

9/13/18

The Apostle John

Shoddy investigation in police work can mean the difference between seeing the obvious from seeing the not so obvious.

Take two sets of footprints on the ground of a crime scene; at first they look like they belong to the same person, but a closer look reveals that the prints are altogether different.

* So with John, having studied James, it is easy to assume John is just like James, but a closer look will reveal he has a unique print of his own in the Scriptures!

We have looked at three of the first group of four in the inner circle, Peter and Andrew and James, using Matthew's order. Matt. 10:2-4

We want to look at the fourth apostle John by looking at three aspects of his life.

- I. The man John.
- II. The call of John.
- III. The apostle John.

I. The man John.

- A. The name of John.

1. The name John "Ioannes" means whom Yahweh loves or Yahweh has been gracious.
 2. John is one of many named John in the Bible, but clearly distinct from the others. Matt. 10:2; Mk. 3:17; Lk. 6:14; Acts 1:13
 - * John is the most common name in the U.S, in fact we name, unidentified cadavers, "John doe's".
- a. There is John the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. Matt. 3:1, 4, 13
 - 1) He was the forerunner of Christ.
 - 2) He was the voice crying in the wilderness, the prophet of God.
 - 3) He is known as John the Baptist.
 - b. There is John the son of Mary, the sister of Barnabas, surnamed Mark, known as John-Mark.
 - 1) He witnessed the church gather in his house in Jerusalem. Acts 12:12
 - 2) He accompanied Barnabas and Saul in the first missionary journey, but turned back, when they got to Perga in Pamphylia. Acts 13:13
 - 3) He later became the subject of a strong contention between Paul and Barnabas. Acts 15:37-41
 - 4) He is the author of the gospel of Mark.
 - c. There was John, a kinsman of Annas the High Priest. Acts 4:6
 - 1) He was one of many who confronted the Peter and John, after being

- arrested for the healing of the lame man at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful.
- 2) He along with the others wanted to know “by what power or name they had done the miraculous work”.
 - 3) John was silent, Peter the spokesman.
- d. There is John the apostle, the son of Zebedee we are studying. Mk. 1:19
- 1) He is the fourth and last of the first group of apostles.
 - 2) He is one of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus after an entire night in prayer. Lk. 6:12-13
 - 3) He is one of the three in the inner circle of Jesus privileged to be present at the raising of Jairus daughter, the transfiguration and the agony in the Garden. Matt. 5:37; Lk. 9:27-31; Mk. 14:32-33
 - 4) He is listed last in Matthew, third in Mark and Acts and last in Luke.

B. The home of John.

1. John was one of the two sons of Zebedee, the other being James. Matt. 4:21; Mk. 1:19; Lk. 5:10
2. John is often called the “brother of James”, re-enforcing he was the older, most likely indicating that he was the older of the two. Matt. 10:2; 17:1; Mk. 3:17; 5:37; Lk. 6:14

3. John however seems to have had the prominent place in the church at Jerusalem, in Acts James is called the brother of John. * John is called a “pillar of the church” by Paul. Gal. 2:9
4. John’s mother is believed to be Salome, the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus, noted in our study of James making them cousins to Jesus, as John the Baptist. Matt. 15:40; Jn. 19:25
5. John was a fisherman along with his brother James in the family business of their father Zebedee in Bethsaida of Galilee. Matt. 4:21; Jn. 1:44
 - a. The family business was prosperous with servants and boats, therefore John came from a well to do economic level. Mk. 1:20
 - b. John’s mother, Salome, the wife of Zebedee, along with other women ministered of their substance to Jesus and His disciples. Matt. 27:55, 56; Mk. 15:20-41
 - c. John’s family was partners with Peter and Andrew, the business was not only prosperous but had expanded from it’s inception perhaps. Lk. 5:10
6. John’s family was known to the High Priest and for that reason he was able to enter the courtyard and get Peter in, when Jesus was taken to Anas. Jn. 18:15

