

HERE FOLLOWETH OF THE HOLY APOSTLES SIMON AND JUDE

Simon Cananean and Judas Thaddeus were brethren of James the Less and sons of Mary Cleophas, which was married to Alpheus. And Jude was sent of Thomas to the king Abgarus of Edessa after the ascension of our Lord.

KING ABGARUS WRITES TO JESUS

And it is read in the *History Scholastic* that the said Abgarus sent an epistle [letter] unto our Lord Jesu Christ in this manner:

Abgarus the son of Euchania to Jesus, blessed Saviour, which appeareth in the places of Jerusalem, sendeth salutation. I have heard of thee, and that the healths and recoverings that thou makest and dost, be without medicines and herbs, and that thou makest the blind to see by thine only word, and the lame to go, the mesels to be cured and made whole, and the dead bodies to live again. Which things heard of thee, I ween in my courage that thou art one of two, that is that thou art God that art descended from heaven for to do this, or that thou art the son of God that dost such things. Wherefore I pray thee by writing that thou wilt travail so much as to come to me and heal me of my malady, of which I have long been vexed. And I have heard say that the Jews murmur against thee and lie in await against thee. Come therefore to me, for I have a little city, but it is honest, and shall shall well suffice to us both.

Our Lord Jesus answered him by writing in these words:

Blessed art thou that hast believed in me when thou hast not seen me. It is written of me, that they that see me not shall believe in me, and they that see me shall not believe. Of that thou hast written to me that I shall come to thee, me behoveth to [i.e., I

Simon is as much to say as obedient, or being in heaviness. And he had a double name; he was said Simon Zelotes, and Simon Cananean of Cana a street that is in Galilee, there whereas our Lord converted the water into wine. And Zelotes is as much to say as Cananean. This holy man had in him obedience of the commandments by execution, heaviness by pity of torment, and had love of souls by firm ardour of love. Judas is as much to say as confessing or glorious; or Judas is as much to say as giving joy. For he had confession of faith, glory of reign, and glory of the everlasting joy. This Judas was called by many names. He was said Judas James, for he was brother to James the Less, and he was called Thaddeus, which is as much to say as taking a prince; or Thadee is said of Thadea, that is a vesture, and of Deus, that is God, for he was vesture royal of God by ornament of virtues, by which he took Christ the prince. He is said also in the History Ecclesiastic, Lebbæus, which is as much to say as heart, or worshipper of heart. Or he is said Lebbæus of lebes, that is a vessel of heart by great hardiness, or a worshipper of heart by purity, a vessel by plenitude of grace, for he deserved to be a vessel of virtues and a caldron of grace. And Abdias, bishop of Babylon, by the apostles ordained, wrote their passion and legend in Greek, and Tropæus the disciple of Abdias translated it out of Greek into Latin. And he was named Africanus.

must] accomplish that which I am sent for, and after to be received of him from whom I am sent. When I am ascended, I shall send to thee one of my disciples to heal thee and quicken thee.

THE PAINTING OF JESUS' FACE

This is written in *Historia Ecclesiastica*. And when Abgarus saw that he might not see God presently, after that it is said in an ancient history, as John Damascene witnesseth in his fourth book, he sent a painter unto Jesu Christ for to figure the image of our Lord, to the end that at least that he might see him by his image, whom he might not see in his visage [face].

And when the painter came, because of the great splendour and light that shone in the visage of our Lord Jesu Christ, he could not behold it, ne [nor] could not counterfeit [copy] it by no figure. And when our Lord saw this thing he took from the painter a linen cloth and set it upon his visage, and emprinted the very physiognomy of his visage therein, and sent it unto the king Abgarus which so much desired it.

And in the same history is contained how this image was figured. It was well-eyed, well-browed, a long visage or cheer [face], and inclined, which is a sign of maturity or ripe sadness.

THE POWER OF JESUS' LETTER TO ABGARUS

That epistle of our Lord Jesu Christ is of such virtue [power], that in the city of Edessa no heretic ne no paynim [pagan] may live therein, ne none tyrant may grieve it. For if any people come against that city by force of arms, a child shall stand upon the gate, and shall read that epistle, and that same day either the enemies shall flee and be afraid [put to flight], or they shall make peace with them of the town. And as is said: This hath been done. But this city hath been sith [since then] taken of the Saracens and touched in such wise, that for the multiplying of sins this benefit is lost.

THE MISSION OF ST. JUDE THADDEUS TO KING ABGARUS

Also it is read in the History Ecclesiastic that when our Lord was ascended into heaven, Thomas the apostle sent Thaddeus, that was Jude, unto the king Abgarus according to the promise of our Lord. And when he was come to him, and had told to him that he was messenger of our Lord Jesu Christ, which had promised to send him one, then Abgarus saw in the visage of Thaddeus a marvellous and godly brightness. And when he had seen it he was all abashed [embarrassed] and afear'd, and worshipped our Lord saying: "Verily, thou art the disciple of Jesu Christ, Son of God, which sent to me word that he would send to me some one of his disciples that should heal me and give to me life."

