

James Salter (1890-1972)

by Keith Malcomson

James Salter was a pioneering missionary who dedicated his life to spreading the Gospel in Africa, facing numerous challenges and hardships along the way.

Scripture: Psalm 121:7, Isaiah 41:10, Mark 16:15, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Missionary Work", "Faith Perseverance"

Description

Keith Malcomson shares the inspiring life story of James Salter, a dedicated missionary who faced numerous challenges and dangers while spreading the Gospel in Central Africa. Despite multiple near-death experiences, including battling malaria and being taken hostage by rebels, Salter remained steadfast in his faith and commitment to God's work. He recruited workers, raised funds, and tirelessly preached the Gospel, leaving a lasting impact on the Congo Evangelistic Mission. Salter's unwavering faith, perseverance, and sacrificial service are a testament to the power of God's calling and the importance of spreading His message of love and salvation.

Transcript

James Salter was born in Preston in 1890. Jimmy's early days were spent as a poor orphan who as a result had little education. But he did have great spiritual education; he was another of Myerscough's young men who attended the Bible School in Preston. It was there that Salter made strong friendships with other Pentecostal pioneers. It was amid Burton's preparations for Congo that he directly asked Salter if he had ever considered Africa's need of the Gospel. This led to them shortly after making a pact to work together in Central Africa. For a time he worked with the Elim Evangelistic Band in Northern Ireland. Because of the War he was unable to get a passport for Congo. Against all the advise that he would not be allowed to land in Africa and with a conviction that it was God's will he set sail in 1915 to join Burton on the field. He took no medication, and instead he simply trusted the Lord to keep him. On that first journey in Africa along with the others he caught malaria and for some time fought between life and death. Between 1915 and 1919 he was raised up from his death bed six times. The last time a sheet was thrown over him and was left for dead, but in response to fervent prayer from a native he was once more raised up. Of this early stage he says, "They poisoned our water and our food; they tried shooting poisoned arrows at us, and then bullets...We were among people whose language we had to learn word by word. In those first months, I tramped from place to place, preaching the Gospel, until my whole body was soaked with malaria." These were days of pioneering, first fruits in conversion, establishing the first mission stations and of seeing great miracles.

In 1919 he returned to Britain to recruit more workers. While back he spoke at the Preston Easter Convention at which Wigglesworth presided, then at the Kingsway Hall Convention in London at Whitsuntide. Here leaders and believers from the movement had gathered, Salter's frail form stood almost motionless as he spoke for two hours, testifying of such things which held the great crowd spellbound. He spoke at a number of churches and gatherings including a conference in Belfast. With a band of helpers he returned to Congo in 1920. Amongst those he recruited were Teddy Hodgson an old friend who was settled in a prospering business and fighting the call of God. Salter walked into his office thinner than he had seen him last and said "well Teddy what about Congo?" In a matter of seconds as Salter prayed quietly the battle was won and a recruit made. Another who joined their ranks was Alice Wigglesworth whom he married. Alice was marked by great warmth, faith and fun. The natives began to call him Inabanza, which means 'wise counsellor.'

As the years passed he increasingly took care of the Missions work in the UK. He had a great ability to testify with freshness and to keep the work of Congo Evangelistic Mission before the Churches and so to draw in fresh helpers and finance for the work during missions conventions. Several times he was elected Chairman for the AoG conference as well as serving on the Executive Council but he always made regular trips to Congo. A great joy to him was to often travel and be with his father in law Smith Wigglesworth. The book "Apostle of faith" about Wigglesworth was written mostly from personal testimonies given by Salter. Wigglesworth speaking of his son-in-law said "He has books all round the room to the ceiling." He also said that while travelling in America if asked a scriptural question he could not answer he would say "My son-in-law, Salter, will answer that. He is a better scholar than I am." In the years 44, 45 and 46 when Wigglesworth presided as chairman of the Preston Easter Convention, Jimmy was in charge of the meetings on Easter Monday which was given over solely to missions, especially reports from CEM missionaries. The day ended with a great gathering around the platform for the laying on of hands. In 1947 he had the privilege to preach at the second World Pentecostal Conference in Switzerland, representing the British and Irish Churches.

In 1960 Congo was falling into terrible conflict, missionaries and Christians were being killed. Jimmy flew out to Congo in September and met up with his good friend Teddy Hodgson. Over the next few weeks things got worse until they were taken hostage by the new local regime of fanatical rebels. They only escaped with their lives because of the intervention and rescue by 150 United Nation troops. It was just a few weeks later that news came out that Teddy along with a New Zealander had tried to get supplies through to some of their evangelists but were taken prisoner by the rebels and butchered with machetes as they prayed for their murderers. another sad loss came in 1964 when his fiery fervent wife Alice went to be with the Lord. A year later the 50th anniversary of CEM was held in London. Burton and Salter embraced and wept at these special meetings as they remembered the work God had accomplished through two weak vessels dedicated to do His will.

At his journeys end jimmy went to be with the Lord in 1972.

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