

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

ESTABLISHED 1786 MISSIONARY

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JOHN ON THE ISLE OF PATMOS

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"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9).

Our text is autobiographical--the author is introducing himself. Strange introduction! He says little to satisfy our curiosity. He says nothing about his position or talents or accomplishments as a servant of God. He tells us nothing about his salary or the size of his last church--nothing about the esteem of his brethren--nothing about how many souls he had won to Christ. There is a vast difference between what a man thinks and says about himself when under the power of the spirit and what he says about himself out of the pride of the natural heart. John had no virtues to extol; no victories to recount; and no prominence to proclaim.



Location: 3.3 miles out Bryan Station Road. Right on Briar Hill Road.

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
Evening Service 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Air-Conditioned Nursery Provided

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Lexington, Ky. 40505

1. He tells us he is a Christian, a brother in Christ. How beautifully humble he is in making this assertion. He lays no claim to Lordship or leadership. There is no air of superiority. He is only a brother in Christ. He is now writing what was to be the completion of the Word of God and yet he does not claim to be a poet, prophet, or author, or a bit of genius. He belongs to the brotherhood. He is a part of the kingdom Christ came to establish. He has caught the spirit of truth taught by Christ: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

2. He is a companion--a sharer with other saints in their common experiences as followers of Christ. He was sharing in the sufferings of fellow believers. His

loyalty to Christ and fidelity to His word had gotten him into trouble. Vital Christianity has had a way of doing that through the centuries. He says, "I found myself on the island of Patmos, for uttering God's message and testifying to Jesus."

Brethren, if we are always sailing on smooth seas; if we are never buffeted by the waves of opposition, we might well examine our chart and compass; we might be headed towards the wrong port. "Woe be unto you when all men speak well of you." "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom." Vital Christianity is so much unlike much that goes by the name of Christianity--Christianity in name only--that it is obnoxious to the world. The Christian life is a flower planted in an unfriendly soil, a soil acid with human hatred for God and His truth. I know the Bible pictures the saint as planted by the rivers of waters, but God has caused these streams to run through this barren world where no water is.

Here is an obvious truth or fact: Faithfulness to God and His word does not make one popular in this world--it does not make one popular with church members even. The world, if it has any milk of human kindness, feels sorry for the Christian who takes his giving seriously--the man who tithes and makes offerings is wasting his money in the eyes of the world. And many church members do not even appreciate the liberal givers--they warn against the wrong motive in giving and are quick to charge with Phariseeism.

If anybody who is a member of a church thinks or ever thought that being faithful and liberal will bring him or her any prominence and prestige, he might as well be disillusioned now because he will find it out sometime that faithfulness to God in time and talent and money brings no earthly reward.

THE NATURE OF JOHN'S TROUBLE: For preaching the word, he had been arrested, tried and deported to the lonely island of Patmos. This was a penal colony, a kind of concentration camp.

The sea was the barrier that kept prisoners from escaping. When John looked forward to the new heavens and the new earth, he said there would be no more sea. No more wall of separation from those he loved. No more imprisonment with criminal companions. John was shut away from fellowship of the saints--away from the privilege of preaching to his devoted congregation.

Here was a godly man herded with the ungodly. About him was broken pieces of humanity. The atmosphere in which he moved was tainted with oaths and vileness of the wicked.

Patmos was John's testing ground. Every believer has his Patmos. Life is constantly bringing us to some kind of a Patmos--into circumstances, good or bad, that try our souls. For John, Patmos was a place of physical and mental suffering. For some of us, Patmos may be a sick-bed. For others, it may be a prodigal son or daughter. For some, it may be a question of employment. Some of you right now may be passing through deep waters of affliction--sorrows that you cannot bare to the public gaze. But on the other hand, Patmos may be in the nature of material prosperity. You can be tested by having too much as well as too little. There is a

during hard days but when he had ease and success. In the day of his strength he was made weak.

(d) Then there is the danger of becoming sour and embittered while living on Patmos. Our dreams have failed to come true; we have not had the appreciation we felt we deserved. We have not heard the plaudits of men. We think about a prophet not being without honour save in his own country. Many a preacher started out in the ministry with a smile on his face and a spring in his step and joy in his heart, and hope in his soul, but he has had to spend many days on Patmos and this gloomy place has taken the smile from his face, the joy from his heart; it has taken the spring out of his step and hope from his soul.

(e) But if some have become soured and embittered, others have become hard and arrogant by what they have thought was great success. Men of this type have no patience with those who have not had the measure of success they feel they have had. They take credit for themselves and blame the lowly brother who never hears the praises of men. These brethren of great success are like a rock, but they are not like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. They look down on their brothers--they are not like John--companions of the defeated. These successful brethren have arrived; they sit on a self-built pedestal to be looked at and admired and praised. But their hearts are dry and little--they have lost compassion for the poor and lowly and defeated.

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"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil" (Proverbs 3:5-7).