

Images and Imagery in Jude

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Based upon the number of commentators who have argued that Jude, the blood brother of James, wrote to Judean believers during the late 50s early 60s, we have asked this question: What was Jude and the messianic Judean community confronting at that time?¹ “Jude’s adult life,” according to Witherington, “was a era of rising tensions in the Holy Land . . .” Pilate’s disgrace and exile in A.D. 36-37 and bad Roman procurators . . . “only fueled the Zealot movement, which had strong Galilean connections” where Jude both lived and ministered.² For decades, the Zealots had incited Judeans to revolt against Rome based upon extremist theology that prompted political activism, all of which began with Judas of Galilee (A.D. 6) and ended with Eleazar

¹ **Agreed Authorship, Recipients, and Date:** Gloag, *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles* (1887), 365; Salmond, *Jude* (1907), iv, vii; Payne, “The Letter of Jude” (1969), 626; Watson, “The Letter of Jude” (1998), 12:474-75; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (2003), 409; Brosend, *James & Jude* (2004), 3-7; G. Green, *Jude & 2 Peter* (2008), 16; Jobes, *Letters to the Church* (2011), 242; Davids, *The Letter of 2 Peter and Jude* (2006) 23; Painter/deSilva, *James and Jude* (2012), 186. Those who are open to dating Jude more broadly from the 60s to the 80s are Keil, *Commentar über die Briefe des Petrus and Judas* (1883), 296; Holloway, *James & Jude* (1996), 137; Elwell/Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament* (1998), 371. For more details about these introductory matters, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Jude* in *The Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*, edited by W. Hall Harris (Willington: Logos, 2015), 28-59.

² **Political Happenings in Judea during Jude’s Life** Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 563-64.: In fact, Tacitus, a Roman historian, attributes the war to two cruel and irresponsible Roman governors: Felix and Festus (*Church History* 5.9.3-5; 5.10.1). Yet in reality, four Roman governors are worth singling out: Felix (A.D. 52-60; *Josephus War* 2.12.5 § 240; *Antiquities* 20.7.1 §§ 137; 20.8.5 § 162), Porcius Festus (A.D. 60-62; *Josephus War* 2.14.1 § 271; *Antiquities* 20.8.9 §§ 183-84), Albinus (A.D. 62-64; *Josephus War* 2.14.1 §§ 272-73; 4.5.3 §§ 300-09; *Antiquities* 20.9.1-5 §§ 197-215), and Gessius Florus (A.D. 64-66; *Josephus War* 2.14.2 §§ 277; *Antiquities* 20.11.1 §§ 252-53) because they all contributed to the growing hostility against Rome. See also E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. — A.D. 135)*, volume 1 revised and edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973), 1:459-70, 485; Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 348-58.

(A.D. 73).³ According to Zealot rhetoric, political freedom from all Gentile occupation and interference would serve to purify the nation, a political purification necessary before God would usher in his eschatological kingdom rule. Consequently, the coming of God’s kingdom was dependent upon Zealot criminal-like militancy against Rome as well as the extermination of any Judean who was willing to submit to Roman rule.⁴ During the late 50s to mid 60s when an increased deterioration between Rome and Judea was at its highest, the Zealots or *Sicarii* were actively striving to convince as many Judeans as possible to revolt against Rome. “The effects of their frenzy,” recalls Josephus, “were thus felt throughout all Judea, and every day saw this war being fanned into fiercer flame.”⁵ “The history of Palestinian Judaism from the time of

