

# THE MINORITY REPORT: A DIFFERENT ASSESSMENT FOR INTERPRETING JUDE, PART 1

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## ABSTRACT

*Scholars and Bible teachers have long assumed that Jude wrote his epistle in response to false teachers. Some see him responding to Gnostic false teachers, others to Christian false teachers. However, a close examination of this “majority report” reveals contradictions within this view, and the letter never explicitly refers to teaching. Part 1 will focus on these problems with the majority report, while part 2 will examine a “minority report” that offers a different background for the letter of Jude.*

**I**N 1956, PHILIP K. DICK PUBLISHED A SHORT STORY in the science fiction magazine *Fantastic Universe*.<sup>1</sup> The story later served as the basis for Steven Spielberg’s film *Minority Report* (2002), starring Tom Cruise. The movie questions the accuracy of a predetermined policing system that prevents crime.

The policing system is based on the interpretation of material offered by three precog mutants who foresee a crime before it occurs. The precog mutants are kept in a pool of water in a somewhat rigid position so that all of their energy can be directed at predicting the future. Precog data are fed into a computer, the computer analyzes the material, and a report is generated for each precog. Unfortunately, the precogs have questions about their interpretations and do not always agree. If the three reports differ, the com-

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<sup>1</sup> Available in Philip K. Dick, *Selected Stories of Philip K. Dick* (New York: Pantheon, 2002).

puter identifies the two reports with the greatest similarity or overlap and produces a “majority report” about a foreseen crime. Police officers then prevent the foreseen crime by arresting the person who has been predetermined a “criminal” before the criminal act can even occur, thereby eliminating the free will of the person to choose another course of action.

I suggest that there are three precog reports about how Jude should be interpreted. Jude’s common name, the nameless recipients, and the obscure references to the “godless” (vv. 4, 15) and “these people” (vv. 8, 12, 16, 19), among other things, create a historical mystery that all three reports strive to solve. Two reports agree. They conclude that Jude is alarmed (vv. 3–4) about “false teachers” who are challenging the early church. Though there are numerous disagreements within the two false-teacher reports, they serve as the basis for a majority report that has become the predetermined conclusion that pastors and students use to read, interpret, and preach Jude. One report, however, differs. It is a minority report. The minority report suggests that Jude is distressed (vv. 3–4) about the Zealot-led rebellion that is challenging the early church in Judea, and this offers a different historical background in which to read, interpret, and preach Jude.<sup>2</sup>

First, how similar are the two reports that make up the majority report, and how do they differ? Do problems within the majority report suggest the need to entertain the minority report? Second, what does the minority report offer? Is there any credible value within the report? Ultimately, this question needs attention: Should the false-teacher majority report be the background for reading, interpreting, and preaching the letter of Jude?

#### THE MAJORITY REPORT: JUDE ADDRESSES FALSE TEACHERS

The majority report concludes that Jude is alarmed (vv. 3–4) about false teachers who are challenging the early church. Yet the majority report consists of two different theories about false teachers. One false-teacher report concludes they are Gnostic false teachers, but the other report claims they are Christian false teachers. Despite the variety of disagreements between and within these reports, their greatest similarity has led to the presumption that

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<sup>2</sup> For a full exegesis of Jude based on the view taken in this article, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Jude*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017).

Jude is speaking against false teachers. Since these two reports undergird the majority view, they warrant some overview.

#### REPORT OF THE GNOSTIC FALSE-TEACHER VIEW

A very large group of mostly non-evangelicals contribute evidence to the Gnostic false-teacher report. While at least sixteen commentators agree that Jude is (1) pseudonymous, (2) written during the post-apostolic period, and (3) oriented against Gnosticism,<sup>3</sup> many competing Gnostic false-teacher assessments reside within the report. Nevertheless, whenever the “godless” (vv. 4, 15) and “these people” (vv. 8, 12, 16, 19) appear in Jude, this report assumes that an unknown author speaks out against *Gnostic* false teachers sometime during the post-apostolic period (AD 85 and following).<sup>4</sup> But what are some of the competing assessments presented within

