

# “Rebellion, It’s not a Good Idea: A Biblical Theology of Jude”

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Jude’s short letter, tucked away at the end of the New Testament, offers a very straightforward theological point frequently overlooked, yet pertinent to both his time as well as ours.<sup>1</sup> Writing with a sense of urgency (v. 3),<sup>2</sup> Jude tackles directly the issue of rebellion and the subsequent outcome for anyone who rebels against God. Jude’s theological concern about rebellion and its outcome compel him throughout his short, yet very vituperative letter. He makes it perfectly clear: Rebellion, of any kind, is not a good idea. Why? Rebellion raises divine ire.

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<sup>1</sup> Several reasons exist for why Jude’s letter tends to be overlooked. It is difficult to interpret much less apply. Jude’s insulting tone (vv. 8–16) and Jude’s evident displeasure of the godless when he declares “Damnation to them” (οὐὰὶ αὐτοῖς, v. 11) can be unsettling. Words interwoven in the letter like “I keep” (τήρω, vv. 1, 6, 13, 21) and “immorality” (ἀσελγεία in v. 4; ἔκπορνεύσω in v. 7) are finely nuanced and important for understanding Jude’s argument. His ambiguous use of “ungodly” (ἀσεβείς) and “these people” (οὗτοι, vv. 8, 10, 12, 16, 19) provide for an uncomfortable application to twenty-first century followers of Jesus. The interpretive method employed (e.g., typology)<sup>1</sup> when referring to Old Testament situations (e.g., exodus generation, angels, and Gentile urbanites, vv. 5–7) as well as Old Testament people (e.g., Cain, Korah, Balaam, v. 11) to his generation appear foreign. Finally, the apparent inclusion of non-biblical material like *1 Enoch* (vv. 14–15) and *the Assumption (Testament) of Moses* (v. 10) generates theological uneasiness. Nevertheless, in his expressed annoyance, Jude wants his Judean readers to consider any and all forms of rebellion as unacceptable (vv. 5–7, 10), to stand firm in their messiah Jesus (vv. 3–4), and to extend mercy to those who disbelieve (vv. 22–23). Consequently, this letter is not for the faint of heart.

<sup>2</sup> Jude 3b reads, “I *just now* had necessity to write to you” (ἀνάγκην ἔσχον<sup>2</sup> γράψαι ὑμῖν). It appears somewhat intense, reflecting a sudden change of mind, and perhaps even an unexpected interruption, which is also evident in the translations: “I found it necessary to write” (ESV, cp. RNT), “I felt I had to write” (NIV; cp. KJV), “I now feel compelled instead to write” (NET; cp. NAB), and “I must write” (CEB, NLT-SE). The Greek word ἀνάγκην occurs seventeen times in the New Testament. In Jude 3, it has a certain amount of mitigated force whereby Jude was compelled “to appeal” (NRSV, ESV), “to urge” (NASB, NIV, NLT-SE, CEB), or “to exhort” (KJV, ASV; cp. NET) Judean brothers and sisters to *struggle intensely* for their faith. Josephus uses the same term when discussing the Jewish war with Rome (66-73 CE). He recalls, “The great encouragements which the Jews had in view to act vigorously were their fear for themselves and for the temple, and the presence of their tyrant, who *exhorted* (παρὰκαλῶν) some, and beat and threatened others to act courageously” (*War* 6.2.6 § 143). Though Jude is no tyrant, there most certainly is a sense of urgency expressed in his redirected purpose with a mitigated force.

### Types of Rebellion in Jude

Rebellion in Jude may be grouped into one of three categories: rebellion against God’s leading, rebellion against God’s universal design, and rebellion against God’s societal norms. As Jude tackles each type of rebellion, past rebellions appear to mirror his contemporary situation. Jude’s remembrance of the rebellions of the wilderness generation, angels, and Gentile urbanites (vv. 5–7) reflect the current rebellion (vv. 4, 8–16) that appears to be wreaking havoc throughout all of Judea. And though Jude merely identifies his contemporary rebels as “godless” (ἄσεβεις),<sup>3</sup> “dreamers” (ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι),<sup>4</sup> “certain *people*” (τινες ἄνθρωποι),<sup>5</sup> or most frequently “these *people*” (οὗτοι),<sup>5</sup> it would appear that Jude’s concern is for Judean followers of Jesus to steer clear of people involved in Judea’s rebellion against Rome.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Josephus uses ἄσεβεις some sixty times in *Jewish Wars* and *Antiquity of the Jews*, mostly to depict the sort of tyrannical leadership over Israel and Judah, which is in keeping with his overall purpose of the his work, particularly *Jewish War*. The essential thesis of the *Jewish War* (1.4 § 9-12) is that the Jewish revolt against Rome “was caused by only a few troublemakers among the Jews—power-hungry tyrants and marauders who drove the people to rebel against their will.” Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 60. For a few examples from *Antiquities* of ungodly tyrants over Israel are Jeroboam (8.9.1 §§243-45), Baasha (8.12.3 § 299), Ahab (9.1.1 § 1), Pekah (9.11.1 § 234), etc. For a few examples of tyrants over Judah are Rehoboam (8.10.2 §§ 251,256), Ahaz (9.12.1 § 243), Manassah (10.3.1 § 37), etc.

<sup>4</sup> Some suggest this reference to “dreamers” (ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι) indicates these godless dream dreams. Yet when dreams and visions occur in Hebrew Scriptures, the content, interpretation follow, and they are somewhat lengthy narratives (e.g., Jacob, Gen 28:12; Joseph, Gen 37:5, 9; 41:5; and Nebuchadnezzar, Dan 2:1, 3). Jude’s contextual brevity (e.g., no content nor interpretation of the dreams are provided), Jude’s subsequent threefold depictions of the godless as contaminated (v. 8a), rebellious (v. 8b), and slanderous (v. 8c) as well as the lack of any direct reference to the godless as “false teachers,” seems to support Balz when he concedes, “we cannot agree with much modern exegesis in seeing a reference to special ecstatic or visionary experiences.” This is not to suggest that people did not have dreams and visions during the second temple period. Like most visions and dreams in Hebrew Scriptures, however, the content of these latter second temple visions or dreams are also given for the reader. For instance, 4Q543 fl a c:1 reads “A copy of the book ‘The Words of the Vision (חִזְוִן) of Amram [son of Kohath, son of Levi].’” This seems to be similar to Daniel’s dreams (Hebrew: חִזְוִן; Greek: ἐνύπνιον) where in he sees visions (Hebrew: חִזְוִן; Greek: ὄραματι). In another second temple text, Issac has a “dream” (ὄνειρον) and he is to relate that “vision” (ὄραμα) to others (*Abraham* A 4:8; cf. Acts 11:1–18; 1 Enoch; 4Q543). In both cases, the content of the vision is provided in the text. Thus, Richard correctly concludes, “Since nothing in the letter supports the visionary option, it seems logical to opt for the meaning that depicts more succinctly the opponents’ moral and intellectual bankruptcy (see vv. 10, 12-13, 16, 19).” See Horst Balz in *TDNT* (1983), s.v. “ἐνυπνιαζομαι”; Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2000), 268.

<sup>5</sup> Whereas “certain *people*” (τινες ἄνθρωποι) occurs only in verse 4, the most frequent reference to these rebels is “these *people*” (οὗτοι; vv. 8, 10, 12 and perhaps 19). Neyrey views the repetition of “these . . .” as an anaphora

*Rebellion Against God’s Leading*

In the past, the wilderness generation rebelled *against God’s leading* (v. 5c-d). When Jude calls his readers to remember that the Lord “saved the people out of the land of Egypt” (v. 5c), the natural and very broad recollection for a Jewish person would be when God delivered Israel through Moses who managed to lead the Israelites successfully out of Egypt (Exod 7:1–12:42; cp. Ps 135:8), who avoided recapture (Exod 13:17–15:21; cp. Pss 66:5; 78:13), who provided for the needs of people (Exod 15:22–17:7; cp. Ps 78:14-16), and who mediated a covenant with God (Exod 19:1–20:21; 24:1-18). Jude’s more explicit concern, however, is the wilderness generation’s *second rebellion* (“those who did not believe were destroyed,” τὸ δεύτερον τοὺς μὴ πιστεύσαντας ἀπώλεσεν). Although there is no shortage of *segmented* rebellion during their exodus from Egypt,<sup>7</sup> two extensive rebellions occurred that involved the

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figure of speech in which the repetition of “these people” are linked throughout the letter to catalog their evils. Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude* in *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday), 72. Although Peter also uses οὗτοι (2 Pet 2:12), he directs explicit attention against “false teachers” (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι) and more than likely men due to the historical and cultural setting (see NET note for Jude 1:4). Jude’s indistinct references throughout the letter make it difficult to pin point exactly who these people were. However, during the Jewish revolt, both men and women took part in the war as evidenced via battles throughout the country. This revolt was not only cross-generational among men, it was also cross-gender as evident in the suicides at both Gamala and again at Massada (Jos *War* 4.1.9 § 63-83; 7.9.1 § 389-406). Thus, it appears more than likely that the less former translations “certain people,” “these people” best fits Jude’s historical context of the Jewish revolt, a revolt underscored with messianic hopes (as misguided as their Messianic hopes may have become).

<sup>6</sup> The assumption of this paper is that Jude wrote his letter while living in Judea to Judean followers of Jesus after the death of James (62 CE) and before the Jewish revolt (66 to 73 CE) when King Agrippa II (great-grandson of Herod the Great) shared political leadership with Festus Rome’s procurator over Judea and Samaria (cp. Acts 25:13-26:32). The Jewish revolt against Rome resulted in various active factions among the Jewish leadership. On the one hand, there was a radical faction led by two people. One was a priest name Eleazar, son of Ananias, and the other was Menachem from the Sicarii and a descendant of “Judas the Galilean.” There is no need to doubt whether Menahem claimed to be the Messiah. He was a warrior, who entered Jerusalem dressed as a king, quarreled with the high priest (who may have entertained some doubts about Menahem’s claim), and worshipped God in the Temple (Jos *War* 2.442-448). On the other hand, there was a moderate faction led by the wealthy aristocracy: the Herodian family, the Sadducees, the Boethusians, and those of the priestly tradition who merely wished to work towards accommodation and not confrontation.