³ **History of the Zealots:** The Zealot movement began with Judas the Galilean. Judas had proclaimed Judea a republic and recognized God alone as king and Lord. “They think little of submitting to death in unusual forms,” according to Josephus, “and permitting vengeance to fall on kinsmen and friends if only they may avoid calling any man master.” See Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.6 §§ 23-25 (Feldman); cf. *War* 2.8.1 § 117-118. The sons of Judas propagated the Zealot rhetoric and maintained disruptive acts of insurrection (A.D. 46-48). The Roman governor Tiberius Julius Alexander eventually brought to trial James and Simon, sons of Judas the Galilean and had them sentenced to crucifixion (*circa* 46-48; *Antiquities* 20.5.2 § 102). Menaham, another son of Judas, changed Zealot tactics during the mid-60s that earned them a new name: *Sicarii*. The nomenclature *Sicarii* (σικάρριοι) was Rome’s designation for the Zealots because of their aggressive, ruthless, and gruesome use of a dagger for assassinations, killing without discrimination Romans and Judeans alike (*Antiquities* 20.5.2 § 102; cf. *War* 2.8.3 254). Menahem first seized Masada from the Romans, confiscated a large amount of weapons, and used Masada as a base of operations. When Menahem made his entrance into Jerusalem like a veritable king fully armed, he assumed charge of the revolution in Jerusalem until he was murdered (*War* 2.7.9 §§ 442-48). Eleazar son of Jairus, a grandson of Judas and a subsequent leader of the *Sacarii* took up residence at Masada (*War* 2.7.9 § 447; 7.8.1 § 253) and played key roles in the A.D. 66 revolt. Eventually, he retreated to Masada and remained there until he and those who followed him faced their suicidal demise in A.D. 73 (*War* 7.9.1-2 §§ 389-406).

⁴ **Descriptions of Zealot Behavior:** They are called “tyrants” (τυράννος, Josephus *War* 1.1.4 § 10); “foolish” (ἄφροσύνη Josephus *War* 2.13.6 § 651) who manifested “rash” behavior (τόλμα, Josephus *War* 3.10.2 § 479; 4.5.5 § 347) and exhibited “madness” (ἄπονοία, Josephus *War* 2.13.6 § 265; 3.9.8 § 454; 3.10.2 § 479; 4.6.1 § 362; 5.1.5 §§ 34, 121, 424, 436, 436; 6.1.3 § 20; 7.6.5 § 213; 7.8.1 § 267; 7.10.1 § 412). Ultimately they promoted and pursued rebellion, pillaged and burned homes, and kidnapped and murdered Roman and countryman alike. Hengel adds to this conversation when he points out that Josephus’ labeling of Zealots as “bandits” and “chief-bandits” were descriptive political terms among the Romans to speak of people who were rebels for political and religious reasons against the Roman government. Furthermore, Josephus’ preference for terms other than “Zealot” was in order present the movement and their leaders as criminals as well as to distance the movement from the Maccabean revolt. Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 15-16, 24-75, 154-56.

⁵ **Rebellion Throughout Judea:** Josephus, *War* 2.8.6 § 264-65 (Thackeray); cf. *Antiquities* 20.8.6 §§ 172-76. Historically, momentum for revolt was growing in the cities of Caesarea and Jerusalem, in the Judean desert regions and hill country, and in Samaria and Galilee. For a summary presentations of Judean war with Rome, see Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The Micmillan Bible Atlas*, (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing, 1968, rev. ed. 1977), 157;

Pompey’s conquest of Jerusalem until the Revolt of Bar Koseb about two hundred years later,” says Hengel, “is deeply marked by the Jews’ struggle for religious and political freedom.”⁶

Consequently, Jude’s letter confronts an historically turbulent, intrusive, and life threatening Zealot seduction for religious and political freedom just prior to the total outbreak of war with Rome in 66 C.E.⁷ As a result, Jude frames the heart of his letter with a select number of historical images or exemplars in order to dissuade Judean followers of Jesus who are being coerced, pressured, and perhaps even threatened to join the Zealot/*Sicarii* cause, a cause bent on rebellion against authority (vv 4, 8, 11), shaped through improper speech (vv 8, 10, 15, 16, 18), driven by greed (v 11), and punishable by God (vv 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14–15). After underscoring the rebellious bent of the godless in verse 4, Jude moves to the vituperative portion of his letter (vv 5–16)⁸

M. Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.*, trans by David Smith (Edinburgh, England: T & T Clark, 1989), 330-76; L.I. Levine “Jewish War” in *ABD* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:839-45.

⁶ Hengel, *The Zealots*, 1. For other evidence, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Jude* in the Evangelical Exegetical Commentary, edited by W. Hall Harris (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 65-93.

