



WELCOME

— THANK YOU FOR JOINING US —



THE MEN JESUS CHOSE



LESSONS FROM THE APOSTLES OF JESUS
WEDNESDAY 7 PM AUDITORIUM CLASS
(MARCH-MAY 2025)

The Men Jesus Chose



Lesson 4

James and John, Sons of Thunder

Ice-Breaker Question

James and John were nicknamed “Boanerges” which means “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17).

Why do you think they may have been given this nickname?



Question 1

James and John, were both sons of Zebedee (Matthew 20:20; 26:37; 27:56; Mark 10:35; Luke 5:10; John 21:2).

Was Zebedee likely a wealthy or a poor man (cp. Mark 1:20)?

Zebedee, the Father of James and John

“...In John 18:15-16 another unnamed disciple appears in the gospel narrative. When Jesus was arrested, Peter and this unnamed disciple followed to see what would happen; and they were able to gain an entry to the courtyard of the high priest’s house, because this unnamed disciple was known to the high priest. John’s acquaintance with the high priest may be explained in two ways. 1. There is extant a letter written by Polycrates who was Bishop of Ephesus about A.D. 190. In it he describes John as “a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and who was a priest and wore the priestly diadem” (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, p. 3, 31)... (Barclay, William. *The Master’s Men*, p. 34).

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Zebedee, the Father of James and John

“...2. It may be that the second explanation is the more probable. H.V. Morton in *In the Steps of the Master* gives us some very interesting information:

There is in the back streets of Jerusalem a dark little hovel, now, I believe, an Arab coffee-house, which contains stones and arches, that were once part of an early Christian church. The Franciscan tradition is that this Church was erected on the site of a house which had belonged to Zebedee, the father of St. John. This family, said the Franciscan, were fish merchants of Galilee, with a branch office in Jerusalem, from which they used to supply, among others, the family of the High Priest.

This would explain how John was known to the doorkeeper of the high priest's house, and it would also explain how Zebedee's fishing business was prosperous enough to employ hired servants...” (Barclay, William. *The Master's Men*, p. 34).

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Question 2

Let's think first about James, the son of Zebedee (Matthew 10:2).

What was he willing to do in order to serve Jesus (Matthew 4:21-22)?

What does our level of sacrifice indicate about our commitment (cp. Hebrews 12:1-2; Matt 10:34-37)?

Fiery James

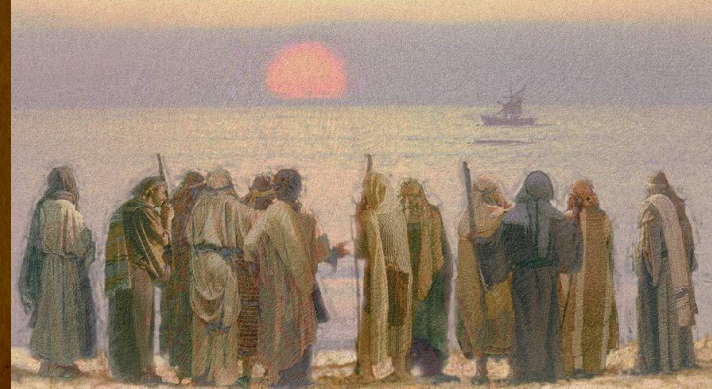
“What little we know about James underscores the fact that he had a fiery, vehement disposition. While Andrew was quietly bringing individuals to Jesus, James was wishing he could call down fire from heaven and destroy whole villages of people. Even the fact that James was the first to be martyred—and that his martyrdom was accomplished by a figure no less than Herod—suggests that James was not a passive or subtle man, but rather he had a style that stirred things up, so that he made deadly enemies very rapidly. There is a legitimate place in spiritual leadership for people who have thunderous personalities. Elijah...Nehemiah...John the Baptist...James apparently was cut from similar fabric. He was outspoken, intense, and impatient with evildoers” (MacArthur, John. *Twelve Ordinary Men*, p. 80).

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HOW *the* MASTER

SHAPED HIS DISCIPLES *for* GREATNESS,

and WHAT HE WANTS *to* DO *with* YOU



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Question 3

In the following list, note the various times James was mentioned alongside Jesus. What is going on in these moments?

- Luke 5:10—Jesus calls Peter, James, and John to discipleship.
- Mark 1:29—Jesus goes into Peter's house and heals his mother-in-law.
- Luke 8:51—Jesus heals Jairus' daughter with Peter, James, and John.
- Matthew 17:1—Jesus is with Peter, James, and John being transfigured.
- Matthew 26:37—Jesus is at Gethsemane with Peter, James, and John.
- Mark 13:3—Jesus is at the Mt. of Olives with Peter, James, John, and Andrew.
- Luke 9:52, 54—Jesus is journeying through Samaria with Peter, James, and John.
- John 21:2—Jesus appears on the lakeshore post-resurrection.

Question 4

If we want to be close to Jesus, how important is it to be near Him when He is preached, taught and when His people are together (Heb 10:24-26)?

