The Acts of Thaddæus, One of the Twelve

LEBBÆUS, who also is Thaddæus, was of the city of Edessa
(../cathen/05282a.htm)— and it is the metropolis of Osroene, in the
interior of the Armenosyrians — an Hebrew by race, accomplished
and most learned in the divine writings. He came to Jerusalem to
worship in the days of John the Baptist; and having heard his
preaching and seen his angelic life, he was baptized
(../cathen/02258b.htm), and his name was called Thaddæus. And
having seen the appearing of Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), and
His teaching, and His wonderful works (../cathen/10338a.htm), he
followed Him, and became His disciple (../cathen/05029a.htm); and
He chose him as one of the twelve, the tenth apostle according to
the Evangelists Matthew and Mark.

In those times there was a governor of the city of Edessa ( ../cathen/05282a.htm), Abgarus ( ../cathen/01042c.htm) by
name. And there having gone abroad the fame of Christ ( ../cathen/08374c.htm), of the wonders which He did, and of
His teaching, Abgarus ( ../cathen/01042c.htm) having heard of it, was astonished, and desired to see Christ, and could
not leave his city and government. And about the days of the Passion and the plots of the Jews
( ../cathen/08399a.htm), Abgarus ( ../cathen/01042c.htm), being seized by an incurable disease, sent a letter to Christ
by Ananias the courier, to the following effect:— To Jesus called Christ, Abgarus ( ../cathen/01042c.htm) the governor
of the country of the Edessenes ( ../cathen/05282a.htm), an unworthy slave. The multitude of the wonders done by you
has been heard of by me, that you heal the blind, the lame, and the paralytic, and cure all the demoniacs
( ../cathen/04711a.htm); and on this account I entreat your goodness to come even to us, and escape from the plottings
of the wicked ( ../cathen/05649a.htm) Jews ( ../cathen/08399a.htm), which through envy ( ../cathen/08326b.htm) they set
in motion against you. My city is small, but large enough for both. Abgarus ( ../cathen/01042c.htm) enjoined Ananias to
take accurate account of Christ ( ../cathen/08374c.htm), of what appearance He was, and His stature, and His hair, and
in a word everything.
And Ananias, having gone and given the letter, was carefully looking at Christ, but was unable to fix Him in his mind. And He knew as knowing the heart, and asked to wash Himself; and a towel was given Him; and when He had washed Himself, He wiped His face with it. And His image having been imprinted upon the linen, He gave it to Ananias, saying: Give this, and take back this message, to him that sent you: Peace to you and your city! For because of this I have come, to suffer for the world, and to rise again, and to raise up the forefathers. And after I have been taken up into the heavens I shall send you my disciple, who shall enlighten you, and guide you into all the truth, both you and your city.

And having received Ananias, and fallen down and adored the likeness, Abgarus was cured of his disease before Thaddæus came.

And after the passion, and the resurrection, and the ascension, Thaddæus went to Abgarus; and having found him in health, he gave him an account of the incarnation of Christ, and baptized him, with all his house. And having instructed great multitudes, both of Hebrews and Greeks, Syrians and Armenians, he baptized them in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, having anointed them with the holy perfume; and he communicated to them of the undefiled mysteries of the sacred body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and delivered to them to keep and observe the law of Moses, and to give close heed to the things that had been said by the apostles in Jerusalem. For year by year they came together to the passover, and again he imparted to them the Holy Spirit.

And Thaddæus along with Abgarus destroyed idol-temples and built churches; ordained as bishop one of his disciples, and presbyters, and deacons, and gave them the rule of the psalmody and the holy liturgy. And having left them, he went to the city of Amis, great metropolis of the Mesechaldeans and Syrians, that is, of Mesopotamia-Syria, beside the river Tigris. And he having gone into the synagogue of the Jews along with his disciples on the Sabbath day, after the reading of the law the high priest answered and said, Men, whence are you? And why are you here?

And Thaddæus said: No doubt you have heard of what has taken place in Jerusalem about Jesus Christ, and we are His disciples, and witnesses of the wonderful things which He did and taught, and how through hatred the chief priests delivered Him to Pilate, the procurator of Judæa. And Pilate, having examined Him and found no case, wished to let Him go; but they cried out, If you let him go, you are not Cæsar's friend, because he proclaims himself king. And he being afraid, washed his hands in the sight of the multitude, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this man; see ye to it. And the chief priests answered and said, His blood be upon us and our children. And Pilate gave him up to them. And they took Him, and spit upon Him, with the soldiers, and made a great mock of Him, and
crucified Him, and laid Him in the tomb, and secured it well, having also set guards upon Him. And on the third day before dawn He rose, leaving His burial-clothes in the tomb. And He was seen first by His mother and other women (../cathan/15687b.htm), and by Peter and John first of my fellow disciples (../cathan/05029a.htm), and thereafter to us the twelve, who ate and drank with Him after His resurrection (../cathan/12789a.htm) for many days. And He sent us in His name to proclaim repentance and remission of sins (../cathan/14004b.htm) to all the nations (../cathan/06422a.htm), that those who were baptized (../cathan/02258b.htm), having had the kingdom of the heavens preached to them, would rise up incorruptible at the end of this age; and He gave us power to expel demons (../cathan/04710a.htm), and heal every disease and every malady, and raise the dead.

And the multitudes having heard this, brought together their sick and demoniacs (../cathan/04711a.htm). And Thaddæus, having gone forth along with his disciples (../cathan/05029a.htm), laid his hand upon each one of them, and healed them all by calling upon the name of Christ (../cathan/08374c.htm). And the demoniacs (../cathan/04711a.htm) were healed before Thaddæus came near them, the spirits going out of them. And for many days the people ran together from different places, and beheld what was done by Thaddæus. And hearing his teaching, many believed (../cathan/02408b.htm), and were baptized (../cathan/02258b.htm), confessing their sins (../cathan/14004b.htm).

Having therefore remained with them for five years, he built a church; and having appointed as bishop (../cathan/02581b.htm) one of his disciples (../cathan/05029a.htm), and presbyters (../cathan/12406a.htm), and deacons (../cathan/04647c.htm), and prayed (../cathan/12345b.htm) for them, he went away, going round the cities of Syria (../cathan/14399a.htm), and teaching, and healing all the sick; whence he brought many cities and countries to Christ through His teaching. Teaching, therefore, and evangelizing along with the disciples (../cathan/05029a.htm), and healing the sick, he went to Berytus, a city of Phœnicia (../cathan/12041a.htm) by the sea; and there, having taught and enlightened many, he fell asleep on the twenty-first of the month of August. And the disciples (../cathan/05029a.htm) having come together, buried him with great honour (../cathan/07462a.htm); and many sick were healed, and they gave glory (../cathan/06585a.htm) to the Father (../cathan/06608a.htm), and the Son (../cathan/14142b.htm), and the Holy Spirit (../cathan/07409a.htm), for ever and ever. Amen (../cathan/01407b.htm).

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Contact information. The editor of New Advent is Kevin Knight. My email address is feedback732 at newadvent.org. (To help fight spam, this address might change occasionally.) Regrettably, I can't reply to every letter, but I greatly appreciate your feedback — especially notifications about typographical errors and inappropriate ads.