life. //
Christ appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters.**

Kontakion, tone 2

**O compassionate Christ, who takes away the many sins of everyone,
And who for the sake of measureless mercy,
Approaches the waters of the Jordan to be baptized as man, //
Putting ferocious nakedness on me as the garment of ancient glory.**

Holy Martyrs Theopemptus and Theonas

"Protectors of piety", "firm battlers for the faith", "wise sufferers", they both "rejected the filthy idolatrous flattery", their own torture, "and were brave before the lawless" were arrested during the persecution of Diocletian in year of 303 in Nicomedia. Theonas, a sorcerer, in Christianity Sinesius, was called by Diocletian to humiliate Theopemptus, Bishop of Nicomedia. He believed in Christ, after seeing that the poison prepared by him in the food for the Holy Bishop did not harm the hierarch at all. Torturers tried in every possible way to get them to renounce Christ; but "neither stroking, nor flattery, nor earthly glory could get them to renounce their faith". "The foreboding of the martyrs" and "the fury of the

impious" was fruitless. They beheaded Theopemptus after much torture, and buried Theonas in the ground alive.

Ven. Syncletica of Alexandria



Born in Alexandria, the daughter of wealthy parents, herself beautiful, the Ven. Syncletica from her youth rejected "any carnal pleasures" and thought about things pleasing to God, adorning herself "with the crown of a temperate way of life". Having loved "the purity of virginity", she refused to marry, and spent all her time in fasting and prayer. After the death of her parents, she distributed her estate to the poor and with her blind sister, accepted monasticism, withdrew into one of the crypts belonging to her parents. The glory of her ascetic life quickly spread to the surrounding areas, and a whole group of pious women and maidens soon gathered around her. During all her life fervently teaching the sisters in word and deed, she lived to a ripe old age. In her 80th year she was struck with a heavy grievous illness, "which overtook all her body, and was eaten by worms". The Venerable One bore her heavy illness with true Christian patience, from which "in continuing her ascetic efforts" she died in about the year 350.

Prophet Micah

Micah (Micaiah) was the son of Imlah. He did not belong to the 12 so-called Minor Prophets. He prophesied orally, was the contemporary of the Holy Prophet Elijah and predicted the destruction of King Ahab in a war with the Assyrians, for which he was put into prison and there was poorly fed with bread and water, until the death of Ahab (3 Kings 22:8-22; compare Micah 1:1). He died as a martyr in the 9th century BC.

Ven. Virgin Apollinaria

She was the daughter of Anthemius, the former regent of the Greek empire during the early childhood of Theodosius the Younger. Having declined marriage, she requested permission of her parents to venerate the holy places of the East. Having arrived in Alexandria from Jerusalem, she secretly, away from her servants, changed her clothes into the habit of a monk and hid herself in one marshy place, where she practiced asceticism for several years in strict fasting and prayers. Here she met St. Macarius and, at her request, he accepted her in his brotherhood under the name Dorotheus as she called herself in the meeting with him. The parents of Apollinaria had another daughter suffering from possession of evil spirits. Her parents sent her to the Skete to the monk Dorotheus, who became known for the gift of healing, and he healed her. On the return trip the maiden again was beset by an evil spirit, again settling in her, her lips accused Dorotheus

of corrupting her. The parents of the maiden have sent soldiers for the monk to take him to court. Dorotheus went to the parents and in a room alone revealed him to be their daughter Apollinaria. After this the sick sister was again healed. Apollinaria again returned to the monastery and died in peace in about the year 470. Only upon her death did the monks learn who appeared as a eunuch in their monastery. Her body was buried with honor in a cave, on the east side of the monastery church of St. Macarius of Egypt.

Ven. Gregory of Crete

He was born on the island of Crete, where in his youth he shepherded the herd of the father. Then he left for Jerusalem and lived there for 12 years, enduring persecution from the Agarians and Jews. He then went to Rome and accepted the schema there. Then he went to Constantinople and in the Acretia area on the Bithynian Cape projecting out in the Sea of Marmara he died in about the year 820.

