

## Saint John the Evangelist

In a previous treatise I gave my understanding of the Saints John, with particular emphasis on St. John the Baptist. I will attempt to do the same for the other St. John the Evangelist, by giving equal attention to the day in December (27th) that is a part of our Masonic calendar. After this date, we must install all officers for the ensuing year.

We might identify this John as O. J. (Other John) but this might be misleading as to the true nature of John. We could call him J. R. (John the Revelator) but that too would be misleading. So, let's just call him by how we first meet him in our Rule and Guide. Let us also examine his true nature and accomplishments to understand why our ancestors accepted him as one of our patron Saints of Masonry.

We first find John in the gospel of Mark 1:16-20. We find that John responded to the call of "Follow me" without hesitation. He did so without excuses, without asking what were the benefits, without asking if he were "good enough", or without any alibi to shirk the call. As we consider this act, let us ask ourselves, how many times we were called before we responded. (I am assuming all have answered the call.)

We further find that John the Apostle came to be among the top three of the twelve in their close relationship with Jesus. We also note that he was known as "the beloved" and "the one whom Jesus loved." John was chosen to participate in many important events in the ministry of Jesus, one of them being at the crucifixion of Jesus. At this point in The Gospel (19:26) of John we find that Jesus saw both his mother and John nearby, and placed his mother in the care of John. To get a true picture, imagine that you, as a reader or listener, are leaving on an extended absence. You wish to place your mother in a situation in which you could be assured of her safety and well being. What kind of person would you entrust with this responsibility? Do you know of one at first thought? This describes the true nature of John the Apostle.



Botticelli, 1484. Virgin and Child Enthroned between Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist. Tempera on panel. Gemaldegalerie, Berlin

In Acts of the Apostles, 1:13 and 8:14 we find this John acting in carrying out the Great Commission, that of establishing the Church. He must have displayed the fortitude necessary to continue steadfast in this mission, as he was banished to the Island of Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian for his continued work in the early Church. Here again, he probably could have avoided exile had he violated his principles.

In his writings, and epistles, we find that John deals with the central theme of the Christian faith; that is, the eternal and steadfast love of God the Creator to his creation. This love is not conditional, nor is it terminal. Time and space does not permit us to properly describe this St. John as he relates to Masonry. However, to me, any description would not be complete without a short look at one of the most important aspects of his apostleship. That is, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, as revealed to John while in exile on the island of Patmos. As we are taught, God created order in six days and consecrated the seventh as a day of rest and worship. We find that John is given the revelation as he was "in the spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10), meaning that he was in close communion with God on the Sabbath day. What was revealed to John? A brief summary would be to say that God allowed him a sneak peek at "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This allowed John to tell his readers some of the joys awaiting us at the end of our journey.

This brief description of John the Apostle makes me proud that our founding fathers chose this St. John to share equal claim to the Patron Saints of Masonry. Masonry is stronger by our affiliation with him and will continue to be strong as long as we identify our fraternity with him.