<sup>7</sup> Some examples of segmented rebellion in the wilderness from the Book of Numbers are Miriam and Aaron rebelled against Moses and his choice of an Ethiopian wife (12:1-1); Korah, along with Dathan and Abiram rebelled against Moses’ leadership (16:1-35); and people rebelled against Moses by way of their perpetual complaints about their circumstances (11:1-15). Each was divinely judged. The first judgment was by way of leprosy (12:10, 13-16), and the latter two by death (16:20-35; 11:3, 31-34).

entire community. The first occurred at the Red Sea when Pharaoh was in rapid pursuit of his recently released Jewish slaves (Exod 14:5-7). God obviously overlooked the revolt for he parted the sea, the Jewish people crossed the sea on dry ground (14:22), the sea destroyed Egypt’s army (14:23-28), and the Israelites were “delivered” from the Egyptians (14:29-31; cp. *Jos Ant* 3.12.6 § 297). The second occurred at Kadesh-Barnea (Deut 12:9-10, Josh 21:44). After twelve men spied out the land for forty days, they returned to report their findings, but only two expressed confidence in subduing the land of Canaan (Num 13:1-30). The others expressed great reservations, which resulted in the Jewish people to fear, to mumber against Moses, Aaron, and God, and to make plans to elect new leaders and return to Egypt (Num 13:31–14:4). Their mutiny was rooted in their disbelief in both God and his appointed leader, Moses.<sup>8</sup> Ten disbelieving spies turned an entire community to doubt God’s ability to deliver (cp. *Jos Ant* 3.14.1-15.1 §§ 300-14). Thus, Jude recalls the ancient testimony about the wilderness community, who were persuaded by a few to rebel against God’s leading.

In Jude’s present situation, the rejection of Jesus as Messiah serves as his example of rebellion *against God’s leading*. Jude’s portrait of the current rebellion against Jesus as God’s appointed Messiah occurs twice in Jude. The first occurs in Jude 4 where the godless are painted as denying both the sovereignty and messiahship of Jesus (“the only Master and Lord,” τὸν

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<sup>8</sup> Alluding to the Kadesh Barnea event is not a unique phenomena in Jude. Hebrews 3:7-4:14 also references the Kadesh Barnea event. By way of Psalm 95, Hebrews emphasizes the hardening of their heart. In the LXX, the Hebrew verb *qsh* is rendered as *skleruno* (“harden”) in Psalm 94[95]:8. The term has the metaphorical sense of stiffening one’s neck, which conveys an attitude of stubbornness. It is used to describe Pharaoh and Zedekiah (Exod 13:15, 2 Chron 36:13), the exodus / wilderness community (Exod 32:9; 33:5; 34:9; Deut 9:6, 13; 31:27), the pre-dynastic community (Judges 2:19), the dynastic communities of Judah and Israel (2 Kings 17:14; 2 Chron 30:8; Isa 48:4; Jer 7:26, 17:23, 19:15; Ezek 2:4, 3:7), the Jewish community’s ancestors (2 Chron 30:8; Neh 9:16–17, 9:26; 4Q504 frag 4:7), and a characteristic *not to be observed* at the Qumran community (1QS 5:5, 26; cp. Prov 28:14, 29:1). Psalm 94[95] specifically cites the wilderness community’s stubbornness at “Meribah as in the day of Massah in the wilderness” (cf. Exod 17:1–7, Num 20:1–13). Thus, the wilderness rebellion in Psalm 95:7–11 provides a type of model *not* to be followed. Yet unlike Hebrews 3:7-4:14 where the followers of Jesus are warned *not to become like those followers of God at Kadesh-barnea*, Jude warns his readers that there are people, who were like those ten spies at Kadesh-barnea in their midst of their congregations.

μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον).<sup>9</sup> The rejection of Jesus as Messiah manifests itself in exchanging God’s grace, which came through Jesus, for conduct that violated many forms of socially acceptable behavior (= “immoral,” ἀσέλγεια)<sup>10</sup> whereby they reject authority (vv. 8, 11), they slander others (vv. 8, 10, 16), they grumble (v. 16), they find fault with others (vv. 16, 19), and ultimately they are greedy self-seekers (vv. 11, 16). More will be said about their immoral behavior later under the rejection of God’s societal norms. The second example of the godless rebelling against God’s leading occurs in Jude 8 where the godless “rebel against the Lord” (κυριότητα . . . ἀθετοῦσιν). Whereas previously in verse 4, attention was given to the simple fact that the godless denied Jesus to be God’s regal sovereign to whom God has granted regal ruling power or lordship, in verse 8 the godless are portrayed as insubordinate. The general assumption of verse 8, however, is that the noun ἡ κυριότης speaks only to the rejection of the Lordship of Jesus.<sup>11</sup> Yet elsewhere in the New Testament, to reject Jesus as Messiah is to reject

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<sup>9</sup> The construction “the only Master and Lord” (τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον) is significant in Greek. The designations “Master” and “Lord” follow a typical pattern in Greek, article – noun – καὶ – noun. Since both nouns are singular, personal, and not proper names, it fits the Granville Sharp rule. The same construction occurs in Titus 2:13 and 2 Pet. 1:11. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Granville Sharp’s Canon and Its Kin: Semantics and Significance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 31-44; idem, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 276-77.

<sup>10</sup> Josephus employs ἀσέλγεια broadly to include “inappropriate” language (*Ant* 4.6.12 § 151), of following a way of “wickedness” as a reproof to governing officials (*Ant* 8.10.2 § 252), of a women who fall into “impurity” (*Ant* 8.13.1 § 318), of 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), of “wasteful behavior” (*Ant* 17.5.5 § 110), of an “impudent obscenity” of a soldier (*Ant* 20.5 § 112), of Cleopatra’s sexual lust for Anthony (*War*, 1.22.3 § 439), of “lascivious behavior” of women (*War*, 2.8.2 § 121), and of “unlawful pleasures” (*War* 4.9.10 § 562). So for Josephus, “immoral *behavior*” takes into consideration many wicked activities. Some commentators, however, limit “immoral *behavior*” to be sexual. For instance, even while admitting that in Hosea it is a metaphor for idolatry, Harrington still contends “it is best taken in its root sexual sense.” Donald Senior and Daniel Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter* in *Sacra Pagina* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 190. Yet Kraftchick rightly concludes about ἀσέλγεια, “we cannot say that the opponents were actually engaged in sexual misconduct.” Steven J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter* in *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002), 33-34.

<sup>11</sup> Although noun κυριότητα is rendered as “dominion” in referencing angelic beings (Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:21; cf. *1 Enoch* 61:10; *2 Enoch* 20:1), in Jude κυριότητα refers back to verse 4. Years later, the author of the *Didache* would write: “My child, you shall be mindful day and night of the one who speaks to you the word of God. You shall honor him as the Lord (ἡ κυριότης), for at the source of proclamation of the lordship [of the Lord], the Lord is there” (4:1; cf. *Hermas Sim.* 5.6.1). Translation is by Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press,

God as well (1 John 1:3; 2:23, 24; 4:15; 5:1, 20; 1 Thess 4:8). Thus, Jude’s current rebels are without God (= godless) and insubordinate to Jesus who is Lord. Needless to say, Judean followers of Jesus were well aware of the nation’s repudiation of Jesus as Messiah during his ministry (e.g. Matt 10:33; Luke 12:9; cf. Acts 3:11–15) as well as the dismissal of his authority (e.g. Mark 1:14-15, 12:35-37; 14:61b-64; cf. Acts 3:16–4:3). The denunciation of Jesus as Messiah in Jude 4 and 8 is reminiscent of the rebellion against God’s leading at Kadesh Barnea through Moses. A small segment of disbelieving religious leaders, who were looking for a different kind of Messiah, turned an entire nation against Jesus. Not only was Jesus God’s sent Messiah but the Messiah who came to announce the coming of God’s kingdom (cf. Mark 1:15).<sup>12</sup> Some thirty plus years later the desire of some sort for Messiah other than Jesus remained and threatened Jude’s followers of Jesus. Consequently, the comparison between the past and the present is simply this: Whereas the wilderness community rebelled against God’s leading by rejecting Moses who wanted to lead God’s people into the promise land of Canaan (v. 5b), Jude’s rebels have rebelled against God’s leading by rejecting Jesus as Messiah (vv. 4, 8b) who came to inaugurate God’s kingdom rule.

### *Rebellion Against God’s Universal Design*

In the past, celestial beings rebelled *against God’s universal design* (v. 6). When Jude calls his readers to remember the angelic rebellion, his readers would be well aware of the

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1998), 103, 105. Advocates for this view are Richard J. Bauckham, *2 Peter, Jude* in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 56-57; Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter* in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 74-75; Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude* in *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 248; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 455-56; and of Gnostic orientation: J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, *Thornapple Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 260-61.

