

67// HERE FOLLOWETH OF ST. JAMES THE LESS

James the Apostle is said the Less [Younger], how well that he was elder of age than was St. James the More [Older], because like as is in religion he that entered first is called aine [older] and great, and he that cometh after shall be called less, though he be the older, and in this wise was this St. James called the Less.

He was called also the brother of our Lord, because he resembled much well our Lord in body, in visage, and of manner.

He was called James the Just for his right great holiness, for St. Jerome recordeth that he was so holy that the people strove how they might touch the hem of his robe or mantle.

He was also called James the son of Alpheus.

This James was ever holy after that he issued out of his mother's womb. He never drank wine, mead, ne cider, ne never ate flesh, ne never rasor touched his head, ne he never bathed. He knelt so oft in prayers that his knees were as hard as the horn of a camel.

He sang in Jerusalem the first mass that ever was sung therein, and he was first bishop of Jerusalem. Josephus recordeth that he had avowed at the death of our Lord that he would never eat till our Lord were risen from death to life; then on Easter day our Lord appeared to him and said: Lay the table, fair brother, and eat, for the son of the Virgin is risen from death to life. Then took he the bread and made the benediction and gave it to him.

HIS MARTYRDOM

The seventh year after, the apostles assembled in Jerusalem on Easter day, there St. James demanding what God had done by them tofore the people, that they should tell. And when St. James had preached seven days in the temple with the other apostles, Caiaphas and some other would have been baptized, and then entered in a man suddenly in to the temple and said crying: O ye sirs, what will ye do? why suffer ye thus to be deceived of these enchanters? Be ye ware and keep you, that they deceive you not.

He moved so much the people that they would have stoned the apostles. Then this

James is as much to say as supplanter or supplanting a feast, or making ready. Or James is said of ja and of cobar, which is as much to say as the burden or weight of God. Or James may be said of jaculum, a dart and copis smiting, which is to say smitten with a dart, or smitten with glaive [lance]s. He was said a supplanter of the world, for he despised it in supplanting hastily the devil. And he is said making ready, for always he made ready his body to do well. For as Gregory of Nyssen saith: We have in us three evil passions which come of evil nourishing, or of right false conversation, or of evil custom of the body, or of the vice of ignorance, and they be cured by good conversation, and for to haunt studies of good exercitation of doctrine. So then the blessed James is escried, for he was always ready in his body to all good. He is said the burden or weight of good or godly manners, that he used by exercitation of virtues. He was smitten with glaives by martyrdom.

fellow went up to the lectern whereas St. James preached, and threw him down backward, and from then forthon ever after he halted.

And this was done the seventh year after the ascension of our Lord, and he was bishop there by the space of thirty years. And in his thirtieth year, when the Jews saw that they might not slay St. Paul because he had appealed to the emperor to Rome, and was sent forth to Rome, they turned all their persecution against St. James, and said to him: The people is deceived, for they supposed that your Jesus were Messias. Then for as much as thou art much believed, we pray thee that thou assemble the people, and that thou stand up on high, and show to them that it is not he, for thou art so just that we all shall believe in thee.

Then St. James went up on the front of the temple on Easter day, and all the people were assembled beneath. Then said the Jews to him, with an high voice: Right just and true man, we know well that thou shalt not lie, show to us of Jesus that was hanged upon the cross that which thou knowest, for all the world is deceived.

Then answered he with an high voice: Wherefore demand ye me of the son of the virgin? I say to you that he is now in heaven, and sitteth on the right side of God the Father, and shall come to deem the living and the dead.

When the Christian men had heard him they were much glad, but the Pharisees and the masters of the law repented them of this that they had made him to say, and bear this witness tofore the people, and took counsel together for to cast him down, for to make the people afeard, because they should not believe him, and they cried: O the just man hath erred at this time. and after they threw him down and the people began to stone him. But he was on his knees, and said: Fair Lord God, pardon them, for they wot not what they do.

Then cried out one of the sons of the priest named Jacob: Sirs, leave this just man in peace. But there was a man in that company took a fuller's staff and smote him on the head, that his brain fell all abroad, and thus by martyrdom he finished his life and was there buried, nigh unto the temple. And the people would have slain these malefactors because they had slain him, but they fled. This was done in the time of Nero the year of our Lord fifty-seven.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Signs and Portents

Josephus saith that for this great sin of the death of St. James was Jerusalem afterward destroyed, for tofore that the destruction came, God showed marvellous signs. For there was a star, right clear and shining, which had the form of a sword, that hung over Jerusalem; but this token, ne the tokens hereafter following, came not only for the death of St. James, but for the death of our Lord Jesu Christ principally, for he said: There shall not in thee be left a stone upon a stone.

But because our Lord would [desired] not the death of sinners, but that he would they should do penance and repent them, he abode forty years, and called them unto penance by his apostles, and most by St. James, brother of our Lord, which continually preached to them.

