

# The Feast Day of the Apostle Jude

June 19, 2010

**GOSPEL: John 14:21-24**

**EPISTLE: Jude 1:1-10**

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading For Vespers: Jude 1:1-10**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading For Vespers: Jude 1:11-16**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Reading For Vespers: Jude 1:17-25**

**Matins Gospel: John 21:15-25**

## Jude's Relationship to Jesus

Jude was the natural brother of James, the Lord's brother, who was Bishop of Jerusalem for over 30 years, and in Jude's brief Epistle, he refers to himself as "the brother of James" (Jude 1:1). This means that Jude was also the stepbrother of Jesus as is shown in Figure 1. Clement of Alexandria<sup>1</sup>, Origen<sup>2</sup>, Hippolytus<sup>3</sup>, and Eusebius<sup>4</sup> stated that James and Jude were sons of Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin Mary, by a former wife who had passed away<sup>5</sup>.

Jude's other brothers were Joseph and Simon (Matthew 13:55). Joseph was also called "Barsabas", "Justus" and "Judas" and was a prophet, and one of the leading men among the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 1:23, 15:22, 32). Joseph was put forward as one of the two candidates to replace Judas Iscariot, but the lot fell to Matthias (Acts 1:23-26). Simon has not been identified very well. Since "Simon" (from the Greek) and "Simeon" (from the Hebrew) are the same name, it is possible that the reference to "Simon" actually refers to "Simeon", Jesus' cousin. It is also possible that "Simon" was Simon the Zealot, one of the Twelve.

Jude was also known as Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13). The name "Lebbaeus" derives from the Hebrew name "Levi", and Jude was a descendant of Levi and Aaron through his great grandfather, Matthan (Figure 1). "Thaddaeus" also comes from the Hebrew (Aramaic) and means "praised"; this was the name Jude took following his baptism by John the Baptist. There was another Apostle, Thaddaeus, of the Seventy, who is sometimes confused with Jude.

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<sup>1</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, "Comments on the Epistle of Jude", Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus, 2, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Origen, Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, X, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, "Appendix to the Works of Hippolytus", In The Story of a Maiden of Corinth, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, Church History, III, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Jerome, in stating that the Virgin Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus, stated that the sons of Joseph were sons of Joseph's brother, Cleopas. Jerome does not seem to have considered the possibility that the Virgin Mary was Joseph's second wife. See Jerome, "The Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary", 15, Treatises, Post-Nicene Fathers v. 6.

Jude's brother, James, was the youngest of Joseph's children, and was about 10 years older than Jesus. During the Flight into Egypt to escape Herod's slaughter (Matthew 2:13-18), James accompanied Joseph<sup>6</sup>, Mary and Jesus since he was still too young to leave behind. Jude was older than James, but younger than Joseph and Simon. Just prior to Jesus' public ministry, at the time of the death of Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, sons Joseph and Simon and daughters Salome and Esther had already moved out of Joseph's house and had families of their own, while just Jude and James still lived at home<sup>7</sup>.

We can get a rough idea of Jude's age from the account of Matthias's selection to replace Judas Iscariot. Shortly after Pentecost, Peter announced that the Holy Spirit had spoken through the mouth of David that someone else should take the Bishopric of Judas. The Twelve proposed two candidates: Matthias and Joseph, called Barsabas and Justus, who was Jesus' stepbrother. These two had accompanied the Twelve "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John", and "one of these must become a witness with us of His Resurrection" (Acts 1:21-23). Matthias had been a student of the Elder Simeon<sup>8</sup>, who held Jesus at His Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:25-35). This places Matthias' age at about 20 years older than Jesus. The hint of age in the selection of Matthias is that Matthias and Joseph were the oldest and most mature of those who "went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John". If Joseph was also about 20 years older than Jesus, and James was about 10 years older, then Jude had to have been 12-18 years older than Jesus.

One of Jude's sisters was Salome, the wife of Zebedee the fisherman, and the mother of James and John. Salome was about the same age as the Virgin Mary (about 15 years older than Jesus) and she was especially close to Mary. Salome was one of the Myrrh-Bearing women at the Cross and at the Tomb following the Crucifixion (Mark 15:40, 16:1). Jude's other sister, Esther, was older and had her own family. She is not mentioned in the Scripture, and no record exists of her role in the Early Church.

Jude was one of the married men among the Apostles<sup>9</sup>, and Paul referred to this (1 Corinthians 9:5). From Paul's remarks, the implications are that Jude's wife accompanied him on at least some of his missionary journeys. If Jude was still unmarried at the death of his father, Joseph, and if Joseph died shortly before Jesus' public ministry, Jude must have married just before John the Baptist began to declare Jesus as the Christ.

Other married men among the Twelve included Peter and Philip. Jude had at least one child, as documented by Eusebius<sup>10</sup>, who quoted Hegesippus.

"Vespasian, after the conquest of Jerusalem, gave orders that all that belonged to the lineage of David should be sought out, in order that none of the royal race might be left among the Jews; and in consequence of this a most terrible persecution again hung over the Jews".

"But when Domitian became Emperor in 81 AD and had also commanded that the descendants of David should be slain, an ancient tradition says that some of the heretics brought accusation against the descendants of Jude (said to have

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<sup>6</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 23.

<sup>7</sup> "History of Joseph the Carpenter", 11, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 9.

<sup>9</sup> Tertullian, On Monogamy, "Elucidation number 2", IV, vi.

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius, Church History, III, 12, 19-20.

been a brother of the Savior according to the flesh), on the ground that they were of the lineage of David and were related to Christ himself. Hegesippus<sup>11</sup> relates these facts in the following words”.

“Of the family of the Lord there were still living the grandchildren of Jude, who is said to have been the Lord’s brother according to the flesh. Information was given that they belonged to the family of David, and they were brought to the Emperor Domitian by the Evocatus. For Domitian feared the coming of Christ as Herod also had feared it. And he asked them if they were descendants of David, and they confessed that they were. Then he asked them how much property they had, or how much money they owned. And both of them answered that they had only nine thousand denarii, half of which belonged to each of them; and this property did not consist of silver, but of a piece of land which contained only thirty-nine acres, and from which they raised their taxes and supported themselves by their own labor.” Then they showed their hands, exhibiting the hardness of their bodies and the callousness produced upon their hands by continuous toil as evidence of their own labor. And when they were asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what sort it was and where and when it was to appear, they answered that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when he should come in glory to judge the living and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works. Upon hearing this, Domitian did not pass judgment against them, but, despising them as of no account, he let them go, and by a decree put a stop to the persecution of the Church. But when they were released they ruled the churches because they were witnesses and were also relatives of the Lord. And peace being established, they lived until the time of Trajan<sup>12</sup>. These things are related by Hegesippus.

The hymns of the Church commemorate Jude as the brother of Christ in the following words:

“Emulating<sup>13</sup> the primal Goodness, the natural and all-divine Life, you were a man good in essence, O Jude, who are called the brother of the Lord. And you showed yourself to be a true disciple of Christ by the grace of your character and the beauty of your demeanor”.

“Your brethren<sup>14</sup> praise you, O Jude, as the brother of the preEternal Word Who appeared, shining forth from the ever-existing and un-originate Father, and deigned to appear in the flesh. Mortifying your members on the earth, you lived with Christ, the Life of all, O Thou Who are most rich, and were a herald of life-bearing Life for the whole world, announcing the words of life. You were the brother of the Master Who was born and became the brother of all the elect, O blessed and all-wise Jude. You were sent by Him as an Apostle unto all the ends of the earth, sowing the word of Faith among all and enlightening those who labored for the evil prince of this world in the darkness of ignorance. Wherefore

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<sup>11</sup> Hegesippus was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Church Historian, but most of his writings are now lost.

<sup>12</sup> Trajan was Emperor from 98 to 117 AD.

<sup>13</sup> “Sticheria for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Jude, the Brother of the Lord”, June 19<sup>th</sup>, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>14</sup> “Ode III for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Jude, the Brother of the Lord”, June 19<sup>th</sup>, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

we cry out to you: entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who honor your holy memory with love”.

“O blessed Jude<sup>15</sup>, your brethren praised you who were the brother of God and became the godly vessel of the Spirit. Illumined in purity with His splendors, you were shown to be an ember burning up falsehood, but illumining the faithful with the effulgence of pure doctrines. Wherefore, we honor you as a never-waning morning star, and we celebrate your holy memory, crying out to you with faith: Ever entreat Christ, that He grant the world oneness of mind, peace and great mercy”.

### **Jude at the Time of Jesus’ Public Ministry**

Jude was one of the Twelve who was an early follower of John the Baptist, and his heart was stirred<sup>16</sup> by the preaching of John:

“Jude came to Jerusalem to worship in the days of John the Baptist; and having heard his preaching and seen his angelic life, he was baptized, and his name was called Thaddaeus. And having seen the appearing of Christ, and His teaching, and His wonderful works, he followed Him, and became His disciple. And Jesus chose him as one of the Twelve, the tenth apostle according to the Evangelists Matthew and Mark” (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18).

In coming to follow John, Jude had to face up to a recent event about which he was very ashamed. Just prior to the coming out of John the Baptist, Jude’s father, Joseph, died of old age when he was 111 years old. Jesus was about 30 years old at this time (Luke 3:23), and He began His public ministry shortly after John began announcing His Coming (John 1:26-27). We note that Jesus’ father, Joseph, was conspicuously absent at the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1-12) immediately following Jesus’ baptism.

Joseph had four sons and at least two daughters by his first wife (see Figure 1); and as was the custom of the day, he wished to divide his property up between his sons before he died. Justus and Simon, the oldest, were married and had families of their own, as did his daughters. Jude and James still lived at home as did Jesus. At the urging of Jude, Justus and Simon felt that Jesus did not deserve a share of the inheritance since He was not really part of their family. They realized that Jesus was not the natural son of Joseph (they were correct!) and therefore they reasoned that He shouldn’t receive any of the inheritance. James protested and agreed to share half of his inheritance with Jesus<sup>17</sup>. Later on, James was referred to as “the Lord’s brother” because of this (Galatians 1:19).

