

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus is joined by His “inner circle” of disciples: Peter, James, and John. These three are also invited to other pivotal events like the restoration of Jairus’s daughter (Mark 5) and the scene of anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14). John goes so far as to describe himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

We are not told why these three occupy such a position of closeness to the Lord. James and John are brothers, as sons of Zebedee, but Peter’s brother Andrew is not included. Mere family relationship is not the key.

One common factor among the three may be a penchant for bold action, although often impetuous or misguided. John and James, the “Sons of Thunder,” propose to rain down fire from heaven on the

unwelcoming Samaritans (Luke 9:54) and later contend for favored positions in heaven (Mark 10:35-45). Peter’s unguarded tongue leads him both to declare great truths, as when he is the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, and inane babbling, as he shows here on the mountain.

Indeed, once these three have witnessed the Lord’s resurrection and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they become the leading lights of the early church. Peter’s tongue is again loosened to make him the first to declare the gospel both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. James becomes the target for the first great persecution of the new Christian sect and succumbs to Herod’s sword in Acts 12. And his brother John will be the last of the twelve to die after having sealed up the scripture with the writing of the Revelation.

Questions:

1. Why do you think the Lord calls the people to himself along with the disciples?
2. What does it mean to deny yourself?
3. What scriptures teach us how the Lord denied himself?
4. According to verses 36 and 37, how valuable is each individual’s soul (or life)?

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5. When is the time the Lord is speaking of in the last part of verse 38?
6. What does verse 9:1 mean?
7. Who or what do Moses and Elijah represent in the transfiguration of the Lord?
8. What is wrong with what Peter says in verse 5?
9. What do verses 11-13 mean?