The Arabic Martyrdom of James, the Brother of Jesus

1 And when James the Just, the blessed, Brother of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached amongst them in the name of the Lord Jesus the Christ in that city, many believed on Him because of the wonders and the miracles which God wrought by means of him--may His name be blessed! The Lord deemed him worthy of the rank of a bishop in Jerusalem. And when he had become bishop, God made many healings of diseases manifest by his hand.

2 And the ruler of the city was a great lover of money; and he hated the saints, because of what Satan, may God curse him, showed him against them. And he had no child; because God, may His fame be gloried, was recompensing him for his many sins. But nevertheless his wife besought God—praise be unto Him—that He would grant her a child; and she did good unto all who were in want, and her alms never ceased from the holy churches without the knowledge of her husband, because of his great greed. And once upon a day she was very sad because of what was in her heart in asking for a child. And when her beseechings were multiplied and her desire was not granted, because God—may He be glorified and magnified—knew what of good there was to her in it.

3 And on a certain day the believing woman was standing, when there came to her the fame of Saint James in his religion; and how God was—may His
power be glorified—dwelling with him in all his deeds. She arose with joy and gladness and went unto Saint James. And she was sound in the faith, for God—praise be to His name—through the prayer of the saint, had given her her desire. And when the saint knew that Theopiste, the wife of the Prefect, wished admittance to him that she might be blessed by him, he wondered exceedingly; and he said, “This is a serious thing.” For he knew the wickedness of her husband. And he allowed her to have access to him.

And when she came into his presence, she knelt down and did obeisance at his feet, and said: “I entreat thee, O holy father, to receive thy handmaiden, and hearken unto her words. I have lived with my husband for twenty years, and have had no child. I am grieved exceedingly at this state of things.” Saint James said unto her: “Dost thou believe that our Lord Jesus the Christ is able to give thee a child?” She replied with all her heart, and said unto him: “I believe.” And he said unto her: “If thou dost believe, be it unto thee according to thy faith.” And she bade him farewell, and delivered unto him the blessing that she had with her, that he might distribute it amongst the needy. And she received his blessing, and returned to her house. And she gave glory unto God, and the fame of the saint was increased.

And after these things God—may He be praised—answered her petition, and gave her her request. And she conceived and bore a male child and called him James, like the name of the saint. And she took her child and much money, and went to the saint; and was blessed by him. And she said: “O good servant of God! God hath heard thy supplication, and hath given me what I asked for. And it is this child which thou seest on my hand; and he is by the blessing of thy prayer. And I entreat thee, O thou holy one, to bless him.”
And the saint took him from her hand, and blessed him with all his heart, and returned him to his mother; and restored her to her house in peace.

6 And when this reached the Prefect her husband, he was wroth with a fierce wrath, because of what his wife had done. And he gathered to himself the nobles of the city and said unto them: “Ye are negligent; and this bishop is corrupting the city for us; and leading all its people astray, desiring that everyone round about us should be of his faith and doctrine.” And they all arose and gook counsel saying: “What shall we do with him?” Some of them said: “The feast-day is near, and if ye wish, come one will watch for him in the temple.”

7 For many people were called James, but there was no James the Just among them except this one; because God chose him from the womb of his mother like Jeremiah the prophet. He drank no wine all the days of his life; and he ate no food from which blood issued; and he never put a razor upon his head; and he never washed in a hot bath; and he never wore a coat; but all his life he was wrapped in a mantle. And he was always in the temple intent on prayer and supplication to God—glory be to His name—that He might forgive the sins of the nation; until his feet swelled from much standing and worshiping, and for this reason he was called James the Just. And all the Jews—may God curse them—knew that he was just, pure; and he was amongst them in the house of the devout.

8 This James was the youngest of the sons of Joseph the carpenter. And Joseph had four male children, and two daughters. And all the children of Joseph were married except this James. And he was orphaned of his mother.
And when the Lady Mary was espoused to Joseph, she found James. And he was the youngest in his house; and she brought him up and taught him the fear of God. And therefore the Lady Mary was called the mother of James. And when he became Bishop in Jerusalem, many of the people believed in the Lord Jesus the Christ by his means; because they knew his purity.

