

“JESUS APPOINTED TWELVE” (2)
Matthew 10:2-4

Introduction:

1. **Children love to sing “The Apostles’ Song:”**

“Jesus called them one by one: Peter, Andrew, James and John. Next came Philip, Thomas too, Matthew and Bartholomew; James, the one the called the Less; Simon, also Thaddeus. Twelve apostles Judas made; Jesus was by him betrayed.”
2. **With the exception of our Lord, the apostles were the most influential men who have ever lived.**
3. **Because of the books they wrote, we know more about Matthew, John, Peter and Paul than the other apostles.**
4. **Since less is found in the Bible about these others, we must look to history to learn more about them.**
5. **John is the best known of Jesus’ apostles after Peter and Paul.**
 - a. **He is the inspired author of five New Testament books.**
 - b. **He was the son of Zebedee and Salome and the younger brother of James.**
 - c. **He was a fisherman and a partner in the family business along with Peter and Andrew.**
 - d. **He was among the first four Jesus called to be apostles.**
6. **We shall look at some other, but lesser known facts about John.**

Discussion:

- I. **THE NAMES JOHN BORE TELL US A LOT ABOUT HIM.**
 - A. **The Hebrew form of John is Jonah which means “dove.”**

1. The Greek name “John” signifies “The Lord is gracious.”
 2. It is one of the most popular names for boys in many languages:
 - a. In Spanish, it is “Juan.”
 - b. In German, it is “Johann” or “Hans.”
 - c. In Scottish, it is “Ian.”
 - d. In French, it is “Jean.”
 - e. In Italian, it is “Giovanni.”
- B. Jesus called James and John “Boanerges,” which means “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17).**
1. The name indicates one who has a quick temper.
 2. This was shown when James and John wanted to burn down a Samaritan village for refusing hospitality to Jesus and the apostles (Luke 9:51-56).
- C. John was also called “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”**
1. In John’s Gospel and his three epistles, John never refers to himself by his personal name.
 2. John the baptist is simply called John as if there were no other by that name (John 1:6,15,19, 29, 32, 35, 40).
 3. The list of the apostles is not found in John’s Gospel.
 4. John was probably one of the two disciples who was pointed to Jesus by John the baptist (John 1:35-39).
 5. He refers to himself as “the apostle whom Jesus loved” five times (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20).
 6. It was John who leaned on the Lord’s breast - the position of honor at a feast - at the Last Supper (John 13:23-25).
 7. Jesus committed the care of His mother, Mary, to John at the crucifixion (John 19:25-27).
 8. Jesus loved all His apostles, but John was closest.

- D. John, “the Son of Thunder” became “the Apostle of Love.”**
- 1. John was transformed by his association with Jesus during the three years of Jesus’ ministry.**
 - 2. For seventy years, he preached Christ and meditated on that amazing love.**
 - 3. It was John who was inspired to write:**
 - a. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16).**
 - b. “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13).**
 - c. “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8).**
 - d. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).**
 - e. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1 John 5:3).**
 - 4. When John was old and had to be carried to church, if asked to speak, he would repeat over and over, “Little children, love one another.”**

II. JOHN’S LATER YEARS WERE SPENT IN EPHEBUS.

- A. Apparently, John remained in Judea and Galilee until Mary, mother of Jesus, died.**
- 1. History abundantly testifies to the fact that he spent his last years at Ephesus in Asia.**
 - 2. During the persecution under Domitian (81-96), John was arrested and imprisoned on Patmos.**
 - 3. He must have been about 90 years old at the time.**
- B. John “was in the Spirit (under the influence of the Holy Spirit, i.e. inspired) on the Lord’s Day” (Revelation 1:10).**

1. The Lord Whom he had loved and served for 70 years appeared to him in a glorified state.
2. He instructed John to write to the seven churches of Asia.
3. The result was the book of Revelation, designed to encourage Christians in times of persecution.

III. MORE HISTORICAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ABOUT JOHN THAN MOST OF THE OTHER APOSTLES.

- A. John is thought to be the only apostle who died a natural death.
- B. He was known to have lived to be about 100 years of age and was the last apostle to die.
 1. Polycarp, an elder of Smyrna, was a student of John.
 2. Papias was a student of Polycarp and learned much about John from him.
 3. Irenaeus, who wrote extensively, was also a disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John.
- C. In “Against Heresies: Book 3,” Irenaeus tells of John’s going into a public bathhouse in Ephesus and finding Cerinthus, a well known false teacher there, rushed out exclaiming, “Let us fly, lest even the bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within” (Guy N. Woods: GA Commentary on Peter, John, Jude, page 206).

Conclusion:

1. Though he was the apostle of love, John stood firmly against false teachers, marked them, and warned others of them (2 John 9-11).
2. John records Jesus’ teaching on the new birth (John 3:3-5).
3. Have you been born again of water and the Spirit (Mk.16:15,16)?

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