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### The Apostle Lebbaeus, Thaddaeus

The ability of God to use any and every individual is an amazing thing and is classically illustrated by the King of England, King James I.

He was a habitual drunkard and rumored to be addicted to other vices which could not be mentioned in public. As King of England he married off his children like pawns to suit his foreign policy. He drained the total treasury to meet the cost of his extravagances in wine and women.

Unkingly in almost every respect, he was described thus by J. T. Green: “His big head, his slobbering tongue, his quilted clothes, his rickety legs, his goggle eyes, stood out as a grotesque contrast with all that men recalled of Henry and Elizabeth in his gabble, his want of personal dignity, his coarse buffoonery, his drunkenness, his pedantry, his contemptible cowardice.”

Yet God in overruling providence used this man to assemble scholars and push through the Authorized Translation of the Bible in 1611--the most influential Bible of all times: King James I. #425

We are told in the Scriptures that men and women are like clay in the hands of the Potter, as He sovereignly shapes and molds them for His purposes.

The tenth apostle, Lebbaeus Thaddaeus, is like James the son of Alphaeus, very little recorded about him. Matt. 10:2-4

But there are three particular things about Lebbaeus Thaddaeus that will help us in our study him.

- I. The particular names of Lebbaeus Thaddaeus.
- II. The person of Lebbaeus Thaddaeus.
- III. The proclamation of Jesus to Lebbaeus Thaddaeus.

#### **I. The particular names of Lebbaeus Thaddaeus.**

- A. He was called Lebbaeus. Matt. 10:3
  1. The name comes from the word “Leb” in the Hebrew, which means “heart”.
    - a. It could mean beloved child of one’s heart.
    - b. It could also mean large-hearted and courageous.
    - c. Most individuals take it to indicated he was a man of heart and courageous.
  3. From his name, it appears he was a man of character and determination.
    - a. Perhaps as James and John the “sons of Thunder”.
    - b. Persistent in his convictions and purposes.

- c. Persevering in times of difficulties and danger.
- B.** He was surnamed Thaddaeus. Matt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18
1. Thaddaeus comes from the word meaning “Breast”, perhaps indicating the breast of a woman.
  2. The surname could refer he was the youngest of the family, “the breast child”.
    - a. He was the baby of the family.
    - b. He was the one looked after by all others in the family, if he was the youngest.
  3. The name was probably a nick name.
    - a. Communicating warm affection.
    - b. Communicating loving endearment
- C.** He was identified as, “Judas the son of James”. Lk. 6:16
1. His name Judas means “he shall be praised”.
    - a. We know that names depict character in many occasions of the Old Testament.
      - 1) Samson means “like the son”, this is what he was to be before the unbelievers, but he became self-willed, obstructing the light of God.
      - 2) Samuel means, “His name is El”, that he was a direct gift from God.
      - 3) Daniel means, “God is my judge”, God knew his heart commitment to God and the things of God.

- b. Some children were named after the direction of God, such as:
    - 1) Ishmael.
    - 2) Isaac.
    - 3) Samson.
    - 4) Samuel.
    - 5) John the Baptist.
    - 6) Jesus Christ.
2. The name is derived from the Hebrew name “Judah”, which means “praised” and used different ways.
    - a. Judah was the son of Jacob by Leah.
    - b. Judah was the tribe descended from Judah the son of Jacob.
    - c. Judah was the territory occupied by the tribe of Judah.
    - d. Judah was the kingdom comprised of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which occupied the southern part of Canaan after the nation divided after the death of Solomon.
  3. The name Judas is most likely his proper name, with two accompanying nick names, which he was known by.
    - a. To the community, he was Judas.
    - b. To his friends, he was a courageous man.
    - c. To his family, he was the youngest, or baby of the family.
  4. The apostle is not to be confused with Jude, the Lord’s brother or Judas Ischariot.