⁷ **Internal Evidence for Jude’s Confronting the Zealots:** Jude seems to make known about whom he confronts with a description of a recontextualized attitude of the Zealot/*Sicarii* toward Roman authorities. Apparently there was an underlining Zealot conviction that drove their movement. “They think little of submitting to death in unusual forms,” according to Josephus, “and permitting vengeance to fall on kinsmen and friends if only they may avoid calling any man master” (Josephus *Antiquities* 18.1.6 §§ 23-25 [Feldman]; cf. *War* 2.8.1 § 117-118). They believed “God is to be their only Ruler and Lord” (Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.23). In verse 4, Jude seems to suggest that this Zealot sentiment was transferred to Jesus: “They are godless people . . . who continually deny *our* only Master and Lord, Jesus, who is the Christ.” Jude’s repeated references to Jesus as Messiah (vv 1, 17, 21, 25) would also appear to counter Simon, Menahem, and other revolutionary Judean rebels who believed and presented themselves as Messiah. Looking back on the period of Jude’s letter Josephus recalled, “Anyone might make himself *king* (Βασιλεύς) as the head of a band of rebels and then would press on to the destruction of the community, causing trouble to few Romans . . .” They believed “God is to be their only Ruler and Lord” (Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.10.8 § 285 [Marcus]). See Herbert W. Bateman IV, “‘False Teacher’ or ‘Zealot Insurrection’: Does a Zealot Occasion Provide a Better Interpretation of Jude?” (paper presented at the 66th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA: November 2014), 1-36; idem, “Three Obstacles to Overcome, and Then One” in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King* by Herbert W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 215-49; idem. “The Background to the General Letters” in *Interpreting the General Letters*, edited by John D. Harvey (2013), 57-88.

⁸ Although Jude’s ultimate concern is rebellion, which appears at the very heart of his letter, his letter is both advisory (B and B¹) and vituperative (C and C¹).

A Greeting (vv 1–2)

where Jude frames the themes of rebellion, speech, greed, and judgment around several images or exemplars: (1) the wilderness generation, angels, Gentile urbanites; (2) Michael the Archangel; (3) Cain, Balaam, Korah; and (4) Enoch.⁹ While two are positive images (#s 2 and 4), the two sets of images are negative (#s 1 and 1). We will focus attention on Jude’s two sets of three images.

Wilderness Generation, Angels, Gentile Urbanites

Verses 5–7 serve as a reminder of what happens to people who rebel. Jude frames his reminder with three negative images or exemplars about past revolts: the rebellion of the exodus community, the rebellion of celestial beings, and the rebellion of urban Gentiles. Each is an event in Hebrew Scriptures that is featured negatively in later non-canonical Jewish texts. Each is a negative historical image or exemplar that represent three different types of rebellion: rebellion against God’s leading (wilderness generation’s uprising at Kadesh Barnea), rebellion against God’s universal design (angelic revolt to remain in heaven), and rebellion against God’s societal norms (Gentile refusal to honor God’s marital norm).¹⁰ Jude frames these diverse rebellions with well-known negative images or exemplars that represent various groups within God’s created order to underscore a simple fact: God is no respecter of persons when it comes to rebellion. He has judged past rebellion indiscriminately. Consequently Jude sets his forthcoming and scathing

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- B Stated Purpose: Contend for the Faith (vv 3–4)
 - C Past Rebellions and Subsequent Divine Judgment (vv 5–7)
 - C¹ Present Rebellion and Future Divine Judgment (vv 8–16)
 - B¹ Stated Strategy: Contend with being Steadfast and Merciful (vv 17–23)
 - A¹ Doxology (vv 24–25)

⁹ Similarly, Foster has argued that James employs exemplars (Abraham, Rahab, Job, Elijah) to frame several concerns for the messianic community he addresses. Robert J. Foster, *The Significance of Exemplars for the Interpretation of the Letter of James* in *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

¹⁰ Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Rebellion and God’s Judgment in Jude,” *BibSac* 170 (October-December 2013), 453-77.

tone in verses 8–16 by way of these three negative images of previous rebellions and judgments in order to tackle the current revolt wreaking havoc and threatening Judea’s messianic community.

