



## Vartanants Saints Serpots Vartanants

CELEBRATED ON THE THURSDAY NEAREST TO FEBRUARY 15

*A celebration of bravery*

A long time ago when Armenia was under Persian rule, the Persian King Hazgerd ordered Armenians to stop believing in Christianity and to pray to his god of fire, threatening terrible punishment if they did not obey his orders.

Armenians, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, sent a brave message back to King Hazgerd expressing their loyalty to him, but refusing to give up Christianity, even if it meant facing punishment.

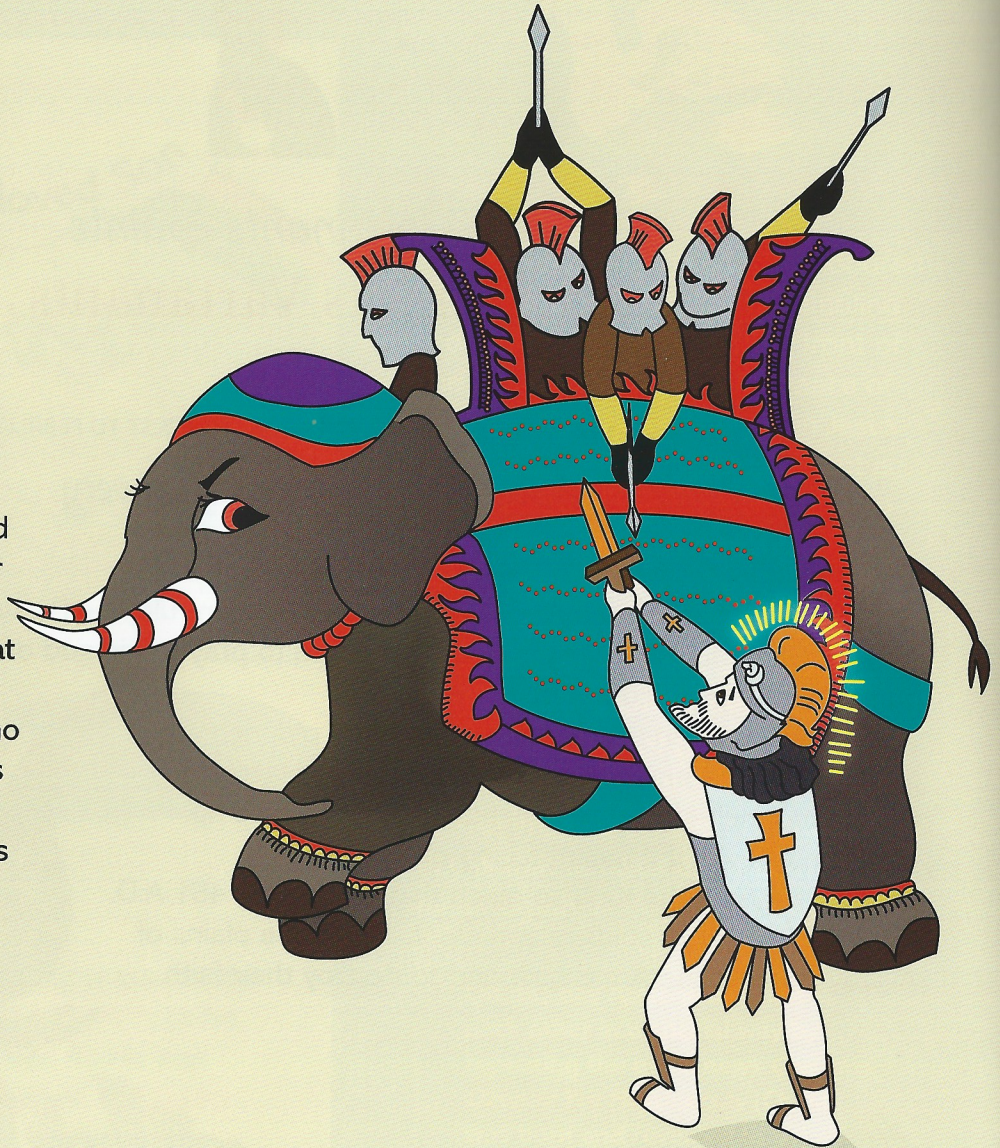
This angered the King so much that in the year 451 A.D. he sent his army of soldiers and elephants to the plains of Avarayr to fight the Armenians and to destroy their faith.



This army was met in battle by the brave Armenian general **Vartan Mamigonian** and his courageous soldiers. The Armenians were terribly outnumbered but they fought hard until finally having suffered unbearable losses, they were overrun by the vast Persian army.

But even though Vartan Mamigonian and his soldiers lost the battle, Armenians held on with determination to their Christian faith throughout the ages, right to this day, and that made them the final victors!

Vartan and his soldiers who died at Avarayr, have stood as shining examples of heroism, patriotism, and Christian values for generations of Armenians. In fact, many children call themselves "*kach Vartanin tore*" (the grandchild of brave Vartan). The anniversary of this battle is an Armenian national holiday, and Vartan Mamigonian and his soldiers are considered saints.



Some of the names celebrated on this day are **Vartan, Vahan, Karekin, Arsen, Vahe** and **Shoushan**; and all those Armenian male names who do not have a special name day.