

Images and Exemplars in Jude: Identifying the Unnamed with the Help of Josephus?

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Jude loves the use of images and exemplars. He appeals to images like “ungodly” (ἀσέβεια), “dreamers” (οὗτοι ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι), “defiled” (σάρκα μιαινουσιν), “hidden rocks” (σπιλάδες), “waterless clouds” (νεφέλαι ἄνυδροι), “autumn trees” (δένδρα φθινοπωρινά), “wild waves of the sea” (κύματα ἄγρια θαλάσσης), and “wandering stars” (ἀστέρες πλανῆται) as a way to discredit those about whom he is writing. He employs exemplars like the wilderness generation (λαὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου σώσας), fallen angels (ἀγγέλους δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις τετήρηκεν), urbanite Gentiles (Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα), “Michael the archangel” (ὁ Μιχαήλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος), Cain (Κάιν), Balaam (Βαλαάμ), Korah (Κόρε), and Enoch (Ἐνώχ) to frame his vituperative argument in verses 5–16. It is by way of these images and exemplars that Jude paints an unflattering picture of an unnamed group of people who appear to be threatening and perhaps even intimidating followers of Jesus.

Jude’s nameless adversaries have caused commentators to speculate about whom Jude speaks and the exact nature of his controversy. On the one hand, numerous commentators are of the opinion that Jude tackles either Gnostic or Christian false teachers.¹ Yet the absence any

¹ **False Teacher Advocates:** Gnostic: Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (1911), 354-55; Windisch, *Die Katholischen Briefe* (1951), 48; Leconte, *Les épîtres catholiques de Saint Jacques, Saint Jude et Saint Pierre* (1961), 66-70; Sidebottom, *James, Jude, 2 Peter* (1967) 75; Cantinat, *Les Épîtres de Saint Jacques et de Saint Jude* (1973), 282; Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (1975), 426; Rowston, “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament” (1975), 554–63; F.F. Bruce, “Jude, Epistle of” (1980), 832; Fuchs/Raymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre* (1980), 143; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (1969, repr 1981), 231; Michael Green *2 Peter and Jude* (1983), 37-40; P. A. Seethaler, “Kleine Bemerkungen zum Judasbrief,” *BA* 31 (1987): 261–64; Grundmann, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus* (1986), 17-19; Paulsen,

pseudo-prefixed nouns typically employed in designating 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) should be cause to pause. Furthermore, a number of commentators argue that Jude, the blood brother of James, wrote to Judean believers during the late 50s early 60s. So we might ask this question: What were Jude and the messianic Judean community confronting?² Were they struggling with false teachers? “There *does not seem* to me,” according to Salmon, “to be sufficient evidence that those whom Jude condemns were teachers of false doctrine, or even teachers at all.”³ In fact, several commentators consider the ‘false teacher’ perspective doubtful.⁴

On the other hand, “Jude’s adult life,” according to Witherington, “was a era of rising tensions in the Holy Land . . .” Pilate’s disgrace and exile in A.D. 36-37 and bad Roman procurators . . . “only fueled the Zealot movement, which had strong Galilean connections”

Der Zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief (1992), 46-49; Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, Der 2 Petrusbrief* (1994), 5. Christian: Bigg, *Epistles of St. Jude and St. Peter* (1909), 244-45, 316; James, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude* (1912), xlviii-lix; Lenski, *Interpretation of Peter, John, and Jude* (1961), 597, 599; Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude* (1989), 201-02; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude* (1996), 29; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude* (1992), 16-18; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (2003), 414; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (2003), 414; Senior/Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter* (2003), 181-82).

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

³ Salmon, *An Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament* (1886), 507 (emphasis mine).