How do you think this affected the faith of James?

How can and should it affect our own faith?

Question 5

What happens to James in Acts 12:1-2?

What had, perhaps, James heard Jesus teach about in Matthew 5:10-12?

What had James seen in Jesus which strengthened him in this moment?

Question 6

Now, let's look at both of the Sons of Thunder. What were some of the negative events in the lives of these two men in the following passages?

What were their character flaws?

- Luke 9:51-56 (cp. 2 Kings 1:7-12)—
- Mark 10:35-37—
- Luke 9:49-50—

James and John Could Be Quick-Tempered

“...when James and John suggested fire from heaven as a fitting response to the Samaritans’ inhospitality, they probably thought they were standing on solid precedent. After all, Elijah was not condemned for his actions. On the contrary, at that time and under those circumstances, it was the appropriate response from Elijah...But it was not a proper response for James and John. In the first place, their motives were wrong...Jesus’ example taught James that loving-kindness and mercy are virtues to be cultivated as much as (and sometimes more than) righteous indignation and fiery zeal” (MacArthur, John. *Twelve Ordinary Men*, p. 63).

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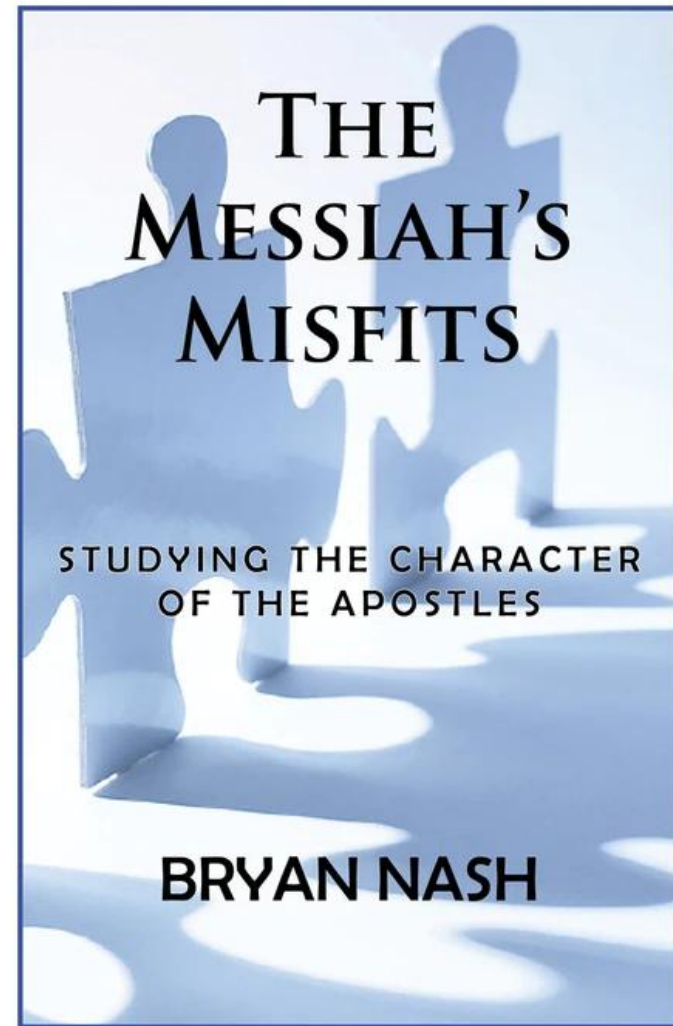
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James and John Had Elitist Tendencies

“...James and John liked notoriety, and we see that attitude carried over in Luke 9:49-50. “John answered, ‘Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.’” ...John displayed an elitist attitude. Essentially he said, “You’re not part of the twelve. Leave that stuff to us.” Some people would rather be powerful than productive...This was clearly the attitude of Diotrefes in 3 John. He loved to put himself first (3 John 9)...” (Nash, Bryan. *Messiah’s Misfits*, p. 21).



James and John Could Be Overly Ambitious

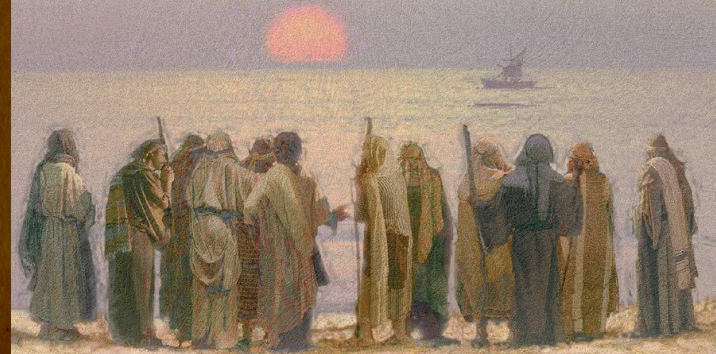
“...the promise of thrones caught the attention of James and John...They were already in the intimate circle of three. They had been disciples as long as anyone. They probably thought of numerous reasons why they deserved this honor, so why not simply ask for it?...in their foolish, ambitious self-confidence...they were clamoring for honor and position, so they were still eager to hear Him promise them those highest thrones...Their ambition ultimately created conflicts among the apostles, because the other ten heard about it and were displeased” (MacArthur, John. *Twelve Ordinary Men*, p. 63).

