

## 99// ST. JAMES THE GREATER

**J**ames the apostle, son of Zebedee, preached after the ascension of our Lord in the Jewry and Samaria, and after, he was sent into Spain for to sow there the word of Jesu Christ. But when he was there he profited but little, for he had converted unto Christ's law but nine disciples, of whom he left two there, for to preach the word of God, and took the other seven with him and returned again into Judea. Master John Beleth saith that he converted there but one man only.

### THE ENCHANTER HERMOGENES

**A**nd when after he preached the word of God in Judea, there was an enchanter named Hermogenes with the Pharisees, which sent Philetus his disciple to St. James for to overcome him tofore all men, and to prove his preaching false. But the apostle overcame him tofore all men reasonably, and did many miracles tofore him.

Philetus then returned to Hermogenes, and approved the doctrine of James to be true, and recited to him his miracles, and said that he would be his disciple, and desired and counselled Hermogenes in like wise to be his disciple. Then Hermogenes was wroth, and by his craft and enchantments he made Philetus in such wise that he might not move, and said: Now we shall see if thy James may save thee.

Then Philetus sent his child to St. James and let him have knowledge hereof. Then St. James sent to him his sudary or keverchief and said: Say to him that our Lord redresseth them that be hurt, and unbindeth them that be empeshed; and as soon as he said so, and touched the sudary, he was unbound and loosed from all the enchanting

*This James the apostle is said "James the son of Zebedee," "brother of St. John the Evangelist," "Boanerges" (that is "the son of thunder"), and "James the More."*

*He was said "James, son of Zebedee," not only in flesh but in the exposition of the name, for Zebedee is interpreted giving or given, and James gave himself to God by martyrdom of death, and he is given to us of God for a special patron.*

*He is said "James, brother of John," not only by flesh but by semblance of manners. For they both were of one love and of one study and of one will. They were of one love for to avenge our Lord, for when the Samaritans would not receive Jesu Christ, James and John said: If it please thee Lord let fire descend from heaven and destroy them. They were of like study for to learn, for these two were they that demanded of our Lord of the day of judgment, and of other things to come. And they asked that one of them might sit at the right side of him and that other on his left side.*

*He was said "the son of thunder," because of the sound of his predication, for he feared the evil and excited the slothful, and by the highness of his preaching he did marvels in converting them to the faith; whereof Bede saith of St. John, that he thundered so high, that if he had thundered a little higher, all the world might not have comprised him.*

*He is said James the More, like as that other James is said James the Less. First by reason of his calling, for he was first called of Jesu Christ, secondly by reason of familiarity, for Jesu Christ was seen to have greater familiarity with him than with the Less James. Like as it appeareth at the raising of the maid, and at his holy transfiguration. Thirdly, by reason of his passion. For among all the apostles he was the first that suffered death, and he may be said More because he was first called to be an apostle, so he was first called to the glory perdurable.*

of Hermogenes, and arose up and went joyfully to St. James.

Then Hermogenes was angry, and called many devils, and commanded them that they bring to him St. James bound, and Philetus with him, for to avenge him on them, lest his disciples afterwards address them against him. Then when the devils came towards St. James, they cried, howling in the air, saying: James the apostle of God have pity on us, for we burn tofore our time come.

To whom James said: Wherefore come ye to me?

And they said: Hermogenes hath sent us to thee and to Philetus for to bring you to him, and the angel of God hath bound us with chains of fire and tormenteth us.

And James said: The angel of God shall unbind you and bring him to me bounden, but hurt him not.

Then they went and took Hermogenes and bound his hands, and brought him so bound to St. James, and they said to Hermogenes: Thou hast sent us thither where we were strongly tormented and grievously bound.

And then said they to St. James: Give to us power against him that we may avenge the wrongs and our embracements.

And James said to them: Lo! here is Philetus tofore you, why take ye him not?

They answered: We may not touch him, ne as much as a flea that is in thy couch.

Then said James to Philetus: To the end that thou do good for evil, like as Christ bade us, unbind him.

And then Hermogenes was all confused. And James said to him: Go thy way freely where thou wilt, for it appertaineth not to our discipline that any be converted against his will.

And Hermogenes said to him: I know well the ire of the devils, but if thou give to me somewhat of thine that I may have with me, they shall slay me.