⁴ **False Teaching View Questioned:** S. Davidson, *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, volume 1 (London: Longman, Green, and Co 1868), 448; I. H. Eybers, “Aspects of the Background to the Letter of Jude,” *Neotestamentica* 9 (1975): 113-23, esp. 114; Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos* (2006), 466; L. R. Donelson, *I, II, Peter and Jude*, NWL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 163-64. Those who hold to a rhetorical letter for the church at large would concur. “The author is not trying to combat heresies within the Church,” according to Wisse, “the authors purpose is to inform Christians everywhere that the enemies of the last days have arrived.” Wisse, “The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology” (1972), 133-43, esp. 142; Salmond, *Jude* (1907), viii.

where Jude both lived and ministered.⁵ The Zealots maintained that the coming of God’s kingdom was dependent upon their militancy against Rome as well as the extermination of any Judean who was willing to submit to Roman rule.⁶ They promoted and pursued rebellion, pillaged and burned homes, and kidnapped and murdered Roman and countryman alike. “The effects of their frenzy,” recalls Josephus, “were thus felt throughout all Judea, and every day saw this war being fanned into fiercer flame.”⁷ Which leads to this question: if there are some reservations about the false teacher view, is it possible that Jude’s uneasiness (v 3) and his vituperative comments (vv 5–16) are directed at the rebellious Zealots wreaking havoc throughout Judea at the time of his writing? If so, does *any* of Jude’s imagery or exemplars

⁵ **Political Happenings in Judea during Jude’s Life** Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 563-64. Tacitus, a Roman historian, attributes the Jewish war to two cruel and irresponsible Roman governors: Felix and Festus (*Histories* 5.9.3-5; 5.10.1; written @ A.D. 100-110). Yet in reality, four Roman governors are worth singling out: Felix (A.D. 52-60; Josephus *War* 2.12.5 § 240; *Antiquities* 20.7.1 §§ 137; 20.8.5 § 162); Porcius Festus (A.D. 60-62; Josephus *War* 2.14.1 § 271; *Antiquities* 20.8.9 §§ 183-84), Albinus (A.D. 62-64; Josephus *War* 2.14.1 §§ 272-73; 4.5.3 §§ 300-09; *Antiquities* 20.9.1-5 §§ 197-215), and Gessius Florus (A.D. 64-66; Josephus *War* 2.14.2 §§ 277; *Antiquities* 20.11.1 §§ 252-53) because they all contributed to the growing hostility against Rome. See also E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. — A.D. 135)*, volume 1 revised and edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973), 1:459-70, 485; M. Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.*, translated by David Smith (Edinburgh, England: T & T Clark, 1989), 348-58.

⁶ **History of the Zealots:** Josephus records how the Zealot movement began with Judas the Galilean. Judas had proclaimed Judea a republic and recognized God alone as king and Lord. The sons of Judas maintained disruptive acts of insurrection (A.D. 46-48). Eventually the Roman governor Tiberius Julius Alexander eventually brought to trial James and Simon, sons of Judas the Galilean and had them sentenced to crucifixion (*circa* 46-48; *Antiquities* 20.5.2 § 102). Menaham, another son of Judas, changed Zealot tactics during the mid-60s that earned them a new name: *Sicarii*. The nomenclature *Sicarii* (σικάρριοι) was Rome’s designation for the Zealots because of their aggressive, ruthless, and gruesome use of a dagger for assassinations, killing without discrimination Romans and Judeans alike (*Antiquities* 20.5.2 § 102; cf. *War* 2.8.3 254). Menahem first seized Masada from the Romans, confiscated a large amount of weapons, and used Masada as a base of operations. When Menahem made his entrance into Jerusalem like a veritable king fully armed, he assumed charge of the revolution in Jerusalem until he was murdered (*War* 2.7.9 §§ 442-48). Eleazar son of Jairus, a grandson of Judas and a subsequent leader of the *Sacarii* took up residence at Masada (*War* 2.7.9 § 447; 7.8.1 § 253) and played key roles in the A.D. 66 revolt. Eventually, he retreated to Masada and remained there until he and those who followed him faced their suicidal demise in A.D. 73 (*War* 7.9.1-2 §§ 389-406).

