



The Baptism of Jesus Christ

Bogojavljenje

Theophany or Epiphany

- This Holiday is celebrated on January 19th (this day corresponds to January 6th on the Julian Calendar) is the official date that the baptism of Christ is celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox Church.
- It is not to be confused with the Western holiday also called Epiphany which is a celebration of the magi presenting the baby Christ with their gifts.

Jesus Travels

ISRAEL DURING THE TIME OF JESUS



Jerusalem - The capital and a central location for many events in the life of Jesus, including the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection (Easter time)

Bethlehem - The birthplace of Jesus, where the Nativity took place (Christmas time)

Nazareth - The town where Jesus grew up and spent his early life

Galilee - A region where much of Jesus' ministry occurred. The Sea of Galilee is associated with several miracles, including the feeding of the 5,000



Jordan River - The site of Jesus' Baptism by John the Baptist

The word Theophany means “Revelation of God”

- Theophany therefore marks the revelation of the Trinitarian nature of God when Jesus was baptized.
- Those who witnessed heard the Father’s voice from Heaven, saw the Spirit descending upon Jesus, and could see Jesus in the flesh, whom God confirmed to be His Son with His voice
- While Christ was baptized in the Jordan River, it was really the Jordan and all of creation that was baptized in Christ.

At Thine appearing in the body, the earth was sanctified, the waters blessed, the heaven enlightened, and mankind was set loose from the bitter tyranny of the enemy.

- Christ has come not only to cleanse and restore mankind, but to adopt us as heirs into his Kingdom. And when we receive His glory, not only are we redeemed, but we draw all of creation with us into the final restoration



- At the top the Holy Spirit is descending upon Jesus as a dove, the Holy Spirit is depicted in a Mandorla. In this manner, The Father, using His own pre-eternal and consubstantial and subracelestial Spirit as His finger, crying out and point from heaven, openly declared and proclaimed to all that the one then being baptized by John in the Jordan was His beloved Son, while at the same time manifesting His unity with Him.” (St. Gregory Palamas, Homily 60.15). St. John Chrysostom also emphasizes that the Gospels state the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descends upon us so that we can ascend with Christ and the Spirit to the Father in Heaven. For the first time since the fall of mankind, the Heavens were opened to us.
- The angels on the right side are waiting to attend and dress him after the baptism is over.
- St. John the Baptist, while baptizing Jesus is usually turned away or looking at the Spirit descending upon Christ. This signifies that Theophany is about elevating Jesus Christ. If this were an Olympic race, it would be as if the Old Testament (John the Baptist and all before him) were passing the baton to the New Testament (Jesus Christ and all of the saints).
- There is an axe near John the Baptist, which reflects his warning that our lives must bear the fruit of the Spirit or else we will be removed. We cannot get comfortable or spiritually lazy.
- Jesus is not submerged in the water, for creation was baptized in Him, not vice versa.
- Lastly, the strange little creatures riding fish at the bottom represent the Jordan River and the Sea, both fleeing at the sight of something much bigger and greater than themselves entering the water. As the Psalms say:
 - Psalm 73:14 –Thou did establish the sea by Thy might, Thou did break the heads of the dragons in the water. (This verse is also linked to Theophany by the priest’s prayer – see page 356 in the Festal Menaion)
 - Psalm 76:15 – The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee and were afraid; the abysses were troubled.
 - Psalm 113:3 – The sea beheld and fled, [the River] Jordan turned back.