

DAVID TATE

WHO WAS JOHN?



JOHN

IN THE

THE CHOSEN

JOHN
ACCORDING TO
THE BIBLE

WHO IS THE BELOVED DISCIPLE?

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE: BELOVED DISCIPLE = AUTHOR OF GOSPEL

²⁰ Peter turned and saw *the disciple whom Jesus loved* following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” ... ²⁴ *This is the disciple who is bearing witness* about these things, *and who has written these things*, and we know that his testimony is true.

John 21:20, 24

ACCORDING TO TRADITION: JOHN = AUTHOR OF GOSPEL

- **Irenaeus:** “Afterwards, *John*, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his resident at Ephesus in Asia.” (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1, 2nd cent.)
- **Theophilus of Antioch:** “The holy writings teach us, and all the inspired men, one of whom, *John*, says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God.’” (*To Autolytus* 2.22, 2nd cent.)
- **See also:** Muratorian Canon (2nd cent.), Tertullian (*Against Marcion* 4.2, 3rd cent.), + more

IS JOHN THE BELOVED DISCIPLE?

INTERNAL EVIDENCE. The author...

- 1. IS NOT NAMED.** He never provides his name, other than to describe himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20).
- 2. IS JEWISH.** He displays an in-depth, personal knowledge of Jewish religion (1:21,25; 6:14-15; 7:26-27,31,40-42; 9:2; 12:34), custom (2:1-10; 11:55; 11:17-44; 18:28; 19:40), and culture (4:9,27; 7:15,35).
- 3. CALLS JOHN THE BAPTIST “JOHN.”** Unlike the other evangelists, he never feels the need to qualify which John he refers to (1:6,15,19,26,28,32,35,40; 3:23-27; 4:1; 5:33,36; 10:40-41).
- 4. IS A RESIDENT OF ISRAEL.** He displays a detailed knowledge of places only residents of first-century Israel would know about (1:28; 2:14,20; 5:2; 8:20; 9:7; 10:23; 11:1; 11:18; 18:1).
- 5. IS AN EYEWITNESS.** He provides specific details that only an eyewitness would know—even when the details aren’t essential to the story (1:35,39; 2:6; 4:6,40,43,52; 6:19,71; 11:17,39; 13:2,26; 19:14,23; 21:8,11)—and includes many details unique to his Gospel (6:9; 12:3,13; 18:3,12; 19:23; 20:7).



IS JOHN THE BELOVED DISCIPLE?

INTERNAL EVIDENCE. The author...

6. IS AN APOSTLE. He was well enough acquainted with the Twelve to know both their thoughts and feelings (2:11,17,22; 4:27; 6:19; 12:16; 13:22,28; 20:9; 21:12). He was present at the Last Supper (13:23; cf. Mk 14:17) and was one of the seven fishing in Galilee after the resurrection (21:2).

7. IS A CLOSE COMPANION OF PETER. Many of his eyewitness accounts are shared alongside Peter (13:24; 18:15; 21:7,20).

8. BEHELD CHRIST'S GLORY. He was present at the Transfiguration (1:14), which was only witnessed by Peter, James, and John (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36).

**THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE FOR
AUTHORING THE FOURTH GOSPEL IS
THE APOSTLE JOHN.**



BIOGRAPHICAL INFO

NAME: JOHN/YOCHANAN (Ἰωάννης / יוחנן) – “Yahweh is gracious”

NICKNAME(S):

Boanerges (Βοανηργές) – “Sons of Thunder” (w/ James, Mk 3:17)

the Beloved Disciple (Jn 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20)

FATHER: ZEBEDEE (Mt 4:21; 10:2; Mk 1:19-20; 3:17; 10:35; Lk 5:10)

MOTHER: SALOME (?) (see Mt 27:55-56; Mk 15:40-41; Jn 19:25)

SIBLING(S): JAMES (Mt 4:21; 10:2; Mk 1:19-20; 3:17; 10:35; Lk 5:10)

SPOUSE: ???

HOMETOWN: CAPERNAUM?