- a. We so often have a picture of the apostles as being very poor for the most part, but by our study we are seeing that it was not the case per say.
- b. Peter, Andrew, James and John by the standards of the day were in a prosperous family business for themselves.
- c. Matthew was a tax-collector, therefore was of considerable wealth by the custom of extracting more than was due.
- d. Up to this point we see, that five of the twelve were not poor as we perhaps have often thought they were.
 - 1) If we exclude Judas Ischariot, even though he stole from the treasury box, it means that at 45.5 % of them, up to this point had a fairly good economic level, prior to being called to following Jesus.
 - 2) This does not mean that the apostles were wealthy and wore designer jeans, like the “Positive confession or faith movement” teachers have taught, to corruptly teach their health and wealth doctrine for Christians, as their “divine right”.
 - * Teachers like Fred Price, Kenneth Copland and Kenneth Haiggan are some of the more prominent ones!

- e. We now can better understand when Peter says, “Lord, we have left all”. Matt. 19:27; Mk. 10:28; Lk. 18:28
 - * “Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and inherit eternal life. Matt. 19:28-29”

C. The brother of John.

1. John’s brother was James, the son of Zebedee.
2. John and James, again like Peter and Andrew, being brothers were different and yet similarities, at the same time.
3. Both had the same parents, upbringing and probably the same friends.
4. Both had the same trade, fishermen.
5. Both were disciples of our Lord.
6. Both were chosen to be apostles.
7. Both were different, in order to be unique in the purposes and plan of God.

Illustration

There could be no greater example of two brothers being raised in the same home and at the same time so different, as Cain and Able!

Application

1. John type individuals have a stability about them.
2. John type individuals can appreciate their older or younger brother.
3. John type individuals are individuals, yet they see themselves as one of many.
4. John type individuals are in the background, not the focus, yet used greatly.

This was the man John!

II. The call of John.

A. The call of John came at the Sea of Galilee.

Matt. 4:18-22

1. Jesus had just called two brothers. vs. 18-19
 - a. He was walking by the Sea of Galilee, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, as they were casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. vs. 18
 - b. He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." vs. 19
2. They immediately left their nets and followed Him. vs. 20
3. 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. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him, declaring two things. vs. 21-22

- a. They immediately left the boat and their father.
- b. They followed Him, Jesus.
 - * They left the pursuit of their lives and followed pursuit of Jesus and His will.

B. The call of John came at the Sea of Galilee is supplemented by the other gospels.

1. Mark only adds the fact that they had hired servants. Mk. 1:20
2. Luke tells us that when John and James saw the great catch of fish their boat sinking due to the amount of fish, Peter confessing his sinfulness before the Lord and the Lord telling Peter, "Do not be afraid, from now on you will catch men", they brought their boats into land and they forsook all and followed Him. Lk. 5:6-11
3. John Himself supplements the call of Jesus on his life in his own gospel, as he records himself as the mysteriously and nameless disciple, along with Andrew, two disciples of John the Baptist, who were pointed to "the Lamb of God". Jn. 1:35-40
4. John by his own admission of being pointed to Jesus earlier says the Galilee call was his

second, like it had been for Andrew and Peter.

- a. Jesus loves to work in and with families as His instruments to reach the world.
- b. Jesus also works through people movements as He pours out His Spirit in particular places and times sovereignly to do a work of grace.
 - 1) This is kind of what happened when I and many of my friends were saved in the early seventies!
 - 2) Many of us are in ministry today, after twenty-six years or so.
- c. The call of John is like that of Andrew, Peter and James, a call to internship or apprenticeship.

Illustration

Alexander the Great was asked how he had conquered the world, replied, "By not delaying". #4782

Application

1. The call of John was in the course of his daily profession as so often it will be with us.
 - a. Jesus met them where they were at, "I will make you fishers of men". Matt. 4:19
 - b. Jesus accompanies the necessary gifts, according to the measure of grace and faith He gives that we not be lifted in pride. Rom. 12:3
2. The call of God on man is never the problem; it is the lack of faithful contentment of the man called.

- a. At times men called get out of their call trying to do things God has not called them to.
 - b. At other times they also begin to operate outside of their gifts.
 - c. They become organizers and fund raiser, rather than shepherds of the flock.
 - d. They become celebrities, rather than servants.
 - * They make the same mistake bringing hurt to themselves as Uzziah when he offered up incense and God struck him with leprosy. 2Chron. 26:16-23
3. The call of God, though it sees potential, is not due to the potential in man, but God's grace and sovereignty.
 - a. God is indebted to no man.
 - b. God is dependent on no man.
 - c. God is able to us all men and women.
 - * Paul says, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen". Rom. 11:33-36

This was the call of John!

