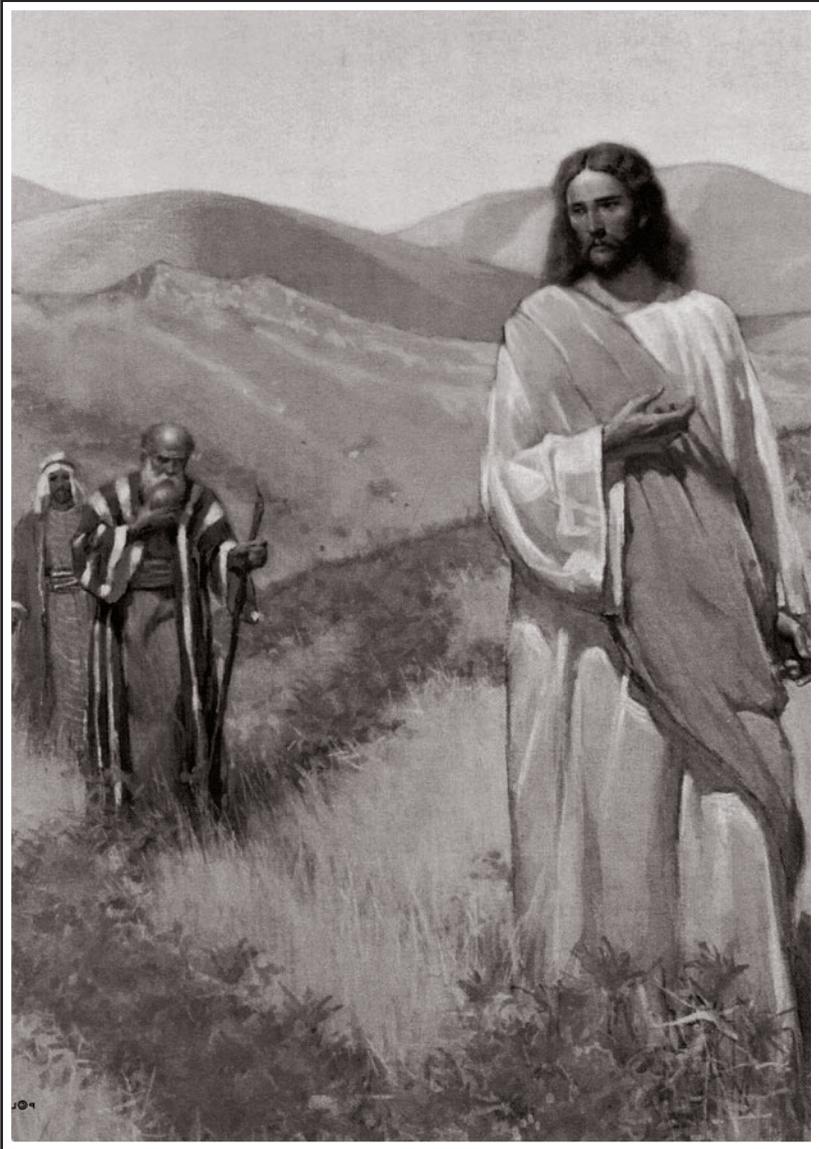
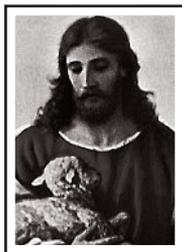


The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb



And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. John 1:36-39

Chapter Seven



The Apostle John

The Apostle John was the younger brother of the Apostle James. By tradition, John is said to be the youngest of the Apostles of Jesus. John was a very humble man, and whenever he speaks of himself in his Gospel, he refers to himself as “*that disciple whom Jesus loved.*” He was never so bold to say “*I did this...*” or “*I did that, and Jesus loved me best!*” So, whenever John spoke of himself, it was always by pointing to Jesus’ special love, and thus drawing attention away from himself. *John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7,20, Reprint 4115*

Much has already been mentioned about John in the previous chapter on his brother James. His mother, Salome, was the sister of Jesus’ mother. This would make John and James the cousins of Jesus. Also mentioned was the fact that John and James were sons of a successful fisherman named Zebedee. Tradition states that their family was “*well-to-do*” and had “*connections*” and perhaps influence with the social and religious rulers of their day.