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: CAPERNAUM (Mk 1:19-20, 29)

EDUCATION: LIMITED (cf. Ac 4:13)

LANGUAGE: ARAMAIC (likely understood Greek and Hebrew as well)

OCCUPATION: FISHERMAN (Mt 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11)

OTHER: (POSSIBLY) FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY (Mk 1:20; Jn 18:15)



JOHN & JESUS: COUSINS?

1) Who were the women present at the cross?

WOMEN PRESENT DURING CHRIST'S PASSION				
CROSS	Mt 27:55-56	Mk 15:40-41		Jn 19:25
	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene		Jesus' mother
	Mary, mother of James & Joseph	Mary, mother of James (lesser) & Joses		Jesus' mother's sister
	Mother of the sons of Zebedee	Salome		Mary wife of Clopas
			Mary Magdalene	
BURIAL	Mt 27:61	Mk 15:47	Lk 23:55-56	
	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Women from Galilee	
	The other Mary	Mary mother of Joses		
EMPTY TOMB	Mt 28:1	Mk 16:1	Lk 24:10	
	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	
	The other Mary	Mary mother of James	Joanna	
		Salome	Mary mother of James	
		Other women		

JOHN & JESUS: COUSINS? (CONT.)

WOMEN PRESENT AT CHRIST'S CROSS		
Mt 27:55-56	Mk 15:40-41	Jn 19:25
Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Jesus' mother
Mary, mother of James & Joseph	Mary, mother of James (lesser) & Joses	Jesus' mother's sister
Mother of the sons of Zebedee	Salome	Mary wife of Clopas
		Mary Magdalene

If #1-3 are correct...
**Salome =
 Mother Mary's sister =
 mother of James & John**

JAMES & JOHN = JESUS' COUSINS

2) Who is "the mother of the sons of Zebedee"?

What We Know:

1. Mary Magdalene ≠ mother of sons of Zebedee
2. Mary, mother of James & Joses ≠ mother of sons of Zebedee
3. Mary, mother of Jesus ≠ mother of sons of Zebedee

What We Don't Know:

1. Mary, mother of James & Joses = Mary, wife of Clopas?
2. Mother of sons of Zebedee = Salome?
3. Salome = Mother Mary's sister?
4. Were there additional women?



HOW OLD WAS JOHN?

HOW OLD WERE THE DISCIPLES?

- Jesus was around 30 when he began his ministry (Lk 3:23), the typical age for a rabbi.
- Students were usually younger than their rabbis. Jesus refers to the Twelve as “little children” (Mt 10:42; 11:25).
- Education ended between ages 12-15. Some disciples were already practicing trades (i.e. Lk 5:1-11; Mt 9:9).
- As far as we know, by the third year of Jesus’ ministry, Simon Peter was the *only* member of the Twelve who had to pay the temple tax (Mt 17:24-27), which began at age 20 (Ex 30:14).
- The Twelve often acted in manners more fitting of younger people (i.e., Mk 10:13-16; Lk 8:24; 22:24-30).
- It appears that **James and John were still living with their father** at the time they began following Jesus (Mt 4:21; Mk 1:20), which seems to imply they were unmarried at the time. The average age for marriage was 18.
- James and John’s **mother still seemed to be have a fair amount of influence** over their lives (Mt 20:20-28).
- The fact that James is usually listed first might suggest that **John was the younger** of the two (Mt 4:21; 10:2; 17:1; etc.).
- John wrote the Book of Revelation, which seems to have been written **near the end of the 1st century** (about 60-70 years after Christ’s ministry) and Church Fathers from the early 2nd century report having been his disciples.

Most of the disciples were likely young teenagers at the time they began following Christ.

John was likely a young teenager (~12-15) at the time he began following Christ.

