

Character Study: James
An Apostle of Passion
Various Bible Passages

What's happening?

- James, the son of Zebedee, was one of two Apostles named "James" and is not to be confused with another James, the Lord's brother (who became the leader of the Jerusalem church). James, a fisherman, was with his brother (John) when the Lord called them to follow Him (Matt. 4:21-22).
- James is seen in the close "inner circle" with Jesus, along with Peter and John. The three were present at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37-42), Jesus' transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8), and Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-34).
- Jesus gave James and John the name "Sons of Thunder," an apparent sign of their boldness and energy (Mark 3:17). However, this "thunder" may not have always been a good quality. When Jesus was not welcomed by a Samaritan village, James and John wished to call down fire out of heaven to destroy the village. Jesus rebuked them for this (Luke 9:51-55). They also requested to be given seats next to Jesus in His coming glorious Kingdom, which Jesus said was not His decision to make (Mark 10:35-41).
- The passion and zeal of James would go on to serve a good purpose, though he was warned by Jesus that he would share in His suffering (Mark 10:39). Approximately fourteen years later, his passion for Christ caught the attention of Herod, who, while persecuting the church, executed James with a sword (Acts 12:1-2).

What's God doing?

> God worked in the life of James to move his passions in the right direction. The direction God had for him eventually led him to a martyr's death (the first of the Apostles). Yet, it was through his death that the early church was further motivated to take a bold stand for the gospel.

What's to learn?

→ Passion can lead to frustration when things do not go the way we want. For this reason, our passions must be coupled with patience and love, especially when sharing God's truth with people who do not respond as we wish they would. James learned this, and his passion for the Lord compelled him to live his life sold out for Christ. May we also be driven to live with the same level of passion for Christ!

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