

“There were twelve disciples
Jesus called to help him Simon Peter, Andrew,
James, his brother John, Philip, Thomas, Matthew,
James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon, Judas
and Bartholomew.
He has called us too. He has called us too.
We are His disciples. We His work must do.”

John

We come today to the third disciple/apostle that served in the inner circle of the twelve, John (the son of Zebedee and Salome, a “Son of Thunder (Mark 3:17).” Like his older brother, James, a former fisherman, he was called of Jesus to “fish for men.” He and his brother were the only ones to receive nicknames from Jesus.



What is unique about John from the historical record?

1. He may not have been a follower of John the Baptizer, but he heard of Jesus in that context and was brought by James to Him (Luke 5:1-11).
2. The closeness of John to Jesus, even within the circle, is evident in that he is said to be the disciple “whom Jesus loved (John 13:23).”
 - a. At the Lord’s Supper, John sat in a place of honor next to Jesus. “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom, one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.... Peter nodded to him.... Then leaning back on Jesus’ chest, He said, ‘Lord, who is it.’”
 - b. He was the only recorded disciple at our Lord’s crucifixion (John 19:25-27). “When He saw...the disciple who Jesus loved standing by, He said... (v. 26).”
 - c. He entrusted His mother’s care to John (“Woman Behold your son. Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother (vv. 26-27).” Here is, perhaps, another evidence that the Zebedee’s had a degree of financial stability.

- d. We have seen John's devotion to Jesus with his brother calling destruction upon the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-54), illustrative of their nickname. We have seen their ignorance of Jesus ministry thinking the kingdom was coming without a cross (Matt. 20:20-24).
 - e. There is one instance where John acted alone in complaining about a person, not among the disciples, who cast out demons in "Your name." He must have thought Jesus' reputation was being tarnished. John was remiss in thinking the power of Jesus had only been given to them. "John said to Him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is for us (Mark 9:38-40).'"
3. After our Lord's ascension, John labored initially in Jerusalem with Peter.
 - a. In Acts 3-4, the two were in the Temple praying and a lame man was healed occasioning an explanation by Peter and the imprisonment of both.
 - b. In Acts 8:14-17, the two are sent by the Jerusalem Church to connect with the Samaritan in the Gospel receiving the Spirit through the laying on of hands.
 - c. In Acts 15, John appears a participant ("the apostles") in the Jerusalem Council that affirmed Paul's gospel preaching to the Gentiles.
 4. John's subsequent ministry is unknown though at the end of his years he appears in Asia Minor, mostly likely in Ephesus in the capacity of an overseer of the area churches ("John, to the seven churches which are in Asia (Rev. 1:4)."

In that context, John encountered the wrath of the state and became a political exile on the Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. "I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 1:9)." Because of his care for the churches from which he was deprived, John wrote to instruct, exhort, and encourage them (the letters and Revelation).

5. It appears that John lived to become aged, he only apostle not to endure martyrdom. "So, Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" Jesus said to him, 'I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me!' (John 21:21-22)."

6. John was the most voluminous writer of the original disciples giving us five writings (the gospel, I-III John, and Revelation).

Thoughts:

1. Despite the youthful expressions of misdirected passion, John aged well. He began to understand the need for humility in those who desired to be great. John's is the only gospel that records Jesus washing the disciples' feet (John 13:4-16). Jesus' simple act of servanthood must have impacted John greatly.
2. John was passionately devoted to the proclamation of truth. No one in Scripture, except the Lord Jesus, had more to say about the concept of truth. His joy was proclaiming the truth to others and then watching them walk in it (III John 4). John became a man devotion to the flock of God in love and truth.

John wrote:

The Gospel Account that people might come to the truth and walk in it by recounting the claims, discourses, and miracles of the lord.

I John that the people of God be kept from false teaching that undermine Christian certainty due to our imperfections.

II John that a particular church be warned of the denial of the incarnation of Jesus,

III John that an autocrat, dictator-type be expunged from the church.

Revelation that a crown will come to us though suffering and endurance comes first encouraging the church to stand firm. "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book (Rev. 22:7)."

3. Zeal for the truth must always be balanced by a love for people. Without it, zeal can turn to harshness and judgmentalism.
4. Confidence and boldness, untempered by compassion and grace, can quickly turn to pride and smugness. Confidence is a wonderful virtue, but without humility, it can become self-confidence, which can lead to boasting and an attitude of exclusiveness.

Philip

What is unique about the Apostle Philip from the historical record?

1. He was from the village of Bethsaida as was Peter and Andrew. He was not in the inner circle of Jesus' disciples. Like Andrew, he was a disciple of John the Baptizer (John 1:43). His trade appears not that of a fisherman (John 21:1-2).
2. His first recorded action is after his encounter with Jesus. Philip found his friend Nathaniel and exclaimed to him that "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph (John 1:45)."
3. He appears in the context of the feeding of the 5,000 emphasizing the cost of feeding such a crowd (John 6:7). Also, in the context of the coming of Greek proselytes in our Lord's final week seeking Him (John 12:20-36). In both instances Andrew is with him (the fact of a boy's lunch and Philip's quest of Andrew to fulfil the proselytes' request).
4. At the Last Supper, he posed a question to Jesus. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him and have seen Him.' Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father' (John 14: 6-9).'" Here is another evidence that the disciples did not fully understand Jesus' words.
5. The last time Philip is mentioned is the gathering of the disciples after our Lord's ascension (Acts 1:13).
6. Tradition states that Philip went to Phrygia (in modern-day Turkey) as a missionary and was martyred there at Hierapolis.



Thoughts:

1. Philip appears meagerly in the Bible. Not everyone is a Peter or Paul.
2. There are times when we are confused in finding Jesus' words hard to understand, especially in stressful occasions.
3. All we can say is that Phillip was a team-guy, a faithful follower!!