

Readings: *Ephesians 2: 19 – 22; Psalm 18 (19): 1 – 4; Luke 6: 12 – 19.*

These saints are included among the Twelve Apostles chosen by Jesus in *The Gospel of Luke* and *Acts*. In *Mark* and *Matthew* we do find Simon, but Thaddaeus instead of Jude. Thaddaeus is an Aramaic nickname, perhaps meaning ‘courageous of heart’, and may have replaced Jude (Judas) to avoid confusion with Judas Iscariot. It is only in the Western Church that they have a common feast on this day. Their relics are enshrined under the altar of S. Joseph in S. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. It is likely that the date marks their translation to Rome in the 7th – 8th century. Nothing is known for certain about either of them beyond what the New Testament tells us, but – as with others of the Twelve – there are traditions about their preaching and their martyrdoms. In *Mark* and *Matthew*, Simon is described as ‘the Cananian’ – sometimes wrongly explained as ‘from Cana’, but actually derived from a Hebrew word which *Luke* translates as ‘called the Zealot’. It is sometimes suggested that Simon was a member of the nationalist party of the Zealots, but, as this party only came into existence at the time of the Jewish War (AD 67 – 70), it is more likely that the title has its religious meaning – one zealous for the cause of God.

So both apostles have names indicating their religious commitment to Jesus.

Jude is described by *Luke* as ‘of James’, which would normally mean ‘son of James’. He has sometimes been regarded as the author of the New Testament *Epistle of Jude*, but there the author is described as ‘brother of James’, and in verse 17 he seems to distinguish himself from the apostles. The letter may have been written by OR attributed to Jude, brother of the James who was leader of the Jerusalem Church.

Archbishop Cranmer’s Collect for this feast, based on the reading from Ephesians, is a fine example of Scripture turned into prayer. It sums up admirably what it means for Christians to be a *holy* and *apostolic* Church.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee.

Supplementary Note on the Holy Kindred. *There has been in the past a tendency among commentators to assume that all similarly named people mentioned in scripture are the same person. An extreme version of this habit is found in the apocryphal tradition of The Holy Kindred, according to which Saint Anne had three successive husbands, by whom she had three daughters – each called Mary – from whom came seven cousins – (a) Jesus, (b) James the Less, James, Simon & Jude, (c) James the Great and John (the sons of Zebedee). The New Testament provides no support for this apocryphal tradition, which was condemned by the Council of Trent!*

(The chapel of S. Anne in Walsingham's Anglican Shrine has a fine painting of the Holy Kindred).