JOHN'S CHARACTER

YOUNG JOHN (GOSPELS)

- Proud, self-seeking (Mt 20:20-28; Mk 10:35-45)
- Impetuous, zealous (Lk 9:51-56)
- Loud, boisterous (Mk 3:17)
- Intolerant, narrow-minded (Mk 9:38-39; Lk 9:49-50)
- Committed, responsible (Jn 18:15; 19:26-27)
- Quick to act (Jn 20:1-4)

OLD JOHN (ACTS & BEYOND)

- Grateful, indebted to grace (Jn 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20)
- Loving, gracious ("Apostle of Love")
- Passionate about truth (3 Jn 4)
- Faithful, bold (Ac 3-4)
- Reliable, authoritative (Gal 2:9)
- Balanced, zealous (2 Jn 4-11)



JOHN IN THE GOSPELS

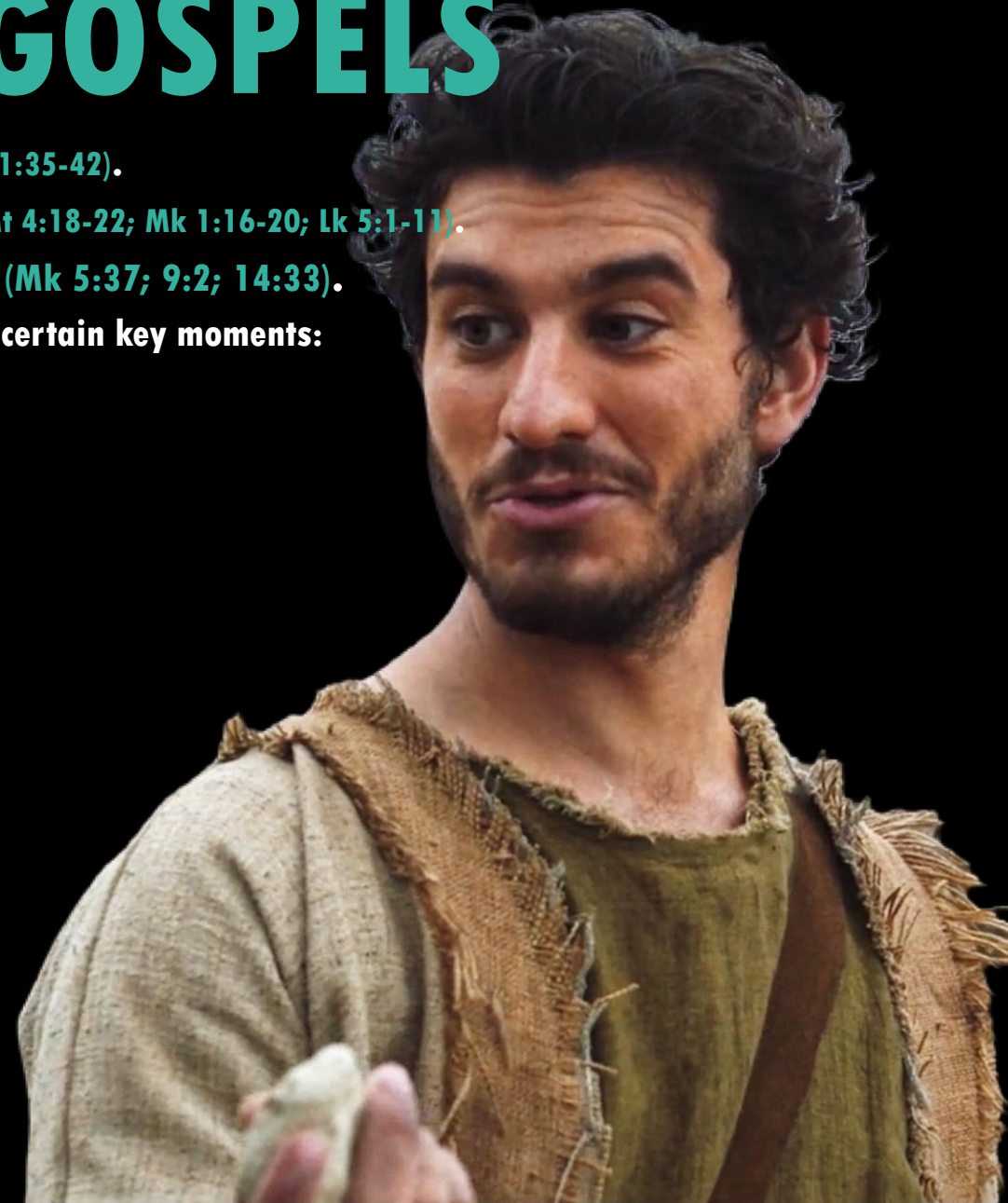
FIRST ENCOUNTER: John first met Jesus while following John the Baptist (Jn 1:35-42).