After the baptism of Jesus and his 40 days alone in the wilderness, Jesus walked past John the Baptist as he was preaching repentance to a crowd of Jews. John the Baptist exclaimed, “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” John, the son of Zebedee, and Andrew, both disciples of John the Baptist, decided quickly to follow after Jesus. They quietly walked behind Jesus for quite a distance when Jesus turned to them saying, “*What do you seek?*” John and Andrew said, “*Teacher, show us where you live.*” *John 1:36-39* Jesus showed them, and they stayed with him that day, learning of him.

The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb

This faithful, teachable spirit of John was a special blessing to Jesus. Like the Apostle Peter and John's brother James, John became a close, loving friend of Jesus. Although John was this loving servant, he and his brother James were nicknamed the "*Sons of Thunder*"—probably because they sought to rebuke the Samaritans. *Recall Mark 3:17, Luke 9: 54,55 & Reprint 1041*

In addition to this incident about the Samaritans, Mark confirms John's strong spirit. *Mark 9:38-40* John spoke out boldly to the Lord against a person who had been casting out devils in Jesus' name. Jesus corrected him again by saying, "*Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part.*" In other words, we are to show love to those who claim to have the Lord's spirit whether they associate with us or not. *Reprint 3747* John learned this lesson quickly, because he loved his Lord very much and desired to please him.

This and many other incidents showed Jesus' special love and trust in his dear Apostle John. Along with Peter and James, John witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. As mentioned in previous chapters, these three Apostles alone witnessed these very important events.

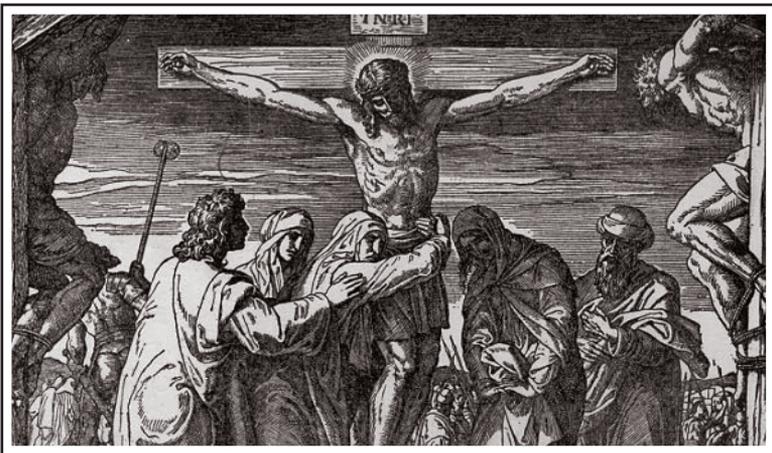
Another evidence of this special friendship was when Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover for Jesus and the twelve Apostles. Through this they witnessed yet another miracle of Jesus in *Luke 22:8-13*. Jesus told them to look for a man carrying a pitcher of water on his head, and this man would lead them to the room where they would eat the Passover together. This was unusual, because women were normally the ones to carry pitchers of water on their heads, not men. The miracle was that Jesus knew in advance that a *man*, at just the right time, would walk by carrying a pitcher of water on his head.

Even though John was called the dearest friend loved of Jesus, he experienced the same fear and confusion as the other Apostles in Jesus' most trying hour. John didn't stay to assist Jesus when the religious rulers arrested Jesus in the Garden of

The Apostle John

Gethsemane. *Matt. 26:56* All of the Apostles “*forsook him and fled.*” They probably felt confused and helpless, because, up to this time, Jesus was able to escape any harm. Jesus warned them of this hour, and yet, they were not prepared for the prophecies to be fulfilled pointing to his death. *John 16:32,33 & Matt 26:37-41* It was not long after abandoning Jesus that John regained his courage. The Scriptures show how John used his *connections* with the religious rulers to gain entrance to the palace. There he witnessed the trials of Jesus before the High Priest. Peter was only permitted into the outer courtyard where he denied the Lord three times. *John 18:13-15*

How John’s heart must have ached for his Lord. He must have wanted desperately to free his Master. It might have been that John viewed from a distance the proceedings of Jesus’ journey bearing the heavy cross. And then, while John stood helplessly at the foot of his Master’s cross, he heard Jesus say to his mother Mary, “*Woman, behold thy son!*” *John 19:25-27* Jesus was so thoroughly trusting of his faithful Apostle, that he asked John to care for his mother. Jesus may have observed how his cousin John showed a special care and concern for Mary all through his life. And Mary must have known of Jesus’ great love and trust in John. So this would have been a special comfort to her as John held her close and cried together with her before the painful cross.



