

APOSTLE JOHN

1. John came from an entrepreneurial family in Galilee.

- a. John probably was born at Bethsaida in Galilee around 10 ad. Peter, Andrew, and Philip were also born there.
- b. His father was Zebedee.
 - (1) **Mt 27:56** 56 ...Among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.
 - (2) **Mk 1:20** 20 And immediately [Jesus] called them, and [James and John] left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.
- c. His mother was Salome.
 - (1) **Mk 15:40** 40 There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.
- d. Like his father, John was a fisherman by trade.
 - (1) **Mt 4:21** 21 And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them.
- e. Peter, Simon, James, and John were business partners.
 - (1) **Lk 5:9-11** 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men. 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.
- f. John was known to the high priest, Caiaphas (Jn 18:16).
- g. Probably his aunt was Mary, the mother of Jesus, making Jesus John's first cousin.

2. As a young disciple of John the Baptist, John was looking for the Messiah.

- a. Jesus may have called John to be a disciple three times:
 - (1) At the Jordan river
 - (a) **Jn 1:40** 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
 - (2) At the Sea of Galilee.
 - (a) **Mt 4:21** 21 And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them.
 - (3) At the Sea of Galilee.
 - (a) **Lk 5:9-10** 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men. 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.
- b. John was Jesus' youngest disciple. John must have been about twenty years old, about ten years younger than Jesus.

3. **Jesus called John and his older brother James the “Sons of Thunder.”**
 - a. **Mk 3:17** 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder)....
 - b. This was for good reason.
 - (1) **Mk 9:38** 38 John said to [Jesus], Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.
 - (2) **Lk 9:49** 49 John answered, Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.
 - (a) Jesus believes in the leadership concept of decentralised execution.
 - (3) **Lk 9:54** 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?
 - c. James and John were ambitious.
 - (1) **Mt 20:20-21** 20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to [Jesus] with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. 21 And he said to her, What do you want? She said to him, Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.
4. **Along with Peter and James, John was in Jesus’ closest inner circle.**
 - a. In his gospel, he refers to himself as “the disciple who Jesus loved.”
 - b. John lived side-by-side with Jesus for three years. They ate, slept, worked, and traveled together.
 - c. At the last supper, John reclined at Jesus’ side (Jn 13:23; 20:2).
 - d. When Jesus was arrested, John and Peter followed from a distance, and entered the high priest Annas’s courtyard (Jn 18:15-16).
 - e. John was the only disciple we know of who witnessed the crucifixion (Jn 19:26-27).
 - f. At the cross, Jesus asked John to look after his mother Mary (Jn 19:25-27). He must have done so until her death.
 - g. John was the first disciple to arrive at Jesus’ empty tomb (Jn. 20:2).
 - h. John saw Jesus at his most human moments. Nevertheless, John believed Jesus was and is the Son of God. That is powerful evidence of Jesus’ deity.
 - i. John was frequently with Peter after Pentecost (Ac 3:1; 4:13).
 - (1) God healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate through Peter and John (Ac 3:1-8), and together they faced the Sanhedrin (Ac 4:1-22).
 - (2) Peter and John laid their hands on the new Samaritan believers, and they received the Holy Spirit (Ac 9:17).
 - j. John was a leader in the Jerusalem church (Ga 2:9).
5. **In later life, John enjoyed a special connection to the churches in Asia Minor (Re 1:11).**
6. **John wrote all of his biblical books—*John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation*—very late in life, after much reflection.**
 - a. Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote their gospels long before John wrote his.
 - b. John’s gospel is based primarily on firsthand information.

- c. He does not quote or paraphrase the gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*. He also does not mention key events in Jesus life that were adequately explained in the other gospels.
 - d. John's Greek is basic and simple, yet accurate, compelling, and dignified.
- 7. During the reign of Domitian (ad 81-96), John suffered persecution and was banished to Patmos (Re 1:9).**
- a. He returned to Ephesus during Nerva's reign and died in ad 98.
 - b. He correctly understood that Jesus had not promised to return during John's lifetime (Jn 21:20-23).