

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023
EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

The Sunday before the Nativity of Christ we commemorate Adam and Eve (the first-created), the righteous Abel, son of Adam, the righteous Seth, son of Adam, the righteous Enos, son of Seth, the righteous Kenan, son of Enos, the righteous Mehaliel (Maleleim), son of Kenan, the righteous Jared, son of Mehaliel, the righteous Enoch, son of Jared, the righteous Methuselah, son of Enoch, the righteous Lamech, son of Methuselah, the righteous Noah, son of Lamech, the righteous Shem, son of Noah, the righteous Japheth, son of Noah, the righteous Arphachshad, son of Shem, the righteous Canaan, son of Arphachshad (in some versions of the OT, Canaan is called the son of Ham), the righteous Shelah, son of Canaan (some versions of the OT call Shelah the son of Arphachshad), the righteous Eber (from whom the Hebrews take their name), son of Shelah, the righteous Peleg, son of Eber, the righteous Ragab (Reu), son of Peleg, the righteous Serug, son of Ragab, the righteous Nahor, son of Serug, the righteous Terah, son of Serug.

The holy Patriarchs: the righteous Patriarch Abraham, son of Terah, the righteous Patriarch Isaac, son of Abraham, the righteous Patriarch Jacob, son of Isaac, the righteous Patriarch Reuben, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Simeon, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Levi, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Judah (Christ was of this tribe), the righteous Patriarch Zebulon, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Issachar, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Dan, son of Jacob and Bilhah (Rachel's maid), the righteous Patriarch Gad, son of Jacob and Zilpah (Leah's maid), the righteous Patriarch Asher, son of Jacob and Zilpah, the righteous Patriarch Naphtali, son of Jacob and Bilhah, the righteous Patriarch Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel, the righteous Patriarch Benjamin, son of Jacob and Rachel.

The righteous Pharez and Zerah, twin sons of Judah, the righteous Hezron, son of Pharez, the righteous Aram, son of Hezron, the

righteous Aminadab, son of Aram, the righteous Nahshon, son of Aminadab, the righteous Salmon, son of Nahshon, the righteous Boaz, son of Salmon, the righteous Obed, son of Boaz and Ruth, the righteous Jesse, son of Obed.

The holy Prophet-King David, son of Jesse, King Solomon, son of David, King Rehoboam, son of Solomon, King Abijah, son of Rehoboam, King Asa, son of Abijah, King Jehosaphat, son of Asa, King Joram (Jehoram, an evil king), son of Jehosaphat, King Ochoziah (Ahaziah), son of Joram, King Jotham, son of Uzziah (Oziah), King Ahaz (a faithless king), son of Jotham, King Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, King Manesseh, son of Hezekiah, King Amos (Ammon), son of Manesseh, King Josiah, son of Amos, King Jechoniah, son of Josiah.

Shealtiel, son of Jechoniah, Zerubbabel (who led captives back to Jerusalem, and laid the foundations of the new Temple), son of Shealtiel, Abiud, son of Zerubbabel, Eliachem, son of Abiud, Azor, son of Eliachem, Zadok, son of Azor, Achim, son of Zadok, Eliud, son of Achim, Eleazar, son of Eliud, Matthan, son of Eleazar, Jacob, son of Matthan, St Joseph the Betrothed, son of Jacob.

The righteous Melchizedek, King of Salem, the righteous Job, the holy Prophet Moses, the priests Hur and Aaron, Joshua, son of Nun.

The holy prophet Samuel, the holy prophet Nathan, the holy prophet Daniel, the three holy youths Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

The righteous Sarah, wife of Abraham, the righteous Rebecca, wife of Isaac, the righteous Leah, first wife of Jacob, the righteous Rachel, second wife of Jacob, the righteous Asineth, wife of Patriarch Joseph the all-comely, the righteous Miriam, sister of Moses, the righteous Deborah, Judge of Israel and prophetess, the righteous Ruth, wife of Boaz, the righteous woman of Zarephath, to whom Elias was sent (3 Kings 17), the righteous woman of Shunem, who was hospitable to Elisha (4 Kings 4), the righteous Judith, slayer of Holofernes, the righteous Esther, who delivered Israel from death, the righteous Hannah, mother of the prophet Samuel, the righteous Susanna.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: *Three stikhera for the Fathers in tone 6, followed by three for the Forefeast, tone 6:*

Holy Fathers, tone 6:

The memory of the Ancestors is revealed to the ends of the world,
truly filling it with light
and making known the dawning of grace.

For Christ shone forth from afar, brighter than the sun,
the leading rank of stars shining with Him;
and the divine-human birth was revealed to take place in
Bethlehem.