9 And there was a great tumult among the Jews and the Scribes and the Pharisees; because the people said that James was the Christ. And they drew nigh unto James and desired to deceive him, and said unto him: “We beseech thee to consecrate all the nation; for they are doubtful about Jesus, that He is the Messiah Who is to come. And all this people will be present at Jerusalem at the Passover. Speak thou to them and make their hearts docile, for we know that thou wilt not say aught that is false; and all the people will accept thy speech; for thou art like a Prophet amongst them. And we will bear witness to them about all thine integrity and will tell them that there is no hypocrisy about thee. Do thou agree to our request, and they will all accept it from thee. Go up to a pinnacle of the temple, and stand so that all the people will hear thy voice”

10 These are the tribes of the children of Israel; they went up, and many of the Gentiles. And all the scribes and the Pharisees desired that James should say unto them that Jesus was the son of Joseph, and he himself was his brother. And they commanded a herald to order the crowd to be silent, that they might hear the words of James the Just. And they all cried, “It is our duty to listen and not to oppose,” because all the people were going astray with the evil of their deeds; and the Jews were longing for faith in Jesus the Christ, Who had been crucified. “Tell us now, O thou Just One, who is Jesus
the King?” James answered in a loud voice and said unto them: “Why ask ye me about the Lover of mankind? Behold He is seated in His majesty on the right hand of the Father; and He it is Who shall come on the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead.” And most of the nation believed in what they had heard from James; and they praised the Lord the Christ, saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

11 And when the priests and the Pharisees heard these words, they were ashamed in the presence of the people; and were filled with rage against James. And they returned and cried unto him, saying: “Tell us, whose Son is Jesus?” He said unto them: “The Son of God in truth—the Father—glory be to His name—Who begat Him before all the ages. And it is He Who was born of Mary the Virgin in the latter days. I believe in Him, and in His Eternal Father, and in the Holy Ghost, the Equal, the Everlasting Trinity for ever and ever.” And when the chief priests and the scribes and the Pharisees heard these words from him, they gnashed their teeth at him, and stopped their ears lest they should hear the word of God—may He be exalted and glorified—at the mouth of Saint James.

12 And they took counsel together and said: “Alas for what we have done! For we have made him testify to all the people that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; but let us go up to him and kill him, lest all the nation should believe in the Christ.” And the prophecy of Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled, when he said: “The righteous shall prosper; it shall not be hard for him to become the Anointed One over us; and they shall eat the fruit of their wicked deeds.” And they went up to him in a rage; and they threw him down and stoned him. And he fell prone upon his face, and knelt upon his knees like Stephen
the first of martyrs: and he made supplication unto God—the God of mercy—saying: “O God of mercy! Forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they stoned him while he was praying after this manner. And one of the priests of the sons of Ahab, about whom Jeremiah the prophet bears witness, cried out to them, saying: “Have pity for a little; what is this that ye are doing to the good man of God? He maketh supplication unto Him—may He be magnified and glorified—that He would forgive you.” And one of them, a fuller, who had not turned at his words, took a piece of wood with which he beat the clothes, and struck the head of James the Just with it, and he yielded up the ghost, on the eighteenth day of Abib. And his martyrdom was ended; and he was buried beneath the walls of the temple.

13 And James the Just was a disciple and a martyr and bishop of the Jews. And he died for the name of the Lord Jesus the Christ. And after his death, a mighty wrath abode upon all the Jews, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And this was chiefly upon those who had been the cause of the murder of James the disciple. And Vespasian surrounded them, and plundered them, and took them captive, and their humiliation increased daily because of the wickedness of their deed to the Lord Jesus the Christ, the King, and to His saints. And may there be to us all, the Christians whom He calleth by the new name, that we may find mercy and forgiveness in the terrible position when the Lord Jesus the Christ cometh to judge the quick and the dead. To Whom be praise and glory henceforth and at all times, and for ever and ever. Amen. Amen. Amen.