

DAVID TATE

WHO WAS JAMES SON OF ALPHAEUS?



**LITTLE JAMES
IN THE**

THE CHOSEN

JAMES OF ALPHAEUS

ACCORDING TO

THE BIBLE

WHO IS “JAMES THE LESS”?

1) Where to we get the name “James the Less”?

WOMEN PRESENT DURING CHRIST'S PASSION				
CROSS	Mt 27:55-56	Mk 15:40-41		Jn 19:25
	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene		Jesus' mother
	Mary, mother of James & Joseph	Mary, mother of James (lesser) & Joses		Jesus' mother's sister
	Mother of the sons of Zebedee	Salome		Mary wife of Clopas
				Mary Magdalene
BURIAL	Mt 27:61	Mk 15:47	Lk 23:55-56	
	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Women from Galilee	
	The other Mary	Mary mother of Joses		
EMPTY TOMB	Mt 28:1	Mk 16:1	Lk 24:10	
	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	
	The other Mary	Mary mother of James	Joanna	
		Salome	Mary mother of James	
			Other women	

WHO IS “JAMES THE LESS”?

	WOMEN PRESENT DURING CHRIST'S PASSION		
	Mt 27:55-56	Mk 15:40-41	Jn 19:25
CROSS	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Jesus' mother
	Mary, mother of James & Joseph	Mary, mother of James (lesser) & Joses	Jesus' mother's sister
	Mother of the sons of Zebedee	Salome	Mary wife of Clopas
			Mary Magdalene

2) Who is Mary, mother of James & Joseph/Joses?

1. She is **not** Mary Magdalene, Salome, or the Mother of the sons of Zebedee.
2. She is **probably not** Jesus' mother's sister (both of their names would be Mary).
3. She is **possibly** Mary, the mother of Jesus (cf. Mt 13:55-56; Mk 6:3).
4. She is **possibly** Mary wife of Clopas.
 - If #3 or #4 are correct, then James of Alphaeus (1) is **not** her son, (2) is **not** “James the Less,” and (3) is **not** the brother of Joseph/Joses.
 - If #3 or #4 are wrong, then James of Alphaeus (1) **might** be her son, (2) **might** be “James the Less,” and (3) **might** be the brother of Joseph/Joses.

WHO IS “JAMES THE LESS”?

3) So...Who is “James the Less”?

OPTION #1: James, son of Joseph & brother of Jesus

OPTION #2: James, son of Clopas

OPTION #3: James, son of Alphaeus & one of the Twelve

OPTION #4: Another James altogether

Traditionally speaking, early church fathers and modern scholars alike are split in regard to his identification.

In the end, **we can't be certain** regarding the identification of “James the Less.” However, in all likelihood, the title seems to refer to either **(1) James the brother of Jesus** or **(2) James the son of Alphaeus.**



BIOGRAPHICAL INFO

NAME: JACOB/JAMES (יַעֲקֹב / Ἰάκωβος) – “supplanter”

NICKNAME(S): JAMES THE YOUNGER/LESS?? (Mk 15:40)

FATHER: ALPHAEUS (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15; Ac 1:13)

MOTHER: MARY?? (Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40)

SIBLING(S):

JOSES/JOSEPH?? (Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40)

MATTHEW?? (Mk 2:14)

SPOUSE: ???

HOMETOWN: ???

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: ???

EDUCATION: ???

LANGUAGE: ARAMAIC (likely Greek & biblical Hebrew as well)

OCCUPATION: ???



JAMES & MATTHEW... BROTHERS?

- Matthew (**Levi**) is described as “the son of Alphaeus” (Mk 2:14); **James**, is also described as “the son of Alphaeus” (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14; Ac 1:13).
- However, the Bible doesn’t seem to suggest a connection.
- Matthew himself doesn’t seem to present them as brothers:

Matthew 10:2b-3: ...πρῶτος Σίμων ὁ λεγόμενος Πέτρος καὶ Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, Φίλιππος καὶ Βαρθολομαῖος, Θωμᾶς καὶ Μαθθαῖος ὁ τελώνης, Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ἀλφαίου καὶ Θαδδαῖος...

Greek	English
Σίμων ὁ λεγόμενος Πέτρος καὶ Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ	...Simon, the one called Peter, and Andrew his brother...
Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ	...Jacob the son of Zebedee and John his brother...
Μαθθαῖος ὁ τελώνης, Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ἀλφαίου	...Matthew the tax collector, Jacob the son of Alphaeus...

