

*In search of...*

# Truth & Right

Volume 09 Issue 42

October 19, 2014

## Sons of Thunder

One of the more curious appellations that we find in the scriptures is the name that Jesus gave to the brothers James and John—Boanerges. Mark records this moniker in 3:17 “And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder.” One does not have to wonder as to why Jesus so marked these two brothers. In Luke 9:51, Jesus is on the way to Jerusalem and he is passing through Samaria to get there. He sends some disciples ahead to find a place to lodge, but no one wants to put Jesus up because they know he is going to Jerusalem. (Samaritans and Jews didn’t get along too well in those days.) James and John suggest the following: “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” (Luke 9:54).

One can certainly understand James and John’s sentiments. Here is the Lord of the universe in human

form. He has come to earth divesting Himself of His heavenly glory so that he could serve man. He is on his way to Jerusalem to go to the Passover and he needed a place to stay for one evening. He had already spent time among the Samaritans (John 4:43) and they would likely have known that he held no ill will toward them and was, in fact, their friend. But cultural bigotry can be a strong force in influencing people not to aid those of other cultures and this day, the Samaritans were not feeling particularly hospitable. What bigots! What racists! Didn’t they know with whom they were dealing? Those ungrateful wretches! Surely the Lord would want them destroyed until nothing was left but a heap of smoldering ashes and cinders! However, we read, “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).

**God does not desire that anyone be lost.** We read in Ezekiel 18:32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." God does not take pleasure in destroying evil people. There are some today who picture God as some malevolent dictator who sits up in heaven eagerly waiting to press the "smite" button. Such is not the God that we serve. Those who eventually will be lost, are lost not because of God, but in spite of God. Peter writes, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God wants all men to be saved and so he is patient, kind, and longsuffering. God is desirous that men repent and live. James and John's request to bring down fire upon these Samaritans was out of character with God's desires for man's salvation.

**Attitude plays a key role in preaching the gospel.** Jesus said of James and John, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Their attitudes were not right. They should have been seeking to forgive these Samaritans instead of condemn them. This is not to excuse the sin of the Samaritans, but instead to look for ways to bring them out of sin so that they could be saved. James and John should also have been seeking to humble themselves for the sake of these lost Samaritans. Humility was a problem with the disciples.

On at least one occasion these two asked to be seated in positions of authority (Mark 10:37). Jesus taught them that those who serve would be the greatest in the kingdom. Too, James and John should also have been seeking to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of other souls. Jesus died for all men while in their sins (Romans 5:8). The servant is not greater than his Lord (John 13:16), hence, James and John's attitude should have been one of sacrifice instead of condemnation. James and John's request to bring fire down out of heaven was out of character with Jesus mission.

**We must realize that Satan is the enemy, not other men.** Perhaps in calling down fire James and John felt that they could right a terrible wrong, but they would not have dealt with the true enemy. Satan was the one who stirred up those national hatreds within the Samaritans. Destroying a few Samaritans wouldn't get rid of him. Satan must be fought on a spiritual level. He must be fought with teaching and instruction. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled" (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). We avenge

disobedience by bringing people to Christ and bringing them to full obedience, not by waging physical war against them. This is what overthrows the influence of Satan, the true enemy. James and John's request was out of character with who the true enemy was.

It is easy for us to be like James and John today. People wrong us and we feel as if we need to be avenged. Wrongs come at all levels in our society. Those in high office are openly criticized for their mistakes in power. Individuals sue other people for enormous sums of money and win because they are seeking retribution. It is easy for a Christian to be caught up in the atmosphere of seeking "justice" even to the point of castigating one's fellow brother in Christ. But let us ask ourselves before engaging in such "justice": Are we seeking something consistent with God's character? Does our attitude reflect the mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost? Does our request recognize who the true enemy is? One other lesson that the sons of thunder teach us is this, even when injustice occurs, it is not always worth pursuing correction. Are we seeking to call down fire from heaven to consume our enemies? Let us examine our hearts and motives each and every day in following the Lord to ensure consistency with God's will in our lives.

Kevin Cauley

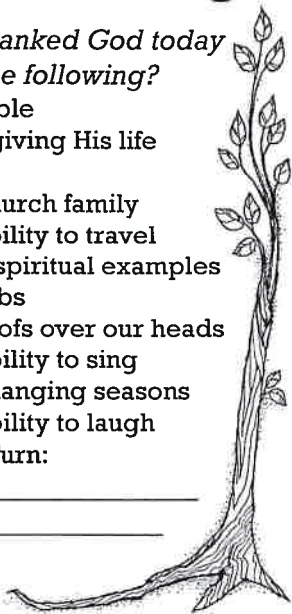
dear God,  
thanks for this  
beautiful life  
and forgive me if  
i dont love it  
enough.

*Have you thanked God today  
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The ability to travel
- Good spiritual examples
- Our jobs
- The roofs over our heads
- The ability to sing
- The changing seasons
- The ability to laugh
- Your Turn:

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# Christian Q&A

*Wayne Campbell is the subject of our interview this month. Have you talked with him & his wife Charena lately?*

**When were you baptized?**

January, 1981

**What inspired you to be baptized?**

My mother-in-law, Charlotte Lancaster, showed me film strips and had Bible study.

**What is your favorite hymn that we sing? Why?**

"God's Family" It fits us at Wellsburg to a tee.

**What is your favorite Bible verse? Why?**

John 11:35 – "Jesus wept." It showed us He cared and felt sorrow like us.

**How do you show others that you are a believer in Jesus Christ?**

By living my life as a Christian should. By being kind, honest, and good with clean speech and actions.

**How long have you attended the Wellsburg church of Christ?**

**Why did you start attending?**

I was looking for a Church of Christ that taught from the Bible and was close in fellowship. And here I found it. That's why.