Then St. James gave to him his staff. Then he went and brought to the apostle all his books of his false craft and enchanting for to be burnt. But St. James, because that the odour of the burning might do evil or harm to some fools, he made them to be cast into the sea. And after he had cast his books into the sea he returned, and holding his feet said: O thou deliverer of souls, receive me penitent, and him that hath sustained till now missaying of thee.

And then began he to be perfect in the dread of God our Lord, so that many virtues were done by him afterward.

## **THE BEHEADING OF ST. JAMES**

**A**nd when the Jews saw Hermogenes converted they were all moved of envy, and went unto St. James and blamed him because that he preached Christ crucified. And he approved clearly the coming and passion of our Lord Jesu Christ in such wise that many believed in our Lord. Abiathar, which was bishop that year, moved the people against him, and then they put a cord about his neck and brought him to Herod Agrippa.

And when he was led to be beheaded by the commandment of Herod, a man having the palsy cried to him. And he gave him health and said: In the name of Jesu Christ, for whom I am led to be beheaded, arise thou and be all whole, and bless our Lord thy Maker.

And anon he arose and was all whole. A scribe named Josias, which put the cord about his neck and drew him, seeing this miracle fell down to his feet and demanded of him forgiveness and that he might be christened. And when Abiathar saw that, he made him to be taken, and said to him: But if thou curse the name of Christ thou shalt be beheaded with him.

To whom Josias said: Be thou accursed, and accursed be all thy Gods, and the name of our Lord Jesu Christ be blessed world without end.

Then Abiathar commanded to smite him on the mouth with fists, and sent a message to Herod, and gat consent that he should be beheaded with James. And when they should be beheaded both, St. James desired a potful of water of him that should smite off their heads, and therewith he baptized Josias, and then anon they were both beheaded and suffered martyrdom.

St. James was beheaded the eighth kalends of April [March 25] on our Lady's day of the Annunciation, and the eighth kalends of August [July 25] he was translated to Compostella. And the third kalends of January [December 30] he was buried, for the making of his sepulchre was from August unto January, and therefore the church hath established that his feast shall be hallowed in the eighth kalends of August [July 25], whereas is most convenable time.

## **ST. JAMES'S BODY IS CARRIED TO SPAIN**

**A**nd as Master John Beleth saith, which made this translation diligently: When the blessed St. James was beheaded, his disciples took the body away by night for fear of the Jews, and brought it into a ship, and committed unto the will of our Lord the sepulture of it, and went withal into the ship without sail or rudder. And by the conduct of the angel of our Lord they arrived in Galicia in the realm of Lupa.

## **THE CONVERSION OF QUEEN LUPA IN GALICIA**

**T**here was in Spain a queen that had to name, and also by deserving of her life, Lupa, which is as much to say in English as a she-wolf. And then the disciples of St. James took out his body and laid it upon a great stone. And anon the stone received the body into it as it had been soft wax, and made to the body a stone as it were a sepulchre. Then the disciples went to Lupa

the queen, and said to her: Our Lord Jesu Christ hath sent to thee the body of his disciple, so that him that thou wouldest not receive alive thou shalt receive dead.

And then they recited to her the miracle by order; how they were come without any governaile of the ship and required of her place convenable for his holy sepulture. And when the queen heard this, she sent them unto a right cruel man, by treachery and by guile, as Master Beleth saith, and some say it was to the king of Spain, for to have his consent of this matter, and he took them and put them in prison. And when he was at dinner the angel of our Lord opened the prison and let them escape away all free. And when he knew it, he sent hastily knights after, for to take them, and as these knights passed to go over a bridge, the bridge brake and overthrew, and they fell in the water and were drowned.

And when he heard that he repented him and doubted for himself and for his people, and sent after them, praying them for to return, and that he would do like as they would themselves. And then they returned and converted the people of that city unto the faith of God.