Ven. Phosterius

This desert-dweller, who practiced asceticism on a certain high mountain, was distinguished for his gift of wonderworking and converted many from heresies. He died in the 9th century.

Ven. Menas, Monk of Mount Sinai

He practiced asceticism for 50 years as a monk of the Mount Sinai Monastery. He died in peace in the second half of the Sixth Century.

Martyr Theoida. The executioners trampled him for confessing faith in Christ.

Martyr Sais drowned in the sea.

Ven. Tatiana died in peace.

Ven. Martyr Roman, from Karpeniseia. He was born in Morea, was a monk on Athos, suffered in the name of Christ in Constantinople and was beheaded by the Turks in 1695.

Theophany Eve

The Eve of Theophany anticipates the feast. Through the hymns and the readings of the Eve in the Royal Hours, Vespers and the Liturgy (see pages 15 and 16), the Church presents from both testaments of the Holy Scripture everything from the Old Testament prototypes and prophecies concerning baptism, the very

existence of baptism and its fruits¹. As on the Eve whatever day of the week it falls, the Ustav (Rubrics) requires, for the sake of the blessing by sprinkling and the tasting of the holy water, a fast and the need to eat "scalded seeds (grain), or kutiya with honey", as this evening of the Baptism ordinarily is called Eve of Theophany or Christmas Eve².

The Ustav (Rubrics) says, that if the Eve falls on Saturday or Sunday that "there is no fast", should be understood in the sense of the simplification of the fast: that there is no fast as on the Eve if it falls on the other days of the week. Instead of once it is permitted to eat food twice, once after the liturgy and after the blessing of water (see The Order for Jan. 5).

On the Eve if it falls on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, the Royal Hours (see about them in Part II) are served, then, especially right after the Hours, Vespers with the Liturgy of St. Basil is served. If the Eve falls on Saturday or Sunday the Royal Hours are served on the previous Friday and the Liturgy is not done on that Friday (the Ustav does not place a fast on this day). But the Liturgy of St. Basil is done on the feast day. On Saturday or Sunday, on the Eve of the feast, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and at its own time (separately from the liturgy) Vespers is performed. Vespers with the reading of the Paramoegas, the Epistle, and the Gospel is served on the Eve before the Baptism. On the Eve (when it falls on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday) after the reading of the Paramoegas the Vespers is joined to the Liturgy by the Little Litany with the exclamation: "For holy art Thou, O our God" and then is said: "O Lord, save the pious" and we sing the "Trisagion". If on the Eve (when it falls on Saturday or Sunday) the Vespers is served separately from the liturgy then after the Paramoegas we do not sing the "Trisagion", but the Little Litany is intoned, and after the exclamation we intone the Prokimenon, we read the Epistle and the Gospel. After the Dismissal of the Liturgy, and after the Dismissal of Vespers on Saturday and Sunday, a lighted candlestick is placed in the middle of the church and we sing the Troparion and Kontakion for the feast.

"If the Eve falls on Saturday: the Prokimenon, the Alleluia, and the Communion Hymn are for the day. The Epistle and the Gospel for the Saturday before Theophany are read and then the rest according to the order". "If the Eve of Theophany falls on Sunday: the Prokimenon, the Epistle, the Alleluia, and the Communion Hymn are for the Sunday before Theophany and then the rest according to the order". See the Typikon for Jan. 5: If the Eve falls on Saturday or Sunday.

On the Eve of the Theophany of the Lord in the temples³ "**The Order for the Great Blessing of the Waters of Holy Theophany**" is performed (see the Monthly Menaion for Jan. 6 and the Book of Needs), which consists in remembering the prophecies concerning the event of Baptism (see the Paramoegas), the very event and its signs (see the Epistle and the Gospel), of the prayers of the blessing by God over the water and the infusion of the Holy Spirit in it for granting to it the power of cleansing and healing, from the triple blessings and the triple