James was devoted to Jesus and was very close to Him ever since the Flight to Egypt when he accompanied Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Some accounts state that Salome, Joseph’s daughter also accompanied Joseph, Mary and Jesus into Egypt<sup>18</sup>, and Salome was very close the Jesus’ mother the rest of her life.

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<sup>15</sup> “Ode IX for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Jude, the Brother of the Lord”, June 19<sup>th</sup>, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>16</sup> “Acts of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, One of the Twelve”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 23.

<sup>18</sup> “History of Joseph the Carpenter”, 8, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

During the early part of Jesus' public ministry, the Scripture states that Jesus' brothers "did not believe in Him" (John 7:5). The Apostle John stated this just after the Twelve had returned from being sent out two by two to heal the sick, cast out demons and raise the dead (Matthew 10:5-23). Since Jude had been sent out with the Twelve, this obviously refers to Simon and Justus, since Jude had already had his eyes opened as a result of his experience with John the Baptist and as a disciple of his Stepbrother. For the rest of his life, Jude was so ashamed of his earlier behavior, when he spoke in favor of denying Jesus a share of Joseph's estate, that he never referred to himself again as "the Lord's brother." Instead, out of humility, he referred to himself as "the brother of James" (Jude 1:1) in his Epistle and elsewhere. Justus and Simon also came around after Jude was numbered with the Twelve and they were sent out as members of the Seventy a year later (Luke 10:1-10).

Even though Justus and Simon "did not believe in Him" (John 7:5) at the time that Jude and the Twelve were sent out two-by-two, we might note that at least Justus still traveled everywhere with Jesus. Since Simon the Zealot was also one of the Twelve at this time, this suggests that Simon the Zealot was not one of Jesus' step brothers but was another more distant relative. Peter testifies to this when Justus was chosen as a candidate to replace Judas. He stated that Justus had accompanied the Twelve "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the Ascension" (Acts 1:21-23).

The one occasion we hear from Jude in the Gospels is during Holy Week when the Apostles were discussing Jesus' immanent return to His Father. Jude asked his Brother, "How will You reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?" The answer is that our love for Christ and our keeping His word opens the door. Jesus proceeded to say that: (1) Those who love Him will keep His Word. (2) Those who don't love Him, won't. (3) The Helper, the Holy Spirit, will be sent by the Father to teach them all things. The Apostles Thomas (John 14:5), Philip (John 14:9) and Jude (John 14:22) were all involved in this discussion.

Jesus stated, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him". Jude said to Him, 'Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.'" (John 14:21-26).

John Chrysostom commented<sup>19</sup> on Jude's questions by pointing out that the Apostles were confused (John 14:5, 8), troubled and fearful (John 14:27). They had heard what Jesus had said about rising from the dead, but they imagined that He would come to them from the grave as some kind of a dead-man-walking. What they really needed was the Holy Spirit to help them understand everything, and how it must happen this way. But the Holy Spirit would not be given while Jesus was still present, or they would ignore the Holy Spirit due to the prominence of Jesus' physical presence.

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<sup>19</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXV, 3.

“Do you see that their soul was pressed with fear? For Jude was confounded and troubled, and thought that as we see dead men in a dream, so Christ also would be seen. In order that they might not imagine this, hear what He said, ‘I and the Father will come unto him, and make Our abode with him’. Thus He was saying, ‘As the Father reveals Himself, so do I’. And not in this way only He removed the suspicion, but also by saying, ‘We will make Our abode with him’, a thing which does not happen in dreams. But observe the disciple confounded, and not daring to say plainly what he desired to say. For he did not say, ‘Woe to us, that You will die, and will come to us as the dead come’. But he said, ‘How is it that You will show Yourself to us, and not to the world?’ Jesus then said, ‘I accept you, because you keep My commandments’. In order that they might not, when they should see Him afterwards, think Him to be an apparition, therefore He said these things beforehand. And that they might not think that He would appear to them as an apparition, He tells them also the reason, ‘Because you keep My commandments’. He said that the Spirit also will appear in like manner”.

“Now if after having accompanied Him so long, they cannot yet endure that Essence, or rather cannot even imagine It, what would have been their case had He appeared thus to them at the first, when they were called? On this account also He ate with them, that the action might not seem to be an illusion. For if they thought this when they saw Him walking on the waters (Mark 6:47-50), although His form was seen by them, and He was not far distant, what would they have imagined had they suddenly seen Him arisen whom they had seen taken and embalmed (John 19:38-41)? Wherefore He continually told them that He will appear, and why He will appear, and how, that they may not suppose Him to be an apparition”.

“‘He that will not hear these sayings not only does not love Me, but neither does he love the Father’. For if this is the sure proof of love, the hearing the commandments, and these are of the Father, he that hears them loves not the Son only, but the Father also. The Son does not speak without the Father, nor say anything of Himself contrary to what seems good to Him.”

“Since these sayings were not clear, and since some of them did not understand, and doubted about the greater number, in order that they might not be again confused, and say, “What commands?” He released them from all their perplexity, saying, ‘The Comforter, whom the Father shall send in My Name, He shall teach you’”.

“‘Perhaps these things are not clear to you now, but The Comforter is a clear teacher of them’. And when He said that the Spirit, ‘dwells with you’ (John 14:17), this is the expression of One implying that Himself will depart. Then that they may not be grieved, He said, that as long as He should remain with them and the Spirit should not come, they would be unable to comprehend anything great or sublime. And this He said to prepare them to bear nobly His departure, as that which was to be the cause of great blessings to them. He continually called Him ‘Comforter’, because of the afflictions which then possessed them”.

## Jude During the First Year of the Church

In the first year of the Church, the Book of Acts describes several encounters between the Apostles and the religious leaders. In all cases, either Peter or John is quoted as being the spokesman for the Apostles. On Pentecost, Peter was described “standing with the Eleven” (Acts 2:14) in his message to the people who were confused by the events taking place. When Peter and John healed the lame man, the man held onto both Peter and John, but Peter was the one who spoke to the people about what had happened (Acts 3:1-12). When Peter and John were arrested for this, it was Peter who spoke in their defense (Acts 4:1-8). When the Twelve were arrested and put in prison, an angel let them out during the night. Summoned before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin, the account reads that Peter *and the other Apostles answered* and said, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:17-29).

Few details are given in Acts regarding the exact accusations that were brought against the Apostles, or who of the Twelve answered these accusations. Pseudo Clement<sup>20</sup> records one example where Jude responded after Bartholomew and James the son of Alphaeus:

“Then a certain Pharisee, hearing this, chided Philip because he put Jesus on a level with Moses. To whom Bartholomew, answering, boldly declared that we do not only say that Jesus was equal to Moses, but that He was greater than he, because Moses was indeed a prophet, as Jesus was also, but that Moses was not the Christ, as Jesus was, and therefore He is doubtless greater who is both a prophet and the Christ, than he who is only a prophet. After following out this train of argument, he stopped. After him James the son of Alphaeus gave an address to the people, with the view of showing that we are not to believe on Jesus on the ground that the prophets foretold concerning Him, but rather that we are to believe the prophets, that they were really prophets, because the Christ bears testimony to them. For it is the presence and coming of Christ that show that they are truly prophets: for testimony must be born by the superior to his inferiors, not by the inferiors to their superior. After these and many similar statements, James also was silent”.

“After him Jude began vehemently to charge it upon the people that they did not believe in Jesus, who had done them so much good by teaching them the things that are of God, by comforting the afflicted, healing the sick, relieving the poor; yet for all these benefits their return had been hatred and death. When he had declared these and many more such things to the people, he ceased”.

In the first year of the Church, Peter, James and John were the undisputed leaders among the Apostles. But they each remembered what their Lord had said when James and John had asked to sit on His Right and Left in His Kingdom. “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).

Eusebius, quoting a now-lost document by Clement of Rome, stated<sup>21</sup> that Peter, James and John took the Lord’s words to heart, and did not seek their own honor.

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<sup>20</sup> Pseudo-Clement, Recognitions of Clement, I, 59.

“Then James, whom the ancients surnamed ‘the Just’ on account of the excellence of his virtue, is recorded to have been the first to be made bishop of the Church of Jerusalem. This James was called the brother of the Lord because he was known as a son of Joseph. But Clement in the sixth book of his Hypotyposes writes<sup>22</sup> thus: ‘For they say that Peter, James (Zebedee) and John after the Ascension of our Savior, as if also preferred by our Lord, strove not after honor, but chose James the Just (i.e. Jude’s brother) Bishop of Jerusalem’. But the same writer, in the seventh book of the same work, relates<sup>64</sup> also the following things concerning him. ‘The Lord after his resurrection imparted knowledge to James the Just and to John and Peter, and they imparted it to the rest of the Apostles, and the rest of the Apostles to the Seventy, of whom Barnabas was one’”.

Thus James the Lord’s brother replaced James the son of Zebedee as one of the three leaders of the Early Church. James the son of Zebedee had left for mission work in Spain, and he didn’t return until just before his martyrdom by Herod (Acts 12:2).

### **Thomas Sends Thaddaeus of the Seventy to Mesopotamia and Armenia**

Since Jude was also named Thaddaeus, it is important to distinguish his work from that of Thaddaeus of the Seventy. Among the archives of the city of Edessa in Mesopotamia were records of the work of two Apostles named Thaddaeus. Edessa was destroyed by the Persians in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, but church historians like Eusebius (4<sup>th</sup> Century) obtained access to the Edessa archives prior to the destruction of the city.

One of the two Apostles to visit Edessa was Jude and the other was Thaddaeus of the Seventy. Thaddaeus of the Seventy went to Edessa first, shortly after the Ascension, and was sent there by the Apostle Thomas. Jude went to Edessa later to confirm the work of Thaddaeus, just as Peter and John were sent to Samaria to confirm the work of the Deacon Philip (Acts 8:4-17), who was also one of the Seventy. To understand the work of Jude, then, one must know about the work of Thaddaeus of the Seventy.

