

James, son of Zebedee

The Twelve · The Twelve Apostles

Brother of John, James belonged to the inner circle with Peter and John, witnessing the Transfiguration, Gethsemane's agony, and other pivotal moments. His martyrdom by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2) made him the first apostolic martyr.

Note: Christ called James and John 'Boanerges'—Sons of Thunder—possibly referring to their fiery temperament (as when they sought to call down fire on a Samaritan village). Their mother's ambitious request for them to sit at Christ's right and left hand revealed both her faith and misunderstanding of the kingdom's nature.

Key Verses

Mark 3:17

And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

Acts 12:2

And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

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