

The Heart Beat of God, a Story of John (Part 1)

By Russ Rentler

Chapter 1

The Apostle John, one of the original disciples of Jesus was nearing the end of his life. Being the youngest of the twelve, he had now out-lived all the other disciples. He also lived with Mary, the Mother of his Lord for a time in Ephesus caring for her as his own and they often recounted the events that changed their life. Later, as an old man, he was exiled to Patmos where Jesus gave him the revelation which over 200 years later became the last book to close the canon of Sacred Scripture.

As old as he was, his mind was still sharp and he could recall in detail each moment spent with his friend and Savior. The stories, the parables, the miracles and Jesus final days in Jerusalem were as real to him as if they had just happened. He remembered what it was like to lay his head on Jesus breast at the Last Passover they shared together. Some nights he would awaken from a dream thinking he could still hear the heartbeat of God, only to realize it was his own. A bittersweet longing would come over him as he realized that he would soon be able to once again lean his head on his friend and savior at the great marriage feast of the Lamb. Despite the rumors that circulated after the resurrection regarding his immortality([Jn 21:23](#)), John always knew that this time would come.

He had spent his life preaching, teaching and discipling others in the ways and words of His friend and Master. As a result, he attracted a group of dedicated believers who hung on his every word as he shared the truths the Savior entrusted to him. Two of John's disciples, Ignatius and the younger, Polycarp, were captivated by the teachings that John shared with them and came to love Jesus very much. They were committed to spreading his teachings with the same fervor that John had. Ignatius couldn't remember the event, but was told he was the infant that Jesus lifted on his knee when the mothers brought their children to him for a blessing.

In the year of 100 AD, the apostle John, "the one who Jesus loved", finally breathed his last and once again joined his friend and savior.

The Heart Beat of God, a Story of John Part 2

Chapter 2

Some 70 years since the Last Supper, John's teachings from the Lord himself were still fresh in the mind of Ignatius. He continued to spread the apostolic traditions of this rapidly growing church. In Peter's first mission church in a city named Antioch, Ignatius was appointed bishop by the laying on of hands. As Peter and Paul laid hands on Ignatius, he imagined what it must have been like for Peter when Jesus did the same to him so

many years before. Ignatius silently prayed for the strength and grace to receive this anointing.

Under his watch as bishop, there were rumors circulating about a teaching that Jesus was not truly God in human flesh. People claimed that Jesus only *seemed* to have a physical body and to physically die, but in reality he was *incorporeal*, a pure spirit, and did not physically die in the crucifixion. Being disciplined directly from the one who wrote that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us”, Bishop Ignatius bristled at the thought that people calling themselves Christians could be saying such things. It was his solemn responsibility to Christ and his Church to set the record straight regarding the apostles teachings. The writings of Ignatius proclaim that not only was Jesus, God in human flesh, but that he continues to remain with the Church through the Eucharistic sacrifice.

“From Eucharist and prayer they hold aloof, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His loving-kindness raised from the dead.

Take care, then, to partake of one Eucharist; for, one is the Flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and one the cup to unite us with His Blood, and one altar, just as there is one bishop assisted by the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow servants. Thus you will conform in all your actions to the will of God.”

“I have no taste for corruptible food or for the delights of this life. Bread of God is what I desire; that is, the Flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for my drink I desire His Blood, that is, incorruptible love....”.

Bishop Ignatius bravely finished his earthly sojourn in the Roman Coliseum where he was thrown to the wild beasts for love of his Savior. Some of his remains were brought back to the city of Antioch to be venerated (honored). In 637 AD, they were returned to Rome and reside in the Church of St. Clement where they can be seen today.

2000 years later we can still partake of His *incorruptible love* in the Eucharist.