

# Seeing the Disciples through the Lens of Grace

## 2) James and John

*'James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"'*

**(Mark 3:17)**

✓ **James and John were fishermen in their father Zebedee's business. Their mother was Salome**

✓ **Jesus called them while they were mending nets. Their immediate response was to leave their father and their nets**

✓ **They, along with Peter, comprised the inner circle of Jesus**

✓ **Their passion and zeal earned them the nickname 'Boanerges' (sons of thunder) by Jesus. They had a zeal, but 'not according to knowledge'**

***'Jesus...sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them"'***

**(Luke 9:52-56)**

**They, and their mother, had selfish  
ambition for them**

*'Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able.'"*

***'So He said to them, 'You will indeed drink 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 is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.'" And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."***

**(Matt.20:20-28)**

# James

- ✓ **James was mentioned before John because he was the older**
- ✓ **Like John, James had a dangerous zeal which could harm others**
- ✓ **He was also ambitious**
- ✓ **But Jesus took him from a zeal that could quickly destroy the lives of others, to laying down his own life that others might be saved. And from seeking glory for himself, to seeking Christ's glory alone in the salvation of the lost**

**James was the first of the 12 disciples to  
be martyred**

***'Now about that time Herod the king  
stretched out his hand to harass some  
from the church. Then he killed James the  
brother of John with the sword'***

**(Acts 12:1-2)**

## **John**

- ✓ **John came from a family that was quite prosperous and well connected**
- ✓ **Like James, he had a fiery temperament and an ambitious desire**
- ✓ **He and his brother may have been Jesus' cousin through their mother Salome's relationship to Mary**
- ✓ **John is much more in the forefront of what is happening during the three years of training with Christ, than James**

- ✓ **John was especially loyal to Jesus. He was the only one of the 12 disciples present at the cross**
- ✓ **He was entrusted with the care of Jesus' mother**
- ✓ **John was the first to believe in the resurrection. The other disciples did not believe on the basis of an absent body, but only when they saw the living Christ. John, however, was different**
- ✓ **After Pentecost, John teamed up with Peter to fearlessly preach the gospel in Jerusalem and suffered beatings and imprisonment for it**

- ✓ **He underwent a remarkable transformation as a disciple, from the quick-tempered Son of Thunder to the compassionate apostle of love**
- ✓ **The reason is that John saw Jesus through the eyes of love. Although he does not mention himself by name in his own gospel, he refers to himself 4 times as *'the disciple Jesus loved.'* He was the one who rested on Jesus' bosom at the Passover**
- ✓ ***'In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins...We love Him because He first loved us'* (1 John 4:10, 19)**

**Because John experienced the unconditional love of Jesus firsthand, he preached that love in his gospel and letters**

***'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him...And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him...There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear'***

**(1 John 4:7-9, 16, 18)**

**□ He was also transformed from narrow-minded exclusivity to including all others who professed faith in Jesus**

***'Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side"'***

**(Mark 9:38-41)**

- ✓ **John was the last surviving eyewitness of the resurrection**
- ✓ **He wrote a gospel account that was different to the synoptic gospels. He wrote more from a new covenant perspective**
- ✓ **He clearly presents Jesus as the Lamb of God, sent to take away the sins of the world**
- ✓ **The gospel of John is usually recommended for new Christians because of its emphasis on faith and love**
- ✓ **His gospel has inspired countless numbers of people to put their trust in Jesus**

- ✓ **John also wrote 3 epistles, as well as the book of Revelation which he wrote while exiled on the Isle of Patmos**
- ✓ **His writings focused on the deity and humanity of Christ, love and truth, and confronted false teachings, especially Gnosticism**
- ✓ **It is evident that he writes as one who had been with Jesus**
- ✓ **He raised up other leaders to take up the torch after his departure**

- ✓ **John was transformed from being a son of thunder to an apostle of love**
- ✓ **He was blessed with longevity of life. He bore witness to Christ and the gospel throughout his many decades as an apostle**
- ✓ **In contrast to James' relatively brief ministry and martyrdom demonstrate that quality of life is just as important as quantity of years**