<sup>12</sup> See my discussions in “Expectations of Israel’s King” 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).

various Jewish traditions circulating about a previous period of time when men and women were reproducing according to God’s expressed expectations (cf. Gen 6:1; cp. 1:28) and the “sons of God” who decided that they too wanted to join in the reproduction process (Gen 6:1-4).<sup>13</sup> At least three Jewish sources *Jubilees*, 1Q Genesis Apocryphon, and *I Enoch* draw attention to angels who desired women, left heaven, took women for wives, procreated with women, and suffered divine punishment (e.g., *I Enoch* 6:1–4a; 7:1–6). In fact, as *I Enoch* 6-7 unfolds, it actually interprets and expands the celestial rebellion in Genesis 6 by first identifying the crisis (6:1-8 from Gen 6:1-2a), then isolating the deed (7:1 from Gen 6:b, 4b), and finally indicating the results (7:2-5 from Gen 6:4, 7). Once again, only a few angelic beings led many astray. Yet Jude does not recount the event in the same manner as any of these sources. What Jude underscores is evident in two parallel statements.<sup>14</sup>

Τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν  
those who did not keep their own domain

ἀλλὰ ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον  
but those who abandoned their own place of residence

<sup>13</sup> Although assumed here that the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-4 are angelic beings, some current scholars believe they are human beings. Some contemporary commentaries argue they are off-spring of Sethite women. Yet Job speaks of “sons of god” to be angelic beings (1:6; 2:1; 38:7). Furthermore, the Hebrew “sons of God” (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים) is rendered “angels of God” (ἄγγελοι θεοῦ) in the Old Greek LXX (3<sup>rd</sup> BCE). Josephus also, offers clarification when he avers “for many angels of God (πολλοὶ γὰρ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ) when they had sex with women (lit. “with women joining together”; γυναιξὶ συνιόντες) they gave birth to sons (ἐγέννησαν παῖδας) that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength” (*Ant* 1.3.1.73). Josephus also recalls, “Now this posterity of Seth continued to esteem God as the Lord of the universe, and to have an entire regard to virtue, for seven generations; but in process of time they were perverted, and forsook the practices of their forefathers, and did neither pay those honors to God which were appointed them, nor had they any concern to do justice towards men. But for what degree of zeal they had formerly shown for virtue, they now showed by their actions a double degree of wickedness; whereby they made God to be their enemy, for many angels of God (πολλοὶ γὰρ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ) accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength; for the tradition is, That these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants (γιγάντων). (*Jos Ant* 1.3.1 §72-73).

<sup>14</sup> Bauckham also views these two clauses to be in synonymous parallelism. He contends, however, the sin is one of apostasy because he views the opponents to be “a group of itinerant charismatic’s who have arrived in the church(es) to which he writes.” Thus, they claim to be followers of Jesus from around 90 CE who are perverting the gospel message. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 11, 52. As we shall see, however, Jude recounts this second rebellion to be a refusal to accept God’s desired place in the heavens and thereby a rejection of God’s universal design.

Although “the language is rather vague,”<sup>15</sup> the similar wording “their own domain” (τῆν ἐαυτῶν ἀρχή) and “their own residence” (ἴδιον οἰκητήριον) gives emphasis to the angelic act of leaving heaven. Granted, the noun “domain” (ἀρχή) could mean they were authority figures or cosmic rulers,<sup>16</sup> but Jude’s parallelism seems to suggest that these celestial beings did not stay within their sphere of official activity, they did not maintain their rightful place of influence, or quite simply they did not remain in their proper domain. In essence, they left heaven (cf. *1 Enoch* 12:4; 15:3).<sup>17</sup> The fact that they abandoned their own residence suggests that angels refused to stay put. Thus, Jude recalls that celestial beings rebelled against God’s universal design by leaving heaven.

In Jude’s present situation, the audacious defamation of angels serves as Jude’s example of rebellion against *God’s universal design*. In verse 8, Jude portrays the godless as slandering angels (“they blaspheme the glorious *ones*” (δόξας . . . βλασφημοῦσιν). The concept of blasphemy has the general sense of defaming another person, an angelic being, or God with verbally abusive language.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the godless malign angelic beings. Although δόξας could

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<sup>15</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 448. Schreiner, however, tends to read Jewish tradition about sex with women into the text rather than concentrate on what Jude explicitly says about the event in order to address his current situation in Judea.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, one Qumran text avers, “peace and blessing for the lot of God, to exalt the authority of Michael among the gods and the dominion of Israel among all flesh” (1QM 17:7-8; cf. *1 Enoch* 82:10-20; 1QM 10:12). Naturally, Michael is the archangel who will appear later in Jude nine. The point to be made here is simply this: an angel is given authority or “position of authority” (CEB). Thus, the term *might* mean angels did not keep their office or position of rulership. Several commentators appear to support the idea that the angels did not keep their position of heavenly powers they at one time exercised over the world: Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 52; Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter, Jude*, 50; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 242; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 257.

<sup>17</sup> BDAG (138d 7, s.v. ἀρχή) lists both possibilities. Several commentators appear to support the idea that Jude is merely saying they left heaven: Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 68; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 448; NET. The synonymous parallelism would seem to best support this option: they are merely two clauses that say the same thing just with different terms.

<sup>18</sup> In Josephus, the verb “I blasphemy” (βλασφημέω) is used of “contumelious language” against Moses (*Ant* 3.14.3 § 307), of Nabal’s “critical language” against David (*Ant* 6.13.7 § 300), of verbal insults against King

refer to human dignitaries,<sup>19</sup> during the latter part of the second temple period (ca. 164 BCE – 70 CE) the Hebrew equivalent נכבדים was associated with angelic beings.<sup>20</sup> Although the lexical evidence is scanty, it seems Jude’s context favors glorious *ones*” (δόξας) to be angelic beings because humans who dare to criticize angels evidences a rejection of God’s established cosmic boundaries. The content of the slander remains open for interpretation because Jude is unclear.<sup>21</sup> What is clear, however, is that the godless malign angels when even angels like Michael the archangel restrains himself from doing so against a fellow angel, Satan (v. 9; cf. 2 Pet 2:10).<sup>22</sup>

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Agrippa (*War* 2.406, 637) and Tiberius (*War* 2.493), of Apion who “criticizes” (βλασφημίας δοῦναι) the laws of his own country (*Apion* 2.14.143), of letters from one of the leaders of the Jewish revolt that were “full of reproaches and lies” (πλήρεσι βλασφημιῶν καὶ ψευσμάτων; (*Life* 47.245; cf. 50.260). Similarly, Philo uses the verb to speak of Alexandrians who are “calumny and evil-speaking” (διαβολαῖς καὶ βλασφημίαις) about their king and thereby revile him in his own person (*Flaccus* 33) and of the builders of Babel (Gen 11:6) who insult God’s angels (*Conf* 154). Likewise in Scripture, “I blasphemy” (βλασφημέω) conveys the idea of speaking ill of another person (1 Pet 4:4; Titus 2:3), God’s name (Isaiah 52:5; Romans 2:24), God’s Spirit (Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10), God’s leaders, celestial beings (2 Pet 2:10, 12), or a combination of the above (Mark 3:28).

<sup>19</sup> See KJV ASV and Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 206. Although the Hebrew equivalent, נכבדים often describes nobility (Isa 23:8; Nah 3:10; 1QpHab 4:2), the elderly (Isa 3:5), illustrious men (1QpHab 14:11); and people who reside at Qumran (1QSb 4:20; 1QM 10:10; 14:12 [4Q491 f8 10i:9]; 4Q521 f2ii+4:7), Bauckham rightly observes that the LXX does not translate נכבדים as δόξας. For instance, the LXX renders נכבדים in Isaiah 3:5 as “the elder” (τὸν πρεσβύτερον), in Isaiah 23:8 as “ruler” (ἄρχοντες) in Nahum 3:10 as “the nobility” (οἱ μεγιστᾶνες).

<sup>20</sup> For instance, one DSS describes angels as “glories *ones*”: “Behold, You are Chief of the gods and King of the glorious *ones* (נכבדים), Lord of every spirit and Ruler over every creature” (1QH 18:10).<sup>20</sup> In the pseudepigraphic work 2 Enoch, the author writes, “and the glorious *ones* bowed down to the Lord, and said: Let Enoch go according to Thy word” (22:7; cf. 22:10). In Philo, Moses speaks of seeing the “glory” (δόξας) or perhaps the “glorious *ones*” that surround God rather than Moses viewing God himself (*Spec Leg* 1:45). Advocates for this view are Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 57-59; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 64–65, 69; G. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 76-77; Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 263; Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter, Jude*, 455-56; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 263; Schriener, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 456-57.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the slander “relates,” as suggested by Hillyer, “to the angels’ function as mediators of the law of Moses (Acts 7:38, 53; Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2; *Jubilees* 1:27–29; *Jos Ant.* 15.136) and guardians of creation (1 Cor 11:10; Shepherd of Hermes, *Similitudes* 8.3.3), a responsibility which some angels had abdicated (Jude 6).” Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 248.

<sup>22</sup> In verse 9, Jude contrasts (δέ) the verbally abusive acts of the godless directed at celestial beings in verse 8c with the self-controlled of the archangel. Michael’s verbal dispute with Satan concerns the corpse of Moses: “he debated *aggressively* about Moses’ body” (διελέγετο περὶ τοῦ Μωϋσέως σώματος). Jude then credits Michael with the ability to exercise self-control over his tongue when he avers “he did not act rashly to bring a verbally abusive judgment *against Satan*” (οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας). So while arguing (διακρινόμενος) with the devil, Michael disputes (διελέγετο) *aggressively* over the corpse of Moses, and yet he manages to exercise self-control over his tongue. In essence, Michael exhibits verbal restraint when it comes to ushering a condemning judgment of other angels. For further discussion about the archangel Michael, see my

Consequently, the comparison between the past and the present is simply this: Whereas angels leave heaven to engage in earthly affairs (v. 6a), the godless interject from earth verbal criticism about heavenly affairs (v. 8c). Jude views both as unacceptable forms of rebellion against God’s universal design.

*Rebellion Against God’s Societal Norms.*

In the past, Sodom and Gomorrah rebelled *against God’s societal norms* (v. 7). When Jude calls his readers to remember the rebellion of Sodom and Gomorrah, his readers would be aware of the various Jewish traditions circulating about their rebellion and that subsequent Jewish retellings of the event expanded Sodom’s sin to include far more than merely their sexual misconduct.<sup>23</sup> Yet the portion of Sodom and Gomorrah’s rebellion that Jude underscores is evident in two parallel statements:

Τὸν ὁμοιον τρόπον τούτοις ἐκπορνεύσασαι  
 who practiced immorality in the same way as these  
 καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας,  
 and who went after different flesh

Unfortunately, these two clauses are a bit baffling. Of all the New Testament authors, Jude alone uses ἐκπορνεύω for “immorality.” Yet the forty-four Septuagint occurrences point to various sorts of sexual sins: pre-marital sex, whoredom or perhaps adultery, sexual orgies, cultic prostitution, and marriage to a non-Jew; as well as figuratively for describing Judah’s national

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commentary on *Jude and Second Peter* in *The Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*, edited by Hall Harris (Bellingham, WA: Logos, forthcoming).

