

Revelation

S P E A K S



*Messages
of Hope
for a
World in
Turmoil*

Lesson 1

INTRODUCTION

The Scribe of the Book

Before you purchase a book you probably want to know something about the author. Perhaps you check out the person's credentials and what sort of person wrote the book. That's only wise, don't you think?

Well, you may ask about the writer, or scribe, of the Book of Revelation. The scribe of Revelation comes with impeccable credentials! The Bible says that John was "God's servant" (Revelation 1:1). It also says that the Lord instructed John to write the Book of Revelation and told him what to put in it (Revelation 1:11).

BUT, WHO WAS JOHN?

His titles, or degrees, are impressive: Prophet, Author, Evangelist, Pastor, and Disciple of Christ, among others.

John came from a dedicated Palestinian family. The Bible says that his father, Zebedee, owned a ship on the Sea of Galilee and that his two sons, James and John, were fishermen (Matthew 4:18). Evidently John's mother, Salome, was a very devoted lady who accompanied the mother of Jesus and other women on missionary trips with Jesus and His disciples (Matthew 27:56). She was with John at the cross (Mark 15:40, 41). And, she was one of the women who came to the tomb on Sunday morning to anoint the body of Jesus (Mark 16:1).

One day as Jesus was walking along the shores of Galilee, He noticed James and John helping their father mend nets on their ship. Jesus called to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And strange as it may seem, they dropped their nets, leaving the hired servants to help their father, and followed Jesus! (Mark 1:16, 20).

Apparently John and his brother were not ones to keep their feelings and opinions quietly to themselves, because Jesus nicknamed them the "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). But among the twelve disciples whom Jesus chose, John, James, and Peter formed the inner circle with Jesus. "It was not that Jesus played favorites, but these three found Jesus even more significant to their lives than did the other nine."—*God Cares*, Vol. 2, p. 49.

We find these three with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, at the bedside of

Jairus' daughter when Jesus raised her from the dead, following Jesus to the courtyard the night of the trial, and close to Jesus that fatal night in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus entrusted the care of His mother to John. And of all the disciples, it was loyal, lovable, courageous John alone who stayed by Jesus when He died on the cross (John 19:26-30). It is not surprising that John the disciple, later known as John the Revelator, became known as the "disciple whom Jesus loved."

It was John who raced Peter to the empty tomb on the resurrection day, arriving first, as we might expect, since John was the youngest of all the disciples—perhaps only twenty years old at that time.

It was John who authored the four books called by his name. As you read those messages filled with so much love for the Lord, you will readily see that this "Son of Thunder" was completely transformed by the Lord he loved so dearly.

After Jesus' ascension, John suffered hardships, persecution, and many trials. Finally, when Domitian was emperor of Rome, the faithful saint of God was exiled to the lonely island of Patmos. It was on Patmos that John was instructed to write the Revelation given by God concerning His Son. "When Emperor Nerva followed [Domitian] to the throne in 96, it is believed that John was released in a general amnesty of Christians and that he returned to Ephesus to finish writing out the Revelation before he died."—*God Cares*, Vol. 2, p. 53.

Tradition says that John the beloved was the only disciple who escaped martyrdom, dying of old age in A.D. 96.