III. The apostle John.

- A.** John like James was a strong aggressive and zealous individual but the lesser of the two.
- 1.** Jesus remember had given to John and James the name Boanerges, “Sons of Thunder”. Mk. 3:17
 - a.** Mark alone gives us this particular characteristic of the Zebedee boys and I don’t think Jesus gave the name “Sons of Thunder” because they were mild tempered or a pacifist.
 - b.** The Lord gave them that name due to their young hot tempered zeal, being very assertive, John was a go getter.
 - c.** As we stated in our study of James, I think when people saw the brothers coming they got out of the way.
 - d.** You would be a foolish Galilean to try and cheat John and James in business!
 - 2.** Jesus one day as we have pointed out was rejected by the Samaritan because He was headed towards Jerusalem. Lk. 9:51-56
 - a.** “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.” vs. 51-53

- b.** “And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” vs. 54
 - c.** But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. And they went to another village.” vs. 55-56
 - 1)** John and his brother James thought they were of Elijah’s spirit to Bar-Be-Que these Samaritans, who dared to insult and dishonor their Lord.
 - 2)** John and his brother were naturally yielding to their carnal flesh and confusing it for spiritual zeal.
 - 3)** John and his brother were impatient in their spirits and intolerant in their thinking!
- B.** John was a very ambitious individual.
- 1.** One day John and his brother James petitioned to reign with Jesus. Mk. 10:35-45
 - a.** John being one of the inner circle, like James had been given special privilege and considered themselves as favorites of Jesus, asking “We want You to do whatever we ask. vs. 35

- b.** John as James petitioned to sit on the right and left hand, in His glory. vs. 37
- 1)** John was one of the three who saw Jairus' daughter raised. Mk. 5:37; Lk. 8:51
 - 2)** John had also been one of the three to see Jesus transfigured in His glory speaking with both Moses and Elijah. Matt. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-8; Lk. 9:28-36
 - 3)** John later would be one of the four on the Mount of Olives to ask the Lord when His coming would be, the sign of His coming, the end of the age. James therefore concluded whatever he asked Jesus, He would not deny him, but he was wrong. Mk. 13:3-4
 - a)** The strange combination of aggressive zeal, ambitious with a sectarian attitude of a couple of ruffians, yet kind of Mamas boys as Matthew tells us their mother interceded for this very request to Jesus. Matt. 20:20-28
 - b)** I wonder if they did not get some of these traits from their mother, even a Jacob learned his conniving from Rachel, his mother.
- c.** Jesus knowing their motive for personal benefit asked if they knew what they were asking and about their ability to drink of the cup He was going to drink

- and be baptized with His baptism, to which you know, they responded without hesitation, "We are able". vs. 38-39a-b
- * They were self-centered individuals who were ambitious to be great by thinking that they were greater than the other ten!
- d.** Jesus then prophesied about how John and his brother would partake of the sufferings of Christ, drinking the cup and the baptism. vs. 39c-d
- * Remember John and James thought Jesus was going to Jerusalem to destroy Rome, to set up His kingdom!
- e.** And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased or indignantly angry with John and James. vs. 41
- 1)** The reason being, that the ten had the same thing in mind but the two beat the ten to it.
 - 2)** The ten could not believe the presumptuous, self-centered, arrogant ambition of the two.
- f.** John was a very ambitious person wanting to be great and had the strong aggressive personality to go for things, not considering the damage they cause.
- C.** John being a very strong, aggressive, zealous and ambitious individual became a great instrument of God.

1. John one day told Jesus, “Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in Your name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us”. Mk. 9:38; Lk. 9:49
 - a. Jesus told John, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side”. Mk. 9:39-40
* The only time John is mentioned by name
 - b. John leaned towards intolerance and exclusiveness and sectarian thinking!
 - c. John learned his lessons well and yielded to His Lords transformation and known as “the apostle of love”.
2. John in his selfish ambition saw the “secret of greatness”, not in serving, but in being served by others, till after Pentecost! Mk. 10:43
 - a. John and Peter were the instruments to heal the lame man at the gate called Beautiful. Acts 3:1
 - b. John and Peter went down to Samaria to confirm the report that they had received the word of God and as they laid hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14-17
* He is really behind the scenes, not the center of attention!