For in this forty years were many signs and prodigies showed to them as Josephus rehearseth, of which the star, like the sword, was one, which was seen over the city a whole year during, and burning with great bright flames. The next year after, in a feast of Easter, there was a clearness and light about the temple in the night, that it was like unto clear day. In that same time there was a cow brought forth to be sacrificed, which anon calved or brought forth a lamb, against kind. After this a little time, about going down of the sun, there was seen in the air carts and wains, and great company of men of arms that environed the city suddenly.

In a feast of Whitsuntide, which is called Pentecost, the priests went in to the temple by night for to do their mysteries, and they heard a voice saying: Let us go hence from this place.

And four years after, tofore that the destruction came, a man whose name was Jesus, the son of Ananias, began to cry suddenly: The voice of the orient! the voice of the occident! the voice of four winds upon Jerusalem! Woe on the husbands! woe upon the wives ! and woe upon all the people!

The said man was taken, smitten, and beaten, tormented, and brought tofore the judge, and he never wept ne cried mercy, but ever persevered, and cried howling the same words, adding thereto: Woe! woe! to Jerusalem.

All this saith Josephus, and yet for all these tokens, warnings, and prodigies the Jews were never afeard.

Then, forty years after the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ, came Titus and Vespasian against Jerusalem, and destroyed it.

Vespasian Cured by Belief in Jesus Christ

The cause, and by whom it was destroyed, is recorded in an history, though it be not authentic. For Pilate, which doubted the fury and anger of the emperor Tiberius, because he had wrongfully judged and condemned Jesu Christ the innocent, sent one of his servants for to excuse him, and the servant's name was Alban. In this time Vespasian was governor of Galatia for the emperor, and the messenger of Pilate which would have gone to Rome, was constrained by a contrary wind to arrive in Galatia, and was brought to Vespasian. For the custom of the country was that who was taken on the sea, and brought so in against his will, should be at the will of the lord, body and goods. And when Vespasian saw him he demanded him what he was and from whence he came; he said that he was of Jerusalem. Then said Vespasian: Ah Lord God! in that country were wont to be good masters and much good surgeons; my friend, said he, canst thou anything of surgery?

This said he because he had in his nose a botch full of worms from his youth, and never might man be found that might heal him of it. The messenger of Pilate answered and said that he could nothing thereof.

Vespasian said: If thou heal me not I shall slay thee.

The messenger said: He that enlumined the blind, and chased devils out of men, and raised dead men to life in our country, knoweth well that I cannot heal thee but he can well heal thee if he will.

Then demanded Vespasian what he was. He said to him that it was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they of Jerusalem had slain wrongfully for envy, "and if thou wilt believe in him he shall heal thee."

Then said Vespasian, "I believe well that he that raised dead men may well heal and make me all whole." And saying these words the wasps fell from his nose with the botch within which they were, and forthwith he was made perfectly whole, whereof he had much great joy and said: "I am certain that he that hath thus made me whole was the very son of God. I shall demand licence of the emperor Tiberius, and I shall go destroy the cursed traitors that have slain this man." And then he let Alban, the messenger of Pilate, go where he would.

Vespasian Marches Against Jerusalem

After this Vespasian went to Rome, and gat licence of the emperor for to destroy this people and the city of Jerusalem, and assembled his host in the time of Nero the emperor, and came suddenly, the Jews then being the most part in Jerusalem on Easter day, and besieged the town, for on that day all the Jews of the country were come to the feast, so that they were suddenly enclosed.

Now was it so that tofore that Vespasian came, the good men of the city were warned by the holy Ghost that they should go out of the city, and they went to a place called Pella, because that the vengeance should not fall on them, but on the wicked people of the Jews.

There was another city of the Jewry named Jonapatam, in which Josephus was duke, which Vespasian first assailed, but Josephus, with such men as he had, resisted them manly, but at the last, when Josephus saw the destruction of it and might no longer keep it, he took with him twelve Jews and hid him in a cave or an house under the earth, where they were four days without meat [food] and drink in great anguish and affliction.

Then the Jews, being there without consent of Josephus, had liefer die than be subject or put themselves in servitude to Vespasian, and would slay themselves, and offer their blood in sacrifice to God. And because Josephus was the most worthy and noble of them, they would slay him first, by whose blood God might best be pleased, or else, as it is said in the chronicle, that each of them should slay other rather than they should come into the hands of the Romans.

Then Josephus, a prudent man, and not willing to die, constituted and ordained himself judge of the death and sacrifice, and who that first should be slain; he ordained that between two and two should be drawn lots, and so, the lot given, now one was slain, now another, till at the last all were dead save Josephus and one other. Then Josephus, being a strong man and a light, caught the sword to him and asked his fellow whether he had liefer live or die, and commanded him shortly without delay to tell him; and he sore dreading said: I forsake not to live if I may by thy grace get and keep my life.

Then Josephus spake to a servant of Vespasian, and did so much that he gat his life of Vespasian, and then he was brought to Vespasian, and Vespasian said to him: Thou shouldst have died if thou hadst not gotten grace by the prayer and request of this man.

And Josephus answered: If any thing be done amiss it may turn to better.

And Vespasian said: Who that is bound, what may he do? Josephus answered: Somewhat may I do if thou wilt give me audience.