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<sup>3</sup> Adolf Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Janet P. Ward (New York: Putnam, 1904), 229–31; Otto Pflieger, *Primitive Christianity: Its Writings and Teachings in Their Historical Connections*, trans. W. Montgomery, 4 vols. (New York: Putnam, 1911), 4:251–54; Rudolf Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri und Judä*, *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912), 206–7, 209; Alfred Loisy, *Remarques sur la littérature épistolaire du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: É. Nourry, 1935), 137–38; E. J. Goodspeed, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1937), 348–49; René Leconte, *Les épîtres catholiques de Saint Jacques, Saint Jude et Saint Pierre*, *La Sainte Bible* (Paris: Cerf, 1961), 58–60; A. R. C. Leaney, *The Letters of Peter and Jude*, *Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 82; E. M. Sidebottom, *James, Jude, 2 Peter*, *New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 78–79; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, *Thornapple Commentaries* (1969; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 232–34; Wolfgang Schrage, “Der Judasbrief,” in Horst Robert Balz and Wolfgang Schrage, *Die ‘Katholischen’ Briefe: Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Johannes und Judas*, *Neue Testament deutsch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), 218, 220; Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed., trans. Howard Clark Kee (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1975), 426–29; Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre, L’épître de saint Jude*, *Commentaire du Nouveau Testament* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1980), 143, 147–48; Ferdinand Hahn, “Randbemerkungen zum Judasbrief,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 37 (1981): 209–18, esp. 216–17; John J. Gunther, “The Alexandrian Epistle of Jude,” *New Testament Studies* (1984): 549–62, esp. 550; Henning Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, *Kritischer-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 44–45, 49; Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der 2 Petrusbrief* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1994), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Determining the beginning of the apostolic period must begin with Jesus. Based on Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection (ca. AD 33), the growth of the early Judean church (AD 33–35; Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 6:1), and the scattering of diaspora Jewish Christians (AD 35; Acts 8:1, 5–6, 12–13; 9:2, 10, 19, etc.), the earliest *terminus a quo* for Jude would be the mid-30s. When determining a *terminus ad quem* for Jude, many commentators speculate on Jude’s age. Thus a likely time span of 90 years of age limits Jude’s writing to the 80s. Nevertheless, many commentators believe the apostolic period began in the mid-30s and ended in the mid- to late-80s and calculate the date of Jude accordingly.

this Gnostic false-teacher report?

First, there is a minor disagreement about the pseudonymity of Jude. At least one Gnostic false-teacher view suggests that a Jerusalem bishop who bore the name Jude wrote the letter during the time of Trajan (AD 98–117).<sup>5</sup> Another argues that an unknown Judas of the second century (AD 100–130) wrote the letter.<sup>6</sup> Both agree that someone named Jude wrote the letter and that ἀδελφός was added later to the opening salutation. Yet the majority of information found within the Gnostic false-teacher report refutes both views. Consequently, the prevailing view is that an unknown person wrote the letter and merely attached Jude’s name to it.<sup>7</sup> We might also add that there are no text critical glosses of “brother of James” (ἀδελφός δὲ Ἰακώβου) in the manuscript evidence.<sup>8</sup> Second, another minor disagreement within the Gnostic report counters the post-apostolic dating of the letter. Some evidence in the report suggests Jude was written around the time Jerusalem fell under Ro-

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<sup>5</sup> Streeter argues that the original opening of Jude’s letter was “Judas of James, a servant of Christ” and that “the brother of [James]” was a later addition. Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Primitive Church: Studied with Special Reference to the Origins of the Christian Ministry* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 178–80.

<sup>6</sup> Harnack and others were content to believe some unknown person named Jude wrote the letter and that “the brother of” (ἀδελφός) was added later (AD 150–180). Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*, vol. 2, *Die Chronologie der Literatur von Irenaeus bis Eusebius*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1958), 467–68.

<sup>7</sup> This view is by far the most prominent. In addition to those listed above, we might also add Samuel Davidson, *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1868), 440–41; Georg Hollmann, “Der Brief Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus,” in *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, vol. 2, ed. Johannes Weiss (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), 61–63; Walter Grundmann, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1974), 15; Richard Kugelman, *James and Jude*, New Testament Message (Dublin: Veritas, 1980), 80–82; Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 749; Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 237; Steven John Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002), 21; Donald Senior and Daniel J. Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 182–83; Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 162. There are many others.

<sup>8</sup> Tommy Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*, Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2006), 134. Landon, though not as exhaustive as Wasserman, identifies no gloss of “brother of James.” Charles Landon, *A Text-Critical Study of the Epistle of Jude*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).

man attack (AD 70).<sup>9</sup> Yet the overwhelming evidence presented in the report underscores a pseudonymous author of a letter dated sometime during the post-apostolic period (AD 85–160).