<sup>23</sup> Jewish literature often points out Sodom and Gomorrah’s demise due to depraved sexual activities (Gen 19:1-13, 23-25; cp. *Jub* 16:5-6; 20:5-6; *Jos Ant* 1.11.3-4 § 200-04; cp Philo, *Abel* 122; *Dreams* 1:85). And yet their sins are expanded to include pride (Ezek 16:49a), arrogance (*Sir* 16:8; 3 Macc 2:5), disregard for the poor (Ezek 16:49b), hatred of foreigners (*Jos Ant* 1.11.1§194), and moral debauchery in general (Ezek 16:46-48; 3 Macc 2:5). In fact, Josephus captures all of these sins when he describes them as people who “grew proud, on account of their riches and great wealth: they became unjust towards men, and impious towards God, insomuch that they did not call to mind the advantages they received from him: they hated strangers, and abused themselves with Sodomitical practices” (*Ant* 1.11.1 § 194; cp. Gen 19:2-11).

whoredom via their worship of idols, or just a general form of lusting after things.<sup>24</sup> Thus, “immorality” (ἐκπορνεύω) takes into consideration many socially unacceptable forms of sexual misconduct outside of a marriage relationship as well as to spurn a Jewish person’s marriage to a foreigner. Another challenge is the phrase “in the same way as these” (ὁμοιον τρόπον τούτοις). It seems more than likely that the phrase refers to back to Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>25</sup> Thus, an interpretive paraphrase would be “the cities practiced immoral *sexual relations* like Sodom and Gomorrah.” Accordingly, the negative behavior of two cities influenced other nearby urban centers to ignore God’s societal norms by promoting a “free sex” society. Jude defines the type of free sex society when he writes, these Gentile urbanites “went after different flesh” (ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας). The word “different” (ἑτέρας) generally means another of a different kind, “flesh” (σαρκὸς) tends to speak of “a person” or “a living being.”<sup>26</sup> Consequently, rather than sleeping with their wives (spouses), flesh of their flesh (cp. Gen 2:23;

<sup>24</sup> Literal Sexual Deviations: of pre-marital sex (Deut 22:20-21); of sex with foreigners (Num 25:1; Philo, *Dreams* 1:89); of Tamar and Gomer playing a whore or perhaps better an adulterer in Gomer’s case (Gen 38:24; Hos 1:2, 5); of Northern Israel’s sexual orgies (Hos 4:18); of cultic prostitution (Exod 34:15-16; Lev 17:7; 19:9; 20:5; 21:9; Deut 31:16), of Dan committing revolting acts of the Gentiles: chasing after wives of lawless men (*TDan* 5:5). Figurative Deviations: of worshiping idols (Judges 8:27; 2Chron 21:11; Hos 4:12-13; 5:3; Sirach 46:11); of Judah’s national whoredom (Jer 3:1; Ezek 6:9; 16:16, 20, 26, 28, 30, 33; 20:30; 23:3, 5, 30, 43); of general lusting (Num 15:39; Judges 2:17). This obviously is contra to BDAG in that the definition of ἐκπορνεύω is limited to “indulge in illicit sexual relations/debauchery (309a, s.v. ἐκπορνεύω). *EDNT* says, “be very immoral” (1990) s.v. ἐκπορνεύω; cf. *TDNT* (1968) s.v. πόρνη . . . ἐκπορνεύω and the discussions of extra-marital intercourse outside of marriage.

<sup>25</sup> Many consider the word “these” (τούτοις) to refer back to the “angels” (ἁγγέλους) of verse 6 (cp. NET). If so, to what then is Jude drawing our attention? An interpretive paraphrase would be “the cities practiced immoral *sexual relations* like the angels.” Jude’s depiction of seditious celestial beings, however, does not involve sexual deviations but rather a refusal to accept God’s designated placement or station for them. Perhaps the demonstrative pronoun “these” (τούτοις) should be declined as a neuter plural dative and modify both “Sodom and Gomorrah” (Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα) because it is not unusual for neuters to have antecedents of mixed gender or sometimes even purely masculine gender (cp. Rom 2:14; 1 Cor 6:10-11; cf. KJV, ESV).

<sup>26</sup> BDAG defines “different” (ἑτέρας) as “to be dissimilar in kind or class from all other entities” and cites speaking with another language (Acts 2:4; Isa 28:11; 1QH 4.16) as an example (399d 2, s.v. ἑτέρας). The use of the noun “flesh” (σάρξ) for a “whole person” or “living being” is a figure of speech known as a synecdoche where the part is put for the whole. Thus, flesh is put for the whole person and is a frequent figure of speech in Scripture (Gen 6:12; Ps 56:4(5); Isa 40:5; Rom 3:20; 1 Cor 1:29). See E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968; tenth 1984), 642.

cp. Eph 5:28-31), they went after “different flesh” (woman or man) and thereby practiced forms of sexual whoredom that spans sexual activities like marriage to foreign women, pre-marital sex, adultery, prostitution, orgies, cultic prostitution, and yes, homosexuality. Thus, Jude’s portrayal of sexual promiscuity (“immorality,” ἐκπορνεύω) involved sex with anyone other than one’s spouse (“different flesh,” σαρκὸς ἑτέρας). Granted, sexual misconduct is, as Green puts it, “the vehicle by which they had violated the order established by God.”<sup>27</sup> Thus, Jude’s explicitly stated order that these Gentile urban centers violated was God’s societal norm pertaining to the marital relationship between a husband and wife.

In Jude’s present situation, the rejection of religious piety (v. 8a), as well as unrestrained and self-indulgent behavior of the godless (vv. 4, 10, 11) serve as Jude’s contemporary example of rebellion against God’s societal norm. First, Jude portrays his contemporary rebels as people who “defile the flesh” (σάρκα μὲν μιαίνουσιν), a phrase which alludes to the Jewish concept of purity. Unfortunately, the twenty-first century interpreter tends to limit the concept of “purity” to “sexual purity.”<sup>28</sup> However, Jude’s allusion to purity has to do with the Jewish concept of religious purity. This is not to suggest that sexual immorality was not a concern in Judea (e.g., Antipas & Herodias, Mark 6:14–18).\* It is to suggest, however, that for the Judeans of Jude’s era and speaking very broadly, religious contamination may be segregated into one of three categories: (1) contact with unclean things such as a dead body or entering into the home of a Gentile,<sup>29</sup> (2) improper worship such as idolatry or disbelief in God’s leading,<sup>30</sup> and (3) moral

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<sup>27</sup> G. Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 71-72.

<sup>28</sup> Those who tend to advocate for limiting “defiled flesh” to sexual impurity are Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 206; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 247; Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 41-42; Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter, Jude*, 456; and of Gnostic orientation: Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 260-61.

<sup>29</sup> Within Judaism, religious purity may be jeopardized when “a person” (“flesh,” σάρξ) defiles themselves through contact with a dead body (Tobit; *Jos Ant* 4.4.6 § 81) or by way of entering a Gentile’s home (John 18:28). Other

misconduct such as bitterness, language, murder, sexual misconduct.<sup>31</sup> Jude’s explicit description of the godless throughout his letter (vv. 4, 8, 10, 11, 16, 18, 19) would appear to suggest the religious contamination occurred by way of disbelief in Jesus as Messiah (vv. 4, 8b) and moral misconduct by way of language (vv. 8, 10, 16, 19), bitterness (vv. 11, 16, 19), murder and sexual misconduct (v. 8). Yet Jude’s center of attention, which closely relates to this broader religious contamination, is covered in his next example about the godless.

The second example of the godless rebelling against God’s societal norms occurs in verses 4, 10, and 11. In verse 4, the portrait Jude paints begins with a board depiction of the godless who violated many forms of social behavior (= “immoral,” ἀσελγεια) such as they reject authority (vv. 8, 11), they slander others (vv. 8, 10, 16), they grumble (v. 16), they find fault with others (vv. 16, 19), and ultimately they are greedy self-seekers (vv. 11, 16). In verse 10, however, the details of Jude’s portrait become more focused in that Jude explicitly depicts them as first stupid as well as irrational. Whereas Jude first exposed the godless as bold slanders of angels (v 8c), he now paints them as slanders of everything (“they slander whatever they do

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examples may include contact with unclean animals (Lev 5:3; 11:24, 43, 44; 22:8; Jos *Ant* 3.12.1 § 275), contracting disease (Lev 13:3, 11, 14, 15, 20, 27, 25, 27, 30, 44, 59; Philo *Immunt* 123-124), contact with the dead (Lev 21:1, 11; Num 19:13; Deut 21:23 & Philo *Law* 3.152; Ezek 44:25).

<sup>30</sup> Within Judaism, religious impurity also occurred by way of improper worship as a result of Jewish people practicing idolatry (Exod 20:25; Lev 20:3; 2 Kings 23:13; Hosea 5:3 6:10; Jer 2:23; 3:1-2; Ezek 5:11; 20:7, 18, 31; 28:7; 37:23; 1 Macc 4:45). Unbelief was also viewed as a form of corruption or religious defilement (Titus 1:15). Jude himself describes the godless as people who do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah (v. 4; cf. 8b) and may suggest the godless suffered from a form of religious contamination due to unbelief in Jesus as Messiah.

