

Jude's "Te Deum"

"Te Deum laudamus: te Dominum confitemur." Thus begins one of the most ancient hymns of the church, entitled "Te Deum." The hymn is so old that the authorship is uncertain. The English translation of this Latin sentence is "O God, we praise Thee: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord." The title "Te Deum" in simplicity says, "Unto Thee, O God." The Te Deum is saying everything is for Your glory, Lord, for You are Lord. You are Lord who shall one day rule and reign in this earth and You are Lord of my life here and now. Therefore, everything I am, everything I do is unto Thee, O God. After the great victory of King Henry V over the French at the Battle of Agincourt, Shakespeare has Henry commanding, "Let there be sung 'Non nobis' and 'Te Deum.'" "Non nobis" is to say not unto us, but to Thee, O God. Even Shakespeare acknowledges glory must be given to God alone.

Scriptures that we see bringing forth this truth would be Psalm 115:1: "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake" and Psalm 75:1: "Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare" and I Timothy 1:17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." I see a hint of "Te Deum" in a phrase that Jude uses in the final verses in his epistle: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude, verses 24 and 25). Here we see, what I should like to call, Jude's "Te Deum."

In the first verse of this epistle, Jude calls himself a servant to Jesus Christ and brother of James. Who was Jude? We discern in two references that Jude is the half brother of our Lord and Savior and full brother to James. Matthew 13:55: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas (Jude)?" Mark 6:3(a, b): "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses (Joseph), and of Juda (Jude), and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?..." Yes, our Lord had siblings: James, Joses, Simon and Jude. The Lord's sisters are not named, but some sources from secular records say there were two and their names were Mary and Salome. Some have tried to ascribe to the perpetual virginity of Mary, the mother of our Lord. The argument given is that these siblings were really the cousins of Jesus, however there is nothing in the text that even hints to that. In reality, everything says the opposite; that these were, in fact, the brothers and sisters of Jesus. There were common words for "cousin" and "kinsmen" used in the Greek language of the day, but neither words were used. The word "brethren" and

“brother” specifically refer to a sibling. Although Mary and Joseph most certainly had not been physically joined before Jesus was born, it did not stay this way as we see revealed in Matthew 1:25: “And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.”

The brothers of our Lord did not possess saving faith in Jesus before the cross and resurrection, as John tells us in John 7:5: “For neither did his brethren believe in him.” But that dramatically changed sometime from the cross to the prayer meeting as observed in Acts 1:14: “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” In an unusual way this could provide comfort for all who have loved ones who are not saved yet. If the brothers of Jesus, who had the most intimate dealings and interaction with Jesus for the first thirty years of His life, did not believe until after the resurrection, cheer up! There is great hope for your loved ones as well! And Jude along with James, Joseph, Jr., and Simon became great proponents of the faith. As Jude himself proclaims in Jude, verse 3, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” I Corinthians 9:5 even informs us that Jude and his other full brothers traveled to other places with their wives to tell others that Jesus Christ is indeed Savior and Lord. What witnesses these siblings became! With this background in mind, let’s examine Jude’s “Te Deum,”

I. THE PRAISE

Jude, verse 24a: “Now unto Him....” It is not about Jude, it is all about Jesus! Notice once again in verse 1 of this epistle that Jude calls himself the brother of James, but the servant or slave of Jesus. He doesn’t even refer to himself, although he could, as the brother of Jesus, but rather the most obedient servant. With the natural sibling rivalry that lasts beyond adolescence, it is remarkable that both Jude and James do not put themselves on an equal plane with our Lord. They elevate Jesus to His rightful place as Lord. He is basically saying the “Te Deum”: “O God, we praise Thee: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.”

II. THE POWER

Jude, verse 24a, b says, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling....” And how is He able to keep us from falling? John 10:27-29 tells us, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

A child of God can fall into backsliding, but not to the depths of the unconverted, for the Scripture says, Psalm 37:23, 24, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.” I like the analogy

we find in the story of the ark found in Genesis 7:16: “And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.” Then the judgment of the flood came, but Noah and his family were shut in. They could lose their footing in the ark and even fall, but they would never fall out of the ark. Jesus encourages us in John 5:24, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” We see this overcoming power in Romans 8:38 and 39: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Jude bespeaks of this glorious power of our Lord with these closing words of this epistle: “...To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude verse 25). Jesus said in Matthew 28:18b, “...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Christ is not restricted to heaven in His power; it extends to earth and the outer reaches of the galaxy and beyond!

III. THE PRESENTATION

Jude, verse 24b-25, “...and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

In Jude’s “Te Deum” he raises his personal hymn of praise to a crescendo with these words. Jude sounds very much like John from Revelation 11:15b: “... The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Through the grace alone of Christ, Jude is reminding us of the fact that we shall stand forgiven and holy in the full manifestation of the glory of the Lord one day. And I would be remiss to leave out the fact that Jude goes further than telling us that this Jesus with whom he was reared was more than his boss and King, he is telling us that Jesus is God of very God, for Jude calls Jesus, “...God our Saviour...” (Jude, verse 25b).

When I get to heaven, I think I should like to sing Jude’s “Te Deum” with him!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.