Vespasian said: I will well that thou say, and if thou say any good thou shalt be peaceably heard.

And Josephus said: The emperor of Rome is dead, and the senate hath made thee emperor.

And Vespasian answered: If thou be a prophet, why hast thou not prophesied to the people of this city that they shall be taken by my hand?

And Josephus said: I have well forty days warned them.

And in the meanwhile came the messengers from Rome and affirmed that Vespasian was made emperor, and led him to Rome. All this recounteth Eusebius in his chronicle. Josephus said tofore to Vespasian as well of the death of the emperor as of his election to be emperor. And Vespasian left his son Titus at the siege of Jerusalem.

Titus Continues the Siege of Jerusalem

It is read also in the same history, though it be apocrypha, that when Titus heard that his father was enhanced into the empire, he was so glad and had so much joy, that all his sinews were shrunken and were so feeble that he was sore tormented with the palsy. And Josephus hearing thereof diligently enquired the cause of the sickness, the time thereof and the manner. The cause ne the sickness were not known, but the time was when he heard of the election of his father to the empire. Josephus, a wise and a prudent man, considered the time of the coming of the sickness, and conjectured that it came of overmuch joy and abounding gladness, and remembering that contraries be cured by their contraries, for that which cometh of love is cured by hate oftentimes, and began to enquire if there were any man that the prince hated much. And it was that he had a servant whom he held in prison, and hated him so much that in no wise he might look on him ne hear him named. Then he said: Titus, if thou desire to be whole, who that

ever come in my fellowship must be here sure and safe. Then Josephus made the dinner to be ready and set himself against him, and the servant that Titus most hated sat on his right side, whom as soon as Titus had beholden he began to chauffe and to be marvellous angry for anguish. Then he which was infrigidate and cold for joy, stretched out his sinews, and was made all whole by the burning heat of anger and was all whole.

All this foresaid of Josephus, I remit it to the reader's judgment whether he will believe it or not, but Titus lay at the siege two years tofore the city, and so long that the famine oppressed so sore, that the fathers from the children, and the children from the fathers, and husbands from the wives, and wives from the husbands, plucked the meat out of others' mouths; and young men that had been right strong fell down dead in the streets and ways. They that should bury the dead fell down oftentimes dead upon them that were dead, and because they were not borne away nor they might not suffer the stench of the dead bodies, they ordained that the commons of the town should cast them over the walls into the ditches because they might not endure the stench to bury them.

And when Titus, which went about the city, saw the ditches so full of carrions which corrupted all the country with the stench, he held up his hands to heaven weeping, and said: Lord God, now see I well that this is not by me but by thee which herein takest vengeance; for then they of the town within had so great default that they ate their shoes and ratchets.

There was a gentlewoman in the town which had a child to whom she gave suck, and for hunger that she had she strangled and slew this child, and roasted that one half and kept that other for to eat. It happed that the governors of the town which went to search, smelled the savour of this roast, and brake up the door and threatened to slay the woman if she gave to them not of her meat. Then she showed to them that other deal of her child that she had kept, and said, "If ye will, I shall gladly give you part." Then had they so great horror thereof that they might not speak. Then said she, "This was my son, the sin is mine and cometh on me, eat on hardily for I have eaten part tofore, for ye loved him not so well as I did that was his mother. And if pity move you that ye leave to eat of him, I that have eaten that one half, know ye for certain that I shall well eat that other half." They then, being abhorred of this inhumanity, went their way.

After this then, when Vespasian had been emperor two years, Titus took Jerusalem and destroyed all, and the temple also; and like as the Jews had bought our Lord for thirty pence, so gave he thirty Jews for one penny. And like as Josephus recordeth, he sold so four score and seventeen thousand, and eleven hundred thousand were perished by famine and by sword.

It is read that when Titus entered Jerusalem he saw a thick wall which he did do perish [destroy] and break, and when a hole was made therein they saw there a fair old man, hoar and venerable of cheer, whom they demanded long what he was. At the last he answered and said he was Joseph of Arimathea, a city of Judea, and that the Jews had mured him therein because he had buried Christ, and saying more, that "from that time until this now I have been fed with heavenly bread and drink, and comforted with divine light."

Nevertheless, in the gospel of Nicodemus it is said that when the Jews had shut him up, Christ in his resurrection took him thence and led him in to Arimathea. It may well be after, when he ceased not to preach of Christ, that the Jews so mured him up.

After this, when Vespasian was dead, Titus his son was made emperor after him, and was so debonair [mild], so liberal and of so great bounty, that there had none been like him, for as Jerome saith: That day that he had not given a gift, ne had done no good, at even he said to his friends, O my friends, this day have I lost.

After this, long time, it happed that some Jews would re-edify [re-build] Jerusalem. And on the first morning that they went to work they found crosses on the dew, and then they fled; and after they came again and began to re-edify again, and then they found bloody crosses, and then they fled away again; and the third time they came again, and out of the earth issued a fire and burnt and wasted them all.

The [iconography of St. James the Less](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

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

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