

## Parish of Finchampstead and California

### SERMON NOTES

Sunday 19 July 2020

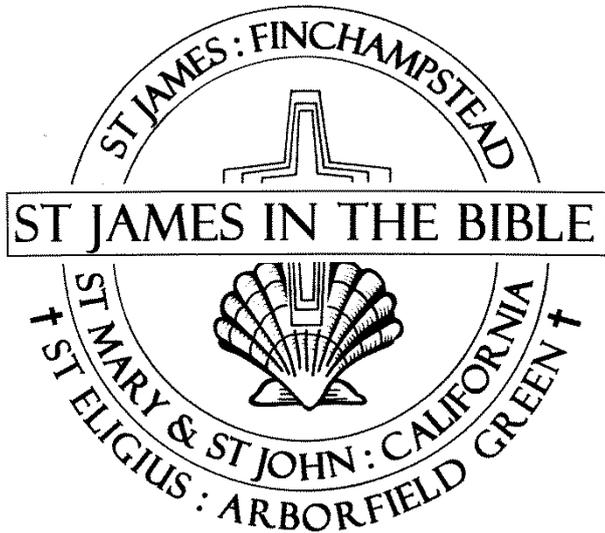
### St James' Day

#### Outline

- **What do we know about St James?** A brief discussion of the traditions which arose after James' death and of the reasons why Santiago de Compostella has such a prominent position in these traditions.
- **How reliable are these traditions?** The uncertainty of the traditions contrasted with the certainty of what is recorded in the first three Gospels (see detailed table and notes below).
- **What can we learn from the Gospel accounts of St James?**

#### The Transfiguration in the East window of the Church





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and California**

**ST JAMES' DAY**

**Sunday 19 July 2020**

**Where are James and his brother John referred to in the Bible?**

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Luke</b>
<b>1</b> Called by Jesus to be his disciples: Leaving their boats # Witnesses of the miraculous fish catch # Listed as members of 'The Twelve' Described by Jesus as 'Sons of Thunder'	1:19-20 3:13-19 3:17	4:21-22 10:1-4	5:4-11 6:12-15
<b>2</b> Witnesses of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law #	1:29-31	*[8:14-15]	*[4:38-39]
<b>3</b> Witnesses of the raising of Jairus' daughter >	5:37-43	*[9:23-26]	8:51-56
<b>4</b> Witnesses of the Transfiguration >	9:2-10	17:1-7	9:28-36
<b>5</b> Request to sit at Jesus' right and left hands 'in his glory' ø Indignation of the other disciples	10:35-40 10:41-45	20:20-23 20:24-28	
<b>6</b> Suggest the destruction of a Samaritan village			9:51-56
<b>7</b> Question Jesus about the destruction of the Temple #	13:3ff	*[24:1ff]	*[21:5ff]
<b>8</b> Present in Gethsemane >	14:32-42	26:36-46	*[22:39-46]
<b>9</b> Listed as members of 'The Eleven'			Acts 1:13
<b>10</b> [James only] His execution by Herod			Acts 12:2

# With Peter and Andrew

> With Peter

\* These incidents are reported by Matthew and/or Luke but James and John are not specifically identified

ø In Matthew, the brothers' mother makes the request on their behalf

Note: James is always named before John until the list in Acts 1.

Note also: Neither brother is referred to by name in John's Gospel - together they are described as 'the sons of Zebedee' in 21:2. Apart from this, James is not mentioned at all (John is the beloved disciple).

## **Comments**

- Peter, James and John are regarded as Jesus' intimates within the Twelve, based primarily on Jesus insisting on their presence alone with him at important events - Jairus' daughter (3), Transfiguration (4), Gethsemane (8). But Mark in particular notes the much wider involvement of James and John, as the table above shows.
- Matthew and Luke both seem to be less interested in the prominence of James and John, and, in John's Gospel they don't get a mention until after the resurrection (and then only in a list of disciples present at the lake). On the other hand Matthew, by introducing their mother as the initiator of their request for special treatment (5), seems to want to deflect some of the criticism of them. Luke ignores this incident altogether, possibly for the same reason.
- It's not clear why Jesus nicknamed the brothers *Sons of Thunder*. Mark alone reports this and nothing in his Gospel suggests this is appropriate - in fact Luke's unique account of their suggestion of destroying a Samaritan village (6) comes closest. But perhaps, just as Peter emerged as *The Rock* only after Pentecost, so too with James and John - we are not told why Herod selected James for exemplary execution - possibly he had indeed become a *Son of Thunder* by then.

## **Questions**

- How might we explain the differences between the Gospel accounts? Why did it seem important to Mark to stress the involvement of James and John throughout Jesus' ministry, but less so for Matthew and Luke, and not at all for John?
- What is the general impression which Mark gives about James and John? What do you think they were like?
- What might we learn from the way in which Jesus treated the brothers when they so obviously fell short of the expectations he had of them - see especially (4), (5) and (8)?
- In what ways should we be pleased to have St James as Patron Saint of the church?