

CHAPTER 3

JAMES

What is the third name found in the list of the 12 disciples as found in Matthew 10:2-4?

_____ Who was this man's father (Matthew 10:2)?

_____ Who was this man's brother (Matthew 10:2)?

_____ James was probably older than his brother John because his name usually comes first when the two are mentioned (See Matthew 10:2 and 17:1).

Don't Get Confused!

James was a common name in New Testament times. There are two other men who also had this same name, and we do not want to get them confused with the man we are studying in this lesson:

1) JAMES THE BROTHER OF THE LORD (GALATIANS 1:19).

Jesus had a half-brother by the name of J _____ (Matthew 13:55). This man is mentioned often on the pages of the New Testament. After His resurrection Jesus made a special appearance to this man (1 Cor. 15:7). He also became the leader of the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; 12:17). He was also the human author of the book of James (see James 1:1).

2) JAMES THE SON OF ALPHAEUS (MATTHEW 10:3).

This man was also among the 12 _____ (Matthew 10:2). In Jesus' small band of twelve men were two men by the name of James. We are not told very much about James the son of Alphaeus whom we will study in a later chapter. We are given more information about James the son of Zebedee, and this is the man we want to study in this chapter

* * * *

The Lord is not the author of confusion; therefore, whenever James, the son of Zebedee, is mentioned, the Bible very clearly identifies him, either as the son of Zebedee or the brother of John.

Leaving and Gaining

What did James do for an occupation? (See Matthew 4:21 and compare it with verse 18.)

_____ What were James and John doing when Jesus called them (Matthew 4:21)? _____ These two brothers made a

decision to follow Jesus. In order to follow Him they had to leave certain things. Can you think of at least three things which they left (Matthew 4:21-22)? 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

In Mark 10:28, Peter said, "Lo, we have left _____ and followed thee." Could James have said the same thing? _____ Read what Jesus said about this in Mark 10:29-31. When people leave things because of Christ, do they also GAIN certain things? _____ Do they end up with their hands empty or with their hands full? _____ Will a follower of Christ GAIN *now* in this life, or will he GAIN *only* in the life to come (Mark 10:30)? _____

When a person becomes a Christian, are there certain things that he should leave or let go of? What would some of these things be? Are there some things that a believer might "lose out on"? What are some things that a believer GAINS in the life to come? What are some things that unsaved people will LOSE in the life to come? James left all for Christ, but he was not a loser; he was a winner. At the end of his life, as we will see, he lost his head for Christ, but even then he was not a loser; he was a winner!

The Son of Thunder

Jesus gave James and John a nickname. He called them BOANERGES (BO-A-NUR-JEZ). What does this name mean (Mark 3:17)? _____ He probably called them this name because of their "stormy personality." Usually when we think of thunder, we think of a storm--even a violent kind of storm with lightning bolts coming down from the sky. James and John were fervent and sometimes fanatical men. At times they even became quite "hot-headed" as we shall see.

We can learn about the "Sons of thunder" by reading Luke 9:51-56. As Jesus and his disciples were traveling on their way to Jerusalem, they were very poorly received by the people in a certain village of the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-53). Which two disciples were greatly angered by the way these Samaritans mistreated Jesus (Luke 9:54)? _____ and _____ Did they think of a nice, peaceful solution to the problem? _____ These "sons of thunder" wanted to command _____ to come down from _____ and _____ them (Luke 9:54). They wanted God to send down some lightning bolts to destroy them!

What did Jesus do? Circle the right answer after you read Luke 9:55:

- a. He agreed with what they said.
- b. He rebuked them for what they said.
- c. He thanked them for what they said.
- d. He said, "Go and do as thou hast said."

The "sons of thunder" did not have the right kind of spirit (Luke 9:55). They had an angry, condemning and judging kind of a spirit that wanted to consume and destroy the Lord's enemies. They failed to understand the very reason Christ came into the world: "For the Son of man is _____ come to _____ men's lives, but to _____ them" (Luke 9:56). Jesus' solution was much more peaceful and merciful: "...they went to another village" (Luke 9:56).

Why did Jesus come into the world (John 3:17; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15)?

_____ If God were to give each one of us exactly what we deserved, we should all get lightning bolts from heaven! We should all get destroyed because of our sins. The Lord is a very merciful God.

