Source: New Advent Encyclopedia: John was the son of Zebedee and [Salome](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13403a.htm), and the brother of [James the Greater.](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08279b.htm) In the Gospels the two brothers are often called after their father "the sons of Zebedee" and received from [Christ](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) the honourable title of *Boanerges*, i.e. "sons of thunder" ([Mark 3:17](https://www.newadvent.org/bible/mar003.htm#vrs17)). Originally they were fishermen and fished with their father in the [Lake of Genesareth](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14716b.htm). According to the usual and entirely probable explanation they became, however, for a time disciples of [John the Baptist](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08486b.htm), and were called by Christ from the circle of John's followers, together with [Peter](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11744a.htm) and Andrew, to become His disciples ([John 1:35-42](https://www.newadvent.org/bible/joh001.htm#vrs35)). The first disciples returned with their new Master from the [Jordan](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08501a.htm) to [Galilee](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06341c.htm) and apparently both John and the others remained for some time with [Jesus](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08374c.htm) (cf. John ii, 12, 22; iv, 2, 8, 27 sqq.).

Peter, James, and he were the only witnesses of the raising of Jairus's daughter ([Mark 5:37](https://www.newadvent.org/bible/mar005.htm#vrs37)), of the Transfiguration ([Matthew 17:1](https://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat017.htm#vrs1)), and of the [Agony in Gethsemani](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01224a.htm) ([Matthew 26:37](https://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat026.htm#vrs37)). Only he and Peter were sent into the city to make the preparation for the [Last Supper](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14341a.htm) ([Luke 22:8](https://www.newadvent.org/bible/luk022.htm#vrs8)). At the Supper itself his place was next to Christ on Whose breast he leaned ([John 13:23, 25](https://www.newadvent.org/bible/joh013.htm#vrs23)). John alone remained near his beloved Master at the foot of the Cross on Calvary with the Mother of Jesus and the [pious](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12748a.htm) [women](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15687b.htm), and took the desolate Mother into his care as the last legacy of Christ ([John 19:25-27](https://www.newadvent.org/bible/joh019.htm#vrs25)).

Early [Christian art](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03710a.htm) usually represents St. John with an eagle, symbolizing the heights to which he rises in the first chapter of his Gospel. The [chalice](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03561a.htm) as symbolic of St. John, which, according to some authorities, was not adopted until the thirteenth century, is sometimes interpreted with reference to the [Last Supper](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14341a.htm), again as connected with the legend according to which St. John was handed a cup of poisoned wine, from which, at his blessing, the poison rose in the shape of a serpent.

St. John is commemorated on 27 December, which he originally shared with St. James the Greater. the Hieronymian Martyrology, and the Gallican [liturgical books](https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09296a.htm).

Source: [Saint John the Theologian, Apostle and Evangelist (fatheralexander.org)](http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/saints/john_evangelist.htm): During the time of Emperor Domitian (81-96), Apostle John, as the sole surviving Apostle, was summoned to Rome and by the decree of this persecutor of the Church was thrown into boiling oil, but the power of God saved him unscathed just as it saved the three lads from the fiery oven. Then Domitian sent him to the desert island of Patmos. Here John wrote the Apocalypse or Revelations of the fate of the Church and the world.

St. John the Theologian died a natural death (the only one of the Apostles to do so), being around 105 years of age, during the time of Emperor Trajan. The circumstances of the Apostles death appeared to be unusual and even puzzling. Upon the insistence of Apostle John, he was buried alive. On the following day, when the tomb was unearthed it turned out to be empty. This event somewhat affirmed the belief in the conjecture of some Christians that Apostle John will not die but will live until the Second coming of Christ and that he will unmask the Antichrist. The reason for such a surmise was served by the words said by the Saviour not long before his Ascention. To the question of Apostle Peter as to what will become with Apostle John, the Lord answered, *"If I will that he remain until I come* (the second time) *what is that to you? You follow Me "*Apostle John makes a notation regarding this in his Gospel: " *This saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die"*(John 21:22-23).

**Biblical Reflection:**

Incense and the censer take a prominent position along-side prayer in the Assumption of Mary by St. John. On lines 6, 36, 40, 48, 122 and 203 incense is invoked and each time with prayer. On the THIRD time the Holy mother commands for incense to be cast, notice what follows, “And there came a voice out of the heavens saying the AMEN.”  (line 48). In St. John’s book of Revelation, incense and the golden censer again mark a key event – the opening of the Seventh Seal (Rev. 8: 3-5). What significance do you see with this? Would you consider using blessed incense during your prayer time? Why? Read Revelation Chapters 8 and 9. What do you see here about the mercy of God in these plagues? Does this inspire you to mingle your prayers with the angels by way of blessed incense? Is there a connection between the blessed Mother, incense, censors and mercy? If so, what is it and what does that tell you?

**Catechism Reflection:**

CCC 966 teaches that the Mary “was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory…” (quoting Pope Pius XII in Munificentissimus Deus (1950). Lines 245-253 describe Mary’s soul being elevated to heaven. Lines 269-275 describe the Holy Mother’s body as it laid in the tomb for 3 days with the voices of angels glorifying God the Christ born of her and then proclaims the bodily assumption into heaven promised by Jesus on lines 214-216. Does the fact that author of Gospel of John and Revelation is alleged to have written this apocryphal work give you more faith, and more hope (confident trust) that the one true faith always revered the Holy Mother of God? Is this an invitation to invite our protestant brothers and sisters to the love of Mary and the Catholic Church? How does this change, or does it, your understanding of the Assumption of Mary? What does that mean to your faith and your relationship with God and Mary?

**Spiritual Reflection:**

Lines 276-285, after the bodily Assumption of the Holy Mother, comes the appearance of numerous saints—Elisabeth, Anna, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and David all singing the “Allelujah”, along with “brilliant light”, the “abundance of perfume” and apparently an angelic melody that only the three virgins could hear. Then St. John notes that only that apostle saw Mary’s “bodily translation” (very similar to the transfiguration of Christ, with bright light—see line 248). Notice the blessings are not bestowed on all—some are for all… some for the apostles… some for the virgins. Why do you think this is? Notice also the saturation of the senses, the light, the perfumes, the song and melodies. Notice it all is coming at once. Can you imagine being overwhelmed by God and his blessings in this way forever? Is this this a foretaste for our imaginations, and understanding to deepen our love of God? Will you change anything about your life and relationship with God and the Blessed Mother given this understanding? Why or why not?