Finally, there is disagreement within the report about the Gnostics themselves. Some older evidence suggests that Jude was confronting a second-century Gnostic sect known as the Carpocratians, who took up residence in Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>10</sup> Pflleiderer considered Jude 4 and 18 to be an assault on the Carpocratians based on their promotion of unrestrained sexual indulgences.<sup>11</sup> While it may be true that Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150–220) believed that Jude spoke prophetically against the Carpocratians and that Irenaeus's (ca. AD 175–195) comment concerning the Carpocratians's scoffing of angels fits one of Jude's criticisms of the godless (v. 8),<sup>12</sup> other Gnostic false-teacher contributors offer counterevidence against these second-century Gnostic influences. Moffatt says the traits of rebellion and discontentment like Korah's (vv. 8b, 11c, 16a), the selfish false prophecies like Balaam's (v. 11), the loud pretensions (vv. 13a, 16), the sodomy and sexual abuses (vv. 7, 10b), and the divisions of mankind into psychics and spirituals (v. 19) "belong to the incipient phases of some local, possibly syncretistic, development of libertinism upon *Gnostic* lines, rather than to any definite school."<sup>13</sup> A contributor to the Christian false-

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<sup>9</sup> Joseph Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques: La seconde épître de Saint Pierre, les épîtres de Saint Jean, l'épître de Saint Jude*, 2nd ed., Études bibliques (Paris: Gabalda, 1939), 269–71; Alfred Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, trans. Joseph Cunningham (New York: Herder & Herder, 1960), 490–91; Jean Cantinat, "The Catholic Epistles," in *Introduction to the New Testament*, ed. A. Robert and A. Feuillet (New York: Desclée, 1965), 595; Jean Cantinat, *Les épîtres de Saint Jacques et de Saint Jude* (Paris: Gabalda, 1973), 287.

<sup>10</sup> Carpocratian Gnostics were followers of Carpocrates of Alexandria (ca. AD 135). He was educated and influenced by Platonic philosophy and promoted a syncretistic form of Christianity. He believed, among other things, that God was an unrevealed First Principle, the world was created by subordinate beings, and Jesus was a mere man. His followers survived into the fourth century and became known for both their licentious living and their revealed images of Jesus and philosophers. Robert M. Grant, *Gnosticism: A Source Book of Heretical Writings from the Early Christian Period* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 36–39; Robert M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 95.

<sup>11</sup> Pflleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, 4:251–53. Harnack also holds this view, but he believes the Carpocratians first emerged in Syria and later migrated to Egypt (Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 2:466). Gunther argues, "The particular combination of errors attacked in Jude is distinctively Carpocratian and/or Cainite" (Gunther, "The Alexandrian Epistle of Jude," 554).

<sup>12</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 3.2.6, 10–11; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.25.1.

<sup>13</sup> James Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (New

teacher report, Bauckham, observes that “the attempt to identify a particular second-century Gnostic sect has been largely abandoned.”<sup>14</sup> Most of the current information within the Gnostic report tends to classify the Gnostics in one of three categories: incipient, libertine, or antinomian Gnosticism.

Commentator	Date or Date Range	Gnostic Sect
Leconte	70–100	Libertine Gnostic
Knopf	80–100	Libertine Gnostic
Kelly, Fuchs/Raymond	80–100	Incipient/Libertine Gnostic
Paulsen	80–120	Incipient Gnostic
Vögile	ca. 90	Libertine Gnostic
Hahn	90–120	Incipient Gnostic
Schrage, Kümmel	ca. 100	Libertine Gnostic
Sidebottom	100–120	Incipient Gnostic
Jülicher	100–180	Antinomian Gnostic
Gunther	120–130	Carpocratian Gnostic (2nd c.)
Goodspeed	ca. 125	Docetic Gnostic (2nd c.)
Loisy	140–150	Antinomian Gnostic
Pfleiderer	150	Carpocratian Gnostic (2nd c.)

Regardless of the Gnostic classification, the majority of the evidence presented within the Gnostic false-teacher report suggests a Gentile audience<sup>15</sup> with a wide range of geographical destina-

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York: Charles Scribner, 1911), 354–55; cf. Leconte, *Les épîtres catholiques*, 68.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 163.