Prior to leaving on his missionary journeys, Thomas sent Thaddaeus, also called Addaeus, one of the Seventy, on a mission to Mesopotamia. Thaddaeus was a native of Edessa<sup>23</sup> who had come to Jerusalem along with many other pilgrims (Acts 2:9), and had become a follower of John the Baptist when he arrived. Several accounts of his missionary work exist today. Following is an excerpt<sup>24</sup> from the account from the Church Historian, Eusebius:

“The divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ being noised abroad among all men on account of his wonder-working power, he attracted countless numbers from foreign countries lying far away from Judea, who had the good fortune of being cured of their diseases and of all kinds of sufferings. For instance the King Abgar, who ruled with great glory the nations beyond the Euphrates, was afflicted with a terrible disease, which it was beyond the power of human

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<sup>21</sup> Eusebius, Church History, II, 1.

Clement of Alexandria, “Catena on Luke, edited by Corderius”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 2.

<sup>22</sup> These works of Clement of Rome, who was Bishop of Rome from c. 66 to c. 99 AD, are now lost, and most of the information we have about Clement’s work comes from others who quote him.

<sup>23</sup> See Greek Orthodox web site, [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org) for August 21 (Thaddaeus).

<sup>24</sup> Eusebius, Church History, I, 13

Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Story Concerning the King of Edessa”, Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.



skill to cure. When he heard of the Name of Jesus, and of His miracles, which were attested by all with one accord, he sent a message to Him by a courier and begged Him to heal his disease. But Jesus did not at that time comply with his request; yet He deemed him worthy of a personal letter in which He said that he would send one of His disciples to cure his disease, and at the same time promised salvation to himself and all his house. Not long afterward His promise was fulfilled”.

“For after His resurrection from the dead and His ascent into heaven, Thomas, one of the Twelve Apostles, under divine impulse sent Thaddeus, who was also numbered among the Seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa, as a preacher and evangelist of the teaching of Christ. And all that our Savior had promised received its fulfillment through him. You have written evidence of these things taken from the archives of Edessa, which was at that time a royal city. For in the public registers there, which contain accounts of ancient times and the acts of Abgar, these things have been found preserved down to the present time. But there is no better way than to hear the epistles themselves which we have taken from the archives and have literally translated from the Syriac language in the following manner”.

Following is a copy of the letter<sup>25</sup> which was written by King Abgar to Jesus, and sent to Him by the hand of Ananias, the Tabularius, to Jerusalem:

“Abgar the Black, sovereign of the country, to Jesus, the good Savior, who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem: Peace. I have heard about You, and about the healing which is wrought by Your hands without drugs and roots. For, as it is reported, You make the blind to see, and the lame to walk. You cleanse the lepers; You cast out unclean spirits and demons; You heal those who are tormented with lingering diseases; and You raise the dead. And when I heard all these things about You, I settled in my mind one of two things. Either You are God, who has come down from heaven and do these things, or You are the Son of God and do these things. On this account, therefore, I have written to beg of You that You would weary Yourself to come to me, and heal this disease which I have. For I have also heard that the Jews murmur against You, and wish to do You harm. But I have a city, small and beautiful, which is sufficient for two”.

According to tradition<sup>26</sup>, the courier, Ananias, that brought Abgar’s request to Jesus, was a painter. Abgar had instructed him that if Jesus could not come to heal him, he was to paint an icon of Jesus. Abgar believed that the portrait would heal him. Aware of this, Jesus took a napkin and wiped His face with it, leaving a perfect impression of His face on the napkin. Jesus then gave this napkin to Ananias, with a message to say that he would be healed partially by it. Later He would send him an envoy, who would rid him of the remainder of the disease. Receiving the napkin, Abgar kissed it and most of the leprosy fell from his body, with a little remaining on his face. When Thaddaeus, of the Seventy, came, he completed the job.

In later centuries, this napkin was framed and placed above the city gate of Edessa. This napkin came to be referred to as ‘The Icon of our Lord Jesus Christ Not-Made-With-Hands’, and August 16<sup>th</sup> has been set aside as a Feast Day in the Church to remember this miraculous icon. When Abgar’s great grandsons restored idolatry, the Bishop of Edessa came by night and walled in the icon above the city gate to prevent its destruction. Succeeding generations forgot that the

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<sup>25</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “The Story Concerning the King of Edessa”, from the History of the Church in the Memoirs of Edessa, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8

<sup>26</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 16.

icon was there. During the reign of Emperor Justinian (527-565 AD), when the Persians attacked Edessa, the Bishop of Edessa, Eulabius, had a vision from the Virgin Mary about the secret of the icon, and retrieved it. The icon was later destroyed during the Islamic Conquests.

The hymns of the Church also celebrate Thaddaeus' work in Edessa, which began very soon after Pentecost, and before the scattering of the faithful at the death of Stephen, which occurred one year after Pentecost:

“O blessed<sup>27</sup> and God-pleasing Thaddaeus, after the divine and radiant Resurrection of Christ and His all-holy Ascension into heaven, you engaged in the preaching of God for the city of Edessa. By your words and miracles you confirmed in the truth Abgar, the local ruler, and all with him”.

“Performing miracles<sup>28</sup> through the invocation of Christ, Who manifested Himself in bodily manner, O all-praised one, you drew people and cities to the excellent Faith. You brought an end to the decay of ungodliness, O blessed Apostle, with the divine salt of your sweet words. You healed hearts wounded by the darts of the serpent, crying: O God of our fathers, blessed are You. Caught up to the heights of vision and filled with the divine Spirit, O Thaddaeus, you were divinely enriched by the saving Word and taught men to cry: Blessed is the God of our fathers!”

Moses of Chorene also gives an account<sup>29</sup> of the work of Thaddaeus in Edessa:

“After the ascension of our Savior, the Apostle Thomas, one of the twelve, sent one of the seventy-six disciples, Thaddaeus, to the city of Edessa to heal Abgar and to preach the Gospel, according to the word of the Lord. Thaddaeus came to the house of Tobias, a Jewish prince, who is said to have been of the race of the Pacradouni. Tobias, having left Archam, did not abandon Judaism with the rest of his relatives, but followed its laws up to the moment when he believed in Christ. Soon the name of Thaddaeus spread through the whole town, as he began to heal every disease and sickness by the power of God, so that all men were amazed<sup>30</sup>. Abgar, on learning of his arrival, said: ‘This is indeed he concerning whom Jesus sent word to me’, and immediately Abgar sent for the Apostle. When Thaddaeus entered, a marvelous appearance presented itself to the eyes of Abgar in the countenance of the Apostle; the king having risen from his throne, fell on his face to the earth, and prostrated himself before Thaddaeus. This spectacle greatly surprised all the princes who were present, for they were ignorant of the fact of the vision. ‘Are you really’, said Abgar to Thaddaeus, ‘the disciple of the ever-blessed Jesus? Are you he whom He promised to send to me, and can you heal my maladies?’ ‘Yes’, answered Thaddaeus; ‘if you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the desires of your heart shall be granted’. ‘I have believed in Jesus’, said Abgar, ‘and I have believed in His Father. Therefore I

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<sup>27</sup> “Six Stichera for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, August 21<sup>st</sup>”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>28</sup> “Ode VII for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, August 21<sup>st</sup>”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>29</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “Moses of Chorene: The History of Armenia”, 8, Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>30</sup> The work of Thaddaeus in his native Edessa was accompanied by spectacular miracles very similar to the work of the Deacon Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:4-8).

wished to go at the head of my troops to destroy the Jews who have crucified Jesus, had I not been prevented by reason of the power of the Romans”.

“Thenceforth Thaddaeus began to preach the Gospel to the king and his town; laying his hands upon Abgar, he cured him; he cured also a man with gout, Abdu, a prince of the town, much honored in all the king’s house. He also healed all the sick and infirm people in the town, and all believed in Jesus Christ. Abgar was baptized<sup>31</sup>, and the whole town with him. The temples of the false gods were closed, and they hid all the statues of idols, which were placed on the altars and columns, by being covered with reeds. Abgar did not compel any one to embrace the Faith, yet from day to day the number of the believers was multiplied”.

The hymns of the Church celebrate the impact of the work of Thaddaeus in Edessa:

“Going to King Abgar<sup>32</sup>, O wise one, by divinely efficacious gestures you brought him healing and deliverance. You built Churches for the all-accomplishing Spirit, O wise one, and destroyed the vile temples of mortals”.

“Possessed of a lofty intelligence<sup>33</sup>, O Thaddaeus, disciple of the King of all, you received divine understanding and spiritual gifts. In teaching the divine mysteries, O blessed one, who are most rich, you enlightened the uninstructed to worship the consubstantial Trinity. You engraved the Law of God upon men’s hearts, O blessed one, having first erased the traces of ignorance and the false worship of graven images”.

“The enlightenment<sup>34</sup> of the Holy Spirit which dwelt within your heart, O Thaddaeus, made of you a true luminary for the world, dispersing the darkness of falsehood. Bearing in your flesh the saving wounds of Christ as an ornament, O wise Thaddaeus, you delivered the people from all ugliness and were taken up into most beautiful joy. You revealed to us the morning Sun of righteousness, O glorious Thaddaeus, showing those mortals who have been illumined thereby to be children of the noetic Light”.

“You were shown<sup>35</sup> to be a heaven declaring the glory of God, O Thaddaeus, and were the enlightenment of nations, leading to the divine Faith those who fervently cry: ‘Hymn the Lord and exalt Him supremely forever!’ Bestowing strength upon the infirm, sight upon the blind, and the ability to walk upon the lame through the power of the Spirit, O blessed Thaddaeus, you were a luminary of the city of Edessa, which ever praises you with faith. Thaddaeus, who by a wealth of miracles brought an unbelieving nation to the Faith at the behest of God, saved those who fled to him from the falsehood of idolatry.”

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<sup>31</sup> Abgar’s baptism may have occurred a little later when Jude arrived.