- a. In fact John goes out of his way to distinguish him by the statement, “Judas, not Iscariot.” Jn. 14:22
- b. Judas, the son of James, Labbaeus Thaddaeus was a faithful apostle.
- c. Judas Ischariot was an unfaithful apostle.
  - 1) The one who betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver.
  - 2) The one who pilfered the treasury box.
  - 3) The one Jesus love to the very end.
  - 4) The one who is synonymous with treachery of the most evil kind, even by the unbeliever.

### Illustration

Until about the years 1100, most people in Europe had only one name. With population increasing it became difficult to distinguish among people, so surnames were added. These came from four primary sources: a man’s occupation, such as John Cook, or Miller; location, such as John Overhill or brook; patronymical, such as John’s son (Johnson); and characteristics, like John small, short, Longfellow, etc.

In addition to the need for identification, one occupation had to go a step further: The fighting men. In the Middle Ages combatants wore heavy suits of armor which made them unrecognizable. To prevent friends from fighting friends, each knight identified himself by painting a colorful design on the armor. In this manner was born the family coat of arms.--C R. Hembree # 2411

\* The believer’s name “Christian” identifies him or her to the family of heaven and heavenly Father through the line of the Son!

### Application

1. How the church needs Pastors known as agents of praise to God.
  - a. Paul indicated this regarding Timothy, “ For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state”. Phil. 2:20
  - b. Jesus declared on the Sermon on the Mount, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt. 5:16
2. How the church needs courageous Christians today as we are surrounded with so much humanistic philosophy, that alienates man from God.
  - a. Paul wrote Timothy to continue to be courageous in the ministry at Ephesus, “God has not given to us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind.” 2Tim. 1:7
  - b. Paul reminded Timothy that it is spiritual warfare, “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.” 2Tim. 2:3-4
  - c. Paul demenstratee to Timothy what he had couniciled him on as he was waiting for his execution, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally,

there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” 2Tim. 4:7-8

3. How the church needs men and women who are children who have the heart of God.
  - a. David was said to be a man after God’s own heart. 1Sam. 13:14
  - b. A common phrase in the Scriptures is “to purpose in one’s heart”, referring to the whole-hearted commitment of a person that is void of any hidden agenda or anterior motive.
    - 1) The psalmist prays, “Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.” Ps. 86:11
    - 2) Paul tell the Corinthians, “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2Cor. 9:7

***The particular names Lebbaeus Thaddaeus and Judas, all designate the same person!***

## **II. The person of Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus.**

- A. Lebbaeus Thaddaeus was one of the twelve apostles.
  1. He was chosen after an entire night in prayer. Lk. 6:12-13
  2. He is distinct from the seventy that were sent out by Jesus.

3. He is in the third group of four.
    - a. The first group of four were the most intimate in fellowship with Jesus.
      - 1) Peter.
      - 2) Andrew.
      - 3) James.
      - 4) John.
    - b. The second group of four, were less intimate in fellowship with Jesus.
      - 1) Philip.
      - 2) Bartholomew or Nathanael.
      - 3) Thomas.
      - 4) Matthew.
    - c. The third group of four, were the least intimate in fellowship with Jesus.
      - 1) James the son of Alphaeus.
      - 2) Labbaeus or Thaddaeus.
      - 3) Simon the Cannanite.
      - 4) Judas Ischariot.
- B. Lebbaeus Thaddaeus appears in different orders in the lists.**
1. In Matthew he is tenth in the list of the twelve. Matt. 10:3
    - a. He follows James the son of Alphaeus.
    - b. He is the second in the list of the last group of four.
  2. In Mark he is also tenth in the list of the twelve. Mk. 3:18
    - a. He follows James the son of Alphaeus, as in Matthew.

- b. He precedes Simon the Cananite, as in Matthew.
- 3. In Luke he is eleventh in the list of the twelve. Lk. 6:16
  - a. He follows Simon the Zealot or Simon the Cananite.
  - b. He is called Judas the son of James.
- 4. In Acts he is the eleventh in the list of apostles.
  - a. He follows Simon the Zealot, as in Luke's list.
  - b. He is the last in order, due to the fact that Judas Ischariot had hung himself.
  - c. He is always second or third in the last group of four.
  - d. He is tenth or eleventh in the over-all list of the twelve.
- 5. In each listing, be it in the gospels or Acts there is a leader for each group.
  - a. Peter is the leader for the first group of four.
  - b. Philip is the leader for the second group of four.
  - c. James the son of Alphaeus is the leader for the third group of four.