<sup>31</sup> Within Judaism, religious impurity occurred due to moral misconduct by immoral acts of murder (Num 5:1-2, 10), by exercising an abundance of war as in the case of David who was considered defiled due to the making of many wars and the slaughtering of his enemies (Jos *Ant* 7.4.4 § 92; cp. 7.14.8 § 371), by language (Jos *Ant* 16.4.1 § 93), by bitterness (Heb 12:15), and by sexual misconduct (adultery: Num 5:3, 14, 20, 27, 29; Ezek 22:11; 44:25; brothel house: Jos *War* 4.9.10 § 562; rape: Gen 34:5, 13, 27; incest: Gen 49:4; homosexual activities: Philo *Law* 2.50; Jos *Ant* 3.12. 1 § 375). Philo also speaks of a person defiled through his mind by “giving himself up to folly and being bred up with shamelessness and audacity, infamous man that he was, attempted to pollute and to defile the judicial faculties of the mind” (*Migrat* 224; cf. Titus 1:15). Other examples may include *1 Enoch* 7:1; 9:8; 10:11; 12:4; 15:3, 4; *EpArist* 166; *PFlor* 338, 18; Jos *War* 4.5.2 § 323).

not understand,” ὄσα . . . οὐκ οἶδασιν βλασφημοῦσιν, v 10a, b).<sup>32</sup> Both statements, the one in verse 8 and here in verse 10, are in stark contrast to Michael (9a, b). Whereas Jude admires Michael for not acting rashly in pronouncing verbal judgments on Satan (“he did not act rashly to bring a verbally abusive judgment *against Satan*,” οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας), Jude ridicules the godless for spinning unlimited destructive criticism as a sign of their stupidity (“no understanding,” οὐκ οἶδασιν).<sup>33</sup> In essence, they appear to suffer from verbal diarrhea. Yet Jude escalates his accusation when he further paints them as people who follow animal instincts (ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα),<sup>34</sup> and thereby are in the process of “corrupting

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<sup>32</sup> Verses 8-10 exposes the unbecoming scruples of contemporary rebels. Jude portrays the godless as self-indulgent rebels who lack restraint and engage in slander. Although verses 8–10 consists of seven independent clauses and three dependent clauses, significant lexical feature throughout these verses is the mention of βλασφημέω in verses 8 and 10 as well as βλασφημίας in verse 9 because the concept of blasphemy serves to link these verses together to form a single unit of thought (see n. 19). For further discussion about the linking of these verses with “blasphemy” see my commentary on *Jude and Second Peter* in *The Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (forthcoming).

<sup>33</sup> To speak with (“no understanding,” οὐκ οἶδασιν) occurs in Josephs in two different ways. On the one hand, Aseneth’s confession of sin and prayer for acceptance, he expresses regret for speaking without understanding when he admits, “And I did not know, miserable that I am, that he is your son, O Lord; for the people told me that Joseph was a son of a shepherd from the land of Canaan, and I believed them. But I was wrong, and I despised Joseph, your chosen one, and I spoke evil words of him, not knowing (οὐκ ᾔδειν) that he is your son” (*Asen* 13:10). On the other hand, to slander with no understanding may generate ridicule. For instance, Josephus insults Apion for speaking without understanding when he avers, “And say you so, sir! as I may reply; then does Apion load the ass, that is himself, and lays on him a burden of fooleries and lies; for he writes of places that have no being; and not knowing (οὐκ εἰδῶς) the cities he speaks of, he changes their situation” (*Apion* 2.10 § 115). In a similar way, God refers to those who do not know him (= they have no understanding) as stupid: “For my people are foolish, they do not know me; they are stupid children, they have no understanding” (οὐκ ᾔδεισαν; LXX: Jer 4:22 NRSV). Jude’s use of “no understanding” is keeping with the latter of the two usages.

<sup>34</sup> Naturally, the drive to care for children is as instinctive for people as it is for “unreasoning animals” (τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα; cf. 4 Macc 4:14, 18). Yet caring for children and even nature’s drive to survive are not what concerns Jude. Jude’s comment insults the godless because he insinuates that they ignore *all* reason. Ptolemy Philadephia (285–247 BCE) allegedly inquires of a group of Jewish delegates, “What is the highest form of sovereignty (= government)?” One of those Jewish representatives Eleazar sent to Ptolemy’s court responded, “Control of oneself, and not being carried away by one’s *impulses*” (φυσικόν; *Letter of Aristeeas*, 222). Whereas admittedly people are driven by naturally instincts, control of those instincts was expected. Isaiah compares a dog’s lack of contentment with that of shepherds: “The dogs have a mighty appetite; they never have enough. The shepherds also have no understanding (οὐκ εἰδότες); they have all turned to their own way, to their own gain, one and all” (56:11b, NET). And though Jude does not address false prophets, the apparent lack of self-control (*Jos Ant*) as well as ignoring all reason (*Jos Ant*) drove Jewish leaders to revolt against Rome. In essence, Jude portrays the godless as people who lack control brought about by ignoring reason. See Josephus’ attempt to dissuade the Jews from entering the war in *Life*.

themselves” (φθειρόνται).<sup>35</sup> “The accusation that someone acts out one’s irrational nature as an animal,” according to Green, “was part of *vituperation* (Philo, *Embassy* 19-20 §§ 131-32), which Jude’s pen pours out as a concrete accusation.”<sup>36</sup> Thus in verse 10, Jude first ridicules the godless as people who suffer from uncontrolled verbal diarrhea and then insults them for acting impulsively or rashly (= irrationally; cf. 9b) like animals. Both are contrary to God’s societal norm. Finally in verse 11, the details of Jude’s portrait are once again very focused. Jude depicts his contemporary rebels as discontented people. Shrouded in a typological association with people of the past, namely, Cain, Balaam, and Korah, Jude essentially depicts the godless as greedy people. They are greedy in that they follow the way of Cain, whose greed manifested itself in self-gratification at the expense of others. “Clearly,” as Green rightly concludes, “the Cain story became an interpretive space that longed to be filled.”<sup>37</sup> Consequently and quite unlike the biblical and extra-biblical sources, Jude provides no specifics about Cain’s waywardness. In his typological comparison of the godless with Cain, Jude merely says, “they have gone (ἐπορεύθησαν) the way of Cain” (τῆ ὁδῷ τοῦ Κάιν ἐπορεύθησαν).

Nevertheless, Jude tends to move from one subject matter to another in groups of three (e.g.,

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<sup>35</sup> On the one hand, most translations render φθειρόνται as “they are destroyed” (ASV, NRSV, NASB<sup>95</sup>, NIV, NET, ESV, CNT, NLT<sup>SE</sup>). Conceptually, Josephus uses the verb “I destroy” (φθείρω) most frequently to speak of physical death in general, but he also uses the term more specifically to speak of destruction (of the world destroyed by fire, *Ant* 1.2.3 § 70; of a city, *Ant* 5.1.2.12; of a Philistine city *Ant* 5.8.7 § 296; 20.2.2 § 29; and circumstances in general, *Ant* 9.14.3 § 289). The latter perspective is often understood to speak of suffering eternal punishment as in 1 Peter 2:12. On the other hand, a few translations render φθειρόνται as “they are corrupt” (KJV, KJVS, BISHOP, DRBY, YNG).<sup>35</sup> Yet the concept may specify sexual corruption and other times more broadly speak of general corruption. For instance, Josephus employs the term to speak of sexual corruption of Abimelech, the king of that country, who did also himself fall in love with Sarah, and was disposed to corrupt her (*Ant* 1.12.1 § 207)<sup>35</sup> as well as the general corruption of people (*Ant* 18.4.4 § 100); by gifts (*Ant* 20.6.2.127); by a political power (*War* 4.9.4 § 510); by money (*Life* 13.73), or simply a charge of corruption (*War* 1.31.5 § 618). More frequently, however, the New Testament uses the term to speak of corrupt morals (1 Cor 15:33; Eph 4:22; Rev 19:2; cf. 2 Cor 7:2; 11:3). Certainly, in Jude’s immediate context the issue is a moral one, slander (see the reoccurrence of the verb βλασφημέω recalls the same verb in verse 8 as well as the noun βλασφημία in verse 9).

<sup>36</sup> Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 85.

<sup>37</sup> Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 90.

remember three past rebellions, vv. 5-7; remember three types of blasphemy, vv. 8-11). It seems more than reasonable to suggest that Jude may be shifting to Cain’s general propensity and reputation as a greedy person as portrayed extensively in second temple literature<sup>38</sup> and thereby likened to the next two notorious Old Testament figures, Balaam and then Korah. Thus, the godless are greedy in that they follow the error of Balaam, whose greed manifested itself in his desire for money at the expense of God’s chosen people (Num 22:3-24:25; cf. 2 Pet 15–16).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Portrayals of Cain in second temple literature vary in what they emphasize about him. In a one work from around the time of the Maccabean revolt (ca. 164 BC), Cain is portrayed typologically as a warning to any person who may pattern their life in moral corruption: “Until eternity those *who are like Cain* in their moral corruption and hatred of brother shall be punished with a similar judgment” (*TBenjamin* 7:5).<sup>38</sup> In another work written around AD 70, Cain is presented in heaven with “the crafty adversary,” acts under the influence of “the lawless one,” and in essence has joined hands with the devil: “And I saw, as it were, Adam, and Eve who was with him, and with them the crafty adversary and Cain, who had been led by the adversary to break the law, and (I saw) the murdered Abel (and) the perdition brought on him and given through the lawless one” (*Apocalypse of Abraham* 24:5).<sup>38</sup> Finally, Josephus in his retelling of the Cain and Abel event makes several editorial comments that depict Cain’s greedy disposition: “Now, the two brethren were pleased with different courses of life, for Abel, the younger, was a lover of righteousness, and, believing that God was present at all his actions, he excelled in virtue; and his employment was that of a shepherd. But Cain was not only very wicked in other respects, but *was wholly intent upon getting*; and he first contrived to plough the ground” (*Ant* 1.2.1 § 53). The portrayal of Cain’s greedy disposition expands when Josephus muses, “And when Cain had travelled over many countries, he, with his wife, built a city, named Nod, which is a place so called, and there he settled his abode; where also he had children. However, *he did not accept of his punishment*, in order to amendment, *but to increase his wickedness*; for he only aimed to procure everything that was for his own bodily pleasure, though it obliged him to be injurious to his neighbors. He augmented his household substance with much wealth, by rapine and violence; he excited his acquaintance to procure pleasures and spoils by robbery, and became a great leader of men into wicked courses. He also introduced a change in that way of simplicity wherein men lived before; and was the author of measures and weights. And whereas they lived innocently and generously while they knew nothing of such arts, he changed the world into cunning craftiness (*Ant* 1.2.2 § 60-61). Josephus ends his editorial comments about Cain’s greedy posterity with “even while Adam was alive, it came to pass that the posterity of Cain became exceeding wicked, every one successively dying one after another more wicked than the former. They were intolerable in war, and vehement in robberies; and if anyone were slow to murder people, yet was he bold in his profligate behavior, in acting unjustly and doing injuries for gain” (*Ant* 1.2.2 § 66; cf. Philo *Worse* 10 § 32).<sup>38</sup> Thus, second temple literature paints Cain as one who hates his brother and morally corrupt (*TBen* 7:5), but his moral corruption resonates more specifically with a greedy disposition that enhances personal pleasures at the expense of others through robbery and murder if necessary (*Jos Ant* 1.2.1-2 § 52-61) and is in keeping with one with whom has associated himself, the devil (*Apoc Abraham* 24:5).

