



John

Transformed People: The Twelve Apostles
(B.L. Newberry, Spring 2020)

John within the Twelve (1 of 2)



Luke 6:14-16

Peter
Andrew
James
John

Philip
Bartholomew
Matthew
Thomas

James (the less)
Simon
Thaddeus
Judas Iscariot

- John is the fourth member of the inner group and one of the three apostles most intimate with Jesus (Peter, James, John)
- John is the brother of James (sons of Zebedee). As such, much of what applied to James also applies to John.
 - Likely a wealthy fishermen [**Mark 1:19-20**]
 - His family was likely well known [**John 18:15-16**]
 - Many modern scholars believe Salome was his mother [**John 19:25**] and that she was Mary's sister [**Matt. 27:56**]
 - Likely the younger brother (typically named second)

John within the Twelve (2 of 2)



Luke 6:14-16

Peter
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James
John

Philip
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Matthew
Thomas

James (the less)
Simon
Thaddeus
Judas Iscariot

- John was with Jesus at several key events...
 - Jesus raising Jairus' daughter [**Mark 5:37**]
 - Mount of Transfiguration [**Matt. 17:1-8**]
 - Garden of Gethsemane [**Matt. 26:36-46**]
- John eventually came to be known as the 'apostle of love', yet he started his journey with all the zeal and boldness shared by his brother James
- Only one location in the synoptic gospels records John speaking at length on his own
- Much of what we know of him is from his writings

John - The Last of the Twelve



- John was extremely active in the early church and was a regular partner with Peter in the accounts of Acts 1 -12.
- He will eventually be the inspired author of a major part of the New Testament. Only Paul and Luke wrote more.
- John is believed to be the only one of the twelve to die of natural causes. He was exiled to Patmos, where he wrote Revelation, and is believed to have died in Ephesus near the turn of the century (~100 AD).



John's Character

Transformed to balance Love & Truth



- John began as a volatile individual (Mark 3:17 ... **Boanerges** , son of Thunder). He, with his brother, wanted to call down fire on the Samaritans [**Luke 9:51-56**].
- Yet, his three years with Jesus transformed him significantly. John became known as the apostle of love. He uses the word **love** 80 times in his writing, but also the word **truth** 45 times. He cared deeply for both and had to learn balance.

Truth without love has no decency; it's just brutality.

Love without truth has no character; it's just hypocrisy.



MacArthur, p. 106

John's Character

Transformed to balance Love & Truth



- **Mark 9:38-41**

“Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.” “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

Sincerity of Purpose

Truth to the Word



Matt. 7:21-23

John's Character

Transformed to balance Ambition & Humility



- Relatively late in his time with Jesus, John and his brother tried to secure for themselves glory in the Lord's kingdom [[Mark 10:35-41](#)]. This infuriated the other apostles (likely wanting the same).
- Yet ultimately, he learned this balance so well that he refuses to even speak of himself. He only references himself in ways to glorify Jesus (i.e. the “disciple whom Jesus loved” [[John 13:23](#); [20:2](#); [21:7](#)]).

**Ambition without humility
becomes egotism.**

**Humility without ambition
can become passivity.**



John's Character

Transformed to balance Suffering & Glory



- All the apostles, initially, were resistant to suffering ... all fled. [**Mark 14:50**]
- All of the apostles, save John, are believed to have been martyred. It can be argued John suffered the most, however. He saw his brother killed for Christ, he saw his friends killed for Christ, he endured exile for Christ, and he saw Christians persecuted.
- Yet, he learned to look beyond suffering. Consider **Revelation 19-22**.

“If we desire to participate in heavenly glory, we must also be willing to partake of earthly suffering.”



MacArthur, p. 112

Stories of John's Late Life

(Mix of historical and Biblical sources)



- Recall that at the cross ... When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. [**John 19:26-27**]
- Tradition has it that he lived in Jerusalem until its destruction in 70 AD and then moved to Ephesus. From Ephesus he was exiled to Patmos.
- Tradition also states he was instrumental in spreading the church through Asia.
- Tradition also says that when John was evidently an old man in Ephesus, he was accustomed to say no more than, "Little children, love one another!" After a time, the disciples wearied at always hearing the same words, asked, "Why do you always say this?" "It is the Lord's command," was his reply. "And if this alone be done, it is enough!"