



Jesus' Brother James and Other History

James, the Brother of Jesus

James, known as "James the Just" or James, the brother of Jesus. He is traditionally considered to be one of the brothers of Jesus, along with Joseph, Simon, and Judas (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3). The Gospel of Mark (6:3) and the Gospel of Matthew (13:55-56) refer to Jesus as having brothers, and James is mentioned among them.

The Epistle of James in the New Testament is often attributed to James. This letter is addressed to "the twelve tribes in the Dispersion" and contains teachings on faith, works, and practical Christian living. It emphasizes the importance of putting faith into action and living out one's beliefs in daily life.

James played a significant role in the early Christian community in Jerusalem. The Book of Acts in the New Testament records that James was a prominent leader in the early church and played a key role in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), where the leaders discussed issues related to the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community.

According to early Christian tradition, James was martyred for his faith. Eusebius, an early Christian historian, records that James was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem and then stoned to death.

While he is not explicitly referred to as one of the Twelve Disciples in the Gospels, he held a leadership role in the Jerusalem church. The Gospels mention that Jesus had twelve disciples, who were specifically chosen by him for special roles in his ministry.

Were any of Jesus' brother Apostles?

The New Testament does not explicitly identify any of Jesus' brothers as being among the Twelve Apostles.

However, after the resurrection of Jesus, there is mention of James having a significant presence. In particular, the Apostle Paul refers to James as an apostle. In Galatians 1:19, Paul writes, "But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother." This indicates that James was recognized as an apostolic figure in the early Christian movement.

It's important to note that the term "apostle" can have broader meanings. While the Twelve Apostles hold a unique and foundational role in Christianity, the term can also be used more broadly to refer to individuals who were sent out as messengers or representatives. In this broader sense, James is sometimes referred to as an apostle in the context of his leadership in the early Christian community, especially in Jerusalem.



Non-Biblical historical references to Jesus' brother James

There are some non-biblical historical references to James. One of the most notable references comes from the writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who lived in the first century AD. In his work "Antiquities of the Jews," Josephus mentions James in a passage known as the Testimonium Flavianum. The passage reads as follows, as translated by William Whiston (1652-1752):

"Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim (a council) of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned..."

This passage provides historical evidence not only for the existence of James but also for his being known as the brother of Jesus who was called Christ. However, scholars have debated the authenticity and original wording of this passage, although many scholars believe that Josephus did make some reference to James.

Apart from Josephus, there are other early Christian writings and traditions that mention James, including the works of Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius, which provide additional details about his life and martyrdom. These sources collectively contribute to our understanding of James, in early Christian history.

Here are a few references from early historical writings:

1. Flavius Josephus:
 - The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, in his work "Antiquities of the Jews" (Book 20, Chapter 9, 1), mentions James in the context of the trial and execution of Jesus. The passage, known as the Testimonium Flavianum, has been a subject of scholarly debate and discussion due to potential later Christian interpolations, but it does contain a reference to James as "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ."
2. Tacitus:
 - The Roman historian Tacitus, in his work "Annals" (Book 15, Chapter 44), makes a passing reference to Christ and his execution under Pontius Pilate. While Tacitus does not mention James specifically, he provides some broader context to the events surrounding Jesus.
3. Clement of Alexandria:
 - Clement of Alexandria, a Christian theologian from the 2nd century, refers to the martyrdom of James in his work "Hypotyposes" (as cited by Eusebius in "Ecclesiastical History" 2.1.3). Clement describes how James was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and then stoned to death.
4. Hegesippus:



- Hegesippus, a 2nd-century Christian writer, is cited by Eusebius in "Ecclesiastical History" (Book 2, Chapter 23) as providing an account of the martyrdom of James.

Non-Biblical historical accounts of Jesus

There are no contemporary, non-Biblical historical accounts of Jesus written during his lifetime. The historical sources that mention Jesus come from later periods, and they are not written by individuals who personally witnessed the events of Jesus' life. Most of the available sources are from the 1st and 2nd centuries, several decades after the supposed crucifixion of Jesus. Here are some of the non-Biblical references:

1. Flavius Josephus:
 - As mentioned earlier, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus made a couple of references to Jesus in his works. The most significant is found in the "Antiquities of the Jews" (Book 18, Chapter 3, 3), known as the Testimonium Flavianum. However, scholars debate the authenticity of this passage, with some suggesting that it has been partially or entirely altered by later Christian scribes.
2. Tacitus:
 - The Roman historian Tacitus, in his work "Annals" (Book 15, Chapter 44), refers to Christ and his execution during the reign of Tiberius under the procurator Pontius Pilate. This reference is often considered authentic, as Tacitus was not sympathetic to Christianity.
3. Pliny the Younger:
 - Pliny the Younger, a Roman governor, wrote a letter to Emperor Trajan around 112 CE seeking guidance on how to deal with Christians. While this letter doesn't provide details about Jesus' life, it attests to the existence of Christians and their worship practices in the early 2nd century.
4. Suetonius:
 - The Roman historian Suetonius, in his work "Lives of the Caesars" (Divus Claudius 25), briefly mentions disturbances among the Jews in Rome instigated by a certain "Chrestus." Some scholars interpret this as a reference to Christ, but it is debated.
5. Lucian of Samosata:
 - Lucian, a 2nd-century Greek satirist, makes a passing reference to Jesus in his work "The Passing of Peregrinus." However, Lucian's tone is mocking, and he doesn't provide historical details about Jesus' life.

It's crucial to note that these references are not detailed biographies or firsthand accounts, but rather brief mentions or allusions to early Christian communities. The primary sources for information about Jesus come from the New Testament of the Bible.

There are no known non-Biblical historical accounts of Jesus written during his lifetime or within the first century. The sources I mentioned in the previous response, such as those from Flavius Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, and Lucian of Samosata, all date from the late 1st century to the early 2nd century or later. These references are among the earliest non-Biblical mentions of Jesus.