<sup>15</sup> F. H. Chase, “Epistle of Jude,” in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 2 vols., ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1899; repr., 1901), 2:805; Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 231; Thomas Barns, “The Epistle of St. Jude: A Study in the Marcsonian Heresy,” *Journal of Theological Studies* os-VI, no. 23 (April 1905): 396; Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, 255; Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri und Judä* (1912), 209; Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques*, 287–88; Leconte, *Les épîtres catholiques de Saint Jacques, Saint Jude et Saint Pierre*, 69–70; Kelly, *Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 234; Cantinat, *Les épîtres de Saint Jacques et de Saint Jude*, 287; Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 2:246–47; Gunther, “The Alexandrian Epistle of Jude,” 549–62; Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter and Jude*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 30; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der 2 Petrusbrief*, 5.

tions.<sup>16</sup> So while the overriding presupposition of the report is that the unknown author's comments are directed at Gnostic false teachers, the range of diverse evidence provided about destination and Gnostic classification underscores a rather significant amount of ambiguity within the report.

#### REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN FALSE-TEACHER VIEW

Another large group of commentators, many of whom are evangelicals, contribute to the Christian false-teacher report. Evidence in the Christian false-teacher report tends to dismantle the idea that Jude is pseudonymous. Naturally, these commentators place the letter's composition during a possible life span for Jude (AD 50–85), underscore the importance of Jewish tradition (e.g., 1 Enoch, Assumption of Moses, etc.), and strive to profile the false teachers based on Jude's portrayal of the godless. Though the Christian false-teacher report seldom appeals to Gnostic texts or concerns, at times Gnostic conclusions *appear* to be simply re-contextualized in the Christian false-teacher report.

While at least thirty-three commentators agree that (1) James's brother Jude wrote the letter (2) during the pre-apostolic period and therefore (3) was oriented against Christian false teachers,<sup>17</sup> numerous competing Christian false-teacher assessments

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<sup>16</sup> Unknown Destination: Hollmann, "Der Brief Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus," 61; Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, 358; J. C. Beker, "Letter of Jude," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 2, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon, 1962), 1010; Cantinat, *Les épîtres de Saint Jacques et de Saint Jude*, 288; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968; repr., 1983), 48; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre*, 144; Kugelman, *James and Jude*, 84; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 237–38. Asia Minor Destination: Barns, "The Epistle of St. Jude," 396; Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques*, 273, 288. Beker holds to the unknown view but likes the Asia Minor view (Beker, "Letter of Jude," 2:1010). Syrian Antioch Destination: Davidson, *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 1:272; Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 2:466–67; Chase, "Epistle of Jude," 2:805; Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri und Judä*, 209; Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 490. Alexandria, Egypt, Destination: Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 231; Pfeleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, 255; Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques*, 288; Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 45; Neyrey, *2 Peter and Jude*, 30. For the most compelling argument for an Alexandrian audience, see Gunther, "The Alexandrian Epistle of Jude," 549–62.

<sup>17</sup> Ernest Renan, *Saint Paul* (Paris: M. Lévy, 1869), 84; Paton J. Gloag, *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1887), 360–61; Bernhard Weiss, *A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. A. J. K. Davidson, vol. 2 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1889), 125; Ernst Kühl, *Die Briefe Petri und Judae*, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), 291–92. Commentators of the 1900s: Chase, "Epistle of Jude," 2:804; J. Vernon Bartlet, *The Apostolic Age: Its Life, Doctrine, Worship and Polity* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1905), 350; Charles Bigg, *A Critical and*

exist in the report. Nevertheless, whenever the “godless” (vv. 4, 15) and “these people” (vv. 8, 12, 16, 19) appear in Jude, it is assumed that Jude, the brother of James, is speaking against Christian false teachers. But what are some of the competing assessments in the Christian false-teacher report? What Christian false teacher conclusions seem to echo the Gnostic false-teacher report?

First, competing information in the Christian false-teacher report concerns from where Jude wrote and to whom he wrote. While from where Jude wrote is often ignored,<sup>18</sup> evidence often ap-

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*Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1909), 317–18; Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), cxlvi–clii; S. D. F. Salmond, *Jude*, Pulpit Commentary (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1907), iv; Montague Rhodes James, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), xxxvi; Gustav Wohlenberg, *Der erste und zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Leipzig: Deichert, 1923), xxxix; J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen & Co., 1934), 189–90; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 45–46; David F. Payne, “Jude,” in *A New Testament Commentary*, ed. G. C. D. Howley (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1969), 626; W. J. Dalton, “Jude,” in *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. Reginald C. Fuller, Leonard Johnston, and Conleth Kearns (London: Nelson, 1969), 1263; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1970), 902–3; Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 385–86; I. H. Eybers, “Aspects of the Background of the Letter of Jude,” *Neotestamentica* 9 (1975): 113–23; John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 170; Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 14–16; Simon J. Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 355–56, 365–66; Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 16; David A. Fiensy, *New Testament Introduction*, College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1994) 338; Gary Holloway, *James and Jude*, College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), 137; Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 27. Commentators of the 2000s: Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 404–6; William F. Brosend II, *James and Jude*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3; D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 690–92; Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 1–9; Karen H. Jobes, *Letters to the Church: A Survey of Hebrews and the General Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 236; John Painter and David A. deSilva, *James and Jude*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 179–83.