⁷ **Rebellion Throughout Judea:** Josephus, *War* 2.8.6 § 264-65 (Thackeray); cf. *Antiquities* 20.8.6 §§ 172-76. Historically, momentum for revolt was growing in the cities of Caesarea and Jerusalem, in the Judean desert regions and hill country, and in Samaria and Galilee. For a summary presentations of Judean war with Rome, see Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The Micmillan Bible Atlas*, (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing, 1968, rev. ed. 1977), 157; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 330-76; L.I. Levine “Jewish War” in *ABD* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:839-45.

suggest that Jude is directing his attention to the historical happenings in Judea during the late A.D. 50s and early 60s? In what ways might Josephus aid in our understanding of Jude’s use of images and exemplars?

Negative Imagery and Exemplars

Although at times a religious movement or organization about whom a biblical author is speaking are named (cf. Mark 2:6–7; 3:22; 8:11; 12:13; 1 Timothy 2:16–17), other times they remain anonymous (Gal. 1:6–9; 2 Peter 2:1–3; 1 John 2:18–19; 2 John 9–11). Non-biblical authors like Josephus exhibit the same practice. Sometimes they name a movement and other times they do not. For example in order to distance the Zealot movement from the highly venerated Maccabean revolt of 167–163 B.C. (cf. John 10:10), Josephus’ preference for terms other than “Zealot” was so that he might present their movement and their leaders as criminals.⁸ Hengel adds to this conversation when he points out that Josephus’ labeling of Zealots as “bandits” and “chief-bandits” were descriptive political images used by the Romans to speak of people who rebelled against the Roman government for political and religious reasons.⁹ Perhaps Jude employs the same tactic. Perhaps he too uses negative images and exemplars in order to distance Jewish revolutionaries from Jewish followers of Jesus.

Imagery

Jude begins his imagery about whom he has concern with an unflattering religious term: “ungodly” (ἀσεβεια). He repeats the image on more than one occasion (vv 4, 15, 18) and makes

⁸ **Descriptions of Zealot Behavior in Josephus:** They are called “tyrants” (τυράννος, Josephus *War* 1.1.4 § 10) and “foolish” (ἄφροσύνη Josephus *War* 2.13.6 § 651). They manifested “rash” behavior (τόλμα, Josephus *War* 3.10.2 § 479; 4.5.5 § 347) and exhibited “madness” (ἄπονοίᾳς, Josephus *War* 2.13.6 § 265; 3.9.8 § 454; 3.10.2 § 479; 4.6.1 § 362; 5.1.5 §§ 34, 121, 424, 436, 436; 6.1.3 § 20; 7.6.5 § 213; 7.8.1 § 267; 7.10.1 § 412).

⁹ Hengel, *The Zealots*, 15-16, 24-75, 154-56.

continual connections to it with subsequent mention of “these people” (vv 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 19). Josephus speaks of the “ungodly” (ἀσέβεια) some sixty times in *Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews*. In those works numerous Jewish figures are deemed ungodly as Jewish tyrannical leadership as a way to parallel and underscore that the Judean 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” (1.4 § 9–12)¹⁰ Yet how might this image of being “ungodly” (ἀσέβεια) support the idea that Jude is addressing the Zealots? Does his usage of the image parallel that of Josephus as a way to refer to the Zealots without naming them?

The context of Jude’s first usage of this negative image occurs in Jude 4 and is rather telling. After labeling them as “ungodly” (ἀσέβεια), he says, “they deny our only *master* and *Lord*.” When this assertion is compared with the Zealot’s manifesto, there are striking conceptual and verbal parallels. According to Josephus, a marked conviction that drove the Zealot movement was that, “they think little of submitting to death in unusual forms and permitting vengeance to fall on kinsmen and friends if only they may *avoid calling any man master*,” and they believed “God is to be their only *Ruler* and *Lord*.”¹¹ Naturally the added reference to Jesus as the “Christ” (Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν) in verse 4 would also serve to counter Simon, Menahem, and other revolutionary Judean leaders of the Jewish revolt because they believed and presented themselves as Messiah. Josephus recalls how, “Anyone might make himself *king* (Βασιλεύς) as the head of a band of rebels and then would press on to the destruction of the [Jewish]

¹⁰ **Ungodly in Josephus:** 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. For the ἀσέβεια of the Zealots, see Josephus *War* 4.3.8 § 157; 5.8.15 §§ 401-42. Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 181-85.