CALLING: Jesus called John to follow him after the miraculous catch of fish (Mt 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11).

LIFE AS A DISCIPLE: John is consistently listed in the first group of disciples (Mk 5:37; 9:2; 14:33).

- John was in the Inner Three, with Peter and James. They were uniquely present at certain key moments:
 1. **The Healing of Jairus' Daughter** (Mk 5:37; Lk 8:51)
 2. **The Transfiguration** (Mt 17:1; Mk 9:2; Lk 9:28; 2 Pe 1:16-18)
 3. **The Agony in Gethsemane** (Mt 26:37; Mk 14:33)

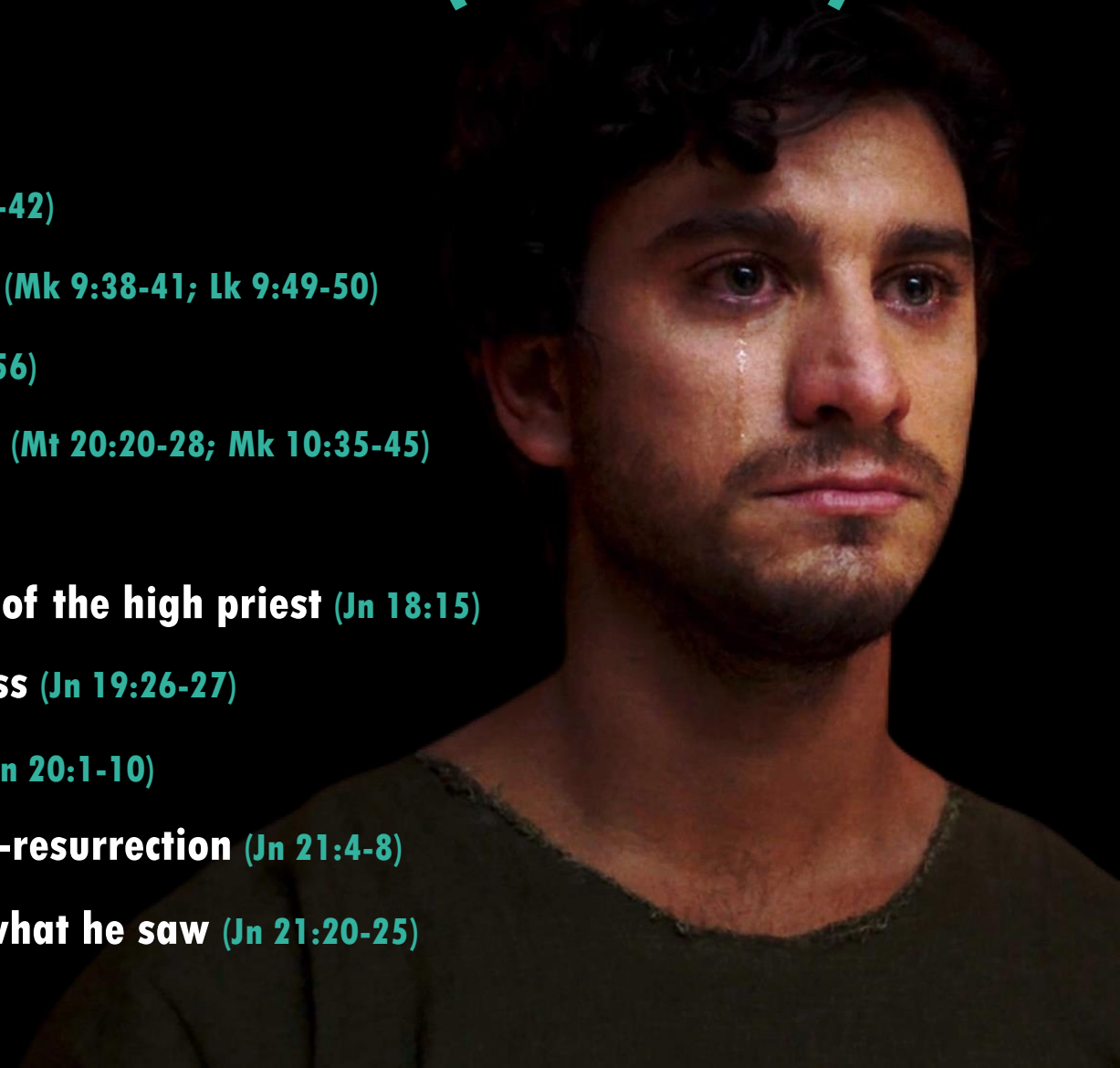
MATTHEW 10	MARK 3	LUKE 6	ACTS 1
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James of Zebedee	Andrew	John
James of Zebedee	John	James of Zebedee	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Judas of James	Judas of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	