<sup>32</sup> “Ode III for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, August 21<sup>st</sup>”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>33</sup> “Ode IV for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, August 21<sup>st</sup>”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>34</sup> “Ode VI for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, August 21<sup>st</sup>”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>35</sup> “Ode VIII for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, August 21<sup>st</sup>”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

The account of Moses of Chorene continues<sup>36</sup> to describe a series of letters exchanged between Abgar, king of Armenia, and Tiberius Caesar. Abgar urged Tiberius to punish the Jews for crucifying Jesus, but Tiberius had other matters pressing, such as a war in Spain and opposition in the Senate, and declined. Abgar wrote back that Tiberius should at least bring Pontius Pilate to Rome on charges and replace him. This Tiberius did, for he had heard from Mary Magdalene, who had traveled to Rome to expose those who unjustly condemned Christ. She told Tiberias the whole story of Pilate's unjust trial, the release of a murderer and insurrectionist in His place and of the cowering of Pilate to the plotting of the Jewish leaders (Acts 3:13-15, Matthew 27:15-24). By the time Pilate arrived in Rome, Tiberias had died and Caius Caligula was Emperor. Pilate was unable to defend himself and was banished to Gaul where he committed suicide<sup>37</sup>. Pilate's wife, Procula, came to believe in Christ and lived an ascetic life along with others of the Holy Women<sup>38</sup>. She had sent word to her husband during Jesus' trial to "have nothing to do with that Just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him" (Matthew 27:19).

### **The Work of Thaddaeus (Addaeus) of the Seventy in Other Cities<sup>39</sup>**

"Aggaeus, who made the silks and headbands of the king, and Palut, and Barshelama, and Barsamya, together with the others their companions, cleaved to Addaeus the apostle. And he received them, and associated them with him in the ministry, their business being to read in the Old Testament and the New, and in the prophets, and in the Acts of the Apostles, and to meditate upon them daily. He strictly charged them to let their bodies be pure and their persons holy, as is becoming in men who stand before the altar of God. 'And put far from you unjust partiality<sup>40</sup>, and bribes, and presents, through which the innocent are pronounced guilty (Deuteronomy 1:16-18). And along with this ministry, to which you have been called, see that you have no other work besides. For the Lord is the work of your ministry all the days of your life. And be diligent to give the seal of baptism. And be not fond of the gains of this world. And hear your cause with justice and with truth. And do not be a stumbling block to the blind, lest through you should be blasphemed the Name of Him who opened the eyes of the blind, according as we have seen. Let all, therefore, who see you perceive that you yourselves are in harmony with whatsoever you preach and teach"

"And they ministered with him in the church which Addaeus had built at the word and command of Abgar the king, being furnished with supplies by the king and his nobles, partly for the house of God, and partly for the supply of the poor. Moreover, many people day by day assembled and came to the prayers of the service, and to the reading of the Old Testament, and the New. The festivals of the Church they also observed in their seasons, and were assiduous every day in the vigils of the Church. And they made visits of almsgiving, to the sick and to those that were whole, according to the instruction of Addaeus to them. In the environs of the

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<sup>36</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "Moses of Chorene: The History of Armenia", 8, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Eusebius, *Church History*, II, vii

<sup>38</sup> The Feast Day for Saint Procula is celebrated in the Orthodox Church on October 27.

<sup>39</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "The Teaching of Addaeus the Apostle", *Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents*, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>40</sup> This quote from Deuteronomy is one of the Old Testament Readings used for the Fathers of the Church that are commemorated in mid July and mid October. The message is that the Fathers of the Church have taken the place among the people of God that used to be occupied by the Levitical judges prescribed by Moses (Deuteronomy 17:8-13, 19:15-21) and which was forfeited by the Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:2) for lack of justice (Matthew 23:14, 28-35).

city, churches were built, and many received from him ordination to the priesthood. So that even people of the East, in the guise of merchants, passed over into the territory of the Romans, that they might see the signs which Addaeus did. And such as became disciples received from him ordination to the priesthood, and in their own country of the Assyrians they instructed the people of their nation, and erected houses of prayer there in secret, by reason of the danger from those who worshipped fire and paid reverence to water”.

In another account<sup>41</sup> of the history of Edessa, Abgar, the king, was humble enough to work alongside Thaddaeus in the building of churches.

“To Edessa Thaddaeus made his journey, and found in it a great work: For the king became a laborer for the church, and was building it. The apostle Addaeus stood in it like a builder, and King Abgar laid aside his diadem and built with him. When apostle and king concurred, the one with the other, what idol must not fall before them? Satan fled to the land of Babylon from the disciples, and the tale of the crucifixion went before him to the country of the Chaldeans”.

“Moreover<sup>42</sup>, Narses (who was related to Abgar), the king of the Assyrians, when he heard of those same things, which Addaeus the apostle had done, sent a message to Abgar the king. ‘Either send to me the man who does these signs before you, that I may see him and hear his word, or send me an account of all that you have seen him do in your own town’. And Abgar wrote to Narses, and related to him the whole story of the deeds of Addaeus from the beginning to the end. And, when Narses heard those things, which were written to him, he was astonished and amazed.

“And some years after Addaeus the apostle had built the church in Edessa, and had furnished it with everything that was suitable for it, and had made disciples of a great number of the population of the city, he further built churches in the villages also. There were both those, which were at a distance, and those, which were near. And he finished and adorned them, and appointed in them deacons and elders, and instructed in them those who should read the Scriptures, and taught the ordinances and the ministry without and within”.

“After all these things he fell ill of the sickness of which he departed from this world. And he called for Aggaeus before the whole assembly of the church, and bade him draw near, and made him Guide and Ruler<sup>43</sup> in his stead. And Palut, who was a deacon, he made elder; and Abshelama, who was a scribe, he made deacon. And he assembled the nobles and chief men, Barcalba son of Zati, Maryhab son of Barshemash, Senac son of Avida, and Piroz son of Patric, together with the rest of their companions. And Addaeus, the apostle, said to them, ‘You know and are witness, all of you who hear me, that, according to all that I have preached to you and taught you and you have heard from me. Even so have I behaved myself in the midst of you, and you have seen it in deeds also. Because our Lord thus charged us, that, whatsoever we preach in words before the people, we should practice it in deeds before all men”’.

“For three days more Addaeus the apostle spoke and encouraged the people who had heard and received the testimony concerning the teaching set forth in the preaching from those engaged with him in the ministry, in the presence of all the nobles, he departed out of this world. And the whole city was in great mourning and bitter anguish for him. Nor was it the Christians

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<sup>41</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “Extracts from Various Books Concerning Abgar the King and Addaeus the Apostle”, II, vii, Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>42</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of Addaeus the Apostle”, Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>43</sup> The term “Guide” and “Ruler” later came to refer to the title “Bishop”.

only that were distressed for him, but the Jews also, and the pagans, who were in this same town. But Abgar the king was distressed for him more than any one, he and the princes of his kingdom. And in the sadness of his soul he despised and laid aside the magnificence of his kingly state on that day, and with tears mingled with moans he bewailed him with all men. And all the people of the city that saw him were amazed to see how greatly he suffered on his account. And with great and surpassing pomp he bore him, and buried him like one of the princes when he dies. And he laid him in a grand sepulcher adorned with sculpture wrought by the fingers — that in which were laid those of the house of Ariu, the ancestors of Abgar the king. There he laid him sorrowfully, with sadness and great distress. And all the people of the church went there from time to time and prayed fervently; and they kept up the remembrance of his departure from year to year, according to the command and direction, which had been received by them from Addaeus the apostle. This was according to the word of Aggaeus, who himself became Guide and Ruler, and the successor of his seat after him, by the ordination to the priesthood which he had received from him in the presence of all men”.

“He too, with the same ordination which he had received from him, made Priests and Guides in the whole of this country of Mesopotamia. For they also, in like manner as Addaeus the apostle, held fast his word, and listened to and received it, as good and faithful successors of the apostle of the adorable Christ. But silver and gold he took not from any man, nor did the gifts of the princes come near him. For, instead of receiving gold and silver, he himself enriched the Church of Christ with the souls of believers”.

“Moreover, as regards the entire state of the men and the women, they were chaste and circumspect, and holy and pure. For they lived like anchorites and chastely, without spot — in circumspect watchfulness touching the ministry, in their sympathy toward the poor, in their visitations to the sick. For their footsteps were fraught with praise from those who saw them, and their conduct was arrayed in commendation from strangers. So that even the priests of the house of Nebu and Bel divided the honor with them at all times, by reason of their dignified aspect, their truthful words, their frankness of speech arising from their noble nature, which was neither subservient through covetousness nor in bondage under the fear of blame”.

“And some years after the death of Abgar the king, there arose one of his contumacious sons, who was not favorable to peace; and he sent word to Aggaeus, as he was sitting in the church. ‘Make me a headband of gold, such as you used to make for my fathers in former times’. Aggaeus sent to him, ‘I will not give up the ministry of Christ, which was committed to me by the disciple of Christ, and make a headband of wickedness’. And, when he saw that he did not comply, he sent and broke his legs as he was sitting in the church expounding. And as he was dying he adjured Palut and Abshelama. ‘In this house, for whose truth’s sake, I am dying, lay me and bury me’. And, even as he had adjured them, so did they lay him — inside the middle door of the church, between the men and the women. And there was great and bitter mourning in all the church, and in all the city — over and above the anguish and the mourning which there had been within the church, such as had been the mourning when Addaeus the apostle himself died”.

“And, in consequence of his dying suddenly and quickly at the breaking of his legs, he was not able to lay his hand upon Palut. Palut went to Antioch, and received ordination to the priesthood from Serapion<sup>44</sup>, bishop of Antioch”.

Moses of Chorene stated<sup>45</sup> that it was to this same area of Armenia that the Apostle Nathanael (i.e. Bartholomew) went in about 90 AD, and this is where Nathanael was martyred:

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<sup>44</sup> Serapion was a contemporary of Irenaeus in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. This indicates that Antioch as a See or Patriarchate was already well established by then.

“After the death of Abgar, the kingdom of Armenia was divided between two people. Ananoun, Abgar’s son, reigned at Edessa, and his sister’s son, Sanadroug, in Armenia.

