



THE HISTORY OF THE BLESSED BENJAMIN

Excerpts from the Paradise of the Holy Fathers..

And there was also in the Mountain of Nitria a marvelous man whose name was Benjamin, who attained to a high state of perfection in the ascetic life, for he had fasted and toiled for eighty years. Now he was held to be worthy of the gift of the craft of the physician, and from every wound or stripe upon which he laid his hand, and which blessed or gave him the power to heal, straightway every pain departed. And this man, who was worthy of such a gift, collected water in his body for eight months before his death, and he was so much swollen that he might have been called a “second Job.” And Dioscurus took us, that is to say the blessed Origen and myself, and said unto us, “Come ye and see a new Job, who whilst suffering from such a severe disease of the body as this healeth others.”

And Benjamin gave thanks concerning his affliction beyond measure, and glorified God continually, and his soul rejoiced and was glad in the hope which is laid up for the saints. Now when we had gone and seen the swelling of his body we found that his body had become so large that a man could not with all his hand encircle one of his fingers; and being unable to look upon such terrible affliction through disease we turned away our eyes. Then the blessed *Benjamin* said unto us, “My sons pray that the inner man may not collect water. Even when this body was in health it in no wise helped me, and now that it is sick, it in no wise hindereth me.”

Now during the last eighth months of his life they made a broad chair for him and he used to sit therein always, because he was not able to lie down upon a bed by reason of the necessity of his belly and the other members of his body. And whilst he

himself lived in such suffering through his afflictions, he was healing others. And it was for this reason that I am compelled to narrate to you concerning the affliction of this righteous man, so that when such an affliction happeneth to man as this happeneth unto the righteous we may not hold the matter to be hard.

Now when this blessed man dies, the whole of the framework of the doorway had to be removed to enable them to bring out his body from his cell, for his body was very large indeed.

(The **Paradise of the Holy Fathers** is compiled by Athanasius Archbishop of Alexander, Palladius Bishop of Helenopolis, Saint Jerome and others)

*And whosoever
doth not bear his
cross, and come
after me, can not
be my disciple
Lu 14:27*