And when Lupa the queen heard this, she was much sorrowful, and when they came again to her they told to her the agreement of the king. She answered: Take the oxen that I have in yonder mountain, and join ye and yoke them to my cart or chariot, and bring ye then the body of your master, and build ye for him such a place as ye will

And this she said to them in guile and mockage, for she knew well that there were no oxen but wild bulls, and supposed that they should never join them to her chariot, and if they were so joined and yoked to the chariot, they would run hither and thither, and should break the chariot, and throw down the body and slay them. But there is no wisdom against God. And then they, that knew nothing the evil courage of the queen, went up on the mountain, and found there a dragon casting fire at them, and ran on them. And they made the sign of the cross and he brake it on two pieces. And then they made the sign of the cross upon the bulls, and anon they were meek as lambs. Then they took them and yoked them to the chariot, and took the body of St. James with the stone that they had laid it on, and laid on the chariot, and the wild bulls without governing or driving of any body drew it forth unto the middle of the palace of the queen Lupa.

And when she saw this she was abashed and believed and was christened, and delivered to them all that they demanded, and dedicated her palace into a church and endowed it greatly, and after ended her life in good works.

## **MIRACLES OF ST. JAMES**

### **The Man in the High Tower**

**B**ernard, a man of the bishopric of Mutina, as Calixtus the pope saith, was taken and enchained and put into a deep tower, and called always the blessed St. James, so that St. James appeared to him and said: Come and follow me into Galicia, and then his bonds brake and St. James vanished away. And he went up into the high tower, and his bonds in his neck, and sprang down without hurting, and it was well sixty cubits of height.

### The Man Whose Sin was Effaced

And as Bede saith: There was a man that had done a foul sin, of which the bishop doubted to assoil him, and sent him to St. James with a schedule in which the sin was written; and when he had laid the schedule upon the altar, on the day of St. James he prayed St. James, that by his merits his sin might be forgiven and defaced. And after, he opened the schedule and found the sin effaced and struck out. And then he thanked God and St. James.

### The Thirty Pilgrims of Lorraine

Thirty men of Lorraine went together on pilgrimage to St. James about the year of our Lord a thousand and sixty-three, and all made faith to other that every man should abide and serve other in all estates that shall happen by the way, except one [man], that would make no covenant. It happed that one of them was sick and his fellows abode and awaited on him fifteen days, and at last they all left him, save he that promised not, which abode by him and kept him at the foot of the Mount St. Michael.

And when it drew to night the sick man died, and when it was night, the man that was alive was sore afraid for the place which was solitary, and for the presence of the dead body, and for the cruelty of the strange people, and for the darkness of the night that came on. But anon St. James appeared to him in likeness of a man on horseback and comforted him and said; Give me that dead body tofore me, and leap thou up behind me on my horse.

And so they rode all that night fifteen days journey that they were on the morn to see the sun rising at Montoia, which is but half a league from St. James. Then St. James left them both, commanding him that was alive, that he should assemble the canons of St. James to bury this pilgrim, and that he should say to his fellows, because they had broken their faith their pilgrimage availed them not. And he did his commandment, and when his fellows came they marvelled how he had so fast gone, and he told to them all that St. James had said and done.

### The Man Accused of Stealing a Cup

And as Calixtus the pope rehearseth, there was a man of Almaine, and he went to St. James about the year one thousand four score and three, and came to Toulouse for to be lodged, and their host made them drunk. Then the host took a cup of silver and put it in their malle. And on the morn, when they were gone, he followed them as thieves, and bare them on hand that they had stolen his cup, and said that they should be punished if the cup were found on them. And he found it in the malle, and anon they were brought to judgment.

And then the sentence was given, that all that they had should be given to the host, and that one of them should be hanged. And then the father would have died for his son and the son for the father. At last the son was hanged, and the father went forth weeping on his pilgrimage to St. James, and came again thirty-six days after, and then went for to see his son, and cried and wept, but the son which was hanged, began to comfort and said to his father: Right sweet father, weep no more, for I was never so well at ease, for the blessed St. James hath always sustained me and held me up, and hath fed me with sweetness of heaven.

And when the father heard him speak, he ran anon to the city and did so much that the people came, and his son was taken down all whole, as though he had never had harm, and the host was hanged which had put the cup in the malle.