There came then into Armenia the Apostle Bartholomew, who suffered martyrdom among us in the town of Arepan. As to Simon (the Zealot), who was sent unto Persia, I cannot relate with certainty what he did, nor where he suffered martyrdom. It is said that one Simon, an Apostle, was martyred at Veriospore”.

## **The Missionary Journeys of Jude**

According to the Church Historian Nicephorus<sup>46</sup>, “Jude, who had the dual title of ‘Thaddaeus’ and ‘Lebbaeus’, the son of Joseph and brother of James, preached the Gospel first in Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Idumaea and afterward in Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia. Finally he came to Edessa, which belonged to King Abgar, where the Gospel had been preached before him by another Thaddaeus, one of the Seventy Apostles. There the Apostle Jude set about and completed what had not been finished by that Thaddaeus”. One account<sup>47</sup> of the work of Jude in Edessa reads as follows:

“And after the passion, and the resurrection, and the ascension, Jude went to Abgar; and having found him in health, he gave him an account of the incarnation of Christ<sup>48</sup>, and baptized him, with all his house. And having instructed great multitudes, both of Hebrews and Greeks, Syrians and Armenians, he baptized them in the Name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, having anointed them with the holy perfume<sup>49</sup>. And he communicated to them of the undefiled mysteries of the sacred body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and delivered to them to keep and observe the law of Moses<sup>50</sup>, and to give close heed to the things that had been said by the apostles in Jerusalem. For year by year they came together to the Passover, and again he imparted to them the Holy Spirit. And Jude, along with Abgar, destroyed idol-temples and built churches; ordained as bishop one of his disciples, and presbyters, and deacons, and gave them the rule of the psalmody and the holy liturgy”.

Leaving Edessa, Jude went farther Southeast toward the Tigris River along with his disciples:

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<sup>45</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “Moses of Chorene: The History of Armenia”, 9, Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Isaac Lambertsen, *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 229-230. This is a translation from the following:  
*The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Moscow, Synodal Press, 1908, v. 10, (June) pp. 413-417.*

<sup>47</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, One of the Twelve”, *Apocrypha of the New Testament*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Jude was about the same age as the Virgin Mary. For him to give an account of the Incarnation, this was from the perspective of a close observer and one of the family, since he was Jesus’ step-brother.

<sup>49</sup> This would be called Holy Chrism today.

<sup>50</sup> By “keeping the Law of Moses”, Jude is not teaching things contrary to what his brother James decreed at the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD (Acts 15:13-29). He is using the Law as a pedagogue or tutor to bring new believers to faith in Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). Jude was certainly aware of the letter his brother wrote to the Gentile Churches (Acts 15:23-29), and he may have carried a copy with him just like Paul did (Acts 15:30-35).

“And having left them, he went to the city of Amis, great metropolis of the Mesechaldeans and Syrians, that is, of Mesopotamia-Syria, beside the river Tigris. And having gone into the synagogue of the Jews along with his disciples on the Sabbath-day, after the reading of the law the high priest said to Thaddaeus and his disciples: Men, where are you from? And why are you here?”

“And Thaddaeus said, ‘No doubt you have heard what has taken place in Jerusalem about Jesus Christ. We are His disciples, and witnesses of the wonderful things which He did and taught, and how through hatred the chief priests delivered Him to Pilate, the procurator of Judea. And Pilate, having examined Him and found no case, wished to let Him go; but they cried out, ‘If you let him go, you art not Caesar’s friend, because he proclaims himself king’ (John 19:12). And Pilate, being afraid, washed his hands in the sight of the multitude, and said, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this man; you see to it’. And the chief priests answered and said, ‘His blood be upon us and our children’ (Matthew 27:24-25). And Pilate gave him up to them. And they took Him, and spit upon Him, with the soldiers, and made a great mockery of Him, and crucified Him, and laid Him in the tomb, and secured it well, having also set guards upon Him (Matthew 27:62-66). And on the third day before dawn He rose, leaving His burial-clothes in the tomb (John 19:38-42, 20:6-8). And He was seen first by His mother and other women (Matthew 28:9, John 20:11-18), and by Peter and John first of my fellow disciples (John 20:1-6), and thereafter to us the Twelve, who ate and drank with Him after His resurrection for many days (Luke 24:40-41). And He sent us in His Name to proclaim repentance and remission of sins to all the nations (Matthew 28:19-20), that those who were baptized, having had the kingdom of the heavens preached to them, would rise up incorruptible at the end of this age (1 Corinthians 15:43-53). And He gave us power to expel demons, and heal every disease and every malady, and raise the dead (Matthew 10:7-8). And the multitudes having heard this, brought together their sick and demoniacs. And Jude, having gone forth along with his disciples, laid his hand upon each one of them, and healed them all by calling upon the Name of Christ. And the demoniacs were healed before Jude came near them, the spirits going out of them. And for many days the people ran together from different places, and beheld what was done by Jude. And hearing his teaching, many believed, and were baptized, confessing their sins”.

“Having therefore remained with them for five years, he built a church; and having appointed as bishop one of his disciples, and presbyters, and deacons, he prayed for them”.

Leaving Mesopotamia<sup>51</sup>, Jude went around the cities of Syria, and teaching, and healing all the sick; where he brought many cities and countries to Christ through His teaching. Teaching, therefore, and evangelizing along with the disciples, and healing the sick, he went to Berytus (modern Beirut), a city of Phoenicia by the sea; and there, having taught and enlightened many, he fell asleep<sup>52</sup>. And the disciples having come together, buried him with great honor; and many sick were healed, and they gave glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>51</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, One of the Twelve”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>52</sup> Hippolytus, On the Twelve Apostles, 10 also states that Jude fell asleep at Berytus.



Other accounts describe Jude's missionary journeys in Armenia, where he was crucified and shot through with arrows while hanging on the Cross. Following is an account of Jude's resurrection from the dead as the Twelve Apostles were gathered for the funeral of the Virgin Mary. Following the funeral of Mary in c. 55 AD, Jude must have gone to Armenia where he was martyred.

### **Jude's Presence at the Virgin Mary's Funeral**

In the mid 50's AD, the Virgin Mary had reached her mid 70's, and she was feeling the effects of old age. Jude was also in his mid 70's and he had fallen asleep in Beirut. And it was then that the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that her departure was imminent<sup>53</sup>, and would occur in three days.

Shortly after Gabriel left, the Apostle John was translated in a bright cloud from wherever he was at the time. This was similar to the way the Deacon Philip was translated from the desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza to Azotus (Acts 8:26, 39-40), and as Habakkuk the prophet carried food to Daniel, who was in the lions' den, and quickly returned to Judaea<sup>54</sup>. There is some disagreement among the Church Fathers as to whether John was in Ephesus or in some region of Judea. They contend that John did not leave the Virgin Mary alone during her lifetime, unless it was just briefly in the care of her stepson, James, the Lord's brother.

After John arrived<sup>55</sup>, "the rest of the Twelve arrived also from whatever part of the world where they were then preaching the Gospel. Peter came from Rome<sup>56</sup>, Paul from Tiberia, Thomas from Hither India, James from Jerusalem. Andrew, Peter's brother, and Philip, Luke, and Simon the Zealot, and Jude, who had fallen asleep, were raised by the Holy Spirit out of their tombs. To them the Holy Spirit said, 'Do not think that it is now the resurrection; but on this account you have risen out of your tombs, that you may go to give greeting to the honor and wonder-working of the mother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, because the day of her departure is at hand, of her going up into the heavens'. And Mark likewise coming around, was present from Alexandria; he also with the rest, from each country".

All of the Twelve arrived except Thomas. They stood and went in, and greeted the queen mother with the following words: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord be with you' (Luke 1:28). And she eagerly rose quickly, and bowed herself, and kissed them, and gave thanks to God. And Peter answered and said to the Apostles, 'Let us each, according to what the Holy Spirit announced and commanded us, give full information to the mother of our Lord'. And those who had come likewise agreed to give an account of how they had come. So each of the Twelve gave Mary an account of where they were when they were summoned".

"Then the blessed Mary said to her brethren: 'What is this, that you have all come to Jerusalem?' Peter, answering, said to her: 'We had need to ask this of you. Certainly, as I think, none of us knows why we have come here today with such rapidity. And they all wondered that

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<sup>53</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, v.8.

Roberts and Donaldson, "The Passing of Mary", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, v.8.

<sup>54</sup> Lancelot C. L. Brenton, "Bel and the Dragon 1:33-39", *The Septuagint with Apocrypha*, Hendrickson, Peabody MA, 1990

<sup>55</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form", *Apocrypha of the New Testament*, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, v.8.

they were there when they heard these things. The blessed Mary said to them: ‘I asked my Son, before He endured the passion, that He and you should be at my death; and He granted me this gift. Whence you may know that my departure will be tomorrow’”.

“After Mary’s death the next day, the Apostles with great honor laid the body in a tomb on the Mount of Olives, then Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olives, like the others had been brought earlier. He saw Mary’s body going up to heaven, and began to cry out to her. Then the waistband with which the Apostles had encircled her body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, finding all the Apostles and a great crowd there. Then Thomas said, ‘Where have you laid her body?’ And they pointed out the sepulcher with their finger. And he said, ‘The body is not there’. But they didn’t believe Thomas. Then they went to the sepulcher, which was a new one hollowed out in the rock, and took up the stone; but they did not find the body, and did not know what to say. Then Thomas told them how he was singing mass in India — he still had on his sacerdotal robes. He, not knowing the word of God, had been brought to the Mount of Olives, and saw the body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing. She heard his prayer, and threw him her waistband, which she had about her. And the Apostles seeing the belt which they had put about her, glorified God, on account of the benediction which the blessed Mary had given him, and because he had seen her body going up into heaven. Then Thomas gave them his benediction, and said, ‘Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!’”

“And the same cloud<sup>57</sup> by which they had been brought carried them back each to his own place. And so also the Apostles quickly returned to where they had at first been, to preach to the people of God”. Jude then resumed his missionary journeys where he had left off.