JOHN IN THE GOSPELS (CONT.)

KEY MOMENTS:

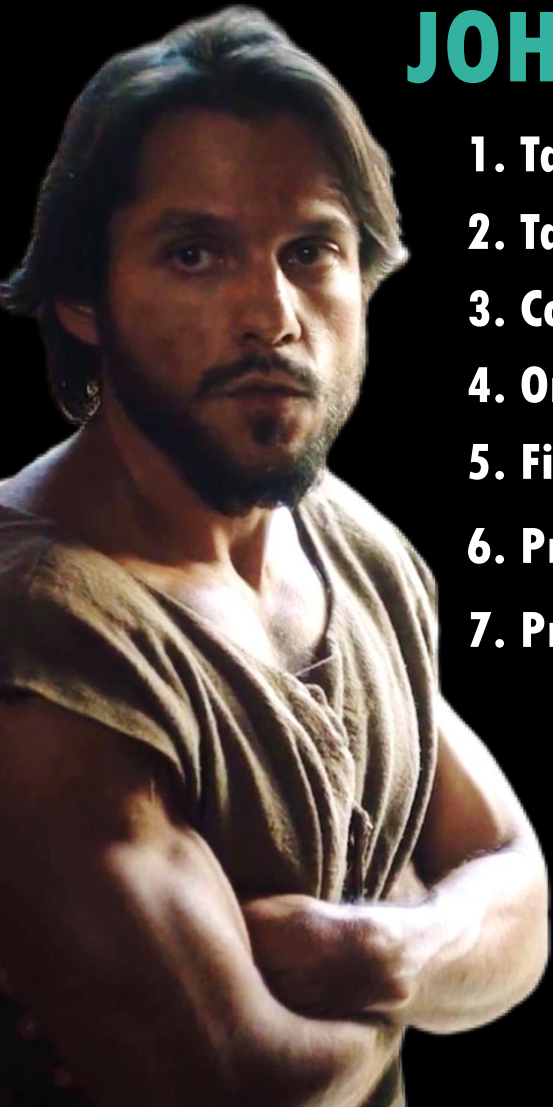
1. Requesting to come and see where Jesus is staying (Jn 1:35-42)
2. Rebuking someone for casting out demons in Jesus' name (Mk 9:38-41; Lk 9:49-50)
3. Requesting to cast fire down upon the Samaritans (Lk 9:51-56)
4. Requesting to sit at His right hand in the coming kingdom (Mt 20:20-28; Mk 10:35-45)
5. Reclining at Jesus' side during the Last Supper (Jn 13:23)
6. Returning to follow Jesus and watch his trial at the house of the high priest (Jn 18:15)
7. Receiving Christ's mother as his own at the foot of the cross (Jn 19:26-27)
8. Running to the empty tomb, arriving first, and believing (Jn 20:1-10)
9. Recognizing Christ as he appeared to them at Galilee post-resurrection (Jn 21:4-8)
10. Remaining long after Christ's death to testify concerning what he saw (Jn 21:20-25)



JOHN IN THE GOSPELS (CONT.)