### **Illustration**

There is an old movie with Jimmy Steward, "It's A Wonderful Life", which used to be shown every Christmas season. The movie is about a man who thought that the world would of been better off, if he

had never been born. And in attempting to jump off a bridge into the icy river, his guarding angel jumps in and rescued Jimmy Steward. Then the angel allowed him to see how much he had affected the lives of people and how worst off they would of been without him, giving him a new view and appreciation for life and friends.

\* So God would have each of us to know by faith others will be the better for our involvement and participation in the body of Christ and eternity will reveal all of it!

### **Application**

1. The place that the Lord Jesus has appointed you to, is of the most critical nature for the development of your own spiritual well-being and the rest of the body.
  - a. You have at least one gift that is to be in operation in the body of Christ. 1Pet. 4:10
  - b. You will either build up the body or handicap it. Eph. 4:16
2. There will be times in the body that you will occupy different levels of ministry.
  - a. You may be over a group of people at one time.
  - b. You may be under someone the next time.
  - c. You may manifest your gift one way at one time and differently another or different gifts depending on the need. Rom. 12:3-5
3. The important thing is that we be faithful in our ministry and our gifts.
  - a. It is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 1Cor. 4:2

- b. It is honored only when agape love is the motive. 1Cor. 4:5
- c. It is to be done descent and in order. 1Cor. 14:40

*The person of Lebbaeus Thaddaeus was a vital link in the twelve!*

### III. The proclamation of Jesus to Lebbaeus Thaddaeus.

- A. Jesus was talking to His disciples about leaving the world. Jn. 14:19-21
  - 1. Jesus said to them that a little while longer the world would see Him no more but they would see Him. vs. 19a-b
    - a. He was going to be crucified and buried, no other unbeliever would see Him after His death.
    - b. He was going to rise from the dead and they would see Jesus at Galilee.
  - 2. Jesus then said, "Because I live, you will live also". vs. 19c
    - a. Jesus would defeat death by paying the ransom for sin and remove the sting of death by tasting death for every man. Matt. 20:28; 1Cor 15:55; Heb. 2:9
    - b. Jesus would live through them, the crucified life. Rom. 6:6, 11; Gal. 2:20

- 3. Jesus also said, that at that day they would know that He was in the Father, and they in Him, and He in them. vs. 20
  - a. The Holy Spirit would be sent by the Father as the other comforter, just like Jesus. Jn. 14:16
  - b. "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." Jn. 14:26
- 4. Jesus then lays down the proof and evidence of being His disciple. vs. 21
  - a. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me." vs. 21a-b
    - 1) Obedience is honored only when it is motivated by love for Jesus!
    - 2) Love is the purest and most loyal motive, not a duty!
  - b. "He who loves Me will be loved of My Father." vs. 21c
    - 1) Love is extended to all the family members!
    - 2) The Father will love us as His does His Son.
  - c. And I will love him and manifest Myself to him. vs. 21d
    - 1) To reveal oneself is to withhold nothing, being unreserved, revealing trust.

2) To be unreserved is an act of love!

- B.** Judas, Lebbaeus, Thaddaeus was not understanding the words of Jesus. Jn. 14:22
1. Judas was thinking in physical terms, at the words of Jesus.
  2. Judas had the Jewish mind about the Kingdom, that Jesus would establish it when He arrived at Jerusalem.  
\* Even as James and John!
  3. Judas was attempting to reconcile this truth and clear up his confusion.
  4. Judas the courageous of heart asked Jesus for clarification.  
\* “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us and not the world?”
    - a. The idea of the disciples seeing Him and not others was confusing, having no idea that Jesus was talking about a spiritual manifestation in His absence from the earth, during the church age.
    - b. The head Christ would reveal Himself to and through His body, the church to reach lost man.
- C.** Jesus was willing to articulate what He meant. Jn. 14:23-24
1. Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him.” vs. 23a-d