### The Pilgrim Seduced into Suicide by the Devil

Hugo de St. Victor rehearseth that the devil appeared in likeness of St. James to a pilgrim, and told to him many things of the unhappiness of the world, and said to him that he should be well blessed if he slew himself in the honour of him. And anon he took a knife and slew himself; and then the host in whose house he was lodged was held suspect, and was sore afraid to be put therefor to death. Then he that was dead revived again, and said that the devil had caused him to slay himself, and brought him into great torments. And St. James ran, and brought him tofore the throne of the judge, and when the devils accused him, he gat that he should be restored to his life.

### The Young Man Who Fell into Fornication

There was a young man of the country of Lyons, as Hugh the abbot of Cluny witnesseth, that was accustomed to go oft to St. James, and the night tofore he should go thitherward he fell in fornication. And the next day he went forth. On a night it happed that the devil appeared to him in likeness of St. James, and said to him: Knowest thou who I am?

And he answered: Nay.

And the devil said to him: I am James the apostle, whom thou hast used to visit every year, and I am glad for thy devotion. But it is not long sith that thou, in going out of thy house, fellest in fornication, and hast presumed to come, not confessed thereof, wherefore thy pilgrimage may neither please God ne me. It appertaineth not to do so, for who that will come to me in pilgrimage, he must first show his sins by contrition and by confession, and after, by going on pilgrimage, punish them and make satisfaction.

And this said, the devil vanished away. Then the young man was in great anguish, and disposed him to return home again to his house and confess him of his sins, and then to begin again his journey.

And then the devil appeared to him again in likeness of the apostle, and warned him in no wise to do so, but said to him: This sin may in no wise be forgiven but if he cut off his members generative. But yet he should be more blessed if he killed himself, and be a martyr for the sake of him.

And he, that same night, when his fellows slept, took a knife and cut off his genitals, and with the same knife smote himself into the belly. And his fellows awoke, and when they saw this thing they were sore afraid, and anon fled away lest they should be taken as suspect of the homicide. And after, as they made ready his pit, to bury him in, he revived again, and then all they were abashed and fled away.

And he called them again, and told all that was befallen to him, saying: When I at the suggestion of the devil had slain myself, the devils took me and led me towards Rome, and anon St. James came after us, and blamed strongly the devils of their fallacy. And when they had long strived together, St. James constrained them to come into a meadow, where the Blessed Virgin sat speaking with many saints. And the blessed St. James complained for me, and then she blamed strongly the devils, and commanded that I should be restored again to my life. And then St. James took me, and rendered to me my life again, like as you see.

And three days after his wounds were whole, and there appeared nothing but the traces where the wounds were, and then he reprised again his journey, and found his fellows, and recited to them all this by order.

### The Frenchman and the Ass

And as Calixtus the pope rehearseth, there was a Frenchman, about the year of our Lord eleven hundred, would eschewe the mortality that was in France, and would visit St. James, and he took his wife and children and went thither. And when they came to Pampelona his wife died, and his host took from him all his money and his jument [mare], upon which his children were borne. And this man, that thus went all discomforted, and bare his children on his shoulders, and led one after him, was in great anguish and sorrow.

Then came a man to him, upon an ass, which had pity on him, and lent to him his ass for to bear his children. And when he came to St. James, and had done what he would, and prayed, St. James appeared to him, and demanded if he knew him, and he said nay. And St. James said to him: I am James the apostle, which have lent to thee mine ass, and yet I shall lend him to thee for to return. And I let thee wit that thine host is fallen from a soler and is dead. And thou shalt have again all that he hath taken from thee. And when all this was done, he returned joyous, with his children to his house. And as soon as his children were taken off from the ass, it was not known where it became.

### The Merchant Freed from his Tower Prison

A merchant was detained of a tyrant, and all despoiled, was wrongfully put in prison. And he called much devoutly St. James into his help. And St. James appeared to him tofore them that kept him, and they awoke, and he brought him into the highest of the tower, and anon the tower bowed down so low that the top was even with the ground. And he went, without leaping, and unbound of his irons. Then his keepers followed after, but they had no power to see him.

### The Three Knights of Lyons

Three knights of the diocese of Lyons went to St. James, and that one was required of a poor woman for the love of St. James to bear her sack upon his horse; and he bare it. After, he found a man sick, and set him on his horse, and took the burden off the man, and the sack off the said woman, and followed his horse afoot. But he was broken with the heat of the sun, and with labour to go afoot, that when he came to St. James in Galicia, he was strongly sick.