3. John in his exclusiveness, saw that there was room for the Gentiles to be included in the church, apart from the law as he witnessed the grace of God over the Gentiles at the first church council, giving Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, along with Peter and James, the Lord’s brother, all being pillars of the church. Acts 15; Gal. 2:9
4. John in his openness to turn all those sinful qualities over to the Lord and was transformed into more like Jesus.
 - a. John is known as “the disciple that Jesus loved”. Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20
 - b. John is identified by his own pen at the Last Supper as the one “leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved”, eager to learn. Jn. 13:23
 - c. John was the only apostle at the cross and Jesus committed His mother Mary to John, being sympathetic, “When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” and from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. Jn. 19:26-27
 - d. John and Peter were told by the woman at the tomb that the body of Jesus had been taken away from the tomb, both

running, John outran Peter, being younger. Jn. 20:1-8

- 1) John stooped down to look and saw the linen but he did not go in. vs. 5
 - 2) Peter ran in full speed and saw the cloths lying there, all folded together. vs. 6-7
 - 3) Then John, “the other disciple”, went in and believed. vs. 8
 - e. John., “The disciple whom Jesus loved”, was the one at the Sea of Galilee who recognized the Lord first, telling Peter, “It is the Lord”. Jn. 21:7
 - f. John was made a rumor by the disciples, that he would not die till the Lord returned, namely Peter but it was not what the Lord said. Jn. 21:20-22
5. John was used by the Lord to be the author of five books.
- a. The gospel of John.
 - b. The first, second and third epistles of John.
 - c. The book of Revelation.
 - d. In these books he is characterised by the certain words.
 - 1) Love. eighty-three times in it’s various forms.
 - 2) Life, fifty-six times.
 - 3) Light, thirty-one times.
 - 4) Witness, testify and record, seventy-nine times.

- e. John is the true and faithful witness of Jesus to all who read his books!
6. John according to tradition was the only apostle who died of old age around 98 A. D.
- a. Tradition tells us that John never left Jerusalem till Mary died.
 - b. John according to Tertullian went to Rome, “was plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and then exiled on an island”, Patmos. (Presc.Her. 36)
 - c. John in his old age was the Pastor of Ephesus, after years of leadership in Jerusalem, where he is said to of written the five books. (Hist. III.18,1; 20.9; 23.4)
 - d. Irenaeus tell that John opposed the heretic Cerinthus and in his old age, when he could not speak with his former vigor, was carried in to the meeting and simply said repeatedly, “Little children, love one another”. (Her. III.3, 4, Commentary on Galatians 6:10)

Illustration

It has been said, “The only apostle that did not become a servant of Jesus became a traitor of Jesus, Judas Ischariot!”

* True servants, serve their Master the Lord Jesus, traitors serve themselves!

Application

1. God takes men like John who are strong aggressive and zealous individual and enables them to trust in their own righteousness but to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, and be more like Christ. Phil. 3:8-11

- a. Jesus is not so interested in what you are, as much as in what you can become by yielding to Him. Rom. 12:1-2
- b. The principle was stated by John, “He must increase and I must decrease.” Jn. 3:30

2. God takes men like John who are ambitious and makes them ambitious for the things of God. Matt. 6:33

- a. John was a good listener, better than the others.
- b. John stayed closer to Jesus than the any other.
- c. John was a good observer, better than the others.
- d. John learned from the rebukes of Jesus, not being sectarian, intolerant or a seeker of greatness.
- e. John came to be know as the apostle of love.
- f. John lived longer than the others and was used tremendously.
 - * Take all these under the control of the Holy Spirit, a passion for God, His truth, that man will be an uncompromising effective, and a powerful witness of Jesus, revealing the love of God!

This was John the apostle!

Conclusion

These are the lessons from the fourth apostle John by focusing on three aspects of his life.

- I. The man John!
- II. The call of John!
- III. The apostle John!