MATTHEW 10	MARK 3	LUKE 6	ACTS 1
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James of Zebedee	Andrew	John
James of Zebedee	John	James of Zebedee	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Judas of James	Judas of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

Ultimately, we can’t come to a definitive conclusion, but the evidence would seem to suggest that Matthew and James were **not** brothers.

HOW OLD WAS JAMES?

HOW OLD WERE THE DISCIPLES?

- Jesus was around 30 when he began his ministry (Lk 3:23), the typical age for a rabbi.
- Students were usually younger than their rabbis. Jesus refers to them as “little children” (Mt 10:42; 11:25).
- Education ended between ages 12-15. Some disciples were already practicing trades (i.e. Lk 5:1-11; Mt 9:9).
- As far as we know, Simon was the only married one at the time (Mt 8:14-15; Mk 1:29-31; Lk 4:38-39) at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry; the average age for marriage was 18.
- As far as we know, by the third year of Jesus’ ministry, Simon was the only one who had to pay the temple tax (Mt 17:24-27), which began at age 20 (Ex 30:14).

Most of the disciples were likely young teenagers at the time they began following Christ.

James was likely a young teenager (~14-16) at the time he began following Christ.

JAMES IN THE GOSPELS

- Apart from being mentioned in each list of the Twelve Apostles, we know nothing about James, son of Alphaeus.
- He is listed 9th in every list of the Twelve, which might suggest that he was the leader of the 3rd group of the apostles.

MATTHEW 10	MARK 3	LUKE 6	ACTS 1
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James of Zebedee	Andrew	John
James of Zebedee	John	James of Zebedee	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Judas of James	Judas of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	



JAMES IN THE GOSPELS

LIFE AS A DISCIPLE:

Like the rest of the Twelve, James...

- ...was appointed by Jesus (Mt 10:1-2; Mk 3:13-16; Lk 6:12-13)
- ...travelled with Jesus (Mt 26:20; Mk 14:17)
- ...received insight to Jesus' teachings (Mk 4:10)
- ...was sent out to preach (Mt 10:5-42; Mk 6:7-13; Lk 9:1-6)
- ...baptized people (Jn 4:2)
- ...performed miracles (Mk 6:13; Lk 9:1-2)
- ...was challenged by Jesus' teachings (Mk 9:36; Jn 6:67-71)
- ...heard Christ predict his death (Mt 20:17; Mk 10:32)
- ...fled at Christ's arrest (Mt 26:56; Mk 14:50)
- ...saw the resurrected Christ (Lk 24:33-49; Jn 20:19-28)
- ...witnessed the ascension (Lk 24:50-53; Ac 1:6-11)