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Question 7

Let's think for a moment about John.

What does it say about his character that Jesus would entrust the care of his mother to him (John 19:26-27)?

Question 8

Who is constantly mentioned alongside of Peter in the book of Acts (Acts 3:1, 3-4, 11; 4:13, 19; 8:14)?

What does the presence of John indicate about him?

Question 9

Scan the writings of 1, 2, and 3 John.

What can we learn about John in his older age as we read through these short epistles?

How would you characterize him through his writings?

John's Writings

“...John's zeal for the truth shaped the way he wrote. Of all the writers of the New Testament, he is the most black and white in his thinking. He thinks and writes in absolutes...For example, in his Gospel, he sets light against darkness, life against death, the kingdom of God against the kingdom of the devil, the children of God against the children of Satan, the judgment of the righteous against the judgment of the wicked, the resurrection of life against the resurrection of damnation, receiving Christ against rejecting Christ, fruit against fruitlessness, obedience against disobedience, and love against hatred. He loves dealing with truth in absolutes and opposites...The same approach carries through in his epistles...John is just that black and white” (MacArthur, John. *Twelve Ordinary Men*, p. 96).

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Question 10

What had Jesus told Peter about the end of his life and whom did Peter question Jesus about during that conversation (John 21:18-24)?

According to history and tradition, what are some of the things that happen to John in his older years?

Look it up in a good Bible dictionary or google it.

John in Later Years

“...It is the consistent tradition of the early Church that thereafter John was banished to the island of Patmos, most probably in the time of Domitian...On being liberated from Patmos, he came to Ephesus, and there he became a leading figure...It is at this period of his life that the traditions gather...The second story of the days in Ephesus is passed down to us by Clement of Alexandria. Once in visiting a certain congregation John saw within it a most handsome young man “of refined appearance and of ardent spirit.” Pointing at the youth, John said to the bishop of the congregation, “This man I entrust to your care with all earnestness in the presence of the church and of Christ as witnesses...”

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John in Later Years

“...The bishop accepted the trust and pledged himself to it. He took the youth into his own home, cherished him, taught him, and finally baptized him. Then he relaxed his care and vigilance—too soon. The youth fell into evil company who seduced him into dissolute luxury and taught him to be a robber. The young man grew accustomed to this new kind of life...The youth himself decided that he had drifted beyond the mercy of God, and he organized a robber band of which he became chief, “the most violent, the most blood-thirsty, the most cruel.” There came the day when John revisited the church in which he had first seen the youth. He said to the bishop, “Now, bishop, return to us the deposit which Christ and I entrusted to your care in the presence and with the witness of the church over which you preside...”

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John in Later Years

“...With sorrow in his voice, the bishop answered “The man is dead.” “By what death did he die?” demanded John. “He is dead to God,” said the bishop, and went on to tell how the youth had slipped from grace, and had become a robber chieftain. John rent his clothes. “A fine guardian of our brother’s soul it was that I left!” he said. John called for a horse and a guide and rode straight from the church to find the youth. When he came near to the headquarters of the robber band he was captured by the robber’s sentries. He made no effort to escape. “It was for this very purpose that I came,” he said. “Take me to your leader.” So he was brought to the leader, who was waiting fully armed, but when he recognized John, he was smitten with shame and turned and fled from his presence. Forgetting his old age, John pursued him”

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John in Later Years

“... “Why do you flee from me, my child,” he said, “from your own father, from me a poor, old unarmed man? Have pity upon me, and do not fear. You have still hope of life. I myself will give account to Christ for you. If need be, I will willingly undergo your penalty of death, as the Lord did for us. I will give my own life in payment for yours. Stand! Believe! Christ has sent me!” On hearing this the youth threw away his weapons and fell to trembling and to tears. With bitter contrition he repented, and John assured him that he had found pardon with his Saviour for him. He prayed with him; he brought him back to the church; he never ceased to keep his grip on him; and in the end the young man was so changed by Christ that he became the bishop of the congregation (Clement of Alexandra, *The Rich Man’s Salvation*, p. 42)” (Barclay, William. *The Master’s Men*, p. 36-38).

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The Men Jesus Chose

The background of the slide is a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper'. It depicts Jesus Christ seated at the center of a long table, surrounded by his twelve apostles. The scene is set in a room with a dark, textured background. Jesus is wearing a pinkish-red tunic and a blue outer garment. The apostles are dressed in various colored robes, and their expressions and gestures are highly detailed, showing a range of emotions from surprise to concern.

**Next week: Lesson 5—*Philip, the
Unsure One***



GOODBYE

— HAVE A WONDERFUL WEEK —