Cain, Balaam, Korah

Verse 11 opens with a condemnation (“They are damned”) followed by a reason for their denunciation. Jude’s basis is found in these images or exemplars: Cain, Balaam, and Korah. They, like the wilderness generation, the angels, and Gentile urbanites, are three notoriously famous figures in Hebrew Scriptures who are also featured in later non-canonical Jewish tradition as negative historical figures. Although Jude’s literary arrangement differs from Hebrew Scriptures, his rearrangement presents a natural progression of thought, namely a life style, an error, and a revolt.¹¹

Historical figures =	Cain No ethnic Connection	Balaam Gentile Prophet	Korah Israelite Priest
Prepositional phrases =	τῆ ὁδῶ in the way	τῆ πλάνῃ in the error	τῆ ἀντιλογίᾳ in the rebellion
Governing verbs =	ἐπορεύθησαν conduct	ἐξεχύθησαν commitment	ἀπόλοντο destruction

What ultimately unites these three figures is their greed. The insertion of “greed” (μισθός) draws attention to a disposition of the godless, a disposition well known among Roman governors, particularly Albinus (A.D. 63-64) and Florus (A.D. 64-66) both of whom were ruling

¹¹ *The way* of Cain, *the error* of Balaam, and *the destruction* of Korah are a figure of speech known as antimereia whereby one part of speech is used instead of another. Here in Jude 11 dative nouns are employed rather than verbs. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 502.

when Jude may have written his letter (ca. 62-66).¹² Similarly greed draws attention to several Jewish high priests (e.g., the high priestly families of Ananus, Boethus, and Phiabi)¹³ who also struggled with the same moral weakness, particularly Ananias (priesthood A.D. 48-59). After the end of his priesthood and throughout the early 60s, Ananias sustained an active relationship with Ananus, who was from one of the controlling priestly families. He also maintained an influence over the people, the high priest Ishmael, and subsequent high priests as well as the Roman procurator Albinus because of money. Ananias was greedy to an extreme. This wealthy priest was notorious for his corruption within the temple precincts.¹⁴ Finally, it draws attention to the

¹² Albinus was incorrigible when it came to money. He plundered monies, accepted bribes, and practiced extortion. He triangulated one Judean faction against another for money and in the end escalated the Judean - Roman animosity. When Nero recalled Albanus to Rome, Albanus, before leaving Judea, executed major criminals and released the remaining prisoners — many of whom were revolutionaries. Although all prisons were empty, the task of Gessius Florus was made more difficult. Florus was worse than Albanus. His plundering escalated from robbing individuals to plundering entire villages, towns, and cities. The Judean revolt broke out two years into Florus’ governorship triggered by his attempt to relieve Jerusalem’s temple of its treasury. Tacitus rightly attributes the war to two cruel and irresponsible Roman governors, Felix (A.D. 52-60) and Festus (A.D. 60-62), but certainly Albinus (A.D. 63-64) and Florus (A.D. 64-66) were equal contributors to the problem. In fact, it seems more appropriate to conclude that under Felix (A.D. 52-60), Festus (A.D. 60-62), and Albinus (A.D. 63-64) the deterioration of Roman – Judeans relations were increasing, but total collapse occurred under Florus (A.D. 64-66). See Tacitus in his book entitled *Histories*, 5.9.3-5; 5.10.1 (written *circa* A.D. 100–110). For more information on **Roman Governor Albinus**, see Josephus *War* 2.14.1 §§ 272-73; 4.5.3 §§ 300-09; *Antiquities* 20.9.1-5 §§ 197-215. For a narrative presentation about Albinus, see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:468-70; Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 353-55. For a narrative presentation about the high priest from the high priestly family of Ananus (Ananus, son of Ananus, A.D. 62) and Jesus, son of Damascus, both who served during the governorship of Albinus, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas* (2004), 476-83. For more information on **Roman Governor Florus**, see Josephus *War* 2.14.2 §§ 277; *Antiquities* 20.11.1 §§ 252-53. For a narrative presentation about Gessius Florus, see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:470, 485; Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 353-58. For a narrative presentation about the high priest from the high priestly family of Boethus (Jesus, son of Gamaliel, A.D. 63-64), Matthias, son of Theophilus (A.D. 64-66), and last high priest Phannias, son of Samuel, all who served during the governorship of Florus, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas* (2004), 483-90.