¹¹ Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.6 §§ 23-25 [Feldman]; cf. *War* 2.8.1 § 117-118; *Antiquities* 18.23.

community, causing trouble to few Romans . . .”¹² In fact Jesus warned that others would come after him making such a claim (Matt 24:5–13; Luke 21:8). Jude’s repeated references to Jesus as Messiah (vv 1, 17, 21, 25) and his subsequent comment about the foretold coming of “scoffers who follow their own *ungodly desires*” (ἐπιθυμίας . . . τῶν ἀσεβειῶν, v 18) may suggest that Jude is making a more explicit allusion to the Zealots by way of their rhetorical platform against Roman officials and ultimately Caesar, which may have been transferred to Jesus (cf. Mark 11:27–12:37; 14:60-64). So perhaps Jude’s negative image, the “ungodly,” in Jude 4 has both a verbal and conceptual connection with the Zealot movement.

Exemplars of Rebellion

Within Jude’s vituperative portion of his letter (vv 5–16),¹³ two sets of three historical archetypes have been chosen to shape two of Jude’s major themes: rebellion and greed.¹⁴ On the one hand, Jude wants his readers to recall (ὑπομνησαι δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι) a triad of notorious and often repeated rebellions in Jewish history past (vv 5–7). Each historical exemplar represents

¹² **Internal Evidence for Jude’s Confronting the Zealots:** Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.10.8 § 285 [Marcus]. See also Herbert W. Bateman IV, “‘False Teacher’ or ‘Zealot Insurrection’: Does a Zealot Occasion Provide a Better Interpretation of Jude?” (paper presented at the 66th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA: November 2014), 1-36; idem, “Three Obstacles to Overcome, and Then One” in *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King* by Herbert W. Bateman IV, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 215-49; idem. “The Background to the General Letters” in *Interpreting the General Letters*, edited by John D. Harvey (2013), 57-88.

¹³ **Jude’s Structure:** Although Jude’s ultimate concern is rebellion, which appears at the very heart of his letter, his letter is both advisory (B and B¹) and vituperative (C and C¹).

- A Greeting (vv 1–2)
- B Stated Purpose: Contend for the Faith (vv 3–4)
 - C Past Rebellions and Subsequent Divine Judgment (vv 5–7)
 - C¹ Present Rebellion and Future Divine Judgment (vv 8–16)
- B¹ Stated Strategy: Contend with being Steadfast and Merciful (vv 17–23)
- A¹ Doxology (vv 24–25)

¹⁴ Similarly, Foster has argued that James employs exemplars (Abraham, Rahab, Job, Elijah) to frame several concerns for the messianic community he addresses. Robert J. Foster, *The Significance of Exemplars for the Interpretation of the Letter of James* in *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

three different rebellious *group*: rebellion against God’s leading (wilderness generation’s uprising at Kadesh Barnea), rebellion against God’s universal design (angelic revolt to remain in heaven), and rebellion against God’s societal norms (Gentile urbanite cities who refused to honor marital norms).¹⁵ These three groups were renowned for their rebellion against God, they are featured repeatedly in canonical and non-canonical Jewish texts, and they were not to be venerated. Here in Jude, the exemplars serve to frame his opening argument against rebellion. Jude’s point is simply this: God is no respecter of any group when it comes to rebellion. He has judged collaborated rebellions of the past indiscriminately. Of particular interest to this discussion is the group of rebellious angels.

As it was with the Exodus community and subsequent Gentile urbanite cities, the angelic rebellion began with a few, spread to others, and ended in punishment for the entire group. Yet unlike the Jewish rebellion against God’s leading and the Gentle rebellion against God’s marital norms, it is a sobering story about a segmented group of angels who wanted to dwell in a place other than heaven.¹⁶ Jude’s focus is on God’s judgment of rebellious angels, who disregard God’s ordained placement and leave heaven, only to be locked up in some jail like situation pending a future judgment day (v 6). It is important to emphasize that while *I Enoch* – from which many people believe Jude draws his information — embellishes the sexual passions of the

¹⁵ Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Rebellion and God’s Judgment in Jude,” *BibSac* 170 (October-December 2013), 453-77.