<sup>18</sup> Bigg, *Epistles of St. Jude and St. Peter*, 320; James, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, xxxviii; H. Willmering, “The Epistle of St. Jude,” in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. Bernard Orchard (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953), 1191; Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 170; Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, 360; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 30; Holloway, *James and Jude*, 138; Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 693. Compare these Gnostic false-teacher presentations: Wikenhausen, *New Testament Introduction*, 491; Koester, *History and Literature of the New Testament*, 2:246–47.

pears within the report that suggests Jude wrote to Hellenistic Jewish Christians living in a predominately Gentile area (the diaspora).<sup>19</sup> Occasionally, the report provides evidence for a mixed Jewish and Gentile audience.<sup>20</sup> Evidence, however, for a Judean place of origin<sup>21</sup> and a Jewish audience living in Judea is also compelling.<sup>22</sup> Some support for a Judean place of origin even appears within the Gnostic false-teacher report: “The tract must have originated in Palestine,” says Kelly, “for it was there that Jude probably worked and that his and James’ names were highly regarded.”<sup>23</sup> The debate and competing evidence offered within the Christian false-teacher report seem unending and inconclusive. Yet while ambiguity abounds about the recipients, the report provides evidence to suggest that Jude wrote his letter while in Judea to Jewish Christians living in Judea.

Second, the Christian false-teacher report appears at times to recontextualize evidence from the Gnostic false-teacher report.

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<sup>19</sup> Willmering, “The Epistle of St. Jude,” 191; Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 198; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 16; Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, 359; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 914; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 28; R. L. Webb, “Jude,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 618; Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 181. Compare these Gnostic false-teacher presentations: Davidson, *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 1:447; Wikenhausen, *New Testament Introduction*, 490.

<sup>20</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 16; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 409. Compare these Gnostic false-teacher presentations: Johannes Schneider, *Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Judas und Johannes*, Neue Testament deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 122; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre*, 144; Kugelman, *James and Jude*, 84; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 48.

<sup>21</sup> Gloag, *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 373; Davidson, *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 1:447; Salmond, *Jude*, iv; Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 3 vols., trans. John Moore Trout (1909; repr., Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1977), 2:238–39; Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 193; C. E. B. Cranfield, *I and II Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM, 1960), 148; Payne, “The Letter of Jude,” 626; Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, Encountering Biblical Studies (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 371; Duane F. Watson, “The Letter of Jude,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, 12 vols., ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 12:475; Brosend, *James and Jude*, 7; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 14; Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 238, 240–41.

<sup>22</sup> Carl Friedrich Keil, *Commentar über die Briefe des Petrus und Judas* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1883), 296; Gloag, *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 365; Salmond, *Jude*, iv, vii; Holloway, *James and Jude*, 137; Watson, “The Letter of Jude,” 12:475; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 409; Brosend, *James and Jude*, 7; Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 16; Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 242; Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 186.

<sup>23</sup> Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 234.

This is particularly true of the proof provided for the practice of unrestrained sexual indulgence among the false teachers, a prominent rebuke about the Gnostics. For instance, the term for “immoral behavior” (ἀσέλγειαν) in verse 4 is at times limited to sexual behavior.<sup>24</sup> Yet Kraftchick, a supporter of the Christian false-teacher view, objects and counters this idea. He concludes, “We cannot say that the opponents were actually engaged in sexual misconduct. . . . In all likelihood they were not.”<sup>25</sup> “A license for evil” (NET), “wicked deeds,” and “immoral behavior” appear to be the best three renderings for ἀσέλγειαν because Jude’s explicitly stated concern is rebellion (vv. 4, 5–7, 8), verbal abuse (vv. 8, 16, 19), and greed (vv. 11, 12). Furthermore, “immoral behavior” (ἀσέλγειαν) has a wide range of meanings.<sup>26</sup> It is not limited to sexual misconduct.

More frequently presented within the Christian false-teacher report, however, are the unrestrained sexual indulgences attributed to the angels (v. 6). This charge is derived from 1 Enoch and promoted in both Gnostic and Christian false-teacher reports.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Harrington contends, “It is best taken in its root sexual sense,” and Schreiner limits the term to sexual immorality due to the reference to angels and Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 6–7). Senior and Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 190; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 439. Christian False-Teacher Presentations: Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 38–39; Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, 374; Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 59–60; Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 44. Gnostic False-Teacher Presentations: Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 55–56; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, 2 Peter*, 261. See also O. Bauernfeind, “ἀσέλγεια,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 8 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:490.

