

# John

## The Beloved

Making The Bible Come Alive

### Who was this person?

- John and James were the sons of Zebedee, and these men were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. John and James were referred to once in Scripture as “The Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:13-19). They were known to be tough guys who weren’t afraid of confrontation. Read Luke 9:51-56 to understand more about their strong character.
- John was nicknamed “Beloved” or “the Apostle of Love”
- Along with Peter and James, John was one of Jesus’ closest friends.
- When Jesus sent the disciples out 2-by-2, he paired John up with Peter. Peter was the oldest, and John was known to be the youngest of the twelve disciples, likely in his early teenage years during the time of Jesus’ ministry (i.e. 13-16 years of age). History would tell us that John was born in AD 6, six years after Jesus was born.
- He was sometimes referred to as “John the Evangelist”.
- John was exiled (imprisoned/sent away) to the island of Patmos, where God gave him a revelation (vision) to share with believers of what is to happen in the future (Revelation 1:1-3).
- John wrote five books of the New Testament: The book of John, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, and the book of Revelation.



### What is this person known for?

- He may have been an early disciple of John the Baptist. John is believed to be one of two disciples (the other being Andrew) who upon hearing John the Baptist point out Jesus as the "Lamb of God", followed Jesus and spent the day with Him (John 1:35-39).
- John was one of Jesus’ twelve disciples. John wrote the gospel that bears his name almost 40 years after Jesus died. This book tells us so many of the miracles, ministry moments and powerful teachings of Jesus.
- John was the one who Jesus asked to care for Mary, His mother, when He was on the cross.
- Being one of Jesus’ closest friends, John seemed to have a “front row” seat to many of Jesus’ miracles and key moments in His life: The Wedding in Cana (John 2).



When Jairus's daughter was brought back to life (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:35-43)

Jesus is transfigured on the mountain (Matthew 17, Mark 9, Luke 9).

Checking the empty tomb after the resurrection (John 20:1-10).

The miraculous catch of fish (John 21:1-14).

When Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46).

- John (and Peter) were sent to prepare the final Passover meal (Luke 22:7-16). John sat close to Jesus at the Passover meal (the Last Supper) (John 13:23-25). John was at the foot of the cross with Mary, Jesus' mother (John 19:25-27). John was there on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:12-14). Healing of the crippled beggar (Acts 3:1-10). John thrown into prison with Peter, yet the Church grew because of their teaching (Acts 4:1-4). Prayed with new believers in Samaria to receive the Holy Spirit (Act 8:14-17).
- He was one of the only disciples who wasn't killed and lived to be an old man, close to 100 years of age. It was in his second half of life, while on the Island of Patmos, that John wrote the book of Revelation.

## WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **To remind us of the Power of love.** All you need is love! The message that rings loud and clear in the books written by John is the theme of love. He is a clear communicator that we are to love God and to love others, leading them to Christ.
- **To remind us how Jesus lived on earth.** To show us how Jesus interacted with His friends who were also His followers. He lived His life as an example for them to follow, and then when He left the earth to re-turn to Heaven, they needed to carry out His work. John was also left with the task of caring for Jesus' mother, as His dear and close friend.
- **To remind us the Jesus is the Son of God.** Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. As we learn about Jesus and put our trust in Him, we can see the love that God wants to show humanity.
- **To share with us what it means to have eternal life.** Since Jesus is God, He lives forever. Before the world was even created, Jesus existed and He will reign eternally with His

Father God. John records Jesus' words when Jesus tells us that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and that no one can come to God the Father except through Him. In Jesus, we have been invited to have a personal and eternal relationship. That relationship begins when we confess our sins, asking Jesus to forgive us, and we accept Him as our Lord and Saviour, and choose to live for Him. (John 3:15-16, 36; 4:14,36; 5:24, 39-54; 10:10, 27-30; 11:25-12:49)

• **To remind us to live a life of faith.** The book of John contains unique miracles — each miracle story tells of the power Christ has over everything! When we read about the miraculous work of Jesus we are encouraged to believe in Him. Believing isn't a 'one and done' kind of thing. We must have faith to believe every day. Our faith must be living and active ... continuous. Each day we need to ask God to show Himself to us. Our faith grows when we see "God at work" in our lives and in the lives of our friends and family. Even as John testified of Jesus, we must do the same, telling others of the good things of God. (John 1:12,50, 2:11,23; 3:15-18;4:39-42,48-53; 5:24,47; 8:24,31; 10:25-42; 11:25-27; 12:37-46; 20:25-30)

• **To teach us about the Holy Spirit.** Jesus told His disciples that when He returned to heaven that He would send them a Comforter, a Helper. The Holy Spirit is Who initially draws us to coming to know and believe in Jesus. Then the Holy Spirit continues to work in the lives of believers as our Guide, Helper, Counsellor and Comforter. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to do great things for God (John 1:32-34; 3:5; 6:63; 7:39; 14:26: 15:26).

• **To remind us that there is life after death!** Because of the resurrection of Christ, we no longer have to fear death. John's writings in the book of Revelation unfold a vision given to him by God to tell us many things about the end times, about churches, about how we should live, about what will happen at the end of time and all about Heaven and life everlasting. As believers in Jesus, we have the hope and assurance of being united with Christ in Heaven when we die (John 20:1-21:23). John, as Jesus' close companion, was the one entrusted to write out the vision God gave him about what is yet to come.

## LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

**Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.**

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?



- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.



## MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Have you ever doubted something? What was it that you were second-guessing?

Have you doubted that God exists? Look around. How do you know God is real? What is it about daily life that helps you to see and know that there is a God who created the world, and who loves you with a love unlike anyone else?

Thomas was a doubter. His friends called him “Doubting Thomas”. In John’s gospel, he speaks of this individual as the one who needed to be able to physically see that Jesus had been resurrected before he could choose to believe. When Thomas eventually saw Jesus’ wounds and was invited by Jesus to actually touch his nail-scarred hands and put his hand into his side where He had been pierced, He could finally believe for himself. In those moments, He knew for sure that Jesus was who He said He was ... the Son of God.

Have your friends ever told you something and you found it hard to believe at first? But, it wasn’t until they could actually prove it to you, that you could finally put your trust in them? That is how it was with Thomas. He saw Jesus come through a locked door, and didn’t realize it was Him.

Read John’s telling of this story of how Jesus appeared to the disciples, including to Thomas, as found in John 20:24-31. John tells us this story so that we, who have never seen Jesus standing before us, would also believe. John wrote His entire gospel for people who weren’t there with Jesus in the days of His ministry on this earth, so that we can hear of His miracles, understand His teachings, and know eternal life through Jesus Christ. Will you choose now to believe? And, if you do choose, who will you tell next about Jesus?