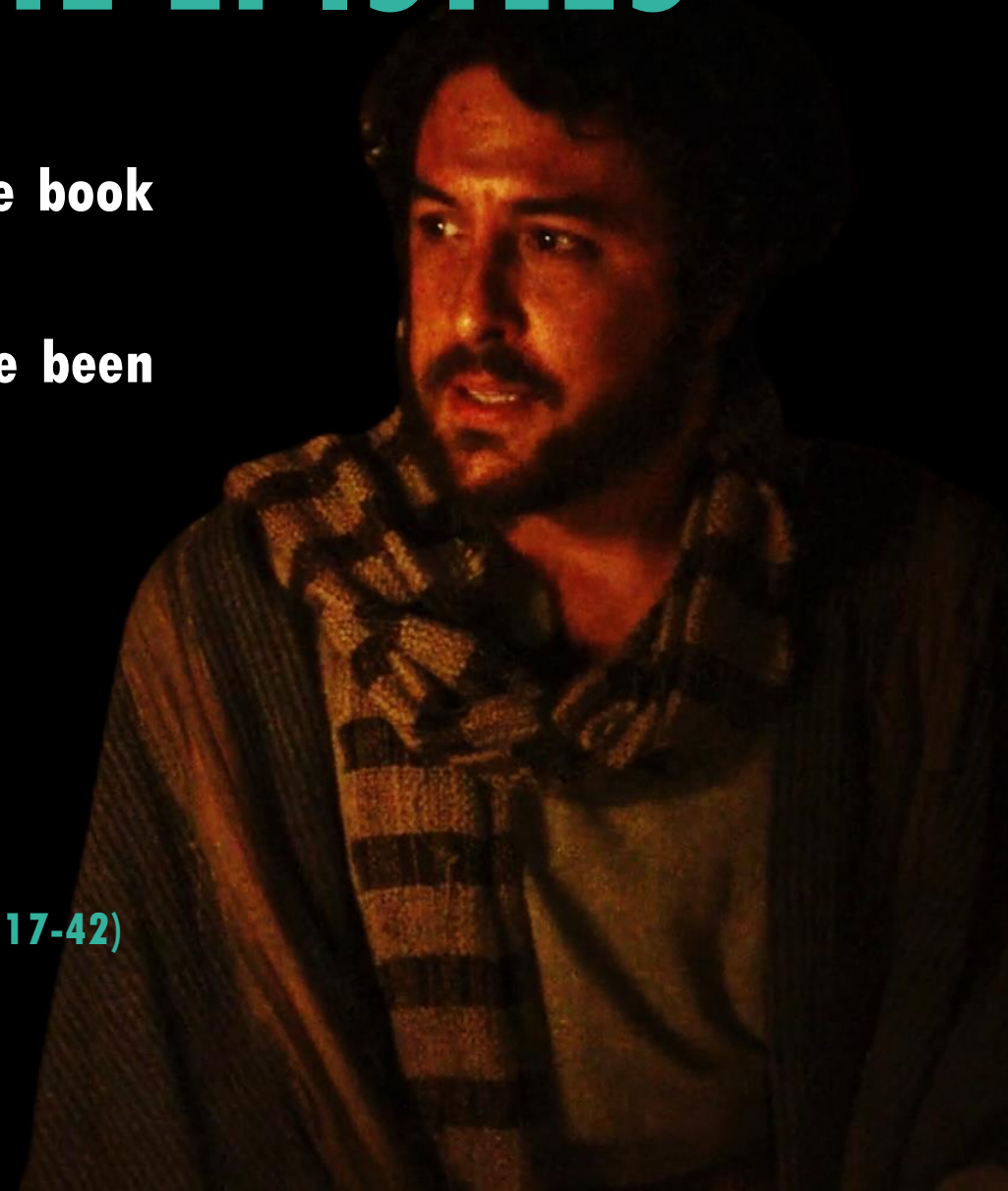


JAMES IN ACTS & THE EPISTLES

James, son of Alphaeus, is only mentioned once in the book of Acts (1:13), and is never mentioned in the Epistles.

Along with the rest of the apostles, James would have been present...

- ... at the Ascension (Ac 1:6-11)
- ... when they replaced Judas Iscariot (Ac 1:12-26)
- ... when the Spirit fell at Pentecost (Ac 2:1-13)
- ... when Peter delivered the first sermon (Ac 2:14-41)
- ... in the establishing of the Jerusalem church (Ac 2:42-47)
- ... as the Jerusalem church continued to grow (Ac 4:32-37)
- ... when the high priest began to arrest the apostles (Ac 5:17-42)
- ... when they appointed the seven deacons (Ac 6:1-7)

