

St. James the Mangled

St. James the Mangled, also commonly known as St. James the Persian, was a prominent soldier in the army of the King of Persia. Because of his courage and might, he was promoted to the highest rank in the King's army. Because of his high rank in the military, he became a close friend of the King, who persuaded him to live in the world and influenced him to turn his heart away from Christ. When his family at home heard of how St. James was living apart from Christ, they wrote him a letter urging him to return to his Christian ways, saying, "Why have you forsaken the faith in the Lord Christ and worshipped the created objects, the fire, and the sun? Know that if you persist in what you are doing, we will disown you and you will become a stranger to us."



When St. James read this, he wept greatly and realized the great sin he had done in forsaking the Lord. He immediately resigned from the army and spent all his time studying Scripture. When the King heard of why St. James resigned, he was furious. He ordered that he be beaten severely and that if he did not reject Christ, he should be cut up with knives. The soldiers cut off his fingers, hands, arms, and legs; however, St. James refused to reject Christ. Every time they would cut off a part of his body, he cited Psalm 50:1 out loud saying, "Have mercy upon me O Lord according to Your great compassion." They kept on mutilating him until all that was left was his head, breast, and loins. St. James entreated the Lord and asked Him to receive His soul. Even despite all the suffering that St. James went through, he apologized to the Lord saying, "I have neither legs to stand before Thee, nor hands to lift up to Thee,

behold the parts of my body have been cast around me, O Lord receive my soul." Christ appeared to Him and comforted Him. Just as Christ was about to receive His soul, a soldier of the army cut off St. James's head, thus receiving the crown of martyrdom.

While the story of St. James the Mangled is quite gruel, it displays the importance of receiving our strength from Christ. Despite receiving a prolonged gruesome torture, St. James's faith never wavered. In fact, it was strengthened! Every time we suffer or have times of hardship, let us remember the story of St. James and the need for us to rely on Christ in these moments. If St. James praised the Lord without legs and arms, how much more can we praise the Lord and ask for His strength during our times of tribulation?

Sources:

- Synxarium, Hator 27
- Bible, English Standard Version