JOHN & PETER

1. Tasked with preparing Triumphant Entry (?) (Mt 21:1-7; Mk 11:1-7; Lk 19:29-35)
2. Tasked with preparing the Passover (Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:13-16; Lk 22:7-13)
3. Conversed w/ one another at Last Supper (Jn 13:21-25)
4. Only two who were present at Christ's trial (Jn 18:15-16)
5. First two to arrive at the empty tomb (Jn 20:1-10)
6. Present at Christ's second miraculous catch of fish (Jn 21:1-7)
7. Present at Christ's prediction of Peter's death (Jn 21:15-25)



IN ACTS & THE PAULINE EPISTLES

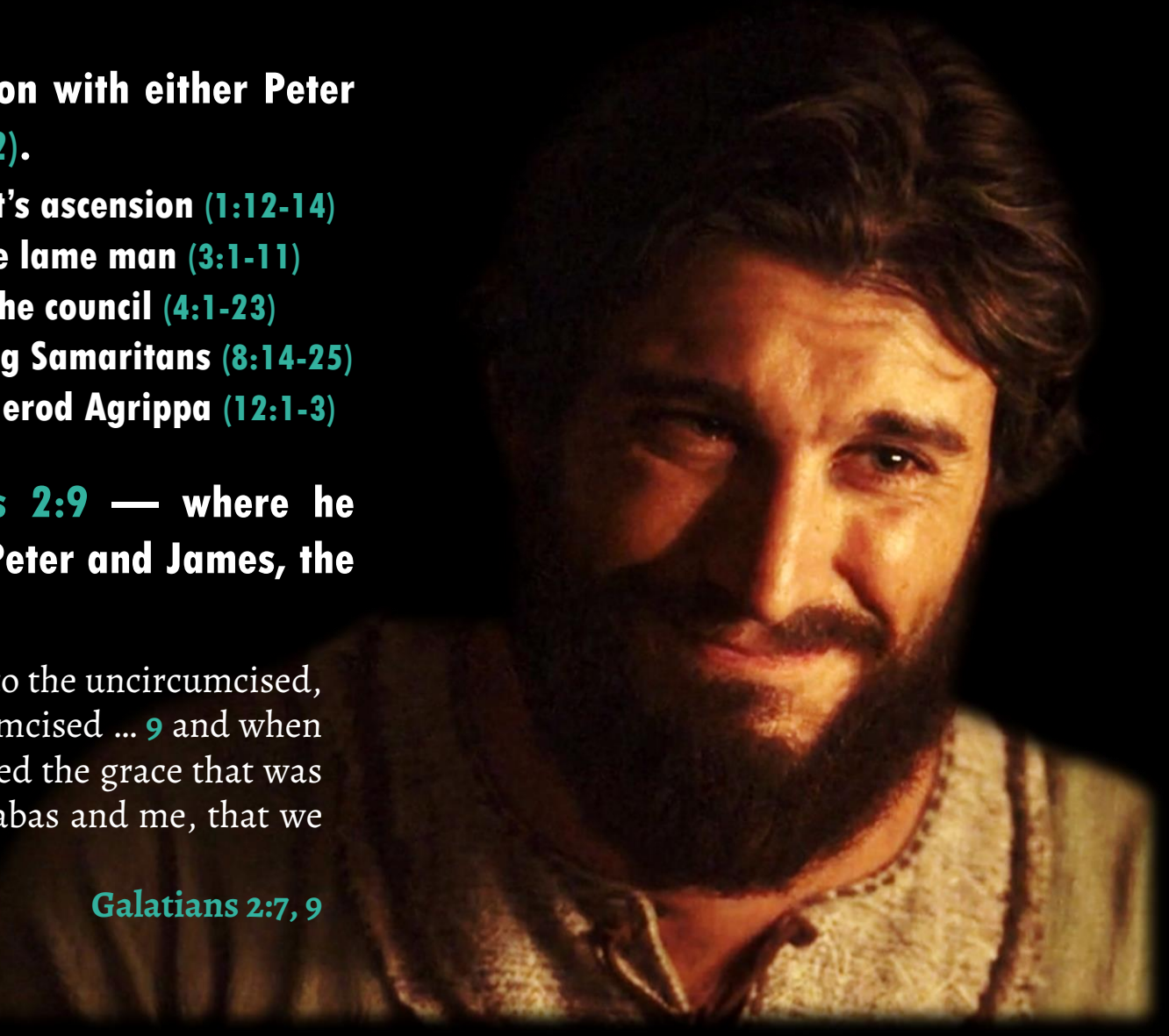
John is mentioned 9 times in Acts, always in connection with either Peter (1:13; 3:1,3,4,11; 4:13, 19; 8:14) or with his brother (12:2).