¹³ Needless to say, the position of high priest provided significant economic advantages. For instance, Ananus son of Seth was the first appointed high priest by a governor of Syria (Quirinius in AD 6) and first to be removed by a Roman governor over Judaea and Samaria (Gratus in AD 15). He was also the first family member to hold the high priesthood. Five sons (Eleazar, AD 16–17; Jonathan, AD 37; Theophilus, AD 37–41; Matthias, AD 42–43; and Ananus, AD 62) also followed him into the high priesthood, as well as his son-in-law Caiaphas (AD 18–36). Their family corruption was later featured in a series of woes pronounced on priests who took by force what did not belong to them (*Tosefta Menahot* 2.1467–68).

¹⁴ Josephus, *Ant.* 20.205–207. See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 458–59. Elsewhere, Josephus explains how it was that priests had a monopoly over the temple. In his response to Apion’s allegation that Antiochus Epiphanes was found in the inner part of the temple, reclining at a table, eating a feast fit for a king, Josephus

Zealots, particularly Eleazar son of Simon who would eventually lead the lower class of priests against Jerusalem’s wealthy class of priests.¹⁵ “It hardly needs to be stressed that, the Zealots displayed a certain tendency to disorder,” which says Hengel, “was caused . . . by the increase within the movement, as its power extended and the economic distress grew, of those who were motivated not by religion but, above all, by a desire for booty.” Josephus recalls the greed of the Zealots in this manner:

For in those days the *Sicarii* clubbed together against those who consented to submit to Rome and in every way treated them as enemies, plundering their property, rounding up their cattle, and setting fire to their habitations (cf. *War* 4.2.2 §§ 16); protesting that such persons were no other than aliens, who so ignobly sacrificed the hard-won liberty of the Jews and admitted their preference for the Roman yoke. Yet, after all, this was but a pretext, put forward by them as a cloak for their cruelty and *greed* (sic) as was made plain by their actions. For the people did join with them in the revolt and take their part in the war with Rome, only, however, to suffer at their hands still worse atrocities . . .¹⁶

engages Apion’s anti-Jewish slander. Josephus sets out to describe the temple and its restrictions, the daily duties of the priests, the objects in the temple (105), and the priestly temple responsibilities (107–108). See Richard Bauckham, “Josephus’ Account of the Temple in *Contra Apionem* 2.102–109,” in *Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and John R. Levison, AGJU 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 327–47. For a complete list of Second Temple priests as they are mentioned in Josephus, a visual comparison of the tabernacle and temple, and another listing of Josephus texts on the temple objects in comparison with the Old Testament texts and the book of Hebrews, see Bateman, *Charts on the Book of Hebrews*, 78–91.

¹⁵ **The Have-Nots against the Haves:** Naturally, Ananias generated Zealot hostilities from other priests. Josephus tells of the *Sicarii*’s kidnapping of Ananias’ son Eleazar (not to be confused with Eleazar son of Jairus). Albinus eventually negotiated a prison exchange: ten captured *Sicarii* for Eleazar. The success of the Zealots’ kidnappings and subsequent negotiations led to other kidnappings. Josephus, *J.W.* 2.6, 9. See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 459–60; Hengel, *Zealots*, 353–55. Similarly, Simon, son of Giora eventually rose to a place of influence prior to the outbreak of the Judean war in the Judean hill country where he issued a royal-like proclamation of freedom for slaves and rewards for the free. He was a leader of the “have-nots” who inhabited the country and eventually secured caves northeast of Jerusalem to store his booty and grain supplies acquired by raids on the rich (see the quote above from Josephus *War*). For more information, see **Simon, son of Giora:** Josephus, *War* 2.19.2 § 521; 4.6.1 § 353; 4.9.4 § 508–12; Taitus, *History* 5.9. Simon, son of Giora may have been responsible for destroying the water pipe that supplied the city of Jerusalem water and where the Zealots with means had taken up their war efforts against Rome (*Jos War* 6.3.2–4 §§ 193–213; LamentRab 4.4.7; *Jos War* 2.9.4 § 175; *Ant* 18.3.2 § 60). See Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989) 50, 63, 176, 254, 292, 297, 336, 372–73.

