

The King's Ambassadors, James the Less, Thaddaeus the Strong, and Simon the Zealot: Steve Swartz  
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Matthew 10:3-4

**Introducing James, the Less:** James is the Hellenistic name of Jacob. James the son of Alphaeus is mentioned here in Matt. 10:3. There is James the half-brother of Jesus, who is considered to be the James who led the church in Jerusalem. Mark 6:3, Jesus is the brother to James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, his brothers didn't believe He was the Christ, John 7:5.

- Mary is the mother of James and Joseph (Joses: Mk. 6:3), Mary is the mother of Jesus, there is Mary Magdelene, and Mary the mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John), Matt. 27:55-56.
- What is the solution to who James the Less and later James the Just is?
  - James the Less is son to Mary, married to Cleopas (Alphaeus), who is sister to Mary the mother of Jesus, and kin to Mary the mother of James and John, of Zebedee. This would make James the Less a cousin to Jesus the Christ. James the Great, is the son of Zebedee and brother to John (the Revelator) and is the first apostle to be a martyr.
- Facts: 1) Cleopas and Alphaeus are the same person, but also both are described as being married to a Mary. James the apostle is the same person as James the Less. 2) The term "brother" and "cousin" are interchangeable. Families were close and James the Less being called the brother of Jesus (the Christ) wouldn't be uncommon. James the Just is James the son of Alphaeus, the same as James the Less. 3) It is a fairly new idea that James the Just is different than James the apostle. Adding to that, Matthew (Levi: Mk. 2:14) the tax collector is also described as the son of Alphaeus. This would make Levi and James the Less related to Jesus (the Christ).
- Reasons why James the Just is the same as James the apostle (the Less and Alphaeus): 1) Puts in charge an apostle leading the church in Jerusalem in Paul's time. 2) It makes an apostle the author of the epistle of James. 3) Solves the dilemma of who James the Less and James the Just are. They are the same person. 4) Makes fewer James to learn about. 5) If these three men are not the same, then the apostle James the Less in Matthew 10 would have zero information about him in Scripture defying the pattern of the other apostles in Scripture.

**Humility of James, the Less:** likely a nickname given by Jesus. He is listed near the end of the list, submitted to Jesus, and was part of Jesus' family. James the Less would lead the church in Jerusalem, Peter reported to James and the brothers in Acts 12:17, 15:1-35. In Acts 21:18, Paul goes before James and all the elders in Jerusalem, which relates to Paul's mention of meeting with James, the brother of Jesus in Gal. 1:19.

- The passage in Gal. 1:19 speaks of meeting only with one apostle, James the Less.
- The other apostles are reported leaving Jerusalem to preach Christ, but James the Less, remains behind to care for the church in Jerusalem.
- James the Less later referred to as James the Just, would regularly beg the Lord in prayer, in the temple, for forgiveness to be granted to the Jews.

**Faithfulness of James, the Less:** after Festus died, the Jews commanded James the Less to renounce Jesus, he would not. They threw him off the Temple Mount, he survived the fall, but was stoned and clubbed to death by the Jews.

**Introduction to Thaddeus the Strong:** In Matthew 10 and Mark 3, he is referred to as "Thaddeus." It means "one who is not yet weaned." In our day, we would call him a "momma's boy." Judas (not Iscariot) the son of James (Luke 6:16) is nicknamed Thaddeus in Matthew.

**Faithfulness of Thaddeus:** Thaddeus traveled to Edessa, modern day Turkey and the region and referred to there as "Addai." In AD 71 a new king of Edessa sought to stop the explosion of Christianity and Thaddeus died by crucifixion in AD 72.

**Simon the Zealot:** would have been part of a group desiring to overthrow Rome. He would have originally believed Jesus was bringing a physical kingdom to Rome but would be transformed to realize that Jesus was bringing a spiritual kingdom and he would die as His apostle.

**Simon's Ministry:** He would travel to North Africa, Egypt, Libya, and Mauritania. History details his arrival in Britain where he planted churches. The churches would be destroyed by Rome, but the Gospel influence and many believers would continue on.

### Further Discussion and Application

These men give the lesson of sacrifice. 2 Timothy 3:12, those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 1 Peter 1:6, suffering and various trials are a part of this life. Suffering is a purifying work in our lives.

- How has suffering purified your life? How has it helped strip you of a love for this world and its pleasures?
- How is persecution for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel evidence of salvation and fellowship with Christ? Why is it a joy to suffer in trials?

A second lesson of the apostles is that they were transformed and matured in Christ. Their nicknames of "momma's boy," and "the Zealot," refer to their lives before Jesus called them to be fishers of men. The apostles went from asking to be great in the kingdom of God, to dying horrendous deaths for their Savior.

- How have you been transformed by the work of the Lord in your life?
- What more could you commit to doing, that would demonstrate a life given more to the work of the Gospel and making disciples and less on the things of this world?
- How would you help a brother or sister in the Lord know and understand what should be their focus in this life and what should be their focus for serving the Lord and honoring Him with their lives?

A third lesson is that these men communed with Jesus. They served with Him and were able to know His heart and mind and they were discipled and shared life together. These men left their families and old life to serve and die for Christ.

- Is our life being more and more consumed by fellowship and communion with Christ?
- Are we desiring more and more to spend time in prayer and meditation on His work and His person as our God and coming King?
- Is our service to His church consuming more and more of our time and life's effort?
- What do we prioritize in life? If we looked at our calendar, what fills it? Is being discipled and discipling others a part of our weekly life?
- How would we describe our love for Christ as evidenced by the life we live and the sacrifice we offer to Him as He commands in Romans 12:1-2? What is a living sacrifice?