<sup>39</sup> Although God appeared to Balaam, inquired about Balak’s delegation that arrived in Pethor, and directed Balaam not to curse Israel (22:9-14), he still saddled his donkey and set out for Moab (22:15-21). However through a chain of supernatural events (22:22-35), a certain irony emerges as the historical account unfolds in Numbers: Balaam blesses Israel (23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-19) and curses Moab with other surrounding enemies (24:20, 21-22, 23-24). True to the God who spoke through him (22:9, 12, 13, 20, 35, 38; 23:3, 5, 12, 16, 26; 24:2, 13), three of Balaam’s oracles contain short, cryptic prophecies about the coming king of Israel (23:21; 24:7, 17-19), which is most notably positive in many texts outside of the Numbers. See Gordon Johnston’s discussion 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), ???. But what lingers on in Jewish second temple retellings about Balaam is his willingness to be hired to utter a curse on the Israelites. Furthermore, Balaam

They are greedy in that they follow the rebellion of Korah, whose greed manifested itself in the challenge of Moses’ authority (Num 16:1-35; cf. *Jos Ant* 4.3.4 § 57-58).<sup>40</sup> Consequently, the comparison between the past and the present is simply this: Whereas Gentile urban centers rebelled against God’s societal norms by rejecting God’s marital standards between husband and wife (v. 7), the godless of Jude’s day are even worse in that they are religiously contaminated in that they deny Jesus as Messiah and thereby God himself (v. 4, 8c), they suffer from voicing stupid statements and exhibiting a lack of self-control brought about by ignoring human reason (v. 10), and finally they are just greedy self-absorbed people (v. 11). Jude views all of these behaviors as unacceptable forms of rebellion against God’s societal norm.

### Rebellion Raises Divine Ire

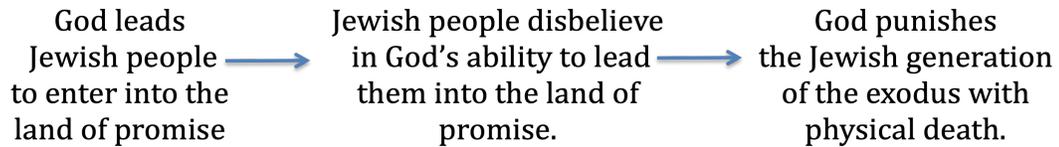
In Jude’s recollection of past rebellions, anyone who rebelled against God experienced his divine ire. Whether Jew, celestial being, or Gentile urbanite, Jude wants his readers to remember that God was impartial when he judged rebellion no matter who it was that rebelled against him. The wilderness generation’s *rebellion against God’s leading* at Kadesh Barnea

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allegedly encouraged sexual immorality, supposedly for pay, he persuaded Israelites to intermarry with the daughters of Moab and involved with cultic fertility worship at Baal-peor (compare 25:1–3 with 31:16).

<sup>40</sup> Korah is remembered for committing a major coup against God’s chosen leader, Moses (Num 16:1-35). Korah, a Levite, incited 250 leaders (“princes”; מְנַשְׁיָאֵי) to rebel against Moses and Aaron (“stood before Moses”; מַעֲמֵד מִפְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה) for allegedly exalting himself over the entire community (vv 1-3). Moses’ response to Korah and the 250 leaders was to let the LORD decide. When Moses summoned Dathan and Abram, they too joined the rebellion. The next day, each brought their own censer with fire in it and incense on it, and they assembled together at the tent of meeting. Korah and the others were standing against Moses and Aaron at the entrance of the tent of meeting when the glory of the LORD appeared to everyone (vv 4-19). The LORD directed Moses and Aaron to separate community from Korah, Dathan, and Abram. Then Moses declared that if these men died a natural death, it would prove that the LORD did not send Moses. But if the LORD did something phenomenal then they will know that they had despised the LORD (vv 20-30). When Moses was finished speaking, the ground split open where Korah, Dathan, and Abram and their entire families stood and “swallowed them.” Two hundred fifty men, who offered incense, were devoured by fire (vv 31-35).

ended in physical death. Thus when Jude writes, “God destroyed” (ἀπόλεσεν)<sup>41</sup> the Israelites for disbelief, he means God pronounced a penalty of physical death.



Concerning the angelic *rebellion against God’s universal design*, God confined the celestial dissenters “in eternal chains” (δεσμοῖς αἰδιότοις). Although it is not unusual to read about people bound in chains and imprisoned either as a criminal or a prisoner of war,<sup>42</sup> the concept of angels being shackled is not mentioned in Genesis six, but prominent in *1 Enoch*.<sup>43</sup> Similarly Genesis says nothing of shackled angels being confined “in darkness” (ὑπὸ ζόφον)<sup>44</sup> “for the judgment

<sup>41</sup> For instance, the Egyptian armies’ pursuit of the Jewish people leaving Egypt came to an abrupt end: “what he [God] did to the Egyptian army, to their horses and chariots, how he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued you, so that the LORD has destroyed (ἀπόλεσεν) them to this day” (LXX, Deut 11:4 [NRSV]; cp. 4Q 122.1-5). Non-canonical retellings of the exodus event also consider “destroy” to mean physical death. For instance, in speaking of God’s judgment of Korah Josephus avers, “Moses, after these men were destroyed (ἀπολωλότας), was desirous that the memory of this judgment might be delivered down to posterity, and that future ages might be acquainted with it” (*Ant* 4.3.4 § 57; of Dathan, *Ant* 4.3.3 § 52; cp. Philo *Moses* 2.281).

<sup>42</sup> For instance, of the forty-eight occurrences in the LXX many references use the noun “bind” (δεσμός; MT Hebrew: כּוּס) for literal imprisonment (of Israelites in Egypt, Lev 26:13; of Manasseh in Assyria, 2 Chron 33:11; Prayer of Manasseh 10; of Zedekiah in Babylon, *1 Esdras* 1:40; of Jewish people in Egypt, *3 Macc* 3:25 etc.). Yet there are references to figurative bindings (of sin, Isa 52:2; Jer 2:20; of women, Eccl 7:26; etc.). In the New Testament, the idea of being bound for literal imprisonment describes the situations of both Peter and Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 12:7; 16:22-27). Likewise, of the forty-five occurrences in Josephus, nearly all speak of someone being bound for imprisonment (of Joseph in Egypt, *Ant* 10.7.5§122; of Jeremiah in Jerusalem, *Ant* 10.7.5§122; of Aristobulus in Rome, *Ant* 14.7.4§123; of Herod Agrippa in Rome, *War* 1.9.6§181; etc.). At Masada they would rather commit suicide than to be placed in chains and taken to Rome (*Jos War* 7.9.1 § 389-406). In fact, Josephus recalls how the rebel leader John of Gischala, one of several who lead a Jewish insurrection against Rome *circa* 67-68 CE, was captured and then describes his imprisonment to be the equivalent to “eternal chains” (δεσμοῖς αἰωνίοις; *War* 6.9.4 § 434).

<sup>43</sup> For instance, “And to Michael God said, ‘Make known to Semyaz and the others who are with him, who fornicated with the women, that they will die together with them in all their defilement . . . bind them for seventy generations underneath the rocks of the ground until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded’” (*1 Enoch* 10:12; cp. 4Q202 fliv:5-10). *1 Enoch* 10:12 was translated by E. Isaac in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Volume One, edited by James H. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 17. See also Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 *Peter*, 53.

<sup>44</sup> The idea that angels are confined “in darkness” (ὑπὸ ζόφον) is common in the Enoch tradition. In *2 Enoch* we read, “And those men picked me up and brought me up to the second heaven. And they showed me, and I saw a

of the great day” (εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας).<sup>45</sup> So *like* a criminal or a prisoner of war, Jude vividly depicts the miserable conditions of rebellious angels: they have been chained, cast into a dark prison, incapable of moving about freely, and kept by God for judgment. Thus angels who rejected their prescribed heavenly residence are, as Richard rightly concludes, “banished from heaven and condemned to imprisonment in darkness within the earth with chains (*1 Enoch* 10:4-6; 14:5; 54:3-5) until the ominous ‘great day of judgment’ (*1 Enoch* 10:12; 22:11).”<sup>46</sup> As a national Judean insurgence against Rome was gaining momentum in order to reestablish the kingdom of Israel, was Jude intending for his readers to ponder their placement in Roman

