

August 24
Festival: Bartholomew, Apostle



The latter ministry of the apostle Bartholomew belongs more to the eastern churches than it does to the western churches.

Bartholomew is said to have had black curly hair, white skin, large eyes, a straight nose, hair that covered his ears and a long grizzled middle height beard. He is also, said to have worn a white robe with a purple stripe and a white cloak with four purple gems at the corners. For twenty-six years he wore these and it is said that they never grew old. In fact, It was also reported, that his shoes lasted the same as his clothing.

Of Bartholomew, it is said that he prayed a hundred times a day and a hundred times a night. It is also said that his voice was like a trumpet, angels waited upon him, and that he was always cheerful and knew all languages.

In the company of the apostle Philip, the apostle Bartholomew went to Asia Minor and labored in Hierapolis, near Laodicea and Colosse, in what is modern day Turkey.

While in Hierapolis, it is said that the wife of the Roman proconsul was healed by the apostles Philip and Bartholomew, that she became a Christian and that her husband ordered Philip and Bartholomew to be put to death by crucifixion. Philip was crucified, however, Bartholomew escaped martyrdom, when for some special reason, the magistrates caused him to be taken down from the cross and dismissed. From there, Bartholomew went eastward to India and then to greater Armenia. He labored in the area around the south end of the Caspian Sea.

A popular tradition among the Armenians is that the apostle Jude (Thaddaeus) was the first to evangelize their region throughout the years of 43 to 66 AD and that the apostle Bartholomew joined him in 60 AD.

It is also said that Bartholomew carried with him a copy of the apostle Matthew's Gospel. This copy was reported to have been found at a later time and a converted stoic philosopher by the name of Pantaenus is said to have brought it to Alexandria.

The modern name of the district where Bartholomew died is Azerbaijan and the place of his death, called in New Testament times Albanopolis, is now Derbend which is on the west coast of the Caspian Sea.

The apostle Bartholomew is said to have been martyred in the year 68 AD.