### **The Continuation of Jude’s Missionary Journeys**

From the letters contained in the archives of the city of Edessa, Jude and Simon the Zealot worked together to some extent in Armenia, Mesopotamia and Persia. Good communication existed between Abgar, king of Armenia (at Edessa) and other kings of Persia and Assyria. In his letters, Abgar proclaimed<sup>58</sup> the Apostles to his fellow kings. In these letters, Abgar states that Simon was sent primarily into Persia while Jude and Thaddaeus (of the Seventy) were sent primarily into Armenia.

“Abgar placed copies of his letters in his archives. He wrote to the young Nerseh, king of Assyria, at Babylon”.

““Abgar, king of the Armenians, to my son Nerseh, greeting. I have received your letter and acknowledgments. I have released Beroze from his chains, and have pardoned his offenses: if this pleases you, give him the government of Nineveh. But as to what you write to me about sending you the physician who works miracles and preaches another God superior to fire and water, that you may see and hear him, I say to you: he was not a physician according to the art of men. He was a disciple of the Son of God, Creator of fire and water; he has been appointed and sent to the countries of Armenia. But one

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<sup>57</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form”, *Apocrypha of the New Testament*, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>58</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, *Preaching of the Apostle Thaddaeus at Edessa, Copy of Five Letters*”, VIII, 4-5, *Moses of Chorene: History of Armenia*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

of his principal companions, named Simon, is sent into the countries of Persia. Seek for him, and you will hear him, you as well as your father Ardaches. He will heal all your diseases and will show you the way of life”.

“Abgar wrote also to Ardaches, king of the Persians, the following letter. ‘Abgar, king of the Armenians, to Ardaches my brother, king of the Persians, greeting. I know that you have heard of Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom the Jews have crucified, Jesus who was raised from the dead, and has sent His disciples through all the world to instruct men. One of His chief disciples, named Simon, is in your Majesty’s territories. Seek for him, and you will find him, and he will cure you of all your maladies, and will show you the way of life. And you will believe in his words, you, and your brothers, and all those who willingly obey you. It is very pleasant to me to think that my relations in the flesh will be also my relations, my friends, in the spirit”.

“Abgar had not yet received answers to these letters when he died, having reigned thirty eight years”.

While Jude was in Persia with Simon the Zealot, Jude drafted his general Epistle<sup>59</sup>, which we now have as part of the New Testament Scriptures. The occasion for Jude composing this Epistle was the fact that ungodly people had concealed themselves within the community of believers, and turned the grace of God into an opportunity for iniquity. Under the guise of Christian freedom, they allowed their followers to commit all kinds of abominable deeds. These ungodly people were followers of Simon Magus, the Samaritan magician, who had tried to purchase the Holy Spirit from the Apostle Peter (Acts 8:9, 18-23). Simon Magus was called<sup>60</sup> the source of most of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Century heresies that plagued the Church.

Irenaeus noted<sup>61</sup> that the priests of these heresies “both lead profligate lives and practice magical arts, each one to the extent of his ability. They use exorcisms and incantations, love-potions and charms, as well as those beings who are called dream-senders”. The Apostle Jude, writing to the Churches in Persia about these heretics, stated:

“Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’ But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah”.

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<sup>59</sup> Isaac Lambertsen, *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 229-230. This is a translation from the following:

*The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language*, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Moscow, Synodal Press, 1908, v. 9, (May) pp. 298-300.

<sup>60</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, I, xxvii, 4; I, xxiii, 2.

Vincent of Lerins, *The Commonitory*, XXIV, 62-63.

Eusebius, *Church History*, II, 13, III, 26-29.

Ignatius, “To the Trallians”, 10-11, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, v. 1.

Tertullian, *Against All Heresies*, II, ix, 1-4.

Theodoret, *Letter to the Monks of Constantinople*, 145.

<sup>61</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, I, xxiii, 4.

“These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever ‘ (Jude 1:8-13).

Jude’s Epistle may seem harsh to our ears today, but it was necessary then. Paul warned the elders of the Church at Ephesus of similar developments that would occur after his departure (Acts 20:29-31). Other documents<sup>62</sup> also describe the work of Jude and Simon the Zealot in Persia.

Other accounts describe<sup>63</sup> Jude’s missionary journeys in Armenia, where he was crucified and shot through with arrows while hanging on a Cross. Jude would have been an old man, in his 80’s, by this time, while Simon was about 20 years younger. If Jude and Simon were related, their desire to work together in Persia and Armenia is understandable, since Simon would be able to help his older relative get around.

The Roman Martyrology states<sup>64</sup> that the location of Nathanael’s martyrdom was Albanopolis (modern Derbent), which is on the West Coast of the Caspian Sea. Other sources state<sup>65</sup> that the location was about 100 miles farther South at Albanus (modern Baku), also on the West Coast of the Caspian Sea. This is about 300 miles East of the site of Jude’s martyrdom.

The hymns of the Church celebrate Jude’s missionary journeys to all parts of the world in the following words:

“O wondrous Jude<sup>66</sup>, as the chariot of Christ you brought down the arrogance of idolatry and mystically, by divine discourse, made captivity captive unto life incorruptible, O glorious one. Delighting now therein, ask peace and great mercy for our souls. O Jude, Apostle of Christ, you were a disciple of our Incarnate God, by Whom you were truly sent like a sheep among wolves, turning them by your discourse away from impiety and toward piety and a godly understanding of the Holy Trinity. Wherefore we praise you. O Apostle, you received invincible authority and power over the demons and the ability to drive away the princes of darkness with the Name of Christ. You traveled the earth, shedding rays of light like the sun, and teaching all the nations, you preached the first coming of Christ the Savior, O glorious one. An instrument well-tuned by the hand of God, O Apostle Jude, you were entrusted with the task of summoning the nations, and, guiding them to the knowledge of Christ. By your words and deeds, you enlightened them all to confess the true divinity of Jesus, the Savior of our souls”.

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<sup>62</sup> “The Passions of Simon and Jude”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, publisher unknown

<sup>63</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, June 19.

Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 226.

This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Moscow, Synodal Press, 1908, v. 9, (May) pp. 298-300.

<sup>64</sup> Thurston and Attwater, Butler’s Lives of the Saints, Christian Classics, Westminster, MD, 1990, August 24.

<sup>65</sup> Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, p. 179.

<sup>66</sup> “Sticheria for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Jude, the Brother of the Lord”, June 19<sup>th</sup>, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

“Divinely drawing<sup>67</sup> the nations up from the abyss of ignorance with the net of your discourse, with faith you brought them forth. As a well-spring of spiritual waters you watered the whole world with grace. Wherefore, we who have been saved by you, O divinely eloquent Apostle Jude, bless you as the close friend of Christ, crying out to you: Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of offenses unto those who honor your holy memory with love”.

“Forsaking<sup>68</sup> earthly things, you followed after Christ. Designated by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you were sent by Him to the nations who were perishing, to turn men to the light of divine knowledge, O Apostle Jude. And having finished the struggles of your divine sufferings and diverse torments, you surrendered your soul into the hands of Christ. Beseech Him, O most blessed one, that He grant us great mercy”.

Jude’s children and grandchildren continued to be leaders in the Church, having learned from Jude’s example. Eusebius quoted<sup>69</sup> a now-lost work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century historian, Hegesippus, regarding two of the grandsons of Jude. Emperor Domitian had commanded that all the descendants of King David were to be slain to prevent another Jewish uprising such as began in c. 66 AD. Some heretics, therefore, brought an accusation against two of the grandsons of Jude:

“When Domitian had commanded that the descendants of David should be slain, an ancient tradition says that some of the heretics brought accusation against the descendants of Jude (said to have been a brother of the Savior according to the flesh), on the ground that they were of the lineage of David and were related to Christ himself. Hegesippus relates these facts in the following words”.

“Of the family of the Lord there were still living the grandchildren of Jude, who is said to have been the Lord’s brother according to the flesh. Information was given that they belonged to the family of David, and they were brought to the Emperor Domitian by the Evocatus. For Domitian feared the coming of Christ as Herod also had feared it (Matthew 2:1-16). And he asked them if they were descendants of David, and they confessed that they were. Then he asked them how much property they had, or how much money they owned. And both of them answered that they had only nine thousand denarii, half of which belonged to each of them; and this property did not consist of silver, but of a piece of land which contained only thirty-nine acres, and from which they raised their taxes and supported themselves by their own labor.” Then they showed their hands, exhibiting the hardness of their bodies and the callousness produced upon their hands by continuous toil as evidence of their own labor. And when they were asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what sort it was and where and when it was to appear, they, answered that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when He should come in glory to judge the living and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works. Upon hearing this, Domitian did not pass

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<sup>67</sup> “Sedalion for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Jude, the Brother of the Lord”, June 19<sup>th</sup>, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>68</sup> “Ode IX for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Jude, the Brother of the Lord”, June 19<sup>th</sup>, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

<sup>69</sup> Eusebius, Church History, III, 19-20.

judgment against them, but, despising them as of no account, he let them go, and by a decree put a stop to the persecution of the Church. But when they were released they ruled the churches because they were witnesses and were also relatives of the Lord. And peace being established, they lived until the time of Trajan. These things are related by Hegesippus.

Tertullian also mentioned Domitian in the following words. “Domitian, who possessed a share of Nero’s cruelty, attempted once to do the same thing that the latter did. But because he had, I suppose, some intelligence, he very soon ceased, and even recalled those whom he had banished.” But after Domitian had reigned fifteen years, and Nerva had succeeded to the empire, the Roman Senate, according to the writers that record the history of those days, voted that Domitian’s honors should be canceled, and that those who had been unjustly banished should return to their homes and have their property restored to them. It was at this time that the Apostle John returned from his banishment in the island of Patmos and took up his abode at Ephesus, according to an ancient Christian tradition.