<sup>25</sup> Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 33–34. For evidence that broadens “immoral behavior,” see Reese, who considers the term to include immorality and violence, and Moo, who expands the meaning to include “sexual misconduct, drunkenness, gluttony, and so on.” Ruth Anne Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 40; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 230.

<sup>26</sup> Josephus employs ἀσέλγειαν broadly to speak of “inappropriate” language (*Ant.* 4.6.12 §151), following a way of “wickedness” (as a reproof to governing officials) (*Ant.* 8.10.2 §252), women who fall into “impurity” (*Ant.* 8.13.1 §318), Herod’s feelings of “lust” (sexual?) for Cleopatra (*Ant.* 15.4.2 §98), the “inconsistency” of Mariamne, which was not sexual (*Ant.* 16.7.1 §185), “wasteful behavior” (*Ant.* 17.5.5 §110), the “impudent obscenity” of a soldier (*Ant.* 20.5 §112), Cleopatra’s sexual lust for Anthony (*J.W.* 1.22.3 §439), the “lascivious behavior” of women (*J.W.* 2.8.2 §121), and “unlawful pleasures” (*J.W.* 4.9.10 §562). So for Josephus, “immoral behavior” takes into consideration many wicked activities.

<sup>27</sup> Gnostic False-Teacher Presentations: Sidebottom, *James, Jude and 2 Peter*, 85; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 166; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 257; Cantinat, *Les épîtres de Saint Jacques et de Saint Jude*, 304; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre*, 164; Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 63; Grundmann, *Der Brief des Judas*, 33–34; Hillier, *1 and 2 Peter*, 242. Christian False-Teacher Presentations: Bigg, *Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 329; David G. Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Epworth

However, “we note,” says Kistemaker, “that he [Jude] does not endorse this idea in his epistle” and that the example of rebellion in verse 6 differs from the rebellion that appears in verse 7.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps Jude chose not to make a sexual connection because Jesus taught celestial beings are sexless (Matt 22:30).<sup>29</sup> Regardless, Jude seems to underscore in verse 6 that celestial beings left their residency in the heavens and thereby challenged where God had situated them. As a result, God punished them.<sup>30</sup> Within the Christian false-teacher report, Gene Green observes that “to keep one’s proper station in [Roman] society was a high value during the era when Jude wrote. In a stratified society where status and position were marked by both clothing and positions in banquets and the theater, the accusation that these beings had moved outside their proper sphere or realm would have been understood as a transgression without the need for any further mention of their sin.”<sup>31</sup> Jude’s readers would have been aware of Jewish leaders and their follow-

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Commentaries (London: Epworth, 1998), 120; Watson, “The Letter of Jude,” 12:488; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 448–49; Robert Harvey and Philip H. Towner, *2 Peter and Jude*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 192–93.

<sup>28</sup> Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, 380. Others also provide evidence that counters sexual allusions. See Gerhard Sellin, “Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 77, nos. 3–4 (1968): 217; Albertus K. J. Klijn, “Jude 5 to 7,” in *The New Testament Age: Essays*, vol. 1, ed. William C. Weinrich (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 237–44, esp. 241–42; J. Daryl Charles, “‘Those’ and ‘These’: The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle of Jude,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38 (1990): 109–124, esp. 114; Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 179

<sup>29</sup> Angels are invisible (2 Kgs 6:17) spiritual beings (Heb 1:14) who can take on human appearance (Gen 18:1–8; 19:1–8; Zech 5:9; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10), but they seem unable to reproduce among themselves and perhaps are even sexless (Matt 22:29–30; cf. Mark 12:25). Fallen angels are capable of invading human beings (Mark 1:21–26; 5:1–13; 9:14–26) and perhaps have the ability to mate with humans by way of possession (Gen 6:1–4; 1 Enoch 6:1–8:4).

<sup>30</sup> Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Rebellion and God’s Judgment in Jude,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 170 (October–December 2013): 453–77.