And his fellows prayed three days for the health of his soul, which three days he lay speechless, and his fellows abiding his death. The fourth he sighed greatly, and said: I thank God and St. James, for I am delivered by his merits when I would have done that which ye warned and admonished me. But the devils came to me and strained me so sore that I might not do nothing that appertained to the health of my soul. And I heard you well but I might not answer. And then the blessed St. James came, and brought in his left hand the sack of the woman, and in the right hand the bourdon of the poor pilgrim that I helped by the way, and held the bourdon for a spear, and the sack for a shield, and so assailed the devils as all angry, and lift up the bourdon, and feared the devils that they fled away; and thus the blessed St. James hath delivered me by his holy grace, and hath rendered to me my speech again. Call me the priest, for I may not be long in this life, it is time to amend our trespasses toward our Lord.

And then he turned him to one of his fellows, and said to him: Friend, ride no more with thy lord, for certainly he is damned, and shall perish shortly by evil death, and therefore leave his company, and then he died. And when he was buried, his two fellows, knights, returned, and that other said to his master this that he had said to him, and he set not thereby, and had despite to amend him. And anon after he was smitten with a spear in battle and died.

### The Destitute Pilgrim of Viriliac

And as Calixtus the pope saith, that there was a man of Viriliac went to St. James, and his money failed him by the way. And he had shame for to beg and ask alms, and he laid him under a tree, and dreamed that St. James fed him. And when he awoke he found a loaf, baked under ashes, at his head, and with that loaf he lived fifteen days till that he came again to his own place, and ate sufficiently twice a day of the same loaf, and always on the morn he found it whole in his satchel.

### The Burgess Redeemed from Slavery

Also the same Calixtus rehearseth that a burgess of the city of Barcelona went to St. James about the year of our Lord eleven hundred, and required only that he should never be taken of any enemies, and as he returned by Sicily he was taken in the sea of Saracens, and led oftentimes to fairs for to be sold, but alway the chains with which he was bounden loosed. And when he had been sold fourteen times he was bound with double chains. Then he called St. James to his help, and St. James appeared to him and said: Because thou wert in my church, and thou settest nothing by the health of thy soul, but demandedst only the deliverance of thy body, therefor thou hast fallen in this peril. But because that our Lord is merciful, he hath sent me for to buy thee.

And anon his chains brake, and he, bearing a part of the chains, passed by the countries and castles of the Saracens, and came home into his own country in the sight of all men, which were abashed of the miracle. For when any man would have taken him, as soon as they saw the chain they were afeard and fled. And when the lions and other beasts would have ran on him, in the deserts whereon he went, when they saw the chain they were afeard that they fled away.

## The Young Man Deceived Of Simplese

It happed in the year twelve hundred and thiryeight in a castle named Prato, between Florence and Pistoia, a young man deceived of simplese by counsel of an old man, set fire in the corn of his tutor, which had charge to keep him, because that he would usurp to himself his heritage. Then he was taken, and confessed his trespass, and was judged to be drawn and burnt. Then he confessed him, and avowed to St. James. And when he had been long drawn in his shirt upon a stony way, he was neither hurt in his body ne in his shirt. Then he was bound to a stake, and fagots and bushes were set about him, and fire put thereto, which fire burnt atwo his bonds, and he always called on St. James, and there was no hurt of burning found in his shirt nor in his body, and when they would have cast him again into the fire, he was taken away from them by St. James, the apostle of God, to whom be given laud and praising.

---

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

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

Scanned by Robert Blackmon. [bob\\_blackmon@mindspring.com](mailto:bob_blackmon@mindspring.com).

This text was taken from the [Internet Medieval Source Book](#). The Sourcebook is a collection of public domain and copy-permitted texts related to medieval and Byzantine history.

Permission is granted for electronic copying, distribution in print form for educational purposes and personal use. If you do reduplicate the document, indicate the source. No permission is granted for commercial use.

E-text © Paul Halsall, September 2000  
[halsall@fordham.edu](mailto:halsall@fordham.edu)

Reformatted with paragraphs, rubrics, italics, and insertions to cover lacunae by Richard Stracke, [rstracke@aug.edu](mailto:rstracke@aug.edu)