To whom Thaddeus said: "If thou believest in the Son of God thou shalt have all the desires of thine heart."

And Abgarus said: “I believe on him, verily [truly], and those Jews that slew him, I would gladly slay them if it were possible to me, and had power, howbeit [except] that the authority letteth [prevents] it.”

And as it is read in some places and books, that Abgarus was leper, and Thaddeus took the epistle of our Saviour, and rubbed and frotted therewith the visage of Abgarus, and anon he received full health.

SIMON AND JUDE ADVISE DUKE BARDACH IN MESOPOTAMIA

Judas preached first in Mesopotamia and in Pontus, and Simon preached in Egypt, and from thence came they into Persia, and found there two enchanters, Zaroës and Arphaxat, whom S. Matthew had driven out of Ethiopia. And found there also Baradach, a duke of the kings of Babylon, which should go in battle against them of India, and could have none answer of his gods. And then they went to a temple nigh to the city, and there they had answer that because that the apostles that were come they might not answer. Then the duke did enquire for them, and found them, and demanded them wherefore they were come, and what they were.

Which [they] answered: “If thou demand of our lineage, we be Hebrews, and if thou demand of our condition, we be servants of Jesu Christ, and if thou demand wherefore we be come, we be for your health.”

To whom the duke answered: “When I shall return joyously from the battle I shall hear you.”

To whom the apostles said: “It is more convenable to thee [in your interest] to know him now, by whom thou mayst overcome and appease [pacify] them that be rebel to thee.”

And the duke answered: “I see you more mighty than our gods; I pray you to say to us tofore the end of the battle.”

And the apostles said: “Because that thou knowest thy gods to be liars, we command them that they give answer to that [which] thou demandest, because that when they have we shall prove that they have lied.”

Then the idols said that the battle should be great, and much people should be overthrown on both sides. And then the apostles began to laugh and the duke said to them: “I am afeard and ye laugh.”

And the apostles said: “Doubt [fear] ye nothing, for peace shall be made among you, and tomorn at the hour of tierce [9 a.m.] the messengers of the Medes shall come, and shall submit them [themselves] to thy puissance [power] with peace.”

And then the bishops of the idols made a great laughter, and said to the duke: “These men here would assure thee here, to the end that thou shouldst believe foolishly, and that thou shouldst be betaken of thine adversaries.”

And the apostles said: “We say not abide a month, but one day only, and thou shalt be vanquisher all in peace.”

Then the duke made to be kept that one and that other, that they that said the truth should be honoured, and the liars punished. Then on the morn, like as the apostles had said, it happed, and then the duke would have burnt the bishops of the idols, but the apostles letted [prevented] him that he should not slay them, for they were not come for to slay but for to quicken the dead. And then the duke much marvelled that they would not that they should be slain ne receive none of their goods, and brought them to the king and said: “These be gods hid in form of men.”

THE ENCHANTERS CONSPIRE AGAINST SAINTS SIMON AND JUDE

And when he had told all to him in the presence of his enchanters, the enchanters, being moved of envy, said that they were malicious and wicked men, and purposed some malice against the realm subtly. Then the duke said to them: “Now if ye dare, assay ye [test them] and dispute with them.”

And the enchanters said: “If thou wilt, thou shalt see that they shall not now speak. We being present, make men to come hither that be eloquent and can well speak. And if they dare speak tofore us despise ye us, and say we be fools.”

And then were brought tofore them many advocates, and anon they were made dumb tofore the enchanters, so that by signs they might not show that they might not speak. Then said the enchanters to the king: “To the end that thou know that we be gods, we shall suffer them to speak, but they shall not mow go [be able to walk], and then we shall give to them their going and shall take away their sight, and yet shall their eyes be open.”

And when they had done all these things, the duke brought the advocates all confused unto the apostles, and when the advocates saw the apostles so evil clothed, they had of them great despite [disdain] in their courage [hearts]. To whom Simon said: “Ofttimes it happeth that among coffers of gold wrought with precious stones be right evil things enclosed, and within coffers of tree [wood] be laid gold rings and precious stones. Promise ye that ye will forsake the idols and will worship one only God invisible, and we shall make the sign of the cross in your foreheads, and ye shall then mow [be able to] confound these enchanters.”

And when these advocates had renounced the idols and were marked in the foreheads with the sign of the cross, they entered again to the king tofore the enchanters. Then might they not be overcome of the enchanters, but confounded them openly before the king and all the people. The enchanters were then angry, and made to come a great

multitude of serpents. Then the apostles came anon by the commandment of the king, and filled their mantles with the serpents, and threw them against the enchanters, saying: “Move ye not in the name of our Lord Jesu Christ but be ye to-torn and beaten, so that ye cry and bray in showing what sorrow and pain ye suffer.”