¹⁶ Josephus, *War* 7.8.1 §§ 254–58 (Thackeray). Rome’s legal view of the Zealots or Judean revolutionaries, however, was that they were robbers (λησται), another term frequently employed by Josephus in his description of the Zealots. Josephus was, according to Hengel, “fully aware of the difference between a band of robbers and a regular army (cf. *War* 4.7.2 § 408), but he shared completely the Roman legal view, according to which anyone who rebelled against Roman rule was regarded as a lawless criminal, whether an individual robber or a whole army of insurgents.” Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 44. In his description of the Judean war against Rome, Josephus contends “When wars are set afoot that are bound to rage beyond control, and when friends are done away with who might have alleviated the suffering, when raids are made by great hordes of *robbers* (sic, ληστηριων) and men of the

Consequently, greed was problematic throughout Judea. So Jude’s concern here may not be limited to the Zealots, though that is the position here. Implicitly understood, greed drove the godless in their *Cain-like* self-centeredness that led to rebellion against Rome (Josephus *Ant* 1.2.1 § 53). Explicitly stated, greed drove their *Balaam-like* promotion of foolish choices that led to rebellion against Rome (Philo Moses 1.266–68; cp. Josephus *Ant* 4.6.5 § 118). Implicitly understood, greed drove their *Korah-like* confrontation that led to rebellion against Rome and their imminent death.

Ultimately, it seems Jude frames his opening condemnation of the Zealots in verse 11 with three negative exemplars (Cain, Balaam, and Korah) whose greed was self-serving that encouraged foolish choices that resulted in a revolt against Rome. But if the exemplars aren’t enough to discourage Judean messianic followers from joining in the revolt against Rome, Jude’s subsequent appeal to five images from nature provides further support. In verses 12–13, he describes the Zealots with metaphors from nature whereby he moves from the sea (v 12a), to the sky (v 12d), to land (v 12e), back to the sea (v 13a), and ending with the sky (v 13b). By way of this group of metaphors from nature, Zealot leaders are portrayed as harmful, unreliable, shameful, and aimless people. Each image underscores the menacing threat of the godless Zealots. In essence, they are harmful people who appear to promise much but produce little, who act shamefully, and wander aimlessly. Thus the coupling of three negative exemplars with five images from nature, underlines Jude’s declaration in verse 11 where he has declared the doom of the godless Zealots — they are damned.

highest standing are assassinated, it is supposed to be the common welfare that is upheld, but the truth is that in such cases the motive is private gain” (Feldman; *Ant* 18.1.1 §§7–8). For Hengel’s complete discussion, see *The Zealots* (1989), 41-46.

Conclusion

At the time of Jude’s writing (ca. AD 62–66), Judaea’s frenzy with Rome manifested itself in pockets of Zealot-led civil disobedience throughout the land, steered or directed by nonbelieving Judaeans (godless; Jude 4; cf. Jude 8, 10, 11–13, 16, 19). The nation had already rejected Jesus and the kingdom message he proclaimed (Matt 13:53–58; 26:57–68; 27:1–43; cf. Mark 6:4–6; 14:53–65; 15:1–37); it had already explained away the resurrection and denied the current reign of Jesus (Matt 27:62–66; 28:11–15); and it had already rejected the message and messengers who preached that Jesus had fulfilled God’s covenantal promises (Acts 4:1–4; 5:29–33; 7:1–60; 13:45–46, 50–51; 14:19; 17:5, 13; 18:5–6; etc.). Thus godless Zealots had already rebelled against God and his Messiah (v 4). Now they wished to rebel against Rome, reestablish the kingdom of Israel according to their standards, in their own strength and with Jewish leaders vying for self-imposed leadership rights. In order to dissuade the messianic community from joining in their revolt against Rome, Jude uses two sets of repudiated images or exemplars and places them strategically in his letter to undergird his concern or sense of urgency (cf. v 3) for the Judean messianic community to keep their distance from those who advocate rebellion, namely a rebellion against Rome.