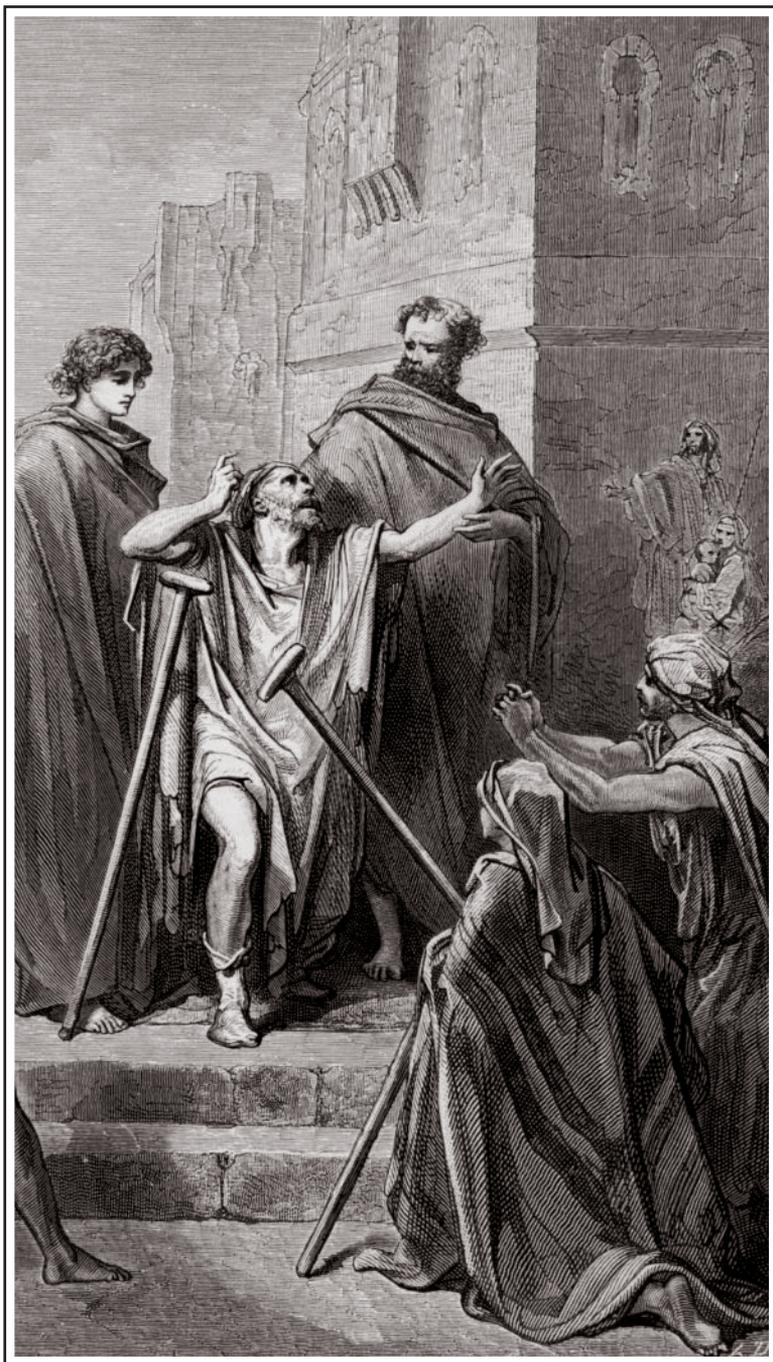
The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb

After Jesus had been placed in the tomb, Peter and John were told by Mary Magdalene that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. As they raced to see for themselves, John outran Peter to the tomb. They both saw the burial clothes lying in the tomb, but Jesus' body was gone. They then knew that Jesus had been resurrected. *John 20:1-8* But they and the other Apostles still didn't know why Jesus had to suffer and die.