- He was present with the other ten apostles after Christ's ascension (1:12-14)
- He was with Peter in the temple when Peter healed the lame man (3:1-11)
- He was arrested with Peter and stood on trial before the council (4:1-23)
- He was with Peter when the Spirit first fell on believing Samaritans (8:14-25)
- He is mentioned when his brother James is killed by Herod Agrippa (12:1-3)

Paul only mentions John one time — in Galatians 2:9 — where he references him as a “pillar” of the church, alongside Peter and James, the brother of Jesus.

7 ...when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised ... 9 and when *James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars*, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Galatians 2:7, 9



IN JOHN'S EPISTLES & REVELATION

John wrote the epistles (letters) of 1, 2, and 3 John.

- **1 JOHN** was traditionally written from Ephesus somewhere between AD 90-95 to the churches in Asia Minor. He reminds his audience of the basic fundamentals of Christianity by refuting what appears to be an early form of the Gnostic heresy. Shares similarities with the Last Supper Discourse (Jn 13-17)
- **2 JOHN** was traditionally written around the same time as 1 John. He instructs a local church to follow Christ's commandments and warns them against showing hospitality to false teachers.
- **3 JOHN** was traditionally written around the same time as 1 and 2 John. He commends a man named Gaius for showing hospitality to their fellow Christian brethren.

John is also generally accepted as the author of Revelation.

- **REVELATION** was traditionally written from the island of Patmos during the reign of Emperor Domitian (~AD 94-96). It details a series of visions he received that serve to reinforce God's sovereignty in light of growing persecution. Having detailed the present spiritual decline of the local churches in Asia Minor (ch.1-3), he details the events surrounding the future return of Christ, as well as the culmination of all things that leads to the fulfillment of God's promises (ch.4-22).

**JOHN
ACCORDING TO**

TRADITION



TRAVELS

1. **Ephesus** (Irenaeus & Polycrates, 2nd c.)
2. **Asia Minor** (Rev 1:4; cf. Gal 2:9)
3. **Patmos** (Rev 1:9)

VARIOUS TRADITIONS

- According to early tradition (the Muratorian Fragment, Clement of Alexandria – both 2nd cent.), John gathered a community of bishops and apostles together for prayer and fasting before **writing his Gospel**.
- According to Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.3.4, AD 180), John possessed an extreme animosity toward the early Gnostic leader **Cerinthus**.
- According to Clement of Alexandria (2nd cent., reported in Eusebius' *Church History* 3.23, 4th cent.), John was responsible for **reforming a backsliding criminal**.
- According to Tertullian (*Prescription Against Heretics* 36, AD 200), John was banished to the island of Patmos after surviving being **plunged into boiling oil** while in Rome.



THE FATE OF JOHN

Jesus told John that he would drink from his cup (Mk 10:35-40).

- There are some traditions holding that John died **a martyr's death** (i.e., Philip of Side, George the Sinner), but they are relatively late (5th cent., 8th cent.) and seem incompatible with other accounts.
- More likely, it seems like Christ was referring to their **suffering** for Him and their **willingness** to die for Him.

**John most likely died of old age
in Ephesus around AD 98.**

(See Irenaeus, Acts of John, Eusebius, etc.)

SEAN McDOWELL'S CONCLUSIONS:

1. JOHN MINISTERED IN EPHESUS – very probably true
2. JOHN EXPERIENCED MARTYRDOM - improbable