And then when the serpents bit and eat [ate] the flesh of the enchanters, they cried and howled like wolves, and the king and the others prayed the apostles that they would suffer them to die with the serpents. And the apostles answered that they were sent for to bring men from death to life, and not from life to death. Then made they their prayers and commanded the serpents that they should take from them again the venom that they had shed, and return again to the places that they came from.

And the enchanters felt greater pain when they drew out their venom again, than they did the first time when they bit them. And the apostles said to them: “Ye shall feel this pain three days, and at the third day ye shall be whole, so that ye depart [desist] from your malice.”

And when they had been tormented three days without meat [food] and drink and without sleep, the apostles came to them and said: “God deigneth not to have service by force, and therefore arise ye all whole and go your way, ye have power to do what ye will.

And they, abiding in their malice, arose up and fled from the apostles and moved almost against them all Babylon.

THE UNWED MOTHER AND THE HOLY DEACON

After, the daughter of a duke conceived a son by fornication, and at her deliverance thereof she defamed an holy deacon, and said that he had defouled her and she had conceived of him. And when the friends of her would have slain the deacon, the apostles came and demanded when the child had been born. And they said: “Yesterday, the first hour of the day.”

And the apostles said: “Bring hither the child to us, and also the deacon that ye accuse.”

And when that was done, the apostles said to the child: “Say to us in the name of our Lord if this deacon hath done this deed.”

And the child answered: “This deacon is chaste and an holy man, ne he never defouled his flesh.”

And then the parents and friends required that the apostle should demand who had done that felony. They answered: “It appertaineth to us for to excuse the innocents, and not betray ne hurt them that be culpable.”

TWO CRUEL TIGERS

That time it happed that two cruel tigers, which were enclosed in a pit, brake out and devoured all them that they met and encountered, and then the apostles came to them and made them as meek and debonair, in the name of our Lord, as they had been sheep or lambs.

SIMON AND JUDE GAIN CONVERTS IN MESOPOTAMIA AND ARE MARTYRED

And then the apostles would have departed thence, but they were holden by prayers so that they abode there a year and three months, and in that espace of time the king and more than sixty thousand men were baptized, without children.

And the foresaid enchanter went into a city called Suamar, whereas were seventy bishops of idols, whom they moved against the apostles, so that when they came thither, either they should do sacrifice to the idols or they should be slain. And when the apostles had gone round about the province, they came to said city, and anon all the bishops and the people took them and brought them to the temple of the sun. And the devils began to cry in the simulachres: What will these apostles of the living God do to us? Lo! how we be burnt by flames in their entering into this city.

And then the angel of our Lord appeared unto the apostles, and said to them: "Choose ye of two things that one, that is, either that this people be suddenly dead or slain, or that ye be martyred."

To whom they said: "We will that thou convert them here, and lead us to the pain of martyrdom."

And they then commanded silence, and the apostles said: "Because that ye shall know that these idols be full of devils, we command them for to come out, and that each of them break and destroy his false image." And anon two Ethiopians, black and naked, issued out of the idols, all the people seeing which were abashed, and all tobrake their idols, and went their way, crying cruelly.

And when the bishops saw this, they ran upon the apostles and hewed them to death anon. And that same hour, which was right fair weather, came so great thunder and lightning that the temple was smitten in three, and the two enchanter were turned into coals by the stroke of thunder.

And the king bare the bodies of the apostles into his city, and did do make a church of marvellous greatness in the honour of them.

OTHER ACCOUNTS OF SIMON'S ACTS AND DEATH

And it is founden in divers places, of S. Simon, that he was nailed to the cross, which thing Isidore saith in the *Book of the Death of the Apostles*, and Eusebius in the *History*

Ecclesiastic, and Bede upon the Acts of the Apostles, and Master John Beleth in his Summa witnesseth the same. And as they say, when he had preached in Egypt, he came again and was made bishop in Jerusalem after the death of James the Less, and was chosen of the court of the apostles, and it is said that he raised thirty dead men to life. When he had governed the church of Jerusalem many years, unto the time of Trajan the emperor, in the time that Atticus was consul in Jerusalem, of whom he was taken and tormented and done to much wrong. And at the last he was tormented and fixed to the cross, and the judge and all they that were there marvelled that the man which was six score years old might suffer the torment of the cross. And some say verily that it was not this Simon that suffered the martyrdom of the cross, but it was another, the son of Cleophas, brother of Joseph, and Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, witnesseth it in his chronicle. For Isidore and Eusebius corrected their chronicles of that they said tofore, which appeareth by Bede, that when he felt this he revoked it in his retractions. And the same witnesseth Usuard in his Martyrology.

Then let us devoutly pray these apostles to be our special advocates unto our blessed Lord Jesu Christ their master, to have pity and mercy on us. Amen.

The iconography of Saint Simon and Saint Jude Thadeus is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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