### **Impact of the Missionary Work of Jude**

Jude’s Epistle, which he wrote while he was in Persia with Simon the Zealot, has had a substantial impact on the Church, but it has not always been accepted. Prior to the ratification in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century of what we now know as the Canon of the New Testament Scriptures, there were disagreements over which writings should be included and which ones should be rejected. The Church Historian, Eusebius, described<sup>70</sup> what opinions were current in his day in the early 4<sup>th</sup> Century. The Epistle of Jude was one of the disputed writings<sup>71</sup>, where not everyone agreed that it should be included in the Canon.

“Since we are dealing with this subject it is proper to sum up the writings of the New Testament which have been already mentioned. First then must be put the holy quaternion of the Gospels; following them the Acts of the Apostles. After this must be reckoned the epistles of Paul; next in order the extant former epistle of John, and likewise the epistle of Peter, must be maintained. After them is to be placed, if it really seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These then belong among the accepted writings. Among the disputed writings, which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, also the second epistle of Peter, and those that are called the second and third of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name. Among the rejected writings must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul<sup>72</sup>, and the so-called Shepherd<sup>73</sup>, and the Apocalypse of Peter<sup>74</sup>, and in addition to these the extant epistle of Barnabas<sup>75</sup>, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles<sup>76</sup>;

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<sup>70</sup> Eusebius, Church History, III, 25.

<sup>71</sup> Also Roberts and Donaldson, “From the Catena on Luke, Edited by Corderius”, Fragments of Clement of Alexandria, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 2.

<sup>72</sup> See Roberts and Donaldson, “The Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul” and “The Acts of Paul and Thecla”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>73</sup> See Roberts and Donaldson, “The Pastor of Hermas”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 2.

<sup>74</sup> See Roberts and Donaldson, “The Revelation of Peter”, Apocalypses and Romances, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 9.

<sup>75</sup> See Roberts and Donaldson, “The Epistle of Barnabas”, Apostolic Fathers, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books. And among these some have placed also the Gospel according to the Hebrews<sup>77</sup>, with which those of the Hebrews that have accepted Christ are especially delighted. And all these may be reckoned among the disputed books. But we have nevertheless felt compelled to give a catalogue of these also, distinguishing those works which according to ecclesiastical tradition are true and genuine and commonly accepted, from those others which, although not canonical but disputed, are yet at the same time known to most ecclesiastical writers”.

Eusebius also states<sup>78</sup>:

“These things are recorded in regard to James, who is said to be the author of the first of the so-called catholic epistles. But it is to be observed that it is disputed; at least, not many of the ancients have mentioned it, as is the case likewise with the epistle that bears the name of Jude, which is also one of the seven so-called catholic epistles. Nevertheless we know that these also, with the rest, have been read publicly in very many churches”.

Jerome stated<sup>79</sup> that one of the reasons that the Epistle of Jude was disputed was that he quoted in his Epistle from the Pseudepigraphal Book of Enoch.

“Jude, the brother of James, left a short epistle which is reckoned among the seven catholic epistles, and because in it he quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch it is rejected by many. Nevertheless by age and use it has gained authority and is reckoned among the Holy Scriptures”.

Tertullian stated<sup>80</sup> that the prophecy of Enoch was genuine, and rejection of the Epistle of Jude by some was uncalled for<sup>81</sup>.

“But since Enoch in the same Scripture has preached likewise concerning the Lord, nothing at all must be rejected *by us* which pertains *to us*; and we read that ‘every Scripture suitable for edification is divinely inspired’ (2 Timothy 3:16). By the *Jews* it may now seem to have been rejected for that very reason, just like all the other portions which tell of Christ. Nor is this fact wonderful, that they did not receive some Scriptures which spoke of Him whom even in person speaking in their presence, they were not to receive. To these considerations is added the fact that Enoch possesses a testimony in the Apostle Jude”.

Origen referred<sup>82</sup> to the Epistle of Jude as follows: “And Jude, who wrote a letter of few lines, it is true, but filled with the healthful words of heavenly grace”.

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<sup>76</sup> See “The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles”, Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7.

<sup>77</sup> This may be a version of the Gospel of Matthew in the original Hebrew, which was still extant in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>78</sup> Eusebius, Church History, II, 23.

<sup>79</sup> Schaff, “Jerome: Lives of Illustrious Men”, 4, Jerome and Gennadius, Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Tertullian, “Concerning the Genuineness of the Prophecy of Enoch”, On the Apparel of Women, IV, ii, 1, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Roberts and Donaldson comment on Tertullian’s statements as follows: “The fact that St. Jude refers to Enoch’s prophesyings no more proves that this book is Scriptural than St. Paul’s reference to Jannes and Jambres makes Scripture of the Targum. The apostle Jude does, indeed, authenticate that particular saying by inspiration of God, and doubtless it was traditional among the Jews”. – Elucidation on Book 2 after Chapter 13.

Jerome referred<sup>83</sup> to the Epistle of Jude, among others, as having a deep insight that not everyone understood:

“The apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude, have published seven epistles at once spiritual and to the point, short and long, short that is in words but lengthy in substance so that most find themselves in the dark when they read them. The apocalypse of John has as many mysteries as words. In saying this I have said less than the book deserves. All praise of it is inadequate; manifold meanings lie hid in its every word”.

## The Spread of Heresy in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century as Seen from Jude’s Epistle

Jude wrote his Epistle from Persia, where he was working with Simon the Zealot. Since Jude was raised from the dead to be present for the funeral of the Virgin Mary<sup>84</sup> in c. 55 AD, this would date his Epistle to the late 50’s or early 60’s. Since Peter quotes parts of Jude’s Epistle<sup>85</sup>, and Peter was martyred in c. 67 AD, these events provide evidence for dating the draft of Jude’s Epistle.

Jude refers to the Faith “which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). Christianity had been well-defined at this time, but there was still a Jewish aspect to it. The Temple in Jerusalem was still standing, and the Jewish revolt against Rome, which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem, hadn’t occurred yet. But there were many heretics that had come forward, including seven from among the Apostles. These seven were:

- **Nicolas** of Antioch was one of the first seven deacons (Acts 6:5) and one of the original Seventy (Luke 10:1-20). When Simon Magus came to Antioch, Nicolas began to follow his teachings, and Nicolas was later rebuked very strongly by the Apostle John (Revelation 2:14-15).
- **Demas** was a companion of Paul and Luke at the time that Paul was under house arrest in Rome (c. 62 AD), and was mentioned by Paul as he drafted his Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24). However, Demas began following the teachings of Simon Magus shortly afterward, and within 5 years, Paul stated that Demas “had forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). Hippolytus stated that Demas became “a priest of idols”<sup>86</sup>
- **Phygellas and Hermogenes**: Just before his death in c. 67 AD, Paul wrote that Phygellas and Hermogenes had turned away from him (2 Timothy 1:15). Hippolytus stated that these two of the Seventy began to follow Simon Magus’ teachings, and were therefore deleted from the ranks of the Seventy<sup>87</sup>
- **Alexander** was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who helped to carry Jesus’ Cross (Mark 15:21). Together with his father and brother Rufus, who was one of the Seventy, Alexander helped to found the Church in Antioch (Acts 11:20). By the mid 60’s AD, Alexander had become a follower of Simon Magus, and

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<sup>82</sup> Origen, Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, X, 17.

<sup>83</sup> Jerome, “Letter to Paulinus”, LIII, 9.

<sup>84</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

<sup>85</sup> Compare 2 Peter 2:1-18 with Jude 1:3-18. It is not word-for-word, but very similar.

<sup>86</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5.



Paul delivered him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh<sup>88</sup> on account of his blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:20). A year or two later, Alexander was instrumental in affecting Paul's martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:14-15).

- **Hymenaeus** was associated with Alexander and was also delivered over to Satan by Paul (1 Timothy 1:20). A year or two later, Hymenaeus was still busy teaching Simon Magus' doctrine of the resurrection (2 Timothy 2:17-18), which stated that the "resurrection" occurs when one is baptized, and that there is no bodily resurrection.
- **Philetas** was an associate of Hymenaeus who also taught Simon Magus' doctrine (2 Timothy 2:17-18).

These heretics were very influential, and the Apostles had to take strong measures to try to control their viciousness. These seven early heretics were not just ignorant bystanders, but were bona fide bad guys who knew better and rebelled against God. To see their connection to Simon Magus, who used his sorcery as demonstrations of "miracles" to support his claims, see the separate study "Simon Magus".

The common characteristic of these heretics is that they promoted teachings that were different from that which "was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). Jude said that men like these had crept into the Persian Churches unnoticed, and, denying Christ, turned the grace of God into lewdness (Jude 1:4). Because they knowingly rebelled against Apostolic authority (Jude 1:8), Jude found it necessary to distinguish these heretics from the body of believers.

By way of contrast, Jude referred to the way the Archangel Michael spoke to the devil regarding the body of Moses. Jude here referred<sup>89</sup> to the pseudepigraphal book, "The Assumption of Moses" (compare Deuteronomy 34:5-6, Zechariah 3:1-2), which gives the background regarding Moses' appearance at the Transfiguration (Mark 9:4-5). Michael treated the devil with dignity, even though he deserved none.

The result of the presence of the heretics in the Persian Churches was what Jude called "hidden reefs in your love feasts" (Jude 1:12). The "Love Feasts" of the Early Church were meals that were served in conjunction with the Eucharist. It was at these meals that some of the Corinthians became drunk at the serving of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:21). Paul said that because the Corinthians did not discern the Lord's body and respect the Lord's Presence, some of them are weak and sick, and many had died (1 Corinthians 11:29-30).

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<sup>88</sup> Compare 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. The intent was the eventual salvation of the individual through a greater recognition of who it is that he's in league with.