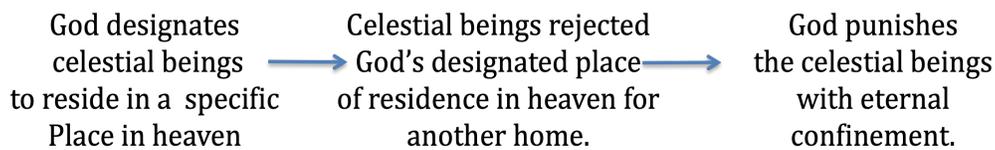
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darkness greater than earthly darkness. And there I perceived prisoners under guard, hanging up, waiting for her measureless judgment. And those angels have the appearance of darkness itself, more than earthly darkness” (71-2; cp 18:1-5). Jude’s description “in darkness” (ὕπὸ ζόφον) may refer to a second heaven, beneath the earth, the ancient Greek’s “underworld” (CEB) or “nether world” (RSV: “nether darkness”). G. Green supports the netherworld perspective with selected statements in Greek classical literature such as Aeschylus who wrote, “As for me, I depart for the darkness beneath the earth” (*Persians*, 839) and Euripides who wrote, “Forever in the nether gloom” (*Hippolytus*, 1416). Admittedly, the concept of “darkness” occurs in Homer’s *Iliad* where Homer tells how the heaven and earth were divided into three parts: Neptune dwells in the sea, Hades took the darkness of the realms under the earth, and Zeus took to the air, sky, and clouds (15.184-199). More specifically, the *Iliad* says the god Hades rules the world below, “the *darkness* (ζόφον) of the realms under the earth” (15:191). Closely related to the Greek concept of Hades is a reference to the underworld as an abyss. Enoch describes, “I then saw one . . . seizing that first star binding his hands and feet, and throwing him into an abyss—this abyss was narrow and deep, empty and dark” (88:1; cp. 54:3-5). Perhaps it is merely a sort of pit or cistern. In *1 Enoch*, the “darkness” in which Semyaz (sometimes referred to as Azaz’el) is buried (10:4-5; 11-12) seems to be nothing more than the idea of a cistern similar to the one Jeremiah was placed (Jer 38:6-13; Jos *Ant* 10.7.5 § 122), or in Isaiah where heavenly forces and earthly kings are imprisoned in a pit (e.g., “cistern,” see NET note) until a period of judgment (Isa 24:21-22). Perhaps it is merely a hole in the ground or a grave. In *1 Enoch* 10, an archangel bound the divine being called Semyaz, made a hole in the desert, cast him in the hole, threw on top of him rugged and sharp rocks, and covered his face in order that Semyaz may never see daylight (10:4-5), and again it is said he is placed “underneath the rocks of the ground” (10:11-12; cp. 14:5).

<sup>45</sup> Jude’s reference of angelic punishment “for judgment of the great day” (εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας) is not in Genesis 6:1-4. Perhaps, this is his embellishment derived from Joel’s “the day of the LORD comes—that great and terrible day” (בְּיוֹם יְהוָה תִּהְיֶה תַרְדֵּמָה וְהַחֲמָסִים; Joel 2:31; 3:4 NET), or another Hebrew prophet because this concept resonates among many prophets (Isa 13:6, 9; Joel 2:11; Amos 5:18, 20; Zeph 1:14; Mal 4:5).<sup>45</sup> Although possible, Jude’s portrayal seems similar to *1 Enoch*. The “judgment of the great day” (κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας) is God’s righteous judgment, namely, fallen angels lead into “the bottom of the fire—and in torment—the prison (where) they will be locked up forever” (10:13-14).<sup>45</sup> Of particular significance is the perceived location of the sinful before judgment day, the judgment day itself, and the events after judgment day: “sinners are set apart when they die and are buried in the earth and judgment has not been executed upon them in their lifetime . . . until the great day of Judgment – and to the accursed (there will be) plague and pain forever, and the retribution of their spirits. They will bind them there forever . . .” (*1 Enoch* 22:10-11; cp. Luke 16). Regardless, celestial beings remain incarcerated until God’s appointed judgment day.

<sup>46</sup> Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 256.

society? “To keep one’s proper station in society,” avers G. Green, “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 any further mention of their sin.”<sup>47</sup>



Concerning the Gentile urbanite *rebellion against God’s societal norms*, they suffered (“by suffering,” ὑπέχουσαι) a “divine punishment” (δίκην).<sup>48</sup> A similar combination of the terms “suffer” (ὑπέχω) and “punishment” (δίκην) occurs in Josephus to describe God’s people suffering divine judgment of the flood (*Ant* 1.3.8 §99) and a plague for rebellion (*Ant* 4.4.1 § 61; cp. 17.5.6 129). Consequently, Sodom and Gomorrah symbolized (= “they *now* set as an example,” πρόκεινται δειγμα)<sup>49</sup> the sort of judgment to expect for any sinful city (Jer 49:18;

<sup>47</sup> G. Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 69. “Legal position and status lay at the root of Roman social organization,” muses Craige B. Champion, “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.” (*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece & Rome* (2010), s.v. “Social Organization, Roman”). See also Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2003), 48-69. At the time, Jude’s Judea was not behaving in a manner in keeping with Rome’s quasi-paternal authority and thereby rejecting their station within the Roman Empire.

<sup>48</sup> The noun “punishment” (δίκην) is frequently used to describe judgment: against Egypt (Wis 18:11); against anyone who ignores God and practices sexual immorality, idolatry, etc (Wis 14:22-31; cp. 1:8); against the Jewish nation for Jason’s changing the nation’s way of life (4Macc 4:21); against a tyrant for an unjustified murder and other heinous crimes (4 Macc 11:2; 18:22; cp. 12:12 where divine judgment involves “intense and eternal fire and tortures,” πυκνοτέρῳ καὶ αἰωνίῳ πυρὶ καὶ βασάνοις), (4 Macc 18:22). There appears, however, where the term conveys the idea of a request of substitution whereby divine judgment of the Jewish nation be passed on to Eleazer (4 Macc 6:28), and that people are excused from divine judgment when fearing a king (4 Macc 8:22).

<sup>49</sup> Although πρόκεινται δειγμα seldom denotes being placed on display as an example, Josephus references Jehoiachin to be a public example for John of Gischala (a leading rebel in the Jewish revolt) concerning how to behave when he was faced with the threat of Jerusalem’s destruction by Rome. The event about Jehoiachin (alternative: Jechoniah) occurred when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea (Hatti-land) sometime in December 598 BCE, laid siege on Jerusalem, and captured it on Saturday, 16 March 597 BCE. While Jerusalem was under

50:40): Jew (Amos 4:11; *TLevi* 14:6) or Gentile (Zeph 2:9).<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, they were consumed by an “eternal fire” (πυρὸς αἰωνίου). The concept of “eternal fire” (πυρὸς αἰωνίου) could serve as an warning,<sup>51</sup> an expression for hell,<sup>52</sup> or both, a temporal warning for the present in

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siege, Jehoiakim died in December 598 BCE. His son, Jehoiachin, ascended to the throne 9 December 598 BCE, but he reigned only three months ten days, and was then deported to Babylon in 597 BCE (2 Kings 24:8–14; 2 Chron 36:9–10). Nebuchadnezzar then appointed Zedekiah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, to be king over Judah and Jerusalem. The event also appears among the Babylonian cuneiform tablets: “In the month Kisliwu (Nov–Dec), the king of Addad called up his army, marched against Syria (lit. Hatti–land), encamped against the city of Judah and seized the town on the second day of the month Adar. He captured the king (i.e., Jehoiachin). He appointed there a king of his own choice (i.e., Zedekiah). He took much booty from it and sent (it) to Babylon” (*ANET*, 203, Fig. 58). Josephus avers, “But still, John, it is never dishonorable to repent, and amend what has been done amiss, even at the last. You have a “good example set” (καλὸν ὑπόδειγμα . . . πρόκειται) before you in Jechoniah, the king of the Jews. He, when of old his conduct had brought the Babylonian’s arm upon him, of his own free will left the city before it was taken, and with his family endured voluntary captivity” (*War* 6.2.1 § 103-04; cp. Philo *Moses* 1:48).

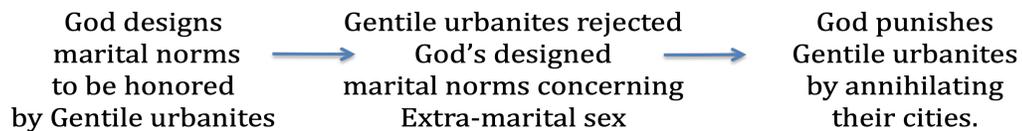
<sup>50</sup> The sins of adultery, living lies, and encouragement of evildoers prior to the destruction of the first temple are, in God’s eyes, typical of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jer 23:14). Others declared that “Just as the Sodomites were destroyed from the earth, so all who serve idols will be destroyed” (4Q221 f2i:3; cp. 4Q223 224 f2ii:53). Later, Jesus equates Galilean rejection of him and his ministry in the cities of Capernaum as sin whose judgment will be more terrible than that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt 10:15; 11:23-24; cp. Luke 10:12; 17:29; Rom 9:29). See also note #55.

<sup>51</sup> “Eternal fire” (πυρὸς αἰωνίου) could be classified as a figure of example as a precedent to be followed or avoided and thereby similar to one found in Luke: “On that day, anyone who is on the roof, with his goods in the house, must not come down to take them away, and likewise the person in the field must not turn back. Remember Lot’s wife” (17:31-32). “Remember Lot’s wife” (i.e., do not look back) is the example. Here in Jude it’s the fiery destruction of Gentile urbanites. Do not repeat their sin. Since the geographical area where the urban infernos occurred remained desolate, “eternal fire” (πυρὸς αἰωνίου) could be conceived as a warning. The fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was so dreadful it was an eternal warning for all subsequent generations to beware lest it happen to them: “You consumed with ‘fire and sulfur’ (πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ) the people of Sodom who acted arrogantly, who were notorious for their vices; and you made them an example (παράδειγμα) to those who should come afterward” (3 Macc 2:5; cf. Philo *Moses* 2.56; Jos *War* 4 § 483). See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 467.

