

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF JESUS AND JOHN

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It is well recognized that Jesus and John (the Baptist) were relatives, since Elizabeth (the mother of John) was the "cousin" (Luk1:36) of Mary (the mother of Jesus). The Greek word translated "cousin" simply means *blood relative*, and is often translated "kinsman" (e.g., Jn18:26; Rom16:11). Thus, Jesus and John the Baptist were related, probably as distant cousins, but their precise relationship cannot be determined from Scripture.

However, the relationship of Jesus, James, and John (the apostles) is much more explicit, being ascertained from a comparison of the Gospel accounts of the women present at the crucifixion as recorded in Matthew 27:56, Mark 15:40, and John 19:25.

### THE WOMEN PRESENT AT THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Matthew 27:56	Mark 15:40	John 19:25
Among whom were <b>Mary Magdalene</b> , and <b>Mary, the mother of James and Joseph</b> , and <b>the mother of Zebedee's children</b> .	There were also women looking on afar off, among whom were <b>Mary Magdalene</b> ; and <b>Mary, the mother of James the less and of Joseph</b> ; and <b>Salome</b>	Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and <b>his mother's sister</b> , <b>Mary, the wife of Cleophas</b> , and <b>Mary Magdalene</b> .

As seen from the corresponding texts highlighted in **red** in each of the verses, "the mother of Zebedee's children" (i.e., James and John<sup>1</sup>) was named "Salome", and she was Jesus' "mother's sister". Since Salome, the mother of James and John, was the sister of Mary (the mother of Jesus), Jesus and John were **first cousins**.

Recognition of this relationship makes the calling of James and John by Jesus to follow Him, recorded without any context provided, at which time "they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him" (Matt4:21-22), much more understandable. This was not a rabbi calling two strangers to follow him. Being first cousins, Jesus, James, and John would have known each other very well. This relationship also provides a meaningful context to the request of "the mother of Zebedee's children" of Jesus to "grant that these, my two sons, may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom" (Matt20:20-21); Salome, the mother of James and John, was Jesus' aunt. Finally, this relationship also provides a meaningful context to Jesus' entrusting the care of His mother Mary to the Apostle John (Jn19:26-27); John was Mary's nephew, and Mary was John's aunt, so such a family obligation is not unexpected.

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<sup>1</sup> The apostles James and John were brothers, the sons of Zebedee (Matt4:21).