



# Bible Heroes

## Story Notes:

### James and John

**Mark 10**

#### **Essential Teachers notes:**

This story pulls in many different passages to paint a big picture of the character of James and John before the set passage. The main story highlights our impulsive and selfish nature but shows how Jesus turns that around. It continues past the focus passage to show how James and John became changed by this encounter in their lives.

**Tell this story or a similar one of your choice from a favourite bible translation or story book. This version is supplied for inspiration, feel free to omit or embellish to give it your personal voice.**

**Main Passage : Mark 10:35-45**

**Additional Passages : Luke 9:51-55, Mark 1 + 3**

Today's story is about two of Jesus's twelve special friends called disciples. These disciples were called James and John, but Jesus liked to call them the "Sons of Thunder." James and John were fishermen; they worked with Simon-Peter. Jesus had walked along near their fishing boat one day and called them to follow him. They went from fishing all night and pulling in heavy nets with fish to fishing for people to be part of God's kingdom, fishing for followers of Jesus.

From then on, James and John could always be found near Jesus. We do know that they weren't always very intelligent, and sometimes they got a bit overexcited. One day, they were so irritated with a village who didn't welcome them that they suggested calling down fire from Heaven to burn it up. Do you think Jesus agreed with their request? No. Jesus told them that he was there to save people, not destroy them. James and John may have had bad tempers, but Jesus still chose them to be part of his kingdom.

One day, James and John came to Jesus with another request. The brothers had worked out that one day Jesus would be king, and they wanted to sit at his right- and left-hand sides when he was on the throne. Jesus listened patiently. The only throne Jesus would have on earth was a wooden cross; Jesus knew this, but obviously James and John hadn't worked that out yet. "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you go through the things I must go through?" James and John didn't hesitate, "Yes, we can, we really can." Jesus looked at his friends; he did not want them to suffer but he knew they would. "To sit at my right or left is not for me to decide," Jesus said and then he walked away.

When the apostles heard about this conversation, they became angry with James and John. Jesus called everyone together and gave them some new instructions. "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. I did not come to be served, but to serve," he said. That must have sounded crazy to the disciples, but slowly they came to understand. Through Jesus, they learnt a better sort of greatness, not one you take but one you give.

After Jesus had gone to Heaven, James and John helped start the church, a church of people who would serve. The disciples tried to serve everyone, and the church grew. James became the first apostle to join Jesus in Heaven. His boldness meant he didn't deny what Jesus had taught him, even if it meant losing his life. His brother John lived for a long time. He wrote to churches, and some of his letters are in the Bible. Knowing Jesus changed John. No longer did he imagine burning villages; his letters are full of love and understanding. He became known as "The Apostle of Love."