immersions of the cross in it, in the paradigm of the immersion of the Lord in the waters of the Jordan. The Blessing of the Water ends, on the one hand, with the clergy and all the people kissing the honorable cross and their sprinkling with holy water; on the other hand, by the invocation of the faithful to the great glory of the acts of God, manifested in the Baptism of the Lord and the blessing of water, and the final invitation to the use of this water for salvation: "for upon those that draw in faith, the grace of the Spirit is invisibly bestowed by Christ God and the Savior of our souls."⁴ Done on the Eve of Theophany, the blessing of water serves as a memorial that in antiquity on the eve of Theophany the blessing of water for the baptism of the catechumens was performed, and is why it is done in the temples where the catechumens were baptized. This blessing of water is called great, in comparison with other blessings, called lesser (done on Aug. 1 and other days), because of the special solemnity of the rite, and the penetrating memory of the baptism of the Savior. The beginning of the custom to bless water on the eve of the feast coincides with the beginning of the feast itself. Tertullian and St. Cyprian already remember these things. The Apostolic Constitutions also contain prayers, said at the blessing of water. St. Epiphanius sees the beginning of the practice to draw a little water from the springs in memory of the miracle at the marriage in Cana of Galilee (refer to Dec. 25) and this practice is called ancient. St. Basil the Great asks: "on what writings do we bless waters of baptism?" and he answers: "From the Apostolic Tradition on the succession of the mystery". St. Chrysostom mentions the special property of the water blessed on this day, noticed already in the ancient church and accepted with faith even today, the property not to spoil with the duration of time and keeps completely fresh during the whole year and even two and three years. Christians since ancient times have great awe for the blessed water. The Orthodox Church calls the blessed water the great agiasmos (holy). The Church uses this holy water for the sprinkling of temples and homes, appoints to drink that which cannot be allowed up to Holy Communion⁵. Pious Christians from of old also have the custom on the eve or on the feast of Baptism to draw a little of the blessed water for domestic use and to keep it over the holy icons⁶.

Troparion before the Blessing of Water, tone 8

**The voice of the Lord is upon the waters:
Come and receive the spirit of wisdom,
The Spirit of understanding,
The Spirit of the fear of God,
O Christ who is made manifest.**

**Today the nature of water is sanctified,
The Jordan is divided and returns its flow,
Seeing the baptism of the Master.**

As man Thou didst come to the Jordan,

**O Christ, our King,
To be baptized with the baptism of a servant:
For our sins, O Lover of man.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

**Thou didst come, O Lord, to the voice in the wilderness
Crying: prepare the way of the Lord.
Thou didst come as a servant
Desiring baptism of John even though Thou art free from sin.
The waters saw Thee and were afraid,
The Forerunner was trembling and cried:
How can the candlestick illumine the light?
How can the servant place his hand on the Master?
Sanctify the waters and me, O Savior,
Who takest away the sins of the world.**

On the Eve, when it falls on Saturday or Sunday, the blessing of water will be done at the end of Vespers, after the Litany of Supplication: "Let us complete our evening prayer", and the exclamation of the priest. On the Eve, when it falls on the other days of the week, the blessing of water will be done at the end of the liturgy, after the Prayer before the Ambo. For the performance of this blessing of water, the priest, during the singing by the clergy: "The voice of the Lord upon the waters", goes out through the Royal Doors "carrying on his head the precious cross, the candle-bearers going before him, and the Deacon with the censer", to the well-adorned table on which there is bowl prepared with water, and stand around it with candles, and they give candles to the brotherhood". The blessing of water is done in this manner: the rector, "blessing the water crosswise with the precious cross, immerses it straight down, going down into the water and rising up, holding it with both hands⁷, singing the Troparion in the first tone: "When Thou was baptized in the Jordan". And the second time in like manner the rector signs the water with the cross, and also the third time, singing the Troparion himself, singing with him are the other priests: and on the fourth time they and the choir sing the Troparion. The rector takes the bowl with holy water, and turning to the people on the West, holding the precious cross in his left hand, and the basilisk (brush) in his right hand, sprinkles crosswise on all sides". After that the concelebrants, and behind them the laymen approach for the kissing of the cross and the rector sprinkles them "on the face" with holy water "crosswise". During this time we sing the Troparion many times, until the end of the sprinkling of holy water⁸. (Ustav (Rubrics) for Jan. 6).

