

**Twelve Ordinary Men**  
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One Son of Thunder

•Another look:

—What are the reasons that Zebedee may have been a man of some importance? (pp. 77-78)

- Reference of “sons of Zebedee”
- Financial success in the fishing business
- “Known to the High Priest” (Jn 18:15-16) evidence of being a Levite

—What are five evidences that James was a strong leader (in the inner circle)? (p. 78)

- Only he, John and Peter were permitted to go with Jesus when He raised Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:37)
- The same group of three witnessed the transfiguration (Mt 17:1)
- He was among the four who questioned Jesus on the Mount of Olives (Mk 13:3)
- He was with Peter and John when Jesus asked them to pray with Him privately in the Garden (Mk 14:33)
- In two lists, he is listed just below Peter (Mk 3:16-19, Acts 1:13)

—Describe the mixed-race group called the Samaritans (p. 81)?

- Conquered by Assyrians, 722 BC
- Ten “lost tribes” of Israel?
- Captivity and resettlement
- Intermarriage, mixed blood
- Claimed to worship YHWH, founded their own priesthood, built their own temple, making a new religion based on human tradition

—What were the reasons that Jesus and the Twelve were turned away as they were passing through Samaria?

- They were on their way to Jerusalem to worship
- Samaritans believed the only place for true worship was Mt. Gerizim
- They knew Jesus' intention so they denied His request

•Biblical connections:

—Look at 2 Kings 9:20-10:31. Based on what we know about James, compare the similarities and differences of Jehu and James (p. 79)

- Similar personality and zeal
- Similar ambition and bloodthirsty tendencies
- Both were men of intense passion
- James however had a heart to please God
- Jehu's zeal was tainted with selfish ambition
- James may have been on the same road had Jesus not met him

- Zealots were often the terrorists of the day. But what differences do you see in the zealotness for God as seen in Jn 2:17 and Rom 2:17? What determines godly zeal?
  - Zeal based on personal ambition is misguided passion
  - That which is grounded in the knowledge of God’s will and Word is legitimate
- Calling fire from heaven. Why was it appropriate for Elijah (2 Kings 1:3-17) but inappropriate for James and John to do so? (pp. 84-87)
  - Elijah’s mission was different from Jesus’ mission.
  - Elijah was to warn and bring on judgment against extreme wickedness to maintain God’s glory.
  - At Jesus’ first coming, He was revealing a different perspective of God’s agenda: He did not come to destroy.
  - Humanly speaking: their motives were wrong, a tone of arrogance.
- James and John had no clue why they could not bring down judgment, but it can be clearer once they understood the rest of the story (Acts 8:5-8). Which is the best headline:
  - Forecasted firestorm fails to develop
  - Samaritans change their minds about Messiah
  - Unexpected investment in peace pays dividends
  - Flames of judgment give way to revival fire
  - Scolded disciples denounce Philip the evangelist
- What was the agenda of Jesus that prevented James and John from calling down fire?
  - Luke 19:10, Matt 20:28, John 3:16-17, Luke 9:55-56, John 12:46-47
- Thunderous personalities. Positive or negative traits (p. 80)?
  - Elijah, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, Jesus
  - All four are positive, zealous for the right reason
- Lesson highlights:
  - Knowing what we do about James, does it surprise you that he encouraged his mother to approach Jesus about who would be the greatest? (pp. 89-91)
- Lasting implications:
  - James may have come from a well-to-do family. How does someone’s family of origin influence the kind of things they expect from God?
  - What ways have we done as the Samaritans, developed a self-styled religious system?
    - Penitence exchanged for confessed sin forgiven
    - Worshipping God at our own convenient location
    - Accommodating sinful activity as acceptable in the church
    - Speaking in tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit
  - Calling down fire was from a wrong motive. When do you think people are most tempted to cover their wrong motives by quoting a verse or example from the Bible?

- Can you name someone who has influenced your life that reminds you of James? How did that person shape your Christian devotion?
- Matt 17:1, Mk 5:37, 13:3, 14:33
  - List the people present in each scene and what is happening.
  - How would firsthand experience impact James’ faith?
  - How would it have affected your faith?
  - Which of these four experiences helped James to prepare for his martyrdom?
- Luke 9:51-56
  - What prompted James / John to call down fire?
  - What personal attitudes are revealed?
  - What strikes you as arrogant?
  - Name a time where you had seen Christians acting in a condescending manner to those who are obviously ungodly.
  - How would Jesus respond to such super-spirituality?
  - What have you learned about yourself in this passage?
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
  - What kind of life situations does this passage deal with?
  - What seems to be the bottom-line message in this poem?
  - For the Samaritans, it was not the time to kill, so what time was it for Jesus?
  - How do you determine how God wants you to act at any given time?
  - Think of a time when your first reaction was wrong but led to an important discovery.
- Matt 20:20-24
  - Identify the cast of characters in this one-act play.
  - How does Jesus respond to the mom’s request?
  - What did Jesus grant and what did He withhold in His response?
  - What about this scene is consistent with Zebedee being a man of influence and wealth?
  - What do you think about James and John so ready to drink the cup of sorrow?
  - What attitudes do you need to keep in check?
- Luke 22:24-34
  - What ungodly behavior is not attributed to individuals by name? Which one is tied to an individual?
  - How does Peter’s failure illustrate how easy it is to perceive greatness in oneself that is not merited?
  - Why did Jesus take the time to tell Peter the extent of his future failure?
  - Why do you think that people without material possessions are just as tempted as those who “have it all?”
  - The “who’s the best” debate came at the Last Supper. When was a time in your life when you were surrounded by believers, only to give in to ungodly thoughts or actions?