<sup>52</sup> The periphrasis or circumlocution concept means unnecessary words are used to describe the author’s point. For instance, “in the city of David” is a periphrasis for Bethlehem (Luke 2:11), or “this fruit of the vine” is a periphrasis for wine (Matt 26:29). Here in Jude “eternal fire” is a periphrasis hell. The idea of fire being an eternal form of punishment occurs elsewhere for tyrants: “justice has laid up for you intense and eternal fire and tortures, and *these throughout all time will never let you go*” (4 Macc 12:12; cp. 1QS 2.8; Matt 18:8; Rev 20:11-15). Commentators vary. “Jude means,” according to Bauckham, “the still burning site of the cities is a warning picture of the eternal fires of hell. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 55; cp. Harrington who sees “eternal fire” a periphrasis for hellfire” (*Jude and 2 Peter*, 197). What appears to drive this periphrasis sense is the presupposition that Jude speaks to the sexual misconduct of angels, who in turn will suffer the eternal fires of hell where angelic beings are eventually cast for their sexual misconduct (*1 Enoch* 10:13-14; 20:1-7; cp. Rev 20:10). Though I agree that there may be conceptual parallels with the angelic situation, it is not due to their sexual misconduct but rather their final punishment on the “great day of judgment.” Others who favor this sort of both-and position are Davids, *The Letter of 2 Peter and Jude*, 53-54; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 244-46; Steven J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 39-40; Moo, *2 Peter and Jude*, 241-42. See Bullinger’s *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 419-22.

order to avoid the eschatological perils of eternal flames associated with hell. Schreiner avers, “This fire functions as an example because it is a type or anticipation of what is to come for all those who reject God. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is not merely a historical curiosity; it functions typologically as a prophecy of what is in store for the rebellious.”<sup>53</sup>

Regardless of how the figure is explained, the point is simply this: as it happened to the Gentiles, so it may happen to any Judean who rejects God’s societal norms. The Gentile urbanites’ rebellion against God’s nuptial expectations ended in their entire cities being destroyed by fire.



In Jude’s present situation, the godless are considered damned (v. 11). Jude’s prophetic pronouncement, typically rendered “woe to them” (ὠὐαὶ αὐτοῖς), seems more along the lines of a rather mild reproach in today’s culture.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps a more appropriate contemporary English

<sup>53</sup> Schreiner (*1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 453) goes on to say, “the brimstone, salt, and wasted nature of the land function as a warning for Israel and the church elsewhere in the Scriptures (Deut 29:23; Jer 49:17-18; cf. Isa 34:9-10; Ezek 38:22; Rev 14:10-11; 19:3; 20:10).” See also E. K. Lee, “Words denoting ‘Pattern’ in the New Testament,” *NTS* 8 (1961-62): 167.

<sup>54</sup> The idiomatic English expression “woe” is reminiscent of the King James era and yet, as indicated above, maintained by many translations (ASB, NASB<sup>95</sup>, RSV, ESV, NRSV, NET, NIV<sup>85</sup>). Only the NLT<sup>SE</sup> breaks away from an antiquated English idiomatic expression with “What sorrow awaits them!” Yet “woe-oracles” are condemning prophetic announcements on Jewish people for rejecting God and living sinful lives that warrant divine judgment. For instance, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah all usher “woe-oracles” to the Jewish people: “Woe to them (ὠὐαὶ αὐτοῖς), for they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, for they have rebelled against me!” (Hos 7:13, NET). “The look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin *like* Sodom, they do not hide it. Woe to them (“woe to their souls,” ὠὐαὶ τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτῶν)! For they have brought evil on themselves” (Isa 3:9, NET). “I have seen your abominations, your adulteries and neighings, your shameless prostitutions on the hills of the countryside. Woe to you (ὠὐαὶ σοι), O Jerusalem! How long will it be before you are made clean?” (Jer 13:27, NET). “Woe to you (ὠὐαὶ ὑμῖν) who write down lying and godless words; for they write down their lies that men may hear them and act godlessly towards (their) neighbor (*1 Enoch* 98:15). “Woe to you (ὠὐαὶ ὑμῖν) who work godlessness, and glory in lying and extol them: You shall perish, and no happy life shall be yours” (*1 Enoch* 99:1). “Woe-oracles” are also prophetic announcements on Gentile nations as well. “Woe to the nations (ὠὐαὶ ἔθνεσιν) that rise up against my people! The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day of judgment; he will send fire and worms into their flesh; they shall weep in pain forever” (Judith 16:17, NRSV). “Woe to you, Moab (ὠὐαὶ σοι, Μωάβ), Chemosh is destroyed: their sons who had sought to escape have been given up, and their daughters have become captive to Sihon, king of the Amorites” (Philo *Alleg* 3:225; cf. 3:231; Num 21:29).

rendering would be “Damnation will come to them” (οὐαὶ ἐλυσεται αὐτοῖς), or “They are damned” (οὐαὶ εἰσιν αὐτοῖς), or just simply, “Damn them.” Yet regardless of the English rendering, Jude’s expression is a prophetic pronouncement of judgment on a group of people who have forsaken God similar to that ushered by Old Testament prophets (cf. Isa. 5:1–30; Jer. 22:13–17; 23:1–4; Amos 6:1–3; Hab. 2:6–20), the author of *I Enoch* (94:6–8; 95:4–7; 96:4–8; 97:7–8; 98:9–16; 99:11–15; 100:7–9), and Jesus (e.g., Matt. 11:21; 18:7; 23:13–16, 23, 25, 27, 29; cf. Peter’s statement in Acts 8:20).<sup>55</sup> Thus, Jude condemns rather harshly the godless who are running around Judea recruiting Jews to rebel against Rome.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Jude’s appeal to *I Enoch* 1:9 certainly directs attention to the fact that rebellion is not a good idea and that it raises divine ire. Although *I Enoch* contains five separate works and each unique,<sup>57</sup> they all contribute to a major theme, which Nickelsburg avers “is the coming judgment in which God will

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<sup>55</sup> In fact, one contemporary translation of Matthew 11:21 reads, “Damn you Chorazin! Damn you Bethsaida! If the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have (sat) in sackcloth and ashes and changed their ways long ago.” In fact, Jesus tells Capernaum “you’ll go to hell.” See Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Gospels* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1994). Carson avers, “May your money perish with you” in Acts 8:20 could be rendered idiomatically as “to hell with you and your money. D. A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 64. See my discussion about Greek and English idiomatic language in *Interpreting the General Letters* in Kregel’s Handbook of Exegesis edited by John Harvey (Grand Rapids: Kregel, forthcoming).

<sup>56</sup> Jude avers in verse 4 that some people *παρεισέδυσαν* (“have secretly slipped in”: NET, CEB; cp. NIV; “have secretly stolen in”: NRSV; “have crept in”: KJV, ASV, ESV; and even “have wormed their way into your churches”: NLT-SE). Although the verb is unique to Jude, there are two significant usages in extra-biblical material. The first usage occurs in a third century papyri: “you cannot creep in (*παρεισέδυσιν*), for the woman has been in possession for a long time.” Here there seems to be the idea of secrecy (see *Griechische Papyrus su Strassburg* I, II [ed. F. Preisigke; Leipzig, 1912-1920], I.22:30). A second usage occurs in Josephus where he uses the term to speak of people with less than honorable motives. During the time of Herod the Great (40-4 BCE), there were some who acted as friends and endeared themselves to honorable people only to spy on them (Jos *War* 1.24.1 § 468). Despite its infrequent use, *παρεισέδυσαν* (“have slipped in secretly”) appears to communicate that “certain people” (*τινες ἄνθρωποι*) managed to intermingle among Judean followers of Jesus in a manner that was at first unnoticed, and now perhaps gaining a swaying influential voice within the community as recruiters for the Jewish revolt. See notes 4, 6, 7, 35, 43, 49, 54.

<sup>57</sup> *I Enoch* is a collection of five books: *The Book of Watchers* (1-36), *The Book of Parables* (37-71), *The Book of Luminaries* (72-82), *The Book of Dream Visions* (83-90) and *The Epistle of Enoch* (92-105).

adjudicate the injustices that characterize life as the authors and their readers experience it.”<sup>58</sup>

Needless to say, it is the predominate theological theme evident in Jude’s vituperative letter against the godless.

### Conclusion

Jude’s literary grouping of the disbelieving exodus generation, the seditious celestial beings, and the Gentile cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is not unique to Jude. This theme of rebellion followed by judgment occurs in numerous Jewish writings.<sup>59</sup> What is unique to Jude is his intention. Jude desires that Judeans remember that whether a person is an Israelite, angel, or Gentile urbanite, God punishes rebellion impartially and in various ways. Jude makes it perfectly clear: Rebellion, of any kind, is not a good idea because rebellion raises divine ire. Thus, Jude’s point about past rebellions is simply this: God judges rebellion impartially and in various ways. Jude demonstrates God’s impartiality via the divine judgment of Jew, angels, and Gentile alike.

Groups	Types of Rebellion	Types of Punishment
Jewish People	Disbelief in God’s Leading	Physical Death and No Entrance into the Land of Promise
Angelic Beings	Rejection of God’s Designated Placement or Station	Imprisonment and No Longer Able to Interact In Heaven or on Earth

<sup>58</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1* in *Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 7.

<sup>59</sup> For instance, *the Damascus Document* (CD) is typically divided into two major sections: “The Admonition,” and “The Law and Communal Rules.” “The Admonition” reviews Israelite history by focusing on Israel’s past and future punishment as well as God’s gracious salvation of Israel’s “remnant” (1:1-10; also referred to as “a sure house in Israel” in 3:19, “the House of Judah” in 4:11, and “those who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus” in 6:19, cp. 6:5, 7:19).<sup>59</sup> The appeal to the three historical tragedies in “the Admonition,” where the text speaks of God’s future punishment of wicked backsliders, is intentionally used to warn readers to stay firm in the Jewish tradition and not to stray from it. In 3 Maccabees, these historical disasters about God’s judgment are intentional placed in the midst of an intercessory prayer for divine intervention against Gentiles who profane the temple. In Jude, they are used intentionally to pause and remember that God judges the rebellious, impartially, and decisively. Thus we concur with Richard’s conclusion “Examination of these shows no signs of literary borrowing by Jude” though there is in fact cultural, conceptual, and literary parallels.

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Gentile People	Rejection of God’s Design of Societal Sexual Behavior	Total Destruction of Urban Cities and their Inhabitants
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Jude’s pronounced concern about the present rebellion, in particular the current rebellion against Rome, is simply this: God will punish the rebellion that is wreaking havoc throughout the land. His having identified three different types of rebellion: disbelief in God’s leading, rejecting God’s prescribed residence, and rejecting God’s societal norms and the divine ire it raises (e.g. physical death, imprisonment, and total annulations of cities) serves as a warning to Judean followers of Jesus to stay clear of those who are advocating a rebellion against Rome.