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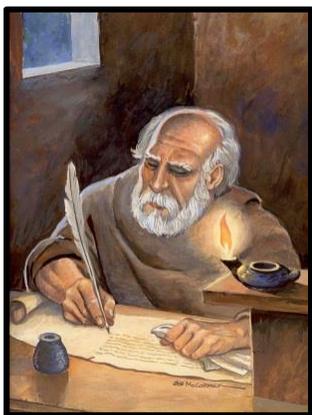
Dear Ones,

Things are looking up. I am still working on the Bible Study Guide each morning, followed by my prayer time--then follows the day. With my two years of physical therapy at an end, I have joined the YMCA. They have a huge gym with much better equipment, an indoor walking/running track and an Olympic swimming pool. It is great, and I can go as often as I wish. I am working out six days a week: weights M, W, F, and walking T, TH, Sat. I was losing my ability to walk; but, by the grace of God, am making steady progress now.

There are people of all ages, sizes and conditions, from toddlers to body builders to old people, still going at it! There are always people on the track, some running and some walking. My legs are still strong (my first weight exercise is the leg press); but I have been losing control of them, and if I get in trouble on the track, there are people there to help me. My control is remarkably better, and improving! Yesterday I walked a strong half mile with good control--a new record.

So thank you for your prayers--I am doing better every day!
-- Tom

The article below is taken from Tom's Study Guide to the Entire Bible; it is the Introduction to the Epistle of Jude.



The Epistle of Jude

Jude is a general epistle, addressed to the Church at large. It contains only one chapter of 25 verses; but those 25 verses are packed--one might say super-saturated--with meaning.

Much of it reads like II Peter, speaking of both the cosmic past and the coming last days, and with warnings against heresies in the present. Jude vehemently denounces and threatens

heretics, warning them that God's judgment will fall upon them even as it fell upon Cain, Korah and Balaam. His hallmark challenge is for the believers to reject false teachers and their heresies, and he urges them to "earnestly contend for the faith, which was once [and for all time] delivered unto the saints." The closing verses are encouraging, containing guidance for "building up yourselves in your most holy faith," and they close with a beautiful, often-quoted, benediction.

Jude uses amazingly powerful imagery (word pictures) to describe the heretics and their practices (e.g. "strange flesh," "filthy dreamers," "spots in your feasts of charity," "clouds...without water," "foaming out their own shame," and "garments spotted by the flesh." Here, again, is a similarity with II Peter, which uses such expressions as, "Having eyes full of adultery," "heart exercised with covetous practices," and "cursed children."

The content of Jude and its similarity to II Peter suggest that Jude was familiar with II Peter, and had the same things on his mind; in fact, in Jude's verses 17 and 18, he seems to be quoting from II Peter 3:2-3. In Jude there is also the sense of urgency so characteristic of II Peter.

It fascinates me that Jude, half-brother to Jesus, who contributed only 25 of the Bible's total of more than 31,000 verses, is the only writer in all of Scripture who tells us that Enoch (who, with Elijah, were the only two people in the Bible to be taken directly to Heaven without experiencing physical death) was a prophet--in fact a prophet of judgment; he gives us a fascinating glimpse into the burial of Moses that is found nowhere else in Scripture; and only he tells us that Michael is an archangel.

A. Author. The author of this brief-but-powerful epistle is Jude, brother of James, and half-brother of Jesus. Like his brother James, and like Peter in his second epistle, Jude identifies himself as the "servant" (in Greek, *doulos* -- bondservant or slave) of Jesus. It appears that Jude and his brother James, because they did not recognize Jesus as Messiah until after the resurrection, declined to identify themselves with the more prestigious designation, "brother of Jesus."

One of the interesting things about Jude is how little we actually know about him. He is identified by Matthew and Mark in their gospels as a half-brother of Jesus. And, in Acts, Luke tells us that Jude was with his mother, Mary, in the upper room after the Ascension of Jesus. Beyond this, there seems to be nothing recorded about the life of Jude. Nothing is known of where he ministered or how, where, or when he died.

Jude's Grandsons. There is, however, an interesting story about the grandsons of Jude, recorded by Eusebius, quoting an earlier source, Hegesippus, the Chronicler, a Christian historian (ca 110-180 AD).

According to this account, the Emperor Domitian, during his persecution of Christians, looked upon the tribe of David as if it were a human royal family. He determined to find all Christians of the line of David, and to eliminate what he interpreted as their threat to his throne, by having them all killed. He was determined to stamp out the living descendants (as he saw it) of David in the way that wicked Athaliah had her grandsons murdered, to enable her to seize the throne, about 900 years earlier.

Arrested as descendants of the brother of Jesus, two of Jude's grandsons were brought to trial before Domitian. He asked if they were of the family of King David, and they said that they were. He asked them what possessions they had. They told the Emperor that the two of them together had a total of only 9,000 denarii, but not in silver; all of their wealth, they said, was in the form of the value of their 39 acres of farm land. From this small farm, they said, they paid their taxes and supported themselves by their own labor; as proof, they showed Domitian their calloused hands. He then asked them about the Kingdom of Christ and when it would appear. They replied that the Kingdom of Christ is not an earthly kingdom; rather, they said, it is a spiritual kingdom, and that it would appear at the end of the world when Christ would come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, judging each person according to his works.

Considering them to be simpletons, unworthy of his time, Domitian dismissed them, and decreed that the general persecution of David's descendants cease. Released, the two grandsons returned to leadership roles in the Church, "both as witnesses and relatives of the Lord." With their peace restored, they lived "even unto the times of Trajan."

B. Place and Date. Jude was probably written from Jerusalem, where his brother, James, was presiding elder. The similarities to II Peter suggest that Jude was familiar with II Peter and that it was written at about the same time (i.e. ca 65 AD). Unger calls the date "undeterminable" but places it in the probable range of 66-80 AD. Theodor Zahn dates it at 75 AD.

Who Would Use a Stone for a Pillow?

Ever since I first read the story of Jacob, fleeing from furious Esau in great fear and distress, lying down to sleep with a stone for a pillow, I have wondered why he would use a rock for a pillow., It made no sense. As a



Marine in the field I have used many things for

pillows: my pack; a blasted or rotten log; scooped up dirt or sand; and, once, in a foxhole, my pillow was the ground-level edge of the foxhole. But it never occurred to me to use a rock. At times, when totally exhausted, I just fell to the ground and slept with no thought of a pillow; once in Vietnam, waiting for pickup by a CIA aircraft, I slept standing up.

I am reading the wonderful Journal of an Israeli soldier named Zvi, a born-again Jewish Christian who survived the Holocaust as a boy (*The Best of Zvi* by [Zvi Kalisher](#)). He fought in every Israeli war, from the War for Independence in 1948 until 1973. At one point he describes fighting in the mountains where the ground is covered with large stones, smoothed over thousands of years by wind and rain. There is nothing there to use for a pillow but the large, smooth stones, and soldiers often claim the best ones for themselves! Zvi even describes a large stone that he claimed and shared repeatedly with his best friend. And now I understand Jacob's choice of pillow.

Milestones

Died: 15 August 2019--Teresa (Terri) Simoncelli of Duncannon, PA was a long-time, faithful friend. In fact, if I had to describe her in one word it would be "faithful"--in her devotion to her family, her friends and, above all, her unwavering faith in, and devotion to, Jesus. Her love, her laughter and her character touched and changed the lives of many, including me.

A FINAL WORD

Treasure and use each day as if it were your last, and never give up hope; God has a limitless supply of new beginnings, and He makes beautiful things out of broken pieces.