<sup>89</sup> Because Jude referred to the pseudepigraphal book, Enoch, there was a hesitancy among some people to accept the Book of Jude into the Canon of the New Testament. As a result, Jude was one of the last books added to the Canon. Tertullian, On the Apparel of Women, IV, ii, 1, 3 referred to the Book of Enoch as Scripture: "I am aware that the Scripture of Enoch, which has assigned to the fallen angels this role of teaching women how to seduce men, is not received by some, because it is not admitted into the Jewish canon either. I suppose they did not think that, having been published before the deluge, it could have safely survived that world-wide calamity. If that is the reason for rejecting it, let them recall that Noah, the survivor of the deluge, was the great-grandson of Enoch. He had heard and remembered, from hereditary tradition, his own great-grandfather's 'grace in the sight of God' (Genesis 5:24), and concerning all his preaching. Enoch had given no other charge to Methuselah than that he should hand on the knowledge of them to his posterity. Noah therefore succeeded in the trusteeship of Enoch's preaching".

Jude's solution to the problem with the heretics is as follows: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (Jude 1:20-23). The "garment" is the human body with which we are clothed, as with a tent (2 Corinthians 5:1-4, Zechariah 3:4-6).

Jude gave a series of descriptive terms for the Persian heretics that have applied to other heretics in the Church since then:

- **They have gone in the way of Cain** (Jude 1:11). This refers to jealousy and hatred over ecclesiastical honor given to another, which is equivalent to murder (Matthew 5:21-22), just as Cain killed his brother, Abel, because the Lord accepted Abel's offering and not his (Genesis 4:3-8).
- **They have run greedily in the error of Balaam** (Jude 1:11). Balak, King of Moab, hired Balaam to curse Israel (Numbers 22:2-6), but Balaam couldn't curse what the Lord had blessed (Numbers 24:10-14). So Balaam taught Balak to send the Moabite cult prostitutes into Israel to draw the men of Israel away from God (Revelation 2:14, Numbers 25:1-9, 31:12-17). Doing this, the Lord would curse Israel independent of Moab (Deuteronomy 28:15-19). Similarly the heretics taught that only spiritual things mattered, and fleshly things, like fornication, were of no significance to the Christian life. The heretics had condoned practices similar to that of the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah, who had given themselves over to immorality (Jude 1:7), like animals (Jude 1:10, Genesis 19:1-5).
- **They have perished in the rebellion of Korah** (Jude 1:5, 11). Korah, Dathan and Abiram, rebelled against Moses and against God during the Exodus, and perished when the earth opened up and swallowed some of them and when fire came out from the Lord to consume the others (Numbers 16:1-35). Similarly the heretics rebelled against the Apostles and their teaching (Jude 1:3, 8).
- **They are hidden reefs on your Love Feasts**<sup>90</sup> (Jude 1:12). A reef is a sharp underwater obstacle that can tear apart a ship's hull. The reef represents self-centeredness and self-serving by the heretics at an occasion specifically designed to show love to others. Paul criticized the Corinthians for doing the same thing (1 Corinthians 11:20-22).
- **They are clouds without water** (Jude 1:12). Clouds carrying water speak of the Holy Spirit in the Church (Isaiah 55:9-11). Devoid of the Holy Spirit, the heretics are carried about by the winds, which represents the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2).
- **They are late autumn trees without fruit** (Jude 1:12). One expects fruit on trees in late autumn. They are twice dead in that they turned their back on Christ after they were

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<sup>90</sup> From Philip Schaff, ed., "Notes on Canon 11 of the Council of Gangra", The First Ecumenical Council, Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 14, "There are few subjects upon which there has been more difference of opinion than upon the history and significance of the Agape or Love-feasts of the Early Church. All agree that these feasts are referred to by Jude in his Epistle. There is also much discussion as to the order in which the Agapae and the celebrations of the Holy Sacrament were related, some holding that the love-feast preceded others that it followed the Divine Mysteries. There seems no doubt that in early times the two became separated, the Holy Sacrament being celebrated in the morning and the Agapae in the evening. All agree that these feasts were at first copies of the religious feasts common to the Jews and to the heathen world, and that soon abuses of one sort or another came in, so that they fell into ill repute and were finally prohibited at the Council in Trullo".

baptized, and then again when they were “pulled up by the roots” (Matthew 18:15-20) and excommunicated by the Apostles for rebellion against Apostolic teaching.

- **They are raging waves of the sea**, foaming up their own shame. This is a paraphrase of Isaiah, “But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Isaiah 57:20). Paul also warned the Philippians to beware of the followers of Simon Magus. “For many walk, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame” (Philippians 3:18-19). Prior to saying this, Paul had warned the Philippians to beware of the followers of the Nicolaitans, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!” (Philippians 3:2-3), where the term “dog” was used in the Mosaic Law to refer to a Sodomite (Deuteronomy 23:17-18).
- **They are wandering stars** (Jude 1:13). The Book of Enoch<sup>91</sup> uses the term “wandering stars” to refer to fallen angels<sup>92</sup>. These angels are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness until Judgment Day (Jude 1:6, 13), and it is for these fallen angels that the everlasting fire has been prepared (Matthew 25:41). Clement of Alexandria referred<sup>93</sup> to these angels as “apostate” and unable to be converted. The “darkness” is the dark air near the earth, and the “chains” are the loss of honor in which they had stood.
- **They are grumblers, complainers**, walking according to their own lusts (Jude 1:16). These are symptoms of a deeper problem; namely a lack of love and humility.

Jerome mentioned<sup>94</sup> that when Jude spoke of Egypt, Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 1:5-7), naming them together, it is not these spots, but the present world, that is meant.

Jude’s warnings in his Epistle became prophecies regarding those Christians that followed, and Peter and Paul issued similar warnings. Following is a short introduction<sup>95</sup> to the history of Irenaeus [122-202 AD]. In this history we can see how the heresies started by Simon Magus, that the Apostles were fighting in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, had developed further to cause a great deal of grief to the Church. Irenaeus devoted his life to fighting and classifying these heresies in order that his successors might benefit:

“The history of Irenaeus (122-202 AD) introduces us to the Church in her Western outposts. We reach the banks of the Rhone, where for nearly a century Christian missions have flourished. Between Marseilles and Smyrna there seems to have been a brisk trade, and Polycarp had sent Pothinus into Celtic Gaul at an early date as its evangelist. He had fixed his see at Lyons, when Irenaeus joined him as a presbyter, having been his fellow-pupil under Polycarp. There, under the “good Aurelius,” as he is miscalled (A.D. 177), arose the terrible persecution which made ‘the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne’ so memorable. It was during this persecution that Irenaeus was sent to Rome with letters of remonstrance against the rising pestilence of heresy; and he was probably the author of the account of the sufferings of the martyrs which is appended to their testimony<sup>96</sup>. But he had the mortification of finding the Montanist heresy patronized by Eleutherus the

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<sup>91</sup> James Charlesworth, “1 Enoch”, The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Doubleday, New York, 1983.

<sup>92</sup> See for example 1 Enoch 21:3

<sup>93</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Comments on the Epistle of Jude”, Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus, 2, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 2.

<sup>94</sup> Jerome, Letters, XLVI, 7

<sup>95</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Introductory Note”, Irenaeus Against Heresies, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

<sup>96</sup> See also Eusebius, Church History, V, 15-28.

Bishop of Rome; and there he met an old friend from the school of Polycarp, who had embraced the Valentinian heresy. We cannot doubt that to this visit we owe the lifelong struggle of Irenaeus against the heresies that now came in, like locusts, to devour the harvests of the Gospel”.

“But let it be noted here, that, so far from being ‘the mother and mistress’ of even the Western Churches, Rome herself is a mission of the Greeks; Southern Gaul is evangelized from Asia Minor, and Lyons checks the heretical tendencies of the Bishop of Rome. Ante-Nicene Christianity, and indeed the Church herself, appears in Greek costume which lasts through the synodical period; and Latin Christianity, when it begins to appear, is African, and not Roman. It is strange that those who have recorded this great historical fact have so little perceived its bearings upon Roman pretensions in the Middle Ages and modern times”.

“Returning to Lyons, Irenaeus found that the venerable Pothinus had closed his holy career by a martyr’s death; and naturally Irenaeus became his successor. When the emissaries of heresy followed him, and began to disseminate their licentious practices and foolish doctrines by the aid of “silly women,” the great work of his life began. He condescended to study these diseases of the human mind like a wise physician; and, sickening as was the process of classifying and describing them, he made this also his laborious task, that he might enable others to withstand and to overcome them. The works he has left us are monuments of his fidelity to Christ, and to the charges of the Apostles Paul, Peter, and Jude, whose solemn warnings now proved to be prophecies. No marvel that the great apostle, ‘night and day with tears’ (Acts 20:31), had forewarned the churches of ‘the grievous wolves’ (Acts 20:29) which were to make havoc of the fold”.

“If it shocks the young student of the virgin years of Christianity to find such a state of things, let him reflect that it was all foretold by Christ himself, and demonstrates the malice and power of the adversary. ‘An enemy hath done this’ (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43), said the Master. The spirit that was then working ‘in the children of disobedience’ (Ephesians 2:2), now manifested itself. The awful visions of the Apocalypse began to be realized. It was now evident in what sense ‘the Prince of Peace’ had pronounced His mission, ‘not peace, but a sword’ (Matthew 10:34-39). In short, it became a conspicuous fact, that the Church here on earth is ‘militant’; while, at the same time, there was seen to be a profound philosophy in the apostolic comment, ‘There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be manifest’ (1 Corinthians 11:19). In the divine economy of Providence it was permitted that every form of heresy which was ever to infest the Church should now exhibit its essential principle, and attract the censures of the faithful. Thus testimony to primitive truth was secured and recorded: the language of catholic orthodoxy was developed and defined, and landmarks of faith were set up for perpetual memorial to all generations. It is a striking example of this divine economy, that the see of Rome was allowed to exhibit its fallibility very conspicuously at this time, and not only to receive the rebukes of Irenaeus, but to accept them as wholesome and necessary; so that the heresy of Eleutherus, and the spirit of Diotrephes in Victor, have enabled reformers ever since, and even in the darkest days of pontifical despotism, to testify against the manifold errors patronized by Rome. Hilary and other

Gallicans have been strengthened by the example of Irenaeus, and by his faithful words of reproof and exhortation, to resist Rome, even down to our own times”.

# Figure 1

## FAMILY TREE OF JESUS

