

St John of the Ladder + Прп. Иоанна Лествичника

Synaxarion.

Thou dwellest no longer at thine earthly diocese O John, but thou dost always delight in the vision of Him Who oversees all.

On this day, the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we commemorate our venerable Father among the saints, St. John of Sinai, the author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*.

No one knows the birthplace or parentage of our venerable Father John of Sinai. In his youth, at the age of sixteen, he came to the wilderness of Sinai and dwelt under the guidance of Abba Martyrius. When Abba Martyrius tonsured our venerable Father John at the age of twenty, he took him and went to that pillar of the wilderness, Abba John the Sabbaite in the wilderness of Gouda where he had with him his disciple Stephen the Cappadocian. When the Sabbaite elder saw them, he arose and took water, poured it into a small basin, washed the feet of the disciple (the young John) and kissed his hand; but he did not wash the feet of Abba Martyrius his superior. Abba Stephen was scandalized by the situation. After the departure of Abba Martyrius and his disciple, Abba John noticed that his own disciple was greatly perplexed and said to him, "Why are you so troubled? Believe me, I do not know who the boy is, but today I received the abbot of Sinai and washed his feet." After forty years, he did indeed become the abbot according to the prophecy of the elder. After the passing of his spiritual father, St. John continued alone in the wilderness in a cave in Wadi-Thola. He travelled from time to time, going at least once as far as Alexandria. He records in *The Ladder* his visit to a large monastic community there and the marvels of repentance, obedience, and humility which he observed. In his humility, he counted our venerable George the Wonderworker of Arselaou as his master. In all, he spent some forty years in solitude and stillness. He guided the monks who dwelt in that desert since he was a most excellent and nurturing spiritual father – for in those days there were innumerable ascetics living in cells all through the mountains and valleys of Sinai. From time to time, he received visitors from farther away. At one point, some other monks, prompted to jealousy by the adversary who hates all good, complained of Abba John's fame and teaching. In response, he humbly kept strict silence for over a year, until the same fathers who had complained came, asking him to speak again for the benefit of all. After he had spent forty years in the wilderness, the monks of Sinai asked him to become abbot of the great monastery built by the emperor Justinian

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beside the Burning Bush of Moses, the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine. In obedience to the fathers, he left his blessed solitude to take up the responsibilities of abbot. It is told that on the very day on which he assumed the office of abbot, there came a group of about six hundred pilgrims. When they were seated, our venerable Father John saw someone in the crowd with short hair and wearing a Jewish tunic. This person was going about like someone with authority, directing the cooks, the stewards, the storekeepers, and other workers. After the people left, when the servers all sat down to eat, they sought everywhere for the one who had been going about supervising, but did not find him. Then the servant of God, our venerable Father John, said, "Let him go. The lord Moses did nothing strange in this same place where he served before and which belongs to him." O, the wonder! It had been the Holy Prophet and Lawgiver Moses who had served the guests. At the request of Abba John, abbot of Raith near the shore of the Red Sea, our venerable father wrote his wonderful book, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, in which he sets out the whole of Christian life as a divine ascent of thirty rungs to Christ. This book has been a treasure, a pearl beyond price, to this day.

It is useful not only to monastics but to all devout Christians. He also wrote, for Abba John, a shorter exhortation, "To the Shepherd," in which he set out the stature and work of the father and shepherd of souls who must guide, not so much by words but by the light of holiness in which he lives. St. John was a true physician of souls and had great spiritual insight into men's behaviour. He made detailed observations of the symptoms of men's sin-sick souls, diagnosed their spiritual diseases, and prescribed the appropriate medicine for their recovery and salvation. He showed how one can ascend the "ladder of the virtues" step by step and reach the Promised Land, fleeing the Egypt of the passions. Yet, his success was due only to his own life of constant watchfulness, fasting, vigils, and prayer. The monastic community he shepherded continues to this day beside the Burning Bush, and his teachings guide and direct monastics throughout the world. During Great Lent, The Ladder is read aloud in monasteries during meals so the monastics may receive his edifying spiritual counsels for their souls' sustenance, as they simultaneously receive physical nourishment for their bodies.

Today, the cave in which he dwelt in the wilderness of Sinai i can still be seen, but his resting place is unknown except to the angels.

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He fell asleep in the Lord in the seventh century. St. John is also commemorated on March 30 (April 12), the day of his repose.

**O Christ our God, through the intercessions of our venerable
Father John of The Ladder, have mercy on us and save us.
Amen**

Синаксарь.

Хотя и телом жив, но умер (миру) Иоанн; И вечно жив (душой), – умерший, бездыханный. Составив «Лествицу» (из тридцати ступеней), он показал нам путь своих же восхождений: ведь умер Иоанн в тридцатый день (весенний).

В возрасте шестнадцати лет, будучи уже совершенным по разуму, Иоанн принес себя самого как непорочную жертву Богу, поднявшись на гору Синай. По прошествии еще девятнадцати лет он пришел на поприще безмолвия, в пяти стадиях (восьми верстах) от храма Господня. Достигнув обители Палестры на месте, называемом Фола, Иоанн провел там сорок лет, горя Божественной любовью, непрестанно распаляемый ее огнем.

Вкушал он все, что не возбранено иноческим уставом, но весьма умеренно, через это премудро сокрушая гордость. Но кто в состоянии передать словами источник слез его? Спал он столько, сколько необходимо было, чтобы ум не повредился от бдения. Все течение жизни его была непрестанная молитва и безмерная любовь к Богу.

Столь богоугодно подвизаясь, Иоанн написал книгу, названную Лествицей, в которой изложил учение о спасении, и, исполненный благодати, достойно почил о Господе, оставив и многие другие сочинения.

Его молитвами, Боже, помилуй и спаси нас.