Therefore with faith let us all gather at this birth, //
rejoicing in chorus and singing the pre-festal praise!

Adam rejoices today,
as he is the foundation and support of the wise Ancestors.
With him Abel leaps with joy, and Enoch makes glad;
Seth dances, and Noah with him;
the all-praiseworthy Patriarch Abraham sings;
Melchizedek beholds from afar the birth that is without a father.
Therefore, as we celebrate the divine memory of the Forefathers of
Christ, //
we pray for the salvation of our souls.

The three Youths, wise in God,
who shone with joy in the furnace,
proclaimed the birth of Christ on earth;
For just as the Lord sent down a precious dew,
He preserved from the flame her who gave birth,
keeping her undefiled and enriching her with divine gifts.
Therefore Daniel, pleasing to God, rejoiced and was glad,
for having foreseen the Stone from the unquarried mountain, //
he now prays with boldness in behalf of our souls.

Forefeast, tone 6:

The never-setting Sun presses forward to rise,
enlightening all things under heaven.
Let us hasten with clean hands and pure deeds to meet Him;
let us prepare to be borne on high with Him in spirit!
Let us beseech Him in His compassion,
that, as He comes in His good pleasure to His own strange birth,
He may lead us, who have become strangers
to the path of life in Eden, //
into Bethlehem where He comes to be born!

The Word of God, upborne on the shoulders of the cherubim,
goes to dwell in a womb without blemish.
Though without passions, He is bound fast to the flesh;
He comes on earth as a man, born of the tribe of Judah.
A cave becomes the palace of the King of all;
the fiery throne is replaced by a manger,
where the Virgin Mary lays Him as a babe,
for He comes to restore the first-created man, //
as He is well-pleased so to do.

O Word of God without beginning,
the Virgin lays You in a manger of dumb beasts.
You choose to begin Your life in the flesh
in a manner beyond understanding.
You have come to loose me from the fetters of evil
with which the envious serpent bound me.
O Lover of man, You are wrapped in swaddling clothes,
tearing to pieces the bonds of my countless sins.
Therefore I joyfully praise and worship Your holy birth, //
for You came to set me free.

GLORY... Fathers, tone 6:

Daniel, the man of desires, beheld You, O Lord,
the Stone cut without human hands from the Mountain.
Thus, he foretold that You would take flesh without seed,
O Word of God, born of the Virgin, //
the changeless God and Savior of our souls!

NOW AND EVER...Forefeast, tone 6:

O cave, make ready, for the Ewe Lamb comes,
bearing Christ in her womb!
O manger, receive Him Who by a word has released the dwellers of
earth from lawlessness!
You shepherds, abiding in the fields, bear witness to the fearful
wonder,
And you magi from Persia, offer to the King gold, myrrh, and
frankincense,
for the Lord has appeared from a Virgin Mother!
And she, bending over Him as a handmaiden,
worshipped Him as He lay in her arms, saying to Him:
“How were You sown as seed in me?
How have You grown within me, //
O my Deliverer and my God?”

Old Testament Readings

The reading from the book of GENESIS 14:14-20 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all.

The reading from the book of DEUTERONOMY 1:8-11, 15-17 ‘See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to your fathers - to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - to give them and their descendants after them.’ “And I spoke to you at that time, saying: ‘I alone am not able to bear you.

The Lord your God has multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. May the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you!’ “So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes. Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring it to me, and I will hear it.’

The reading from the book of DEUTERONOMY 10:14-21

“Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it. The Lord delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.

APOSTIKHA: all stikhera of the Forefeast, tone 2

O house of Ephratha,
The holy city,
The glory of the prophets,
Beautify the house,

In which the Divine One is born!

O Bethlehem, land of Judah,
prepare the divine cavern
as a dwelling for God to be born in the flesh
from a Virgin who knew not a man//
to save the human race!

Come, all you faithful,
let us celebrate the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ
as we spiritually offer our hymn as the star!
Sing with the Magi and shepherds:
Salvation comes from the Virgin's womb,//
recalling the faithful to life!

GLORY... for the Fathers, tone 2

Rejoice, O honored Prophets,
who laid well the foundation of the Law of the Lord,
and were revealed as firm and unshaken pillars of faith!
You became indeed the mediators of Christ's new covenant.
Since, therefore, you have been taken up into heaven//
intercede with Him to grant peace to the world and salvation to our
souls!

NOW AND EVER... for the Forefeast, tone 2

The time of our salvation draws near.
Make ready, O cave!
The Virgin draws near to bear the Christ.
Be glad and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah,
for our Lord has come from thee!
Hearken, O mountains and hills, you lands around Judea//
for Christ, the Lover of man, is coming to save those whom He
created!

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 4

Holy Fathers

Forefeast

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