- a. The evidence of loving Jesus is obedience to His word.
  - b. The benefit of loving Jesus, is that the Father loves the one loving Jesus.
2. Jesus continued and said, “And We will come to him and make Our home with him.” vs. 23e
    - a.. The Godhead is one, in perfect unity and harmony.
    - b. The Godhead is composed of three distinct persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
  3. Jesus said, “He who does not love Me does not keep My words. vs. 24a
    - a. The lack of love is evident by a lack of concern for the pleasing of another.
    - b. The evidence of self love is pleasing oneself.
  4. Jesus then said, “And the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.” vs. 24b
    - a. The words were those of the Father, in the Old Testament prophecy and warnings.
    - b. The Father had sent Jesus with His words.  
\* Thirty-six times John says in his gospel that Jesus was sent by the Father!
  5. Tradition tells us that Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus.
    - a. He was gifted with the gift of healing.

- b. He went to Syria and healed a King named Adgar and was converted.
- c. He was martyred by a nephew of the king, who was an apostate.
- d. He is usually prefigured by the symbol of a big club, which he supposedly was beat to death with.

### **Illustration**

A. W. Tozer said, “We are not forced to obey in the Christian life, but we are forced to make a choice at many points in our spiritual maturity. We have that power within us to reject god’s instructions--but where else shall we go? If we refuse His words, which way will we turn? If we turn away from the authority of God’s Word, to whose authority do we yield? Our mistake is that we generally turn to some other human--a man with breath in his nostrils.

I am old-fashioned about the Word of God and it’s authority. I am committed to believe that if we ignore it or consider the commandment of holiness as optional, we jeopardize our souls and earn for ourselves severe judgment to come”. (The Tozer Pulpit Vol. 2, book five:62)

### **Application**

1. It is a most perplexing thing to those in the world as it was to Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus that Jesus reveals Himself to us through the Scriptures and speaks to us, though He is in heaven.

- a. The unbeliever thinks such talk is a mere crutch to get through life, void of reality and we are crazy, as Festus told Paul! Acts 26:24-25
  - b. The unbeliever fails to understand Jesus is not our crutch, but our entire dependency. Jn. 15:5
2. It is of the utmost importance the believer understands spiritual truth, without attempting to figure out every little detail on every doctrine.
- a. At times believers will attempt to understand the doctrine of predestination and free-will to a logical rational, ending up in one of two camps that have divided the church through the centuries, Calvinism and Armenianism, but it did not exist for the first 300 years of the church till Augustin of the Catholic Church.
  - b. Both doctrines are Biblical and complementary truths that should never be understood as contradicting each other.
  - c. Any attempt to understand or embrace the doctrine of predestination or free-will, at the expense of the other, will end up as heresy!
  - d. Moody said they are two parallel lines in this side of heaven that never cross but when we get to heaven, we will see how they do cross.
3. It should be understood that even as Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus was given an answer, so will Jesus answer each of us through the Scriptures the questions of life, if we are willing to go to God and wait on Him.

- a. We are not to lean to our own understanding but in all our ways acknowledge Him. And He shall direct your paths. Prov. 3:5-6
- b. We are to not be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and mind, through Jesus Christ. Phil. 4:6-7
- c. We are to let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Ja. 1:5-8
- d. We should never forget that obedience the secret of blessedness and love is the secret to obedience, according to the words of Jesus.
  - 1) “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” Jn. 13:17
  - 2) “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Jn. 14:15

### **Conclusion**

The tenth apostle according to Matthew’s list may not have much information about his life, but what is present serves us well.

- I. The particular names Lebbaeus Thaddaeus and Judas, all designate the same person!
- II. The person of Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus was a vital link in the twelve!
- III. The proclamation of Jesus to Judas Lebbaeus Thaddaeus was of a spiritual nature !

***The proclamation of Jesus to Lebbaeus Thaddaeus was of a spiritual nature !***