

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2023
PROPHET OBADIAH
MARTYR BARLAAM

The Holy Prophet Obadiah.

Obadiah lived at the court of King Ahab, but, when the king turned away from true worship and bowed down to idols, Obadiah did not follow the king's example, but continued to serve the one, true God. When the wicked Queen Jezebel, because of her feud with Elias, hunted down all the prophets of God, Obadiah took a hundred of them and hid them in two caves, feeding them till the persecution was over (I Kings 18:4). A contemporary of the great Prophet Elias, Obadiah revered him greatly and hearkened to him in all things, being a follower and pupil of his. He lived nine hundred years before Christ, and entered peacefully into rest.

The Holy Martyr Barlaam.

He was born in Antioch, and was harshly tortured by the dishonourable judge for his faith in Christ the Lord. The judge decided to use ridicule, and to put such pressure on him that he would offer sacrifice to idols. He accordingly took him to the temple and applied fire to his palm, putting incense on the fire with the thought that the martyr would be forced by the pain to throw the fire and incense from his hand in front of the idols, and thus involuntarily offer them incense. But this heroic soldier of Christ held the fire on his palm, and would not cast it before the idols, until his fingers were burned and fell off, and his palm was burned through and fell to the ground with the fire. 'He had a right hand stronger than fire', said St Basil the Great, 'for, though the flames consumed it, still the hand held the fire as ash.' Chrysostom writes: 'The angels looked from the heights; the archangels beheld, for the scene was majestic, surpassing in truth all human nature. Lo, who would not wish to see a man who made such an ascetic endeavour and did not feel that which it is common to man to feel; a man who was himself the altar of sacrifice, and the sacrifice, and the priest?' When his hand had burned off, his body fell dead to the ground and his soul went to the eternal rest of his Lord and Saviour. This glorious and heroic elder suffered in the year 304.

Our Holy Fathers Barlaam and Joasaph the Heir.

They were Indian ascetics. Joasaph was son and heir to King Abenner. By God's providence, he was visited by the elder Barlaam, who taught him the Christian faith and baptised him. After that, the elder went off

into the mountains to live in asceticism, and Joasaph remained to wrestle with many temptations in the world and to overcome them by the grace of God. Joasaph finally succeeded in bringing his father to Christ. When he had been baptised, King Abenner lived a further four years in deep repentance (for he had committed grave sins in his persecution of Christians) and then finished his earthly course and went to the better life. The young Joasaph entrusted the kingdom to his friend Barachias, and himself went off into the desert to live in asceticism for the sake of Christ. His one desire on earth was to see his spiritual father, Barlaam, once more. God, in his mercy, fulfilled his desire, and, one day, Joasaph stood before Barlaam's cave, and called: 'Bless me, Father!' The elder Barlaam lived in asceticism in the desert for seventy years, living a hundred years in all. St Joasaph handed over his kingdom at the age of twenty-five and went into the desert, where he lived a further thirty-five years. They both had great love for the Lord Jesus, brought many to the true Faith and entered into the eternal joy of their Lord.

The Holy Martyr Heliodorus.

He was from the town of Magidus in Parnphylia, and was tortured for the Christian faith in the time of the Emperor Aurelian (270- 75). While undergoing harsh torture, he heard a voice from heaven: 'Fear not; I am with thee!' Thrown into a white- hot copper ox, he prayed fervently to God, and God saved him. The white- hot ox was suddenly cooled, and Heliodorus emerged alive. The judge cried to him that some sort of magic had done that, but to this the martyr replied: 'My magic is Christ!' He was then beheaded and went to the Lord.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: *Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 7(Spiral bound Vespers book), followed by three for the Prophet and three for the Martyr*

Prophet Obadiah, Tone 1:

As a shining vessel of the Spirit,
you were illumined by Him, Obadiah!
With most divine vision, you were enriched by the image of
prophecy;
foreknowledge of things to come and knowledge of the truth.//

Pray that He may grant our souls peace and great mercy!

The glorious and honorable Prophets
participate through communion by grace
in the very attributes and properties
by which God is made known.//

The Lord enlightens His chosen ones with His splendor!

You were a glorious prophet:
a divine herald of God full of unfading light.
You beheld the glory which surpasses understanding and reason
as you stood before the Master of all!//
Entreat Him that He may grant our souls peace and great mercy.

Martyr Barlaam, tone 4:

You were more sturdy than a pillar,
harder than iron, and stronger than bronze;
for each of these, when submitted to fire, is overcome by its force;
it melts and is quickly destroyed.
But your right hand did not waver when it was placed over the
burning coals.//
It unexpectedly prevailed, O all-wise Barlaam.

As though you were a priest standing before God,
and coming before Him, not with another's blood, but with your
own, O blessed martyr,
you offered a sacrifice of sweet fragrance,
not to the delusion of demons, //
but to Christ the Savior and Master Who reigns forever.

A priest who offers and a lamb that is offered;
joyfully we call you both, O Martyr, worthy of all praise;
as a victim, entirely unblemished,
you made yourself a whole-burnt offering to God through the fire
of torments.//

Earnestly pray that He save those who praise and honor your
memory!

GLORY...NOW AND EVER... the Dogmatikon in tone 7
(spiral bound Vespers book)
APOSTIKHA: all Resurrection in tone 7 (spiral bound Vespers
book)

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 7

By Your Cross You destroyed death.
To the thief You opened Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy.
And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,
to proclaim that You are risen,//
granting the world great mercy.

Saint Barlaam, tone 4

Armed with youthful fervor,
you endured martyrdom in old age and glorified Christ.
You offered Him your right hand as a whole burnt offering
and your holy soul as a blameless sacrifice.//
Intercede that all that be granted forgiveness, Great-martyr
Barlaam.

Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 4

The mystery of all eternity,
unknown even by Angels,
through you, Theotokos, is revealed to those on earth:
God incarnate by union without confusion.
He voluntarily accepted the Cross for us,
by which He resurrected the first-created man,//
saving our souls from death.

Damascus Orthodox Church

Rector: Father Michael Anderson

16903 Espola Rd

Poway, CA 92064

Email: powaypadre@stjohnofdamascus.org

Office: 858-674-1931