Imperial hours. 1) **Paramoea:** Is. 35:1-10. **Epistle:** Acts 13:25-32; sel. 33. **Gospel:** Mt. 3:1-11; sel. 5. 3) **Paramoea:** Is. 1:16-20. **Epistle:** Acts 19:1-8; sel. 42.

Gospel: Mk. 1:1-8; sel. 1. 6) **Paramoea:** Is. 12:3-6. **Epistle:** Rom. 6:3-11; sel. 91. **Gospel:** Mk.1:9-15; sel. 2. 9) **Paramoea:** Is. 49:8-15. **Epistle:** Tit. 2:11-14; 3:4-7; sel. 302. **Gospel:** Mt. 3:13-17; sel. 6.

Vespers: **Paramoeas:** 1) Gen. 1:1-13. 2) Ex. 14:15-18, 21-23, 27-29. 3) Ex. 15:22-27-16:1 4) Joshua 3:7-8, 15-17. 5) 4 Kings 2:6-14. 6) 4 Kings 5:9-14. 7) Is. 1:16-20. 8) Gen. 32:1-10. 9) Ex. 2:5-10. 10) Judges 6:36-40. 11) 3 Kings 18:30-39. 12) 4 Kings 2:19-22. 13) Is. 49:8-15. **Epistle:** 1 Cor. 9:19-27; on Sat. and Sun. 1 Cor. 10:1-4⁹; sel. 143. **Gospel:** Luke 3:1-18; sel. 9.

Great Blessing of Water: **Paramoeas:** 1) Is. 35:1-10. 2) Is. 55:1-13. 3) Is. 12:3-6. **Epistle:** 1 Cor. 10:1-4; sel. 143. **Gospel:** Mark: 1:9-11; sel. 2.

As the holy water serves "for the cleansing of souls and bodies, and for the blessing of houses", the clergy on the eve and on the feast of Theophany go to the homes of laymen to sprinkle them with holy water.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0010-0016**
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¹ Psalms 31 and 26 of the **1st Hour** presents the Lord as the Pastor, Enlightener and Savior. The spiritual renewal of the faith in Jesus Christ is announced in the Paramoeas of the prophecies of the 1st hour. The Epistle and the Gospel tell about the Baptizer and Forerunner of the Lord who testifies about His eternal and divine greatness.

Psalms 28 and 41 of the **3rd Hour** describes the authority and the might of the Lord over water and all the elements of the world. In the Paramoeas we hear the Prophet Isaiah, who foresaw spiritual rebirth through baptism. The Epistle reading speaks about the distinction of John's baptism from the baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the Gospel lesson about the Forerunner, who prepares the way of the Lord.

Psalms 73 and 76 of the **6th Hour** describes the divine greatness and omnipotence of the Lord. In the Paramoeas the Prophet Isaiah beholds the grace of the salvation in the waters of baptism and calls believers to make it their own. The Epistle lesson inspires those baptized in Christ Jesus to enter into the renewal of life. The Gospel announces the Theophany of the Holy Trinity at the baptism of the Savior, about His forty-day ascetic effort in the desert and the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel.

Psalms 92 and 93 of the **9th Hour** proclaims the royal greatness and omnipotence of the Lord. The Paramoeas of the prophecies describes the unspeakable mercy of God for the people and help full of grace opened to them in baptism. The Epistle lesson teaches about the appearance of the grace of God that saves all humanity, and the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit on believers. The Gospel narrates the baptism of the Savior and the Theophany.

Thirteen Paramoeas are read in Vespers.

The first Paramoea tells about the water "on which", at the creation of the world, "the Spirit of God was moving", pointing it out as the type of spiritual regeneration and enlightenment in the mystery of baptism.

The second Paramoea describes the divine authority of the Lord over the waters of the Red Sea, parted for the salvation of Israel and joined together for the death of the Egyptians, and spiritually describes the mystery of Holy Baptism.

