

November 19

6. Holy Prophet Obadiah (Abdias)

He is the fourth in the group of the Minor Prophets and "by the Divine Spirit he foresaw the future". In the "Christian Menaion", published by the Synod printing house, the Holy Prophet Obadiah was the disciple of the Holy Prophet Elijah (Elias), who lived 716 years before the birth of Christ and died in peace. This holy prophet found the prophetic speech in the Bible about the death of Edom and the flourishing of the kingdom of the Lord on its ruins.

The *Holy Martyr Barlaam* the Elder suffered for Christ in Caesarea, Cappadocia about the year 304 during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian. After torturing him, the torturers led Saint Barlaam into a pagan temple and having placed him before an altar, put into his hand a burning coal with incense, thinking, that St. Barlaam, would not be able to tolerate the terrible pain, and involuntarily throw the incense with fire onto the altar and thus sacrifice to an idol. But the holy martyr, "a most solid pillar and most hardened brass", was victor over the "godless fury" and held the fire in his hand until it burned his fingers. After this the embittered torturers killed the brave long-sufferer.

Kontakion, tone 4

**O Barlaam, you were revealed a most amazing fortress,
For you offered a most sweet smelling incense to Christ,
And you received the crown of honor.
O Sufferer, always pray for us.**

☩ Our Venerable Fathers of the Desert, Excelling in Fasting, Barlaam and Josaphat, Prince of the Great Land Called India (and the Father of the Holy Prince, King Abenner)

The King Abenner at first was a pagan who cruelly persecuted Christians, especially presbyters and monks. He brought up his son, Prince Josaphat, in paganism and undertook all measures to make sure that the prince would not even hear the name of Christ. But, by the will of the Lord, the wise and virtuous desert father, the Venerable Barlaam, a presbyter, secretly enlightened the saint in the Christian faith and baptized Prince Josaphat and then again left for the desert. Having learned that Josaphat accepted Christianity, Abenner tried in every possible way to convert him again to idolatry. According to his grandee Arahija, Abenner

asked the magician Nahor to present himself as Barlaam and deliberately arranged a debate between the learned pagans and him in the presence of the prince and to lose the debate. Although the prince knew that Nahor pretended to be Barlaam, but did not oppose this debate and in the presence of all before the contest told the pretended Barlaam: "if you will be defeated, then you will hold your heart and tongue in your hands, for this your other members will be turned over into dog food: that it will be evident to you, you will be afraid not to charm the sons of the prince". Frightened by this, Nahor, to the surprise of everyone won the debate (and after secret talks with the prince he also accepted baptism). The cunning of another magician Thezvi (who also upon the victory of the prince accepted Christianity) also became fruitless. Finally, Abenner divided his kingdom in half with the prince, hoping, that the affairs of state will distract the prince from faith in Christ. But the prince, accepting royal authority, began to root out idolatry, ruined pagan temples, erected Christian temples and everywhere spread Christianity. Finally, through his fervent prayers even Abenner converted to Christ. Having been baptized, Abenner "offered all royal authority to his son, and himself lived in silence", adorning himself with humility and piety, and "passing his last days after baptism", "when he began to approach the end of his life, he offered his soul in a good confession and with warm tears". After this Josaphat, because of his love for solitude and self-sacrifice, "left the kingdom", transferring its management to the grandee Barachias (who also accepted baptism and became a pious Christian), "went off to the wilderness" and spent the rest of his days as a hermit in the wilderness together with St. Barlaam. Both venerable saints died in peace.

Troparion, tone 4

**O King Josaphat, you learned from your spiritual director to know God:
You were enlightened through baptism,
And you converted the people to faith.
You were the sponsor of your father from the font.
Having left the kingdom, you reached for the wilderness,
And in it you ascetically did works of love.
Together with your teacher Barlaam,
Pray to Christ God to save our souls.**

Kontakion, tone 8

**Knowing your good will from childhood, O Josaphat,
Knowing in your heart the one God:
For you were led from the earthly kingdom into the monastic life,
Granted to follow the great Barlaam:
Having with him even now the all-bright fatherland Jerusalem on high,
Wanting, delighting in the beautifully good Holy Trinity,
We pray to you royal beauty, remember us who honor you in faith.**

Paramoebas: see Jan 6. **Matins Gospel:** see Jan. 12. **Epistle:** Col. 1:12-18; sel. 250. **Gospel:** see Oct. 3.

A feast day, where there is a temple.

Martyr Aza, Wonderworker, who suffered for Christ in Isauria during the reign of Diocletian.

At first he was a warrior, but, then, having left military service, he became an ascetic hermit in the desert. Arrested to be tortured, he wonderfully delivered water to 150 soldiers who escorted him, after which all believed in Christ and for this were beheaded. St. Aza received the same martyr's crown.

Martyr Heliodorus was beheaded for Christ in Magido during the reign of Emperor Aurelius (about the year 273).

Martyr Roman. See November 18.

Venerable Barlaam, Hegumen of the Monastery of the Caves

The son of a boyar, a famous military commander, and known for his piety Ian Vyshatitich, who served the Grand Prince Iziaslav, since his youth he often visited the Venerable Anthony in his cave, with love listening to his instruction. Having visited once accompanied by many servants with various gifts on a richly groomed horse, in expensive attire, the young boyar removed his expensive clothes, put them at the feet of the Venerable Anthony who met him, and remained to be numbered among the brethren. Neither threats, nor caresses, nor the requests of his father, nor the tears of his mother and his young wife could change his decision. Having asked the prince for the ground above the caves, he built there the first external church for the brethren. Because of his virtuous life, the Venerable Anthony installed him as the first hegumen of the monastery. Returning tired from his trip to the East, the Venerable Barlaam was not able to reach Kiev because of exhaustion, and reached only "the city of Vladimir (in Volynia) and went down into the closest monastery, which is called the Holy Mountain (see Volynia Diocese.), and there fell asleep in the Lord in peace. He accepted the end of his life "(about the year 1073), having commanded that his relics be transferred to Kiev where they even now lay in the St. Anthony Cave, "being an ever flowing source of wonders". He has a special service with an All-night Vigil.

Venerable Hilarion, the Wonderworker

He was born in Kakheti. He was tonsured a monk in his youth in the Garesja Monastery on Mount Olympus, then he spent 17 years in the Jordanian desert and

finally in the city of Thessalonica. The Lord found him worthy of the gift of wonderworking. He died in the year 882.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 417-9
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