<sup>31</sup> Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 69; cf. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 179. On proper station in Roman society: “Legal position and status lay at the root of Roman social organization, which at all levels was formally hierarchical. . . . Rome exercised a quasi-paternal authority in its foreign policy and expected other states to behave as dutiful clients. In all such cases, Roman authority was paramount and subordinates were hierarchically graded.” Craig B. Champion, “Social Organization, Roman,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Michael Gagarin and Elaine Fantham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). See also Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 48–69. At the time, Jude’s Judea was not behaving in keeping with Rome’s quasi-paternal authority and was thereby (from Rome’s point of view) rejecting their station within the Roman Empire.

ers who challenged Rome’s political hierarchy, disrupted the Pax Romana, and were imprisoned (e.g., Aristobulus [*Ant.* 14.7.4 §123]; Herod Agrippa [*J.W.* 1.9.6 §181]).<sup>32</sup>

One final example within the Christian false-teacher report that suggests Jude is confronting unrestrained sexual indulgences is the translation of σπλάδες in verse 12. A rather significant number of people submit evidence to support the translation of σπλάδες as “spot” or “blemish,” indicating immorality. Beyond the appeal within the report to the sexual misconduct in Jude 4, 6, 7, 8 13, 16, it is also suggested that 2 Peter 2:13 speaks of false teachers as “blemishes” due to their sexual misconduct (v. 14).<sup>33</sup> Yet Peter uses a different noun, σπῖλοι rather than σπλάδες. The basic meaning of σπλάς is a rocky hazard hidden by ocean waves.<sup>34</sup> Since hidden

<sup>32</sup> Hengel explains that when Josephus labeled Zealots as “bandits” and “chief-bandits,” he used Roman political terms for people who were rebels against the Roman government for political and religious reasons. Furthermore, Josephus preferred terms other than “Zealot” in order to present the movement and their leaders as criminals as well as to distance the movement from the Maccabean revolt. Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.*, trans. David Smith (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 15–16, 24–75, 154–56.

<sup>33</sup> Christian False-Teacher Presentations: Bigg, *Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 333–34; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*, Lenski’s Commentary on the New Testament (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1945), 635; Albert E. Barnett and Elmer George Homrighausen, *The Epistle of Jude*, Interpreter’s Bible (New York: n.p., 1957), 332; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 74–75; Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, 391–92; Watson, “The Letter of Jude,” 12:492; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 278–79; Senior and Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, 199, 212; Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 95. See also John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, trans. John Owen (1551; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 441; J. B. Lightfoot, *On a Fresh Revision of the English New Testament*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1891), 151–53; W. H. Bennett, *The General Epistles*, New Century Bible (New York: Henry Frowde, 1901), 337. See also Gnostic False-Teacher Presentations: Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri und Judä*, 232; Wohlenberg, *Der erste und zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 311–13; James Moffatt, *The General Epistles*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (1928; repr., London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), 239; Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques*, 315; Hans Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1951), 44; Sidebottom, *James, Jude, 2 Peter*, 89; Cantinat, *Les épîtres de Saint Jacques et de Saint Jude*, 314; Grundmann, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, 40; Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 71.

<sup>34</sup> Josephus speaks of hazardous rocks (σπλάδες) that jut from the sea at Joppa (Josephus, *J.W.* 3.9.3 §§419–420). Strabo, in *Geography* 17.6.1, describes hidden rocks in the east bay of Alexandria. See also Homer, *Odyssey* 3.298; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 2.550 (3rd c. BC); Polybius, *Historicus* 1.37.2 (2nd c. BC). Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 938, s.v. σπλάς; Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. James D. Ernest (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 3:270–72, s.v. σπλάς; cf. N. Walter, “σπλάς,” in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Horst Baltz

reefs were harmful for anyone sailing the Mediterranean Sea, many contributors to the Christian false-teacher report conclude that σπλάδες is a metaphor describing the godless as people hidden and harmful to the Judean Christian community.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, Jude has already alluded to how the godless have “slipped in” or “sneaked in secretly” (παρεισέδυσαν, v. 4). So in some sense, Jude has returned to the fact that the godless have hidden themselves among the followers of Jesus who meet in Jewish Christian homes throughout Judea. Thus σπλάδες is often rendered “hidden rocks” (ASV), “hidden reefs” (NASB95, ESVS), or “dangerous reefs” (NET, NLTse), a metaphor without sexual overtones.

So while there is unanimity within the Christian false-teacher report about Jude’s speaking out against false teachers, there is a great deal of contradictory evidence presented and disagreement among the contributors. Origin, recipients, destination, and sexual misconduct are just some of the unresolved issues within the report. Nevertheless, the common and overlapping data about false teachers within the Gnostic and Christian reports serve as the unifying factor for the majority report. Yet several people raise difficulties with the majority false-teacher report.