¹⁶ **Advocates for Angels Leaving Heaven:** Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (1551 repr 1948), 435; perhaps Martin Luther, “Genesis 1–5,” translated by George V. Schick, in *Luther’s Works*, vol 1, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 112. Gnostic False Teacher View: Fronmüller, “The Epistle General of Jude” (1867), 18; Grundmann, *Judas-2 Petrusbrief*, 33-35; Sellen, “Die Häretiker der Judasbriefes,” 213; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 60. Christian False Teacher View: Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 120; Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, 265; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 448; Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 68; Senior/Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, 196, 204. The synonymous parallelism of “who did not keep their own domain” and “who abandoned their own place of residence” would seem to best support this option: they are merely two clauses that say the same thing, just with different terms (BDAG 138 7).

angels¹⁷ and many of those same commentators appeal to *I Enoch* as a means to suggest that Jude alludes to sexual promiscuity parallel to that supposedly found in verse 7.¹⁸ Yet Jude says nothing about any angelic sexual misconduct. “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 among Gentile urbanites.¹⁹ One might argue that Jude chooses not to make any sexual connections because Jude’s brother, Jesus, taught celestial beings are sexless (Matt 22:30).²⁰ Yet what Jude underscores explicitly in verse 6 is this simple fact: a group of celestial beings left (rebelled against) their residency in the heavens and as a result God punished them.

So how might this angelic example of rebellion support the idea that Jude is addressing a group or various groups of rebellious Zealots against Rome during the late A.D. 50s and early

¹⁷ **First Enoch:** The most noted Jewish retelling of Genesis 6:1-4 occurs in the non-canonical text known as *I Enoch*. The book *I Enoch* derives its name from the person who was seventh descendent of Adam, Enoch (Gen 5:21-24). For someone living during antediluvian period (before the flood), Enoch is somewhat of an enigma in that he lived only 365 years, he had a special relationship with God (lit. “Enoch walked with God”), and he was spared experiencing physical death (lit, “then he was not more, because God took him”). The mysterious disappearance invited Jewish theological speculation and literary creativity, which in turn evolved into a collection of five books written before Maccabean (prior to 167 BCE) and during the Maccabean period (167-103 BCE) that are falsely ascribed to him known today as *I Enoch* (cf. *Jubilees*, 1Q Genesis Apocryphon)

¹⁸ **Advocates for Sexual Activities of the Angels:** Bigg, *Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 329; Wand, *The General Epistles of St Peter and St Jude*, 202; 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 St. Jacques de St. Jude*, 304; Fuchs/Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre: L’épître de saint Jude*, 164; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 51; Paulsen, *Der Zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, 63; Grundmann, *Judas-2 Petrusbrief*, 33-34; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter*, 242; Horrell, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 120; Watson, “2 Peter, Jude,” 12:488; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter and Jude*, 448-49; Harvey/Towner, *2 Peter & Jude*, 192-93.

¹⁹ **Advocates for No Sexual Allusions:** Kistemakar, *Peter and Jude*, 380; cf. Albertus K. J. Klijn, “Jude 5 to 7” in *The New Testament Age: Essays*, vol. 1, ed. by William C. Weinrich (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 237-44, esp. 241-42; Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 179; Sellin, “Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes,” 217; J. Daryl Charles, “‘Those’ and ‘These’: The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle of Jude,” *JSNT* 38 (1990): 109-124, esp. 114.

²⁰ **Biblical Descriptions of Angels:** Angels are invisible (2 Kings 6:17) spiritual beings (Heb 1:14) who can take on human appearances (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; cf. *I Enoch* 6:1-8:4).