Have you ever gotten angry at a certain person and wished that this person would somehow drop dead or be removed from this earth? Perhaps this person has even mistreated you or done things that are really wrong. Did you know that God wants to be merciful to that person also? Did you know that God is very good and kind to that person **right now**? (See Matthew 5:43-48). This person may really be your enemy, but Jesus said, "_____ your enemies" (Matthew 5:44).

Who Is The Greatest?

James and John were the "sons of thunder." They were also the "sons of ambition." They wanted to be great in the kingdom of God. They wanted to have the best position of all. When the most important subjects of the Kingdom are all seated, they wanted to have the two seats that were the closest to the King! James and John were two men who really needed to be humbled!

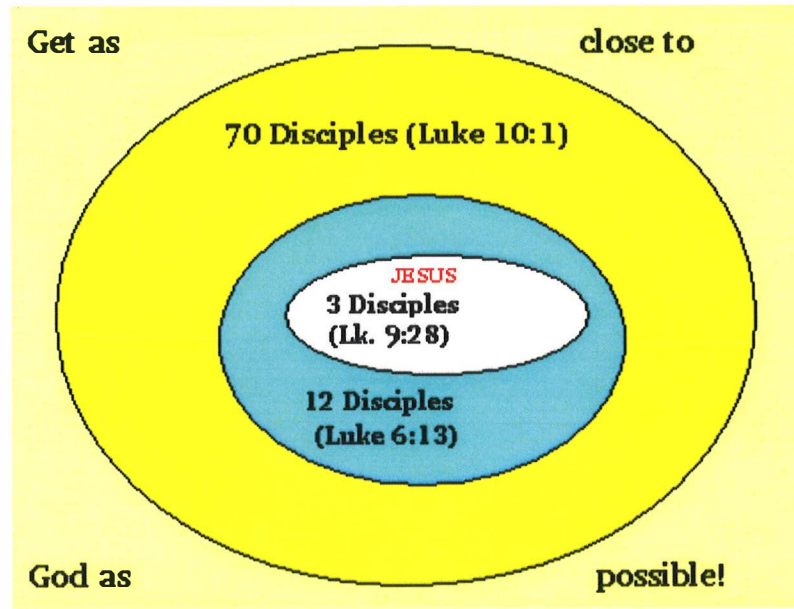
Notice their request in Mark 10:35. They were saying something like this: "Master, we want You to do for us whatever we want!" Some people pray like this. Instead of looking for what God wants, they want God to do for them whatever they want! They want God to be their SLAVE and do whatever they want or desire! Did Jesus promise that He would do whatever they wanted (Mark 10:36)? _____ What was their request (Mark 10:37)

_____ James and John had a mother who also had something to do with this request (Matthew 20:20-21). She asked for special honors for her two sons!

Were the other disciples pleased when they found out about this request that James and John had made (Mark 10:41)? _____ They probably wanted the same thing! According to the words of Jesus in Mark 10:42-45, what is the real secret of greatness? To be truly great in God's sight, what must a person do? How does God measure greatness? No one is greater than the KING, but what was the King willing to do (Mark 10:45)?

The Inner Circle

James was one of the disciples who was part of the Lord's inner circle. The Lord had many disciples. Seventy disciples are mentioned in Luke 10:1. Some disciples were closer to the Lord than others. Jesus at times would call aside certain disciples to do certain things that the other disciples could not do. Although Jesus had many disciples, he chose twelve of these men to be with Him in a special way (Luke 6:13). Of these twelve men, Jesus would at times select three to take with Him certain places. These three men were allowed to do certain things that the other nine were not. Here then are the different "circles" of disciples:



Was James one of the disciples in the inner circle (Luke 9:28)? _____

The Bible tells us three things that Jesus did with these three disciples. In each of these occasions, the other nine were not included:

1. Who were the only three disciples who saw Jesus and Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5)? _____ Were they allowed to tell the other nine disciples what they had seen (Matt. 17:9)? _____
2. Which three disciples were with Jesus when He raised up the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark 5:37-43)? _____ Did He allow any others to follow Him (Mark 5:37)? _____
3. In Matthew 26:36, Jesus told the eight disciples to sit down. Judas was not with the group at this time. Which disciples did Jesus take with Him (Matthew 26:37)? _____ Jesus gave these three men the special opportunity to share in the very difficult experience that He was going through. Did these three disciples do very well (Matthew 26:40,43,45)? _____ He gave them a great opportunity, but they were unable to take advantage of it!

Think of a Shepherd and his flock of sheep. The Shepherd loves all the sheep in the flock. Many sheep stay far away from the shepherd, and they graze on the outskirts of the flock. There are other sheep that stay very close to the Shepherd and walk right beside him. In fact, there may even be some young lambs which the Shepherd may pick up and carry in his arms.