#### DIFFICULTIES WITH THE MAJORITY REPORT

While the majority report has concluded that Jude confronts false teachers, not everyone agrees. “There does not seem to me,” says George Salmon, “to be sufficient evidence that those whom Jude condemns were teachers of false doctrine, or even teachers at all.”<sup>36</sup> Salmon’s statement is strengthened by Toit’s observation that, unlike other New Testament authors who address false teachers,

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and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 3:265.

<sup>35</sup> Christian False-Teacher Presentations: Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 85–86; D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1989), 259; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 256; Holloway, *James and Jude*, 160–61; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 259; Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 124; Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 48–49; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 465; Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 68–69; Harvey and Towner, *2 Peter and Jude*, 208; Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 213. Gnostic False-Teacher Presentations: Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter*, 40–41; Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, 44; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 270–71; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 174; Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 207; Fuchs and Raymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre*, 98; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der 2 Petrusbrief*, 67.

<sup>36</sup> George Salmon, *An Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: John Murray, 1886), 507.

Jude fails to use any nouns prefixed by *pseudo-*, typically employed to designate opposition groups such as “false apostles” (2 Cor 11:13), “false brothers” (Gal 2:4), “false teachers” (2 Pet 2:1), and “false prophets” (1 John 4:1). Nor are they called “liars” (Rev 2:2).<sup>37</sup> Thurén also reinforces Salmon’s perspective when he says, “Almost no word refers to teaching or doctrinal issues” in Jude.<sup>38</sup> He contends that references in Jude to slander (vv. 8, 10), wicked remarks (v. 15), discontented murmurings (v. 16), and scoffing (v. 18) “describe—in a pejorative way—verbal criticisms of other people.”<sup>39</sup> In fact, Eybers considers the letter to be “practical more than doctrinal” (e.g., v. 4).<sup>40</sup> And while Donelson’s conclusion about the opponents is a bit elusive, he observes, “There is nothing in Jude that explicitly suggests antinomianism,” and, “A summarizing adjective, such as Gnostic or antinomian, should be avoided.”<sup>41</sup> Finally, the appeals that Jude is addressing unrestrained sexual indulgences appear to depend on a character flaw of the Carpocratian, incipient, or libertine Gnostics that is usually refuted by contributors for both the Christian and Gnostic false-teacher reports. Jude’s problem with the godless is predominately their rebellion (vv. 4, 5–7, 8), verbal abuse (vv. 8, 16, 19), and greed (vv. 11, 12).

Triplet Expressions about the Godless				Jude
First set of charges against the intruders	Godless	Rebels	Deniers of Jesus	4
First paradigm of rebellion and punishment (past)	<i>Remember the wilderness generation</i>	<i>Remember the fallen angels</i>	<i>Remember Sodom and Gomorrah</i>	5–7
Second set of charges against the intruders	Self-polluting	Rebels	Slanderers	8

<sup>37</sup> Andrie du Toit suggests that Jude vilifies his opponents for moral depravity and being prone to poor judgment. Andrie du Toit, “Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian Epistolography,” *Biblica* 75 (1994): 403–12, esp. 408, 410.

<sup>38</sup> Thurén’s emphasis, however, is on the author’s condemnation of the rhetorical devices being used against Christian leadership within the community. Lauri Thurén, “Hey Jude! Asking for the Original Situation and Message of a Catholic Epistle,” *New Testament Studies* 43 (1997): 451–65, esp. 463.

<sup>39</sup> Thurén, “Hey Jude!,” 463.

<sup>40</sup> Eybers, “Aspects of the Background of the Letter of Jude,” 114.

<sup>41</sup> Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, 164.

Second paradigm of rebellion and punishment (current)	The godless in greed advance their self-interests like Cain	The godless in greed incite foolish acts like Balaam	The godless in greed can expect bereavements like Korah	11
Third set of charges against the intruders	Greedy	Brazen	Selfish	12
Fourth set of charges against the intruders	Disgruntled murmurers	Boastful speech	Patronizing comments	16
Final set of charges against the intruders	Disrupters	Sensuous	Unspiritual	19

So if there are no references to false teachers in Jude, no references to false teaching, no explicit descriptions of unrestrained sexual practice, and Jude ought not to be labeled as Gnostic or antinomian, is there another possible option? Should the majority report be the lens through which everyone ought to read, interpret, and preach Jude? What does the “minority report” have to offer?

The second article in this series will suggest that the minority report better accounts for the criticisms raised by Jude, such that Jude should be read through the lens of the Zealot-led rebellion challenging the early church in Judea.