

The Hostile Witnesses

▪ What We Found

The two witnesses no grief theory can reach: Saul the persecutor, whose reversal cost him everything he lists in 2 Corinthians 11 and finally his life, and James the unbelieving brother (John 7:5) who ended leading the Jerusalem church and dying by stoning, a death recorded by the non-Christian Josephus. Both attributed the change to seeing him alive. We steelmanned legend with a real legend on the table: the Gospel of Peter's giant Jesus and talking cross show what invention looks like, and the canonical restraint (no evangelist narrates the rising; CCC 647) shows what testimony looks like. The dated creed leaves legend no time to work.

▪ Voices of the Church

St. Clement of Rome • *1 Clement 5 (c. AD 96)*

Within one generation: Peter and Paul bore their witness to the death rather than unsay it. (Close summary.)

St. John Chrysostom • *In Praise of St. Paul*

The wolf became the shepherd; only a living Christ turns a persecutor into an apostle. (Summary.)

St. Jerome • *Lives of Illustrious Men 2*

James the Just, brother of the Lord, governed the Jerusalem church thirty years and died rather than deny him. (Summary.)

▪ Live It This Week

- Read Acts 9:1-22: the same event from outside. What could bystanders perceive?
- Who is the most honest opponent of your views you know? What would their conversion require?

▪ Scripture Memory Verse

He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.

Galatians 1:23 (RSV2CE)

▪ Before Next Session

Before Session 6: read Acts 2:22-36.

Catechism connections for this session: CCC 639, 642, 647.