As believers, we need to stay close to the Shepherd. Are *any of us* as close to Him as we should be? _____ We need to seek to get closer and closer to our Lord. If we are in the outer circles, we need to seek to work our way into the inner circles. How can a believer get closer to the Lord? How can a believer get farther away from the Lord? Does God want each believer to DRAW NEAR (James 4:8; Hebrews 10:22)? _____

James was also among the group of four disciples who asked the Lord about what would happen

in the future (Mark 13:3). See also **Chapter 2** on the life of Andrew in this series of studies on the 12 Disciples. James was also present each of the three times when Jesus appeared to His disciples after the resurrection (John 20:19,26; **21:2**).

The Martyrdom of James

Concerning the death of James, we do not need to depend upon tradition or historical records that have been handed down to us. The Bible clearly tells us about the death of James.

James was the first of the twelve disciples to give up his life as a martyr. He was not the first Christian martyr. That honor belonged to Stephen. James was the first of the disciples to be killed, and his death took place about 14 years after the resurrection of Christ.

What was the name of the ruler who was persecuting the church at this time (Acts 12:1)?

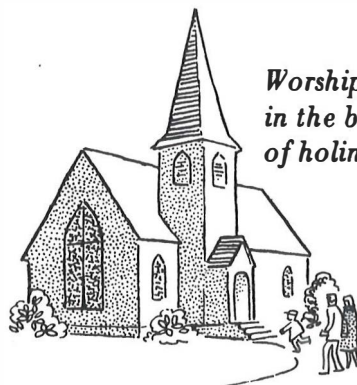
_____ What did this king do to James and how (Acts 12:2)?

_____ Soon after this, did God bring an end to this king's life (Acts 12:23)? _____ The words of Jesus in Mark 10:39 were fulfilled. James did drink of the cup of suffering just as Jesus had promised.

We must remember that the sword did not bring an end to James' life; it only brought an end to his earthly existence. As soon as the sword brought physical death, James was "absent from the _____" and "present with the _____" (2 Cor. 5:8). Was James worse off or better off (Philippians 1:21,23)? _____

You in James and James in You

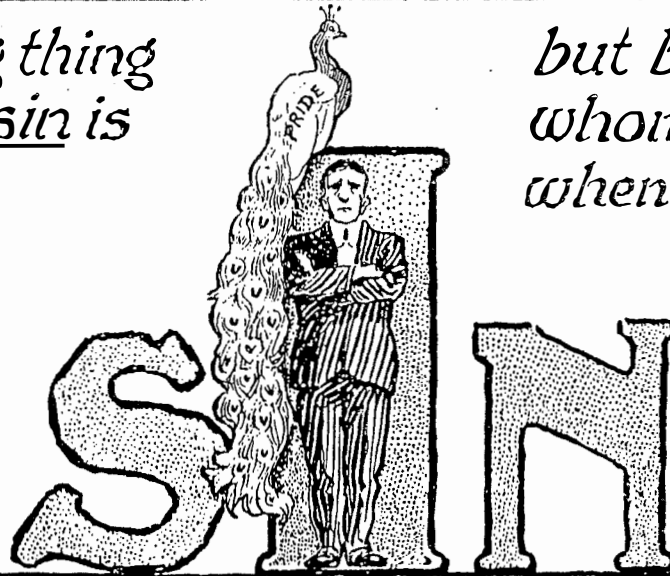
James was a man who had his good points and bad points. At times he was a fervent son of thunder who needed to calm down and have a more merciful spirit about him. He was a man of ambition and pride and Jesus needed to give him a lesson in humility and true greatness. James was a devoted follower of Christ who left all to follow his Master. He stayed close to the Lord and was part of the "inner circle." He served Him faithfully to the end, and he was the first of the twelve disciples to die and enter into the presence and joy of Christ. As you think back to the life of James, can you find yourself in this man? As you think about your life today, can you find James in you? What are his good points that you share? What are his weak points that you share?



*Worship the Lord
in the beauty
of holiness.*

The big thing about sin is the **I**;

but behold whom we see when that **I**



but

"I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST; AND IT IS NO LONGER I THAT LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: AND THAT LIFE WHICH I NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH I LIVE IN FAITH, THE FAITH WHICH IS IN THE



becomes zero

#acc

OF GOD, WHO LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR ME" GAL. 2:20 R.V.