

# Character Study: John

## The Apostle of Love

### Various Bible Passages

#### What's happening?

• John was a fisherman along with his brother, James ([Matt. 4:21-22](#)). As they followed the Lord, He gave them the nickname “Sons of Thunder,” which gives insight into their energetic personalities ([Mark 3:17](#)). As part of the “inner circle” of Jesus, the brothers were present at some significant events of Jesus’ ministry (see “Character Study: James”).

• In John’s writing, he references himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” ([John 13:23](#); [20:2](#); etc.). John had a great love for the Lord as well, coupled with a strong faith. He was the first to arrive at the empty tomb, the first to believe in the resurrection, and the first to recognize the risen Lord ([John 20:4-9](#); [21:7](#)). He was the only Apostle who witnessed the crucifixion firsthand, and was appointed by Jesus to care for His mother, Mary ([John 19:26-27](#)).

• Following Christ’s ascension, he worked closely with Peter ([Acts 3:1](#); [4:3-21](#); [8:14](#)). He also wrote three epistles (I, II, III John) that encourage believers to live a life that reflects genuine faith through obedience and a love for others (note [I John 4:4-8](#)). The Gospel of John is his account of the life of Jesus, pointing people to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God in whom we must believe ([John 20:30-31](#)).

• History reveals that he became the pastor of the church at Ephesus. He was banished to the Island of Patmos during the persecution of Emperor Domitian, at which time he wrote the book of Revelation. He died back in Ephesus around A.D. 98, being the only Apostle to live to old age.

#### What’s God doing?

> John no doubt had a bold personality, but God taught him the importance of trusting God and showing love as well. In his writing, John uses the word “believe” over a hundred times and “love” over eighty times, showing that these should characterize our faith (see [I John 3:18](#)).

#### What’s to learn?

→ John had a desire to truly know Christ. He did not simply want to follow the Lord; he wanted to know Him personally. As he watched and listened to Jesus, he learned to think and act just like Him. His closeness to Jesus resulted in obedience, and his love for Jesus resulted in a love for others. Being close to Jesus will impact everything about us!