The third Paramoea speaks about the omnipotence of the Lord shown over the waters of Marah, by the strength of grace was changed from bitter to sweet, and pointed out the twelve springs of waters in the desert for quenching the thirst of the people of God.

After the third Paramoea the reader proclaims the Troparion, glorifying the Creator of the world who loves mankind and the Enlightener of "those sitting in darkness".

The fourth Paramoea points out in every detail the grace of God over the waters of the Jordan, which opened a bottom for the passage to Israel.

The fifth Paramoea tells about the authority of grace over the waters of the Jordan, which opened a bottom for the passage of Elijah and Elisha.

The sixth Paramoea tells about the authority of grace over the waters of the Jordan given to Naaman, who was cleansed from leprosy through the sevenfold immersion in them according to the word of the Prophet Elisha.

After intoning these three Paramoeas the reader again proclaims the Troparion, glorifying God, Who shines the light on "those sitting in darkness".

The seventh Paramoea also repeats the one that is read at the Third Hour of the Eve.

The eighth Paramoia tells about the "omnipotent grace of God over the waters of the Jordan over which the Patriarch Jacob passed".

The ninth Paramoia tells about how Moses was taken unharmed from the waters of the river.

The tenth Paramoia tells about "the grace shown in the dew of the fleece of Gideon strengthened his faith in calling God for the salvation of the Hebrews from the Midianites.

The eleventh Paramoia tells about Prophet Elijah pouring water over his prepared offering three times and this action did not inhibit the fire led down upon it through the prophet.

The twelfth Paramoia is also read at the Ninth Hour on the Eve. The Epistle at the **Liturgy** preaches about the fulfillment of the ancient paradigm (Ex. 13:21.14:22) in Jesus Christ who accepted Baptism. The Gospel tells the good news about the sermon by the Forerunner about Christ to the people of God.

² The day of the Eve of Theophany was especially solemnly honored by our ancestors and was a day that was extremely holy in the people's consciousness. Being occupied with dressing and fortune telling, considered permissible on the Forefeast of the Baptism, known to the people by the name of "A Baptismal Evening" (with Jan. 2), on the Eve of the Baptism this was considered a great sin. On the Eve of the Baptism everyone considered it an indispensable sacred obligation to visit the temple. To eat fish on the Eve of Theophany was considered as the greatest sin. Also it was not permissible to eat with oil. Everyone, in compliance with the requirement of the church Ustav (Rubrics), considered it a sacred duty to fast on this great day even up to the blessing of holy water (as this even now is still followed, unfortunately, only in some pious families), did not dare to eat anything.

³ In the opinion of the "Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger)" (1893, 16), "the Great Blessing of Water" on the Eve of Theophany is performed in the prayer house, separate from the parish, and it follows that the priest recognize by expression special care for his parishioners who do not have the opportunity to be present at the blessing of water in the temple.

⁴ On the Eve of Theophany as on the day of the blessing of water with the cross, we have received the custom to trace out crosses with chalk on the doors, windows, etc. prominent places of the building, for protection from harmful action of the evil spirit. But in some places of Lithuania they write in Latin letters G. M. B., which are the first initials of the magi: Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar, who brought gifts to the born Savior (refer to page 16 comment 5 and Dec. 26), and only, if they are illiterate, write instead of these letters three crosses. And in Kholm Russia, Belarus and some places in Little Russia a large candle called "gromnitsia" is kept in each home which the hostess, being sent to church, takes with herself for the blessing, after returning with the holy water of the Jordan she lights this candle, and with its flame "smokes" on the beam and above the doors the form of a cross so that the evil one will not dwell in the hut. And for each member of family she burns a pinch of hair on the head "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit". (Refer to Feb. 2).

⁵ The allowance to drink Theophany water instead of communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord could occur from deep antiquity, shortly after the canons were made, who excluded sinners from communion for a long time. For the consolation of those repenting who have declared sincerity of repentance, it was necessary to allow the Theophany water. (Archpriest Nikolsky, **Concerning the Services of the Russian Church**, having been in the previous published theological books, page 290, St. Petersburg, 1885).

