

ST. JUDE

(Also known as Judas, Lebbaeus, Thaddaeus, and the brother of James the Less)

The tradition of devotion to St. Jude goes beyond a simple Bible story; in fact, it is a reflection of the ability of ordinary people to call upon their powerful faith to triumph over seemingly impossible odds in their daily lives.

Legend has it that St. Jude was born into a Jewish family in Paneas, a town in the Galilee portion of ancient Palestine, the same region that Jesus grew up in.

He probably spoke Greek and Aramaic, like many of his contemporaries in that area, and he was a farmer (as many of his family were) by trade.

Jude was described by St. Matthew (13:55) as being one of the "brethren" of Jesus, probably meaning a cousin since the Hebrew word for "brethren" indicates a blood relationship.

His mother, Mary, was referred to as a cousin of Jesus' mother Mary, while his father, Cleophas, was the brother of St. Joseph.

Jude had several brothers, including St. James (Acts 1:13), who was another of the original Apostles.

His own first name, "Jude", means giver of joy, while "Thaddaeus", another name he was called, means generous and kind.

He was later married, had at least one child, and there are references to his grandchildren living as late as 95 A.D.

Jude was then called to be one of Jesus 12 Apostles, and began preaching the Good News of Jesus to Jews throughout Galilee, Samaria, and Judea.

St. Jude went to Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) around 37 A.D., and became a leader of the Church of The East that St. Thomas established there.

For a fascinating account of St. Jude's influence in that region, read the article; [The St. Jude- Iraq Connection](#).

St. Jude was a true internationalist, traveling throughout Mesopotamia, Libya, Turkey, and Persia with St. Simon, preaching and converting many people to Christianity.

He was credited with helping the early creation of the Armenian Church and other places beyond the borders of the Roman Empire.

Around the year 60 A.D., St. Jude wrote a Gospel letter to recent Christian converts in Eastern Churches who were under persecution.

In it, he warned them against the pseudo-teachers of the day who were spreading false ideas about the early Christian faith.

He encouraged them to persevere in the face of the harsh, difficult circumstances they were in, just as their forefathers had done before them.

He exhorted them to keep their faith and to stay in the love of God as they had been taught.

His inspirational support of these early believers led to him becoming the patron saint of desperate cases.

He is believed to have been martyred in Persia or Syria around 65 A.D.

The axe or club that he is often shown holding in pictures symbolizes the way in which he was killed.

Truly, he paid the ultimate price for his faith.

After his death his body was brought back to Rome and was placed in a crypt beneath St. Peter's Basilica, which people visit to this day.

St. Jude is traditionally depicted carrying the image of Jesus in his hand or close to his chest.

This idea comes from a Biblical story in which King Abgar of Edessa (a city located in what is now southeast Turkey) asked Jesus to cure him of leprosy and sent an artist to bring him a drawing of Jesus.

Impressed with Abgar's great faith, Jesus pressed his face into a cloth and gave it to St. Jude to take to Abgar.

Upon seeing Jesus' image, The King was cured and he converted to Christianity along with most of the people under his rule.

This cloth is believed to be the famous Shroud of Jesus which is currently on display in Turin, Italy.

St. Jude is often shown in paintings with a flame around his head.

This represents his presence at Pentecost, when he received the Holy Spirit with the other apostles.

Accomplishments of Thaddeus:

Thaddeus preached the gospel as a missionary following Jesus' resurrection. He also penned the book of Jude. The final two verses of Jude (24-25) contain a doxology, or "expression of praise to God," considered the finest in the New Testament.

Thaddeus' Strengths:

Thaddeus learned the gospel directly from Jesus and loyally served Christ despite hardship and persecution.

Thaddeus' Weaknesses:

Like most of the other apostles, Thaddeus abandoned Jesus during his trial and crucifixion.

Life Lessons from Thaddeus:

In his short epistle, Jude warns believers to avoid false teachers who twist the gospel for their own purposes, and he calls us to staunchly defend the Christian faith during persecution.

Hometown:

Unknown

Referenced in the Bible:

Matthew 10:3 Mark 3:18 Luke 6:16 John 14:22 Acts 1:13 Book of Jude

Occupation:

Unknown, missionary

Family Tree:

Father - Alphaeus
Brother - James the Less

Key Verses:

John 14:21-22

[Jesus speaking] "Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them." Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" (NIV)

Jude 20-21

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (NIV)

Jude 24-25

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. (NIV)

Click link below to read more about Judas Thaddeus

<http://christianity.about.com/od/newtestamentpeople/a/JZ-Thaddeus.htm>