



My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday our Church is blessed to celebrate the falling asleep of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian, an example of bravery, fidelity, and faith. St. John was the son of Salome & Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman, and the brother of St. James the Elder. Christ gave St. James & St. John the nickname, Βοαρηγῆς, or “Sons of Thunder” to reflect their tempers, such as when the brothers offered to rain fire on a Samaritan town which had rejected the Lord (*Luke 9:51-55*). However, this personality of St. John’s also showed itself by devotion. We read in his account of the Mystical Supper about “[o]ne of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved...reclining next to him” (*John 13:23*). In ancient times, meals were eaten at couches. Therefore, as St. John holds himself with his other hand, his head is near Christ’s heart.

Of all the Disciples, only St. John does not flee after our Lord’s arrest: instead, he follows Him into the courtyard of the High Priest, and then to the foot of the Cross. Seeing this love, Christ’s uses his dying breath to provide for His Mother— *“Woman, here is your son”*—and to show how much He trusts and values His friend— *“Here is your mother”* (*John 19:26; 27*). After the Resurrection, we read a curious statement: *“...the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, ‘If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?’”* (*John 21:23*) We know St. John, did not live forever, but as the youngest of the Disciples, he alone fell asleep at the old age of 95, and in a natural way.

Like many Christians, he was persecuted, and exiled to the island of Patmos where He was inspired to write his Revelation. St. John returned to his home in Ephesus, where he fell asleep after having written praise to his friend and his God, beginning His Gospel with the high words: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”* (*John 1:1-5*)

My beloved ones, there is a beautiful way to read the references to the “the Beloved Disciple.” We know that St. John chooses not to name himself out of humility; but I would suggest that the Evangelist does this so the reader can imagine themselves: resting with our Lord and following Him through His Passion. The Evangelist does not boast, but asks us to imagine whether we could fulfill our calling as Christians by showing such bravery, friendship, and faith to that friend of Man, our Lord and God.

**+ALEXIOS**  
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