

January 3

c. Forefeast of the Theophany

From the church hymns for this day: "The Word without beginning with the Father and the Spirit", "being humble", "already comes" "to bow his head to the servant and voluntarily be baptized in the flesh", "being encircled renewing man once again with a way of life" and "we who have been punished with death" "to enliven with the streams of the Jordan". "Heaven and the angelic hosts are seized with dread as they see you," "Christ comes like a servant to a servant seeking and asking for baptism". "Believers, shaking the sleep of evil from the eyelids of our souls", "tears in streams pouring out from our eyes", "cleanse our minds and contemplate the strange sight by partaking in the mystery", "Christ coming as a meeting to cleanse us in the streams of the Jordan".

The Holy Prophet Malachi



The Prophet Malachi comes from the root of Zebulon, and lived after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity about 400 years before Christ. As the last of the prophetic writers he is called "the seal of the prophets". "Uniting fervently the bodily goodness to the spiritual goodness", he led the people by his piety in wonder who, seeing, that his life was similar to an angel's named him Malachi, that is, Angel or Messenger. He died in his young years and was buried in the grave of his fathers¹. He left a book consisting of 4 chapters where he strictly accuses the Jews of transgressions and foretells the coming of Christ and His Forerunner and the last judgment (3:1-5; 4:1-6).

Kontakion, Tone 4

**O Prophet, by bestowing rich prophesies,
You clearly predicted the coming of Christ and the salvation of the world. //
He enlightened the world by His radiance.**

Holy Martyr Gordius

The Holy Martyr Gordius was born of Christian parents in the last half of the Third Century in Caesarea, Cappadocia. At a mature age he joined the army and surpassing all in bodily strength and emotional courage was made a centurion. During the persecutions in the beginning of the Fourth Century, seeing the desecration of Christianity by the pagans, St. Gordius, "having disdained passing glory" and abandoned wealth and convenience of life, left for the desert, where inflamed with desire for eternal life in heaven, he prepared himself for the struggle for Christ through fasting, prayer, vigils and studying the Word of God and he

openly confessed belief in Christ before the prefect, for which after much torture he was beheaded.

Kontakion, tone 8

O most glorious Gordius, all the earth hymns your sweat and honorable blood,

O godly Wise One, all the world is made glad through your prayers,

O all Praised One, save all through faith, who hymn and bless you, //

Singing a worthy hymn to you as a long suffering one.

Epistle: 2 Tim. 2:10; sel. 292. **Gospel:** Mt. 10:16-22; sel. 36.

If January 3 falls: 1) on a Saturday, read the Epistle and the Gospel for the Saturday before Theophany at the liturgy; 2) on a Sunday, read the Epistle and the Gospel for the Sunday before Theophany at the liturgy (Typicon (Ustav) for Dec. 26).

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp 0008-9.
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¹ According to national beliefs, only in Malachi is it possible to understand “eunuch”, that is, deformed, spoiled, subject to melancholy. It is not known what the relation the memory of this prophet has for eunuchs and why simple people this day chide them.