60s? To answer this question, a statement about Roman social order is somewhat necessary. “Rome exercised,” according to Champion, “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.”²¹ Gene Green appears to take into consideration this social phenomenon when he offers this interpretation about the celestial rebellion. He says, “To keep one’s proper station in 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.”²²

Josephus takes great pains to stress to his Roman readers that only a small segment of Judea’s population was responsible for stirring the Jewish people to revolt. It was a group of Zealots who were not behaving in a manner in keeping with Rome’s quasi-paternal authority and thereby rejecting their station within the Roman Empire. Judean believers would have been mindful of people in the past that either revolted or spoke ill against Rome and/or leaders only to face imprisonment equivalent to that of eternal chains (e.g., Aristobulus in Rome, *Ant* 14.7.4 § 123; of Herod Agrippa in Rome, *War* 1.9.6 § 181). They would have been attentive to the fact that the social disorder ravaging Judea was reckoned as *criminal* behavior (= *immoral* behavior, ἀσελγειαν) subject to incarceration.²³ Thus Judean followers of Jesus would have made the

²¹ Craige B. Champion, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece & Rome*, s.v. “Social Organization, Roman.” See also Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 3rd edition, 2003), 48-69.

²² Gene Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 69; cf. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 179.

²³ **Immoral Behavior:** The term “immoral *behavior*” or “wicked deeds” (ἀσελγειαν; cf. 2 Mac 2:26) tends to be translated as: “lasciviousness” (KJV, ASV, RSV, NAB, NRSV, NASB, WEB). Yet Lenski adamantly rejects a lasciviousness interpretation of ἀσελγειαν: “it does not mean ‘lasciviousness’ (our versions, sexual only) but all

connection between the group of angels who instigated the insurrection against God’s sovereign placement in heaven and the group of Zealots whose discontentment of Roman rule over Judea countered God’s sovereign placement of Judea within the confines of the Roman Empire. Like the apostles, who expected believers to honor Roman rule (cf. Rom 13:1–7; 1 Pet 2:13–15), Jude appears to frown upon the Zealot rebellion against Rome and he will return to his disapproval of them in his appeal to Korah who lead a group of priests to rebel against Moses and Aaron (v 11).

Exemplars of Greed

On the other hand, verse 11 opens with a condemnation directed at the current unnamed group of godless people of verses 4, 8–10. Jude says, “they are damned” (οὐαὶ αὐτοῖς). He frames this denunciation of the godless with another triad of exemplars. This time, however, Jude draws attention to a particular behavior currently ravaging Judea that paralleled the bad behavior of individuals from history past: Cain (Κάϊν), Balaam (Βαλαάμ), Korah (Κόρη). These three individuals, like the wilderness generation, the angels, and Gentile urbanites, are three notoriously famous and negatively portrayed individuals in Hebrew Scriptures. They also are remembered and their acts embellished in later non-canonical Jewish tradition as figures not to

kinds of ‘excess’” (*The Interpretation of The Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*, 614). “Debauchery” (Wis 14:26; Mark 7:22 [NET]) is yet another possible rendering because the term simply means a lack of self-constraint involving conduct that violates socially acceptable behavior, *self-abandonment* and antinomian behavior. Josephus employs the term 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 woman who falls 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 an array of wicked activities. Contextually, Jude attributes various deeds of misconduct to the godless. They reject authority (vv 8, 11), they slander people and angelic beings (vv 8, 10, 16), they grumble (v 16), they find fault with others (vv 16, 19), they are greedy (v 11), and ultimately they are self-seekers (vv 11, 16). Translations like “a license for evil” (NET), “wicked deeds” or “immoral *behavior*” appear to be the best three renderings. An argument might be made that the “godless” are Zealots with anti-Roman attitudes who were generating an antinomian atmosphere throughout Judea.

be venerated.²⁴ Although Jude’s literary arrangement differs from Hebrew Scriptures, his rearrangement presents a natural progression of thought, namely a life style, an error, and a revolt traceable in the three prepositional phrases.²⁵

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

Yet how might these three exemplars support the suggestion that Jude is addressing current happenings of the Zealot movement in Judea during the late A.D. 50s and early 60s?

Jude’s insertion of “greed” (μισθός) draws attention not only to a marked disposition of these three men in Jewish literature but also to the state of affairs in Judea at the time of his writing. First Josephus recalls how greed was an engrained disposition among Roman governors, particularly Albinus (A.D. 63-64)²⁶ and Florus (A.D. 64-66)²⁷ both of whom were ruling when Jude

²⁴ For a complete discussion of these three exemplars in non-biblical literature, see Bateman, *Jude*, 359-96.

