



July 25

Festival: James, Apostle

Of the three apostles who comprised the inner circle of Jesus' disciples (Peter, James and John), we know the least about the apostle James. We do know, however, that the apostle James was the eldest brother of the apostle John and that their father's name was Zebedee (their mother's name was Salome.)

James, his brother John, Peter and Andrew were all partners in a fishing business prior to being called by Christ Jesus to follow Him. Zebedee was, also, a partner in the business.

There is some evidence that James was the first cousin of Jesus the Messiah and had been acquainted with Him from infancy. It is believed that his mother Salome was the sister of Jesus' mother Mary.

Not much is known of his ministry after Jesus' resurrection. It is believed, however, that he lived another 14 years before his martyrdom. In fact, the apostle James was the first apostle to suffer martyrdom. By order of Herod Agrippa I, James was beheaded in Jerusalem about the feast of Easter, 44 AD.

It is believed that within this 14 year period, James visited the Jewish colonist and slaves in Spain to preach the Gospel.

It has been said that when the apostle James was led out to die, a man who had brought false accusations against him walked with him to the place of execution. He had doubtless expected to see James looking pale and frightened but he saw him, instead, bright and joyous, like a conqueror who had won a great battle. The false witness greatly wondered at this and became convinced that the Savior in whom the prisoner by his side believed must be the true God or He could not impart such cheerfulness and courage to a man about to die. The man himself, therefore, became a convert to Christianity and was condemned to die with James the apostle (both were consequently beheaded on the same day and with the same sword.)

About the same period, Timon and Parmenas (two of the seven original deacons) suffered martyrdom (the former at Corinth and the latter at Philippi in Macedonia.)