

The Prologue - November 29/ Dec 10, 2018
THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR James the Persian

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Video: <https://youtu.be/qhJ87Ljv6HU>

Read the prologue every day.



Partial Summary for November 27

One of my favorite Saints is commemorated today, **James the Persian**. He was a great martyr, but not all of his life was that of a great martyr. At first, he was a coward, but then he came to his senses, he confessed Christ and was tortured in unbelievable ways. Those who listen closely will hear him commemorated whenever I end a service.

You should read his life, and learn from it. It is good to learn from people who made terrible errors, and even apostasy, but came to their senses. God never abandons any of us.

If you are not perfect, and even if you have made terrible errors and mistakes, reading the life of St James the Persian should be required for your life.

Ask for his intercessions. He understands cowardice, he understands apostasy, he understands terrible mistakes, and he also understands that God will help anyone that comes to their senses. And what is more, he is alive today and can hear us when we cry out to him and ask him to pray to God that we would have courage and steadfastness and stop doing whatever it is that we are doing that we don't know how to stop doing.

There are two versions of his life. This should not alarm us. The important details about his life are the same in both versions. In one version he is a soldier, and he is afraid when all of his fellow soldiers are called to give sacrifice to the pagan gods, and he acquiesces – this means he apostasized. In another version, he is a member of the court, and much beloved by the king, and because of vanity, he apostasized so as to make the King love him more. It doesn't really matter which version is true. What matters is that James evidently was not a very good Christian, and gave up his birthright very easily. His story could've ended there, and we would not know his name, because there are vast millions of people that have done that. Most of them do not repent and lose their souls.

James had a great advantage, by the mercy of God. He had a mother and a wife who loved him enough to rebuke him. They sent him a very harsh letter, with words that would not be acceptable to many in our age of blind consent with immorality, apostasy and ignorance. They basically told him that he was an apostate and they wanted nothing to do with him unless he repented. Can you imagine the response of the politically correct crowd to such a letter in our day? Of course, most people in our day, just like in most any other day, don't really believe in anything very strongly except themselves. James had fallen into idolatry and the worship of himself, because anyone who worships himself will not worship God. It was the source of his apostasy.

The letter that James was sent resonated in his sinful soul, and he resolved to make his confession before the King and to repudiate his apostasy. The King who formally loved him was angered and put James to great torture. St. James was tortured by putting each of his limbs on the chopping block, and parts of his body were taken off by hitting the limb with a hammer, joint by joint. He lost his feet and his toes, one by one in his feet and his lower legs in his fingers in his upper legs in his arms, until he was literally only a man with a head in a trunk. Of course, only God can cause a man that that such torture to survive. The blood loss would kill someone after only a few blows, but God allowed him to endure, and we are blessed to have the words of St. James as he was tortured.

I'm sure that many of you are frightened when you hear of James' tortures. Don't let that be your only impressions of his sacred martyrdom. James is now among the saints and blessed, and can hear us, and is in indescribable glory. None of his tortures are causing him any distress now.

I'm sure that there are many that might look at this video or listen to it, or read the document that I've written, and have terrible sins that they feel make them completely unworthy of God's love. There are Orthodox Christians who go to church regularly who may believe that they cannot be saved because of their sins. Perhaps you have had an abortion never mentioned it to anyone, or done something very unclean sexually and never said a word of it anyone, or done some other terrible deed, or not been there for someone who you think killed themselves because you did not give them aid - there are thousand different things that people can hold themselves liable for and forget that God's mercy covers everything if we only repent.

St. James life and martyrdom are a wonderful lesson for us. That is why I commemorate him in every service. Sometimes, by the way, I am befuddled as to why I am rarely asked why there are certain people that I commemorate at the end of every service. The priest sometimes wonders, well anyway, this sinful priest sometimes wonders if anybody is really listening.

All of us are capable of terrible things, but God is more powerful than any terrible thing. It is good to ask St. James' intercessions for us if we suffer from any cowardice, or any sin that is long-standing, or if there's anything that we cannot forgive ourselves for.

In Bishop Nikolai's prologue there is a short life of St. James and a beautiful poem concerning him and also the words that are preserved that came from him as he was tortured. I would like to read them to you now.

When the executioners severed the thumb of St. James's right hand, he said: "Even a vine is pruned in this manner, so that in time a young branch may grow."

At the severing of his second finger, he said: "Receive also, O Lord, the second branch of Thy sowing."

At the severing of his third finger, he said: "I bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

At the severing of his fourth finger, he said: "O Thou who acceptest the praise of the four beasts [symbols of the four evangelists], accept the suffering of the fourth finger."

At the severing of the fifth finger, he said: "May my rejoicing be fulfilled as that of the five wise virgins at the wedding feast."

During the severing of the sixth finger, he said: "Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, Who at the sixth hour stretched out Thy most pure arms on the Cross, that Thou hast made me worthy to offer Thee my sixth finger."

At the severing of the seventh finger, he said: "Like David who praised Thee seven times daily, I praise Thee through the seventh finger severed for Thy sake."

At the severing of the eighth finger, he said: "On the eighth day Thou Thyself, O Lord, wast circumcised."

At the severing of the ninth finger, he said: "At the ninth hour, Thou didst commend Thy spirit into the hands of Thy Father, O my Christ, and I offer Thee thanks during the suffering of my ninth finger."

At the severing of the tenth finger, he said: "On a ten-stringed harp I sing to Thee, O God, and thank Thee that Thou hast made me worthy to endure the severing of the ten fingers of my two hands, for the Ten Commandments written on two tablets."

Oh, what wonderful faith and love! Oh, the noble soul of this knight of Christ!

Use the link to the prologue entry for today, and read with humility and longing and learn something that will make you better today:

<http://westserbdio.org/en/prologue/706-november-27?tmpl=component&print=1&page=>

You can read any selection from the Prologue by going to the following link, and entering the date: http://www.rocor.org.au/?page_id=925

Please keep in mind that the dates are the church calendar. Don't pay attention to the day that the calendar shows. If you follow the new calendar, just enter the civil date that you're interested in. If you follow the old calendar, you need to be able to do math if you know the civil (Joe's garage calendar) date. You must subtract 13 days from that date get the church calendar date.

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