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A Biographical Study of James the Apostle

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James the Apostle

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

I. The ministry of James

A. His call

1. James's first contact with Jesus (Matt. 4:21-22; Mark 1:19-20; Luke 5:10-11)—
"And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him" (Matt. 4:21-22).
2. James's formal call by Jesus (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14)

B. His companions—James was especially close to his brother and to Simon Peter. These three alone:

1. Saw the transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28)
2. Were present at the resurrection of Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51)
3. Were asked by Christ to watch and pray in Gethsemane (Mark 14:33)

C. His carnality—On at least three occasions, the fleshly nature of James was displayed.

1. As seen by a sectarian event (Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50)—"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:49-50). Note: It is assumed John's personal pronoun "we" as used here was a reference to his brother James.
2. As seen by a selfish event (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45)
 - a. The request of the two—"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory" (Mark 10:35-37).
 - b. The resentment of the ten—"And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John" (Mark 10:41).
 - c. The response of the Lord
 - (1) Toward the two—"And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matt. 20:23).
 - (2) Toward the ten—"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even

as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28).

3. As seen by a spiteful event
 - a. The refusal demonstrated by the Samaritans—"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51-53).
 - b. The retaliation demanded by the brothers—"And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:54).
 - c. The rebuke delivered by the Lord—"But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" (Luke 9:55-56).
- II. The martyrdom of James
 - A. The monarch—"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church" (Acts 12:1).
 - B. The method—"And he killed James the brother of John with the sword" (Acts 12:2).

STATISTICS

Father: Zebedee (Matt. 4:21)

Mother: Salome (Mark 15:40)

Brother: John (Matt. 4:21)

First mention: Matthew 4:21

Final mention: Acts 12:2

Meaning of his name: "Heel catcher, supplanter" (Note: both he and his brother John were nicknamed "Boanerges" by Christ, meaning "Sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17).

Frequency of his name: Referred to 19 times

Biblical books mentioning him: Four books (Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts)

Occupation: Fisherman before becoming one of Christ's three key apostles

Place of birth: Probably Bethsaida in Galilee

Method of death: He was killed by the sword (Acts 12:2).

Important fact about his life: He was the first apostle to be martyred for Christ.