

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON THE LIFE OF JOHN, THE APOSTLE

1. Two assumptions based on John 1:40 and context:
 - a. That he lived, and possibly was born, in Bethsaida which was the city of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (John 1:44; 12:21).
 - b. That he was a disciple of John the Baptist. Concerning the unnamed disciple in John 1:35, 40 Brown has the following comment:

"The other was certainly our Evangelist himself-- because otherwise there seems no reason why he should not have named him; because, if not, he has not even alluded to his own calling; but chiefly, because it is according to his usual manner to allude to himself while avoiding the express mention of his name, and the narrative here is so graphic and detailed as to leave an irresistible impression on the reader's mind that the writer was himself a party to what he describes. His great sensitiveness, as Olshausen says, is touchingly shown in his representation of this first contact with the Lord; the circumstances are present to him in the minutest details; he still remembers the very hour: but he reports no particulars of those discourses of the Lord, by which he was bound to Him for the whole of his life; he allows everything personal to retire" (I, 354).
2. John's call (Matt. 4:20, 21; Mark 1:19, 20).

From these passages we learn the following:

- a. His father's name was Zebedee.
- b. He had a brother, probably older since he is always mentioned first, named James.
- c. They were in the fishing business, evidently prosperous because Zebedee had "hired servants" (Mark 1:20).

By cf. Matt. 27:56 and Mark 15:40 we learn that their mother was Salome. Also, many feel from the information given in John 19:25 that "his mother's sister" refers to Salome, making the Lord Jesus first cousins of James and John. There are those who dispute this latter point.

Luke 5:10 tells us that James and John were "partners with Simon" in the fishing business.

3. John was present when Simon Peter's mother-in-law was healed (Mark 1:29).

4. Listed with the apostles (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14).

Note two things:

- (1) John continues to have a place after James. (In the book of Acts it is Peter and John.)
 - (2) Mark adds the information that the Lord "surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder". Thayer (p. 103) says that this was because of their "fiery and destructive zeal that may be likened to a thunder-storm", and he refers to Luke 9:54.
5. Present when Jairus's daughter was healed (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51).
 6. Observed the transfiguration of Christ with Peter and James (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28).
 7. Was rebuked by the Lord because he sought the man who was casting out demons (Mark 9:32; Luke 9:49).
 8. Was rebuked by the Lord again when he wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village (Luke 9:54).
 9. Was rebuked a third time when he with James requested seats at the right and left hands of the Lord when He established His kingdom (Mark 10:35, 41). Matthew says that their mother requested it (Matt. 20:20).
 10. Asked questions which led to the Olivet Discourse (Mark 13:3).
 11. Was sent with Peter to prepare for the Passover (Luke 22:8).
 12. Speaks of himself in a unique way in connection with the Lord's disclosure that Judas was to betray him (John 13:23). This took place in the Upper Room.
 13. Accompanied the Lord with Peter and James into the inner part of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37; Mark 14:33).
 14. Was instructed by the Lord to care for Mary (John 19:26).
 15. Was with Peter when Mary Magdalene told them that the Lord's body was not in the tomb, after which he and Peter ran to the tomb to see for themselves. John's testimony concerning himself is that "he saw, and believed (John 20:2, 8).

16. Recognized the Lord standing on the shore (John 21:7).

Note: John refers to himself also in John 19:35; 21:20, 24. See how the first and last of these references express his conviction concerning the truth of all he writes. It is also implied that he saw all that he writes about.

The events above are listed according to their chronological order as checked by Robertson's A Harmony of the Gospels.

There were, of course, many other times when John had dealings with the Lord, but the above are mentioned as having special reference to him.

Message:

- I. There were ^{two} ~~three~~ times when the Lord had to rebuke James and John together; ~~one, John only.~~

In Mark 3:17 we read,

"And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder."

The following three experiences proved how well the Lord knew them. In all three they display ignorance.

- A. He rebuked their desire to DOMINATE (Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49).

John only
They wanted to control the work of God. They wanted it all to be under their direction. They were ignorant of the grandeur of God's work--that the Lord was working through others too.

- B. He rebuked their desire to VINDICATE (Luke 9:54).

It was humiliating to them to be so treated by Samaritans. After all, were they not manifesting the grace of God in going to these outcasts. Surely God did not want His message and His servants to be treated in this way!

Note the Lord's words in Luke 9:55, 56.

- C. He rebuked their desire to NEGOTIATE (Mark 10:35, 41; cf. Matt. 20:20).

Isn't it a pity when those of us who are parents give our children a false conception of what it means to serve the Lord?

James and John were talking like unregenerate Gentiles, not like apostles of Jesus Christ.

In the Lord's work now, and in the glory to come, the principle is: It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

II. There were also three times when the Lord gave the former partners in the fishing business unique privileges JOHN DOES NOT MENTION which were not extended to the other apostles. ANY OF THE THREE → HOPE FOR PRESENT

A. He permitted them to see a demonstration of His power (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51): The raising of Jairus' daughter. MAR 5:27-43 (MARK V 35-43)

TWO OTHER RESURRECTIONS:

(1) LUKE 7:11-18
SON OF WIDOW OF NAIN

(2) JOHN 11:1-46
LAZARUS

BROWN (JFA)

POINTS OUT THE DIFFERENT LENGTHS

OF TIME THEY WERE DEAD.

There are so many things of interest here: His unhurried manner, death, the helplessness of religion, the scoffing of the people.

REQUEST FROM EVAN AND ARISE (11:11).
But when He said, Arise, she arose!

GLORY TO COME

B. He took them to see a manifestation of His Person (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28).

They saw what they could not possible have known even existed.

And they wanted to stay there! (Note the added evidence that the Old Testament saints were alive.)

C. He commanded them concerning a participation in His passion (Matt. 26:37; Mark 14:33).

Here they failed. They failed because they did not pray. They did not pray because they did not understand the weakness of the flesh.

In all of these experiences the Lord was training John (and the others) for that which was to come.

III. There were, finally, three wonderful ways in which the Lord used John--as is evident in his writings.

A. In the Gospel of John the Lord is using John as an evangelist to those who have never received Christ. Cf. John 20:30, 31.

- E. In the Epistles the Lord uses John as a Father to the family of God.

Nine times in the epistle he calls the Lord's people "little children" (2:1, 12, 13, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).

- C. In the book of the Revelation he writes as a "brother, and companion in tribulation" (1:9).

What is the hope of believers? What will the outcome of our present trials and testings be?

There is only one hope. See Rev. 22:20b, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."