Disappointed at the death of Jesus, and, after several weeks went by where our resurrected Lord did not appear to the Apostles, many of them went back to their various jobs. Then, one morning the Apostles John, Peter, James, Thomas, Nathanael and two others were coming back from a long night of fishing with no catch of fish. Nearing the shore, they heard a man say, "Try throwing your nets out on the other side of the boat." They did as he said and caught a great haul of fish. Because John's heart was very near Jesus at all times, he recognized the stranger on the shore as being Jesus. He said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" *John 21:2-7* This is a good example to the Christian, because if we are living close to the Lord, we will recognize when it is he calling to us and giving us instructions for our decisions in life.

After these many opportunities of witnessing the resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles were ready to receive the holy Spirit at Pentecost. John was with the other Apostles when the miracle of Pentecost occurred. *Acts 2:5-7* One of the first recorded uses of the gifts of the spirit is shown in Acts 3:1-10 where Peter and John healed a lame man. This miracle provided two important lessons for John and Peter. First, they learned that the gift of healing provided an opportunity to witness to others about their Lord and his coming restitution of all things. *Acts 3:11-26* Second, they learned that this would bring an opportunity to suffer with their Master for bearing witness to the truth. Because of healing the lame man, they were persecuted by the religious rulers and thrown into prison. But the lame man was so thrilled by the experience that he went to prison with them to show support for these servants of the Lord. They could have become discouraged by their imprisonment, but instead, they saw even this as an

The Apostle John



The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb

opportunity to preach the good tidings of the coming Kingdom! When all three were brought before the religious rulers, Peter and John spoke boldly for the truth. *Acts 4:1-21* We should all look at our trying experiences in this way—as an opportunity to share the goodness of God to others.

After being imprisoned for the sake of Christ, John lived and preached in Judea, continuing to care for Jesus' mother. John went on performing miracles to draw out a people in the name of Christ, even when the religious rulers told him not to do so. The Apostle Paul called John, James and Peter "*pillars*" of the Church and that these three would continue preaching to the Jews while he, Paul, would go the Gentiles. *Gal. 2:9*

Bible historians state that John moved to Ephesus, a city of Gentiles, just before the destruction of Jerusalem. There, John preached until he was banished to the Island of Patmos around A.D. 90. This was a time of great persecution to the early Church, and Patmos was a desolate island prison where many were sent as a result of their faithfulness to God. But, as before, John turned his imprisonment into an opportunity to glorify God. John could have said, "*Oh, poor me! I'm on this lonely island with nothing to do.*" But, no, he again rejoiced in the Lord for being able to experience the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. *Phil. 1:29* And, because of this positive attitude, God granted a most remarkable blessing, the vision seen in the last book of the Bible known as the *Revelation of John*.

When John was finally released from prison he lived out the rest of his life in Ephesus. John's loving, yet strong nature made him useful in the Lord's work. He is responsible, by the Lord's holy Spirit, for writing five books of the New Testament: the Gospel of John; the three letters of John to the Church; and Revelation. These inspired writings illustrate John's wonderful example of Christ-likeness. His humble spirit is displayed in Revelation 1:1 where John speaks of himself as a *servant* of his Master, Jesus. Because of John's special vision, he could write with a deeper understanding of the Heavenly works of Jesus and their meaning to the Christian. All of John's writings have this *spiritual* view of presenting the truth of Jesus' life and

The Apostle John

teachings, whether it be the writings of deep symbolism in Revelation, the three letters of encouragement to the Church, or the Gospel of John which records the events of Jesus' life. The other three Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke tell of Jesus' *earthly* work. *Reprint 1046*

It is interesting to note that the Apostle John was the last Apostle to die, whereas his brother James was the first to die. Almost all of the Apostles met with violent deaths as a result of preaching the Gospel of Christ, but John died a natural death in Ephesus at the advanced age of around one hundred.

The Apostle John was certainly a wonderful example to all believers in Jesus. His life and writings prove to us that in all things, whether good or bad, we can rejoice if we look to the Lord for strength. The Apostle John was worthy to be called one of the *Twelve Apostles of the Lamb*.