There is no basis to prohibit partaking of the Theophany water to pregnant women nor in general to women who are menstruating: this water is sprinkled even "in all places and shabby, and everywhere " (see the Monthly Menaion).

⁶ By the way, during an earlier time, according to the witness of the Domostroi (Manager), we had the custom to wash with holy water everything found in the house of holy icons. During an earlier time there existed also a custom in which the Old Russian love for the needy was so clearly expressed: on the eve of Theophany early until dawn our ancestors went to the prisons and the homes of poor men with bountiful alms. On this day every Russian considered it an obligation to give some food to the needy, so that poor men had something to break the fast with on the next day. Unfortunately, the piety of our ancestors was easily reconciled with pagan customs and superstitions, which even until now are in some places strong in our people.

In villages, on the Eve of the Baptism, elderly women collect snow from the piles, in full confidence that as one can bleach linen cloth by dipping in lye and sun, and then the water will not need to be done with sun and lye. The snow collected on the evening of the Baptism, according to the belief of the peasants, can protect the artesian well water all year: all that is necessary is to bring in the snow from the field, to purify it in the artesian well, and then from it will be help and under this help which lasts all year, even if there isn't a drop of rain all summer. With the snow collected on the Eve of the Baptism, peasants in the villages heal infirmities as paralysis in the feet, dizziness and spasms.

The Baptismal supper among the Belarus is called "shchodra", and among the Little Russians "hungry evening", or kutiya. This "hungry evening" supper as some people think is so called because the peasants did not eat anything all day, but at the evening meal use up everything that is prepared.

The belief exists, that at midnight on the Eve before Theophany the water is stirred, in commemoration of the Baptism of the Lord done at this time. This is why some people go to watch for this, and try within that instant of this imaginary wonderful commotion of the water to take the water in jugs, reverentially keep it, considering it something that does not spoil and attributes to it some special healing qualities.

⁷ According to the explanation in "Manual for Village Pastors (Rukovodstvo dlia Seljskikh Pastirej)" (1889, 4), in these remarks "The Order", on immersing the holy cross in water it says that 1) it is necessary to hold the holy cross with both hands (not the top or bottom end of it, but the lateral ends of it, at least we have everywhere clergy so immerse the holy cross in water) and, 2) immersing it in the water "right", i.e. in direct, instead of an indirect or horizontal position ("right" = ὀρθιον or rectum, that means "correctly", "directly"), 3) "to lower" it into the water (gradually to lower) "and to raise" it (gradually to lift or raise it out of the water) "crosswise" i.e. as though to scribe in the water two arches, in a horizontal position and with the ends turning upwards.

In the opinion of "Tserkovnyi Vestnik (Church Messenger) (1892, 21)", those priests more correctly perform who, on the Eve of Theophany, at the blessing of water, immerse the holy cross three times in one holy water bowl, transferring after each time the holy cross on this or that tub with water so that the water runs down from the cross into it, but not to immerse the cross one time in each vessel as the last in effect does not accomplish the blessing of water as the holy cross should be immersed three times.

⁸ At the end of the blessing of water, usually everyone vies with each other to try to scoop the holy water, assuming that the water scooped earlier possesses more curative properties, or being afraid that there will not be enough of the prepared water for all. To eliminate these disorders during the ladling of the consecrated water it is advised, having made the people accustomed to the situation, the time and the place, and having assured them that there will be enough water for everyone, to forbid them to take the water themselves, but to distribute it through the members of the church clergy.

⁹ The Epistle and the Gospel are read: on Saturday, the one "for the Saturday Before Theophany (see page 6) and then the one in the order for the day", on Sunday the one "for the Sunday Before Theophany and then the one in the order for the day" (Ustav (Rubrics) Jan. 5), and then sel. 143 is put in the order on the eve of Theophany, "if there is no fast, (i.e. on Saturday and Sunday), the reading begins "from the center" (see for the Epistle "The Collection of the 12 Months", Jan. 5), i.e. from the second half (from verse 1 of chapter 10).