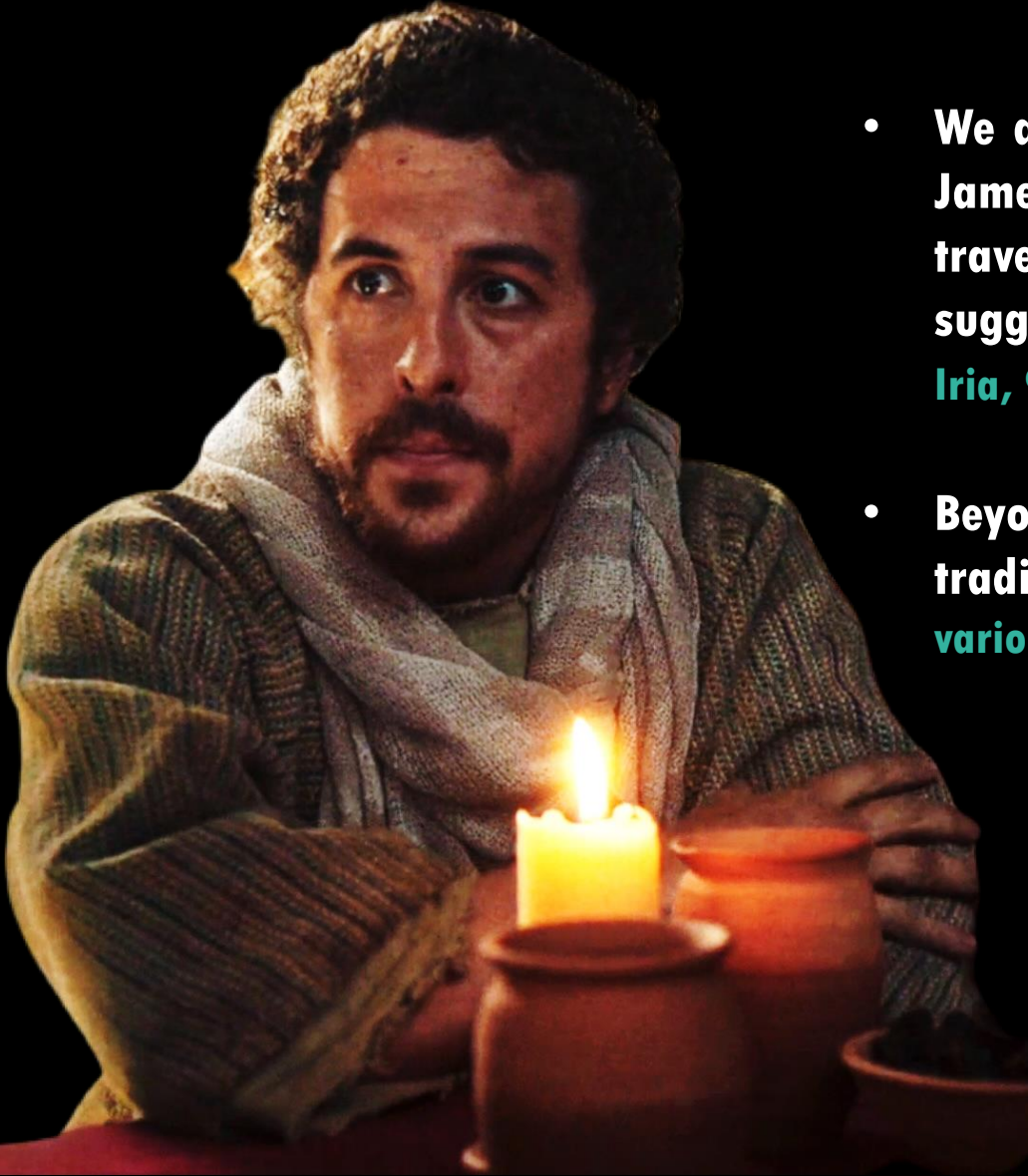


**JAMES OF ALPHAEUS
ACCORDING TO**

TRADITION

TRAVELS & TRADITIONS

- We don't have any specific early accounts regarding the travels of James, but there are some late traditions which suggest he travelled to **Persia** (*Hieronymian Martyrology, 5th c.*), while others suggest that he helped establish Christianity in **Spain** (*Theodemir of Iria, 9th c.*) or even in **Egypt** (*Niketas David Paphlagon, 9th c.*).
- Beyond this, we don't have much extra-biblical information or traditions regarding James, son of Alphaeus. (*Confusion over the various Jameses of the NT have made this even more difficult.*)



THE FATE OF JAMES

There are two primary traditions regarding the death of James, son of Alphaeus:

- Death by stoning (*Hippolytus on the Twelve*, 2nd cent.)
- Death by crucifixion
 - The *Hieronymian Martyrology* (5th c.) suggests that they journeyed to **Persia**, where he was crucified.
 - According to **Niketas David Paphlagon** (9th c.), James travelled to Eleutheropolis, Gaza, and Tyre before eventually getting crucified in Ostrakine, **Egypt**.

That all being said, given what little information we have, we cannot be confident in regard to how James died.

SEAN McDOWELL'S CONCLUSIONS:

1. JAMES, SON OF ALPHAEUS, ENGAGED IN MISSIONARY WORK OUTSIDE JERUSALEM – very probably true
2. JAMES, SON OF ALPHAEUS, EXPERIENCED MARYTRDOM – as plausible as not

