

Apostle John the beloved.

Apostle John was one of the three men who made the inner circles of the Lord Jesus. The others were Peter and James. James was John's brother. Their father was Zebedee, while their mother was Salome. The mother, Salome, was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Thus, John was Jesus' cousin. This is maybe one of the reasons they were close.

The family lived in Galilee and were fishermen, from where he was called to be a disciple. Apostle John wrote five of the books of the bible. They are the gospel of John, though he did not mention his own name in the book, but referred to himself as the apostle, who Jesus loved (John 13:23). The other books are the three letters of John and the book of Revelation. He was quite close to the Lord and therefore understood the love that Jesus had for him.

John had a character flaw. He was unduly vehement, intolerant and selfish. He was surnamed by the Lord as Boanerges, or the "son of thunder" because of his outbursts of anger. He overcame these flaws eventually, as we all should. He became known for his gentleness and love, which formed the basis of his writeups in four of the five books. This is evident of the character transformation that we should all have as the spirit of the Lord works upon us to overcome the carnal nature.

He became a disciple of the Lord, through John the Baptists (John 1:35). He was one of the three members of the inner circle of Jesus. He was there when Jairus daughter was raised (Mark 5:37). He was there at the transfiguration and saw the Lord in a glorious vision with the others. (Matt 17:1). He was there at the garden of gethsemane ((Matt 26:37). He asked Jesus to call down fire upon the Samaritans and for such outbursts, was called the son of Boanerges (Luke 9:54). His mother requested that he and his brother be given a special place, at his right hand in the coming kingdom (Mrk 10:35). He lay close on Jesus breast at the Passover (John13:25) and was present at Jesus' trial ((Jhn 18:15-16). He recognized Jesus at the sea of Galilee and was active in the early church (Acts 3:1-4).

He was with Peter on his mission to Samaria (Act 8:14-). He was with Peter at the interview with Paul in Galatians (Gal 2). He was described as the pillar (v9). The Lord entrusted the care of his mother to him (John 19:26-27). He was banished to the Island of Patmos (Rev1:9). Mark 10:39 and Matt 20:23, suggest that John may have been killed early by the Jews (if they drank of the cup that Jesus drank as they admitted they could). Beyond the banishment to the island of Patmos, it was believed that he lived in Ephesus, where he wrote the gospel of John, at the request of the local church. The gospel of John essentially filled the gaps in the synoptics gospels.

We could ask some pertinent questions about John, the Apostle: Does John command a special place among the apostles? We shall assess this by looking at the later end. Whereas he had a special place with Jesus in his earthly ministry, there is nothing in the scripture narratives that suggests that John had a better end than the other disciples. Though the mother asked for special places for him and James, Jesus made it clear that it was not his to give. Was he able to drink of the cup that Jesus drank? He said he could, but even if he did, he did, was he qualified to accomplish same result? No. Even if his blood was shed for others, he could not save mankind. If that was possible, there would have been no need for God to send Jesus.

He preached Love. That was the very essence of the godhead (John 3:16). That was the message of the Kingdom that Jesu preached. It is to love the Lord above all else. The love of God is demonstrated through

the love for man. God cannot rule as a king in the lives of those who do not love him. But the love of God towards mankind is implicit in his love towards mankind. He fore chose man before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4).

Is there a class distinction between the other disciples and John? He was close to the Lord. He could ask questions others may not be able to ask (John 13:24). He followed Jesus everywhere he went. John's parents were well to do and had relationship with the high and mighty of his day. He could thus gain entrance into the house of the high priest, where Jesus was tried. So could Peter, who we know was unstable in character, but received help of the Lord. Save for Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, none was classified and had a different spirit that separated him spiritually for the group. Judas was unfaithful to the end. While the other may have had some failings along the line, they all recovered other time.

Post the resurrection, the disciples lacked direction. Their shepherd, having departed (Matt 26:31 and Mrk 14:27) ad there was a scattering. Thus, when Peter (was it out of idleness?) said he would go a fishing, the others including John, went with him. That move was not of the spirit, which obviously was made clear by the lack of results in their efforts, until the Lord Jesus appeared on the scene. It is instructive, that Peter was given special instruction to feed His sheep. The passage in John 21 shows that there is a period of tutelage, in which a man may depend upon the energies of his flesh. The takeover of the holy spirit is gradual. At the fullness, the Holy Spirit is in full control for those who achieve complete submission. The Holy Spirit would lead peter when he comes to this stage and guide him completely, even against the run of his flesh and natural inclination. If John was separate or the lead, he would have been the one to receive that instruction. At least, he would not have gone a fishing with the others!

We all have the adoption of sons and therefore can call upon the Lord, Abba, father (Rom 8:15). He is our father. We are all in a measure, prodigal, to the extent to which we harness the gifts of God for divine purposes. Some fail, some succeed. While there are those who have all of the gifts and riches at their disposal and do not use or apply them, and thus live a life of poverty, there are many who though behave waywardly at the beginning, at some point catch the spirit and repent completely. God takes them on as if there was no fault. He does not differentiate between those who started work with him in the morning and those who came one-hour to the end of the day. He pays them the same wages (Matt 20:1-16).

There are twelve foundations of the holy city, the new Jerusalem. Each of the apostles formed one of them. No one of them formed two foundations. They all made it to the throne, save the son of perdition, who committed suicide. While Judas Iscariot was a hireling (John 10:12-13, Jon 7:1-), the others proved to be sons!

Did John forsake the Fellowship of the brethren? John never stepped out of fellowship with the brethren. He was not a loner. He received ministry from others as he ministered. He was there present with the others. He was with Peter at the river where they went fishing. His brother was killed, yet he was with Peter when they went to the temple at the hour of prayers, when the lame man was healed (Acts 3:1). He could be in and out of the spirit. He was not in the Island of Patmos by choice. He was banished. He may have had opportunity to commune with the Lord. He wrote, that he was in the spirit on the Lord's day. Everyday is the Lord's day. Which means he could be out of the spirit like any other man. He heard the voice from behind and from the front, an evidence of some disconnect with the spirit?

Did he live forever? There is no bible record to that effect! There was a rumor which arose out of misperception of the intent of the Lord when he asked a question:

Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?²² Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.²³ Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?²⁴ This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.(CWSB) John 21:21-24.

It is the same disciple that penned the story and said that that was not the intent of the Lord. If he willed, it would have happened. However, there is no record that suggests that he did. Secondly, we also need to look closely at what he meant by “till I come”. He came on the day of Pentecost and has lived among us, ever since! Praise God.

Yes, John the Apostle was special. There was a bond between him and the Lord. But he forsook all that he had, like others and followed Jesus (Luke 14:33-35). What matters is that we should all be faithful till the end. May we be faithful to you, Lord, Amen.

Good morning Holy Spirit. May we be close to you as Apostle John was. May we, instead of jumping ship on the seventh year (Deut 15:12-18, Exo 21:1-6), prefer to stay with you, our Lord and have our ears born with an awl signifying our desire to stay with you forever. Dear Lord, let this bond be forever, with our saltiness remaining till the end. Amen.