²⁵ *The way* of Cain, *the error* of Balaam, and *the destruction* of Korah are a figure of speech known as antimereia whereby one part of speech is used instead of another. Here in Jude 11 dative nouns are employed rather than verbs. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 502.

²⁶ **Roman Governor Albinus:** Albinus was incorrigible when it came to money. He plundered monies, accepted bribes, and practiced extortion. He triangulated one Judean faction against another for money and in the end escalated the Judean - Roman animosity. When Nero recalled Albanus to Rome, Albanus, before leaving Judea, executed major criminals and released the remaining prisoners — many of whom were revolutionaries. Although all prisons were empty, the task of Gessius Florus was made more difficult. For more information on Roman Governor Albinus, see Josephus *War* 2.14.1 §§ 272-73; 4.5.3 §§ 300-09; *Antiquities* 20.9.1-5 §§ 197-215. For a narrative presentation about Albinus, see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:468-70; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 353-55.

²⁷ **Roman Governor Florus:** Gessius Florus was worse than Albanus. His plundering escalated from robbing individuals to plundering entire villages, towns, and cities. The Judean revolt broke out two years into Florus’ governorship triggered by his attempt to relieve Jerusalem’s temple of its treasury. For more information on Roman Governor Florus, see Josephus *War* 2.14.2 §§ 277; *Antiquities* 20.11.1 §§ 252-53. For a narrative presentation about Florus, see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:470, 485; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 353-58.

may have written his letter (*circa* A.D. 62-66). Second Josephus underscores how greed was notorious among the Jewish high priests (e.g., the high priestly families of Ananus, Boethus, and Phiabi).²⁸ This moral weakness was particularly true of Ananias (priesthood A.D. 48-59). After the end of his priesthood and throughout the early 60s, Ananias sustained an active relationship with Ananus, who was from one of the controlling priestly families. He also maintained an influence over the people, the high priest Ishmael, and subsequent high priests as well as the Roman procurator Albinus because of money. Ananias was greedy to an extreme. This wealthy priest was infamously known for his corruption within the temple precincts.²⁹ Finally, Josephus draws attention to the Zealots, particularly Eleazar son of Simon who would eventually lead the lower class of priests against Jerusalem’s wealthy class of priests.³⁰ “It hardly needs to be

²⁸ **High Priestly Families:** Needless to say, the position of high priest provided significant economic advantages. For instance, Ananus son of Seth was the first appointed high priest by a governor of Syria (Quirinius in AD 6) and first to be removed by a Roman governor over Judaea and Samaria (Gratus in AD 15). He was also the first family member to hold the high priesthood. Five sons (Eleazar, AD 16–17; Jonathan, AD 37; Theophilus, AD 37–41; Matthias, AD 42–43; and Ananus, AD 62) also followed him into the high priesthood, as well as his son-in-law Caiaphas (AD 18–36). Their family corruption was later featured in a series of woes pronounced on priests who took by force what did not belong to them (*Tosefta Menahot* 2.1467–68). For a narrative presentation about the high priest from the high priestly family of Ananus (Ananus, son of Ananus, A.D. 62) and Jesus, son of Damascus, both who served during the governorship of Albinus, see James VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004), 476-83. For a narrative presentation about the high priest from the high priestly family of Boethus (Jesus, son of Gamaliel, A.D. 63-64), Matthias, son of Theophilus (A.D. 64-66), and last high priest Phannias, son of Samuel, all who served during the governorship of Florus, see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 483-90.

²⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.205–207. See VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas*, 458–59. Elsewhere, Josephus explains how it was that priests had a monopoly over the temple. In his response to Apion’s allegation that Antiochus Epiphanes was found in the inner part of the temple, reclining at a table, eating a feast fit for a king, Josephus engages Apion’s anti-Jewish slander. Josephus sets out to describe the temple and its restrictions, the daily duties of the priests, the objects in the temple (105), and the priestly temple responsibilities (107–108). See Richard Bauckham, “Josephus’ Account of the Temple in *Contra Apionem* 2.102–109,” in *Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and John R. Levison, AGJU 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 327-47. For a complete list of Second Temple priests as they are mentioned in Josephus, a visual comparison of the tabernacle and temple, and another listing of Josephus texts on the temple objects in comparison with the Old Testament texts and the book of Hebrews, see Bateman, *Charts on the Book of Hebrews*, 78–91.

³⁰ **The Have-Nots against the Haves:** Naturally, Ananias generated Zealot hostilities from other priests. Josephus tells of the *Sicarii*’s kidnapping of Ananias’ son Eleazar (not to be confused with Eleazar son of Jairus). Albinus eventually negotiated a prison exchange: ten captured *Sicarii* for Eleazar. The success of the Zealots’ kidnappings and subsequent negotiations led to other kidnappings. Josephus, *J.W.* 2.6, 9. See VanderKam, *From Joshua to*

stressed that, the Zealots displayed a certain tendency to disorder,” which says Hengel, “was caused . . . by the increase within the movement, as its power extended and the economic distress grew, of those who were motivated not by religion but, above all, by a desire for booty.”

Josephus recalls the greed of the Zealots in this manner:

For in those days the *Sicarii* clubbed together against those who consented to submit to Rome and in every way treated them as enemies, plundering their property, rounding up their cattle, and setting fire to their habitations (cf. *War* 4.2.2 §§ 16); protesting that such persons were no other than aliens, who so ignobly sacrificed the hard-won liberty of the Jews and admitted their preference for the Roman yoke. Yet, after all, this was but a pretext, put forward by them as a cloak for their cruelty and *greed* (sic) as was made plain by their actions. For the people did join with them in the revolt and take their part in the war with Rome, only, however, to suffer at their hands still worse atrocities . . .³¹

According to Hengel, Josephus shared the Roman view that “anyone who rebelled against Roman rule was regarded as a lawless criminal” and that he “saw their actions as no more than raids made by robbers in search of booty.”³² Consequently, greed was problematic throughout Judea amongst the Roman and Jewish leadership. But it was greed that drove the godless Zealots in their *Cain-like* self-centeredness that led to rebellion against Rome (Josephus *Ant* 1.2.1 § 53).

Caiaphas, 459–60; Hengel, *Zealots*, 353–55. Similarly, Simon, son of Giora eventually rose to a place of influence prior to the outbreak of the Judean war in the Judean hill country where he issued a royal-like proclamation of freedom for slaves and rewards for the free. He was a leader of the “have-nots” who inhabited the country and eventually secured caves northeast of Jerusalem to store his booty and grain supplies acquired by raids on the rich (see the quote above from Josephus *War*). For more information, see **Simon, son of Giora**: Josephus, *War* 2.19.2 § 521; 4.6.1 § 353; 4.9.4 § 508-12; Taitus, *History* 5.9. Simon, son of Giora may have been responsible for destroying the water pipe that supplied the city of Jerusalem water and where the Zealots with means had taken up their war efforts against Rome (Josephus *War* 6.3.2-4 §§ 193-213; LamentRab 4.4.7; Josephus *War* 2.9.4 § 175; *Ant* 18.3.2 § 60). See Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989) 50, 63, 176, 254, 292, 297, 336, 372-73.

³¹ Josephus, *War* 7.8.1 §§ 254-58 (Thackeray). Rome’s legal view of the Zealots or Judean revolutionaries, however, was that they were robbers (λησται), another term frequently employed by Josephus in his description of the Zealots. Josephus was, according to Hengel, “fully aware of the difference between a band of robbers and a regular army (cf. *War* 4.7.2 § 408), but he shared completely the Roman legal view, according to which anyone who rebelled against Roman rule was regarded as a lawless criminal, whether an individual robber or a whole army of insurgents.” Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 44, cf. 41-46. In his description of the Judean war against Rome, Josephus contends “When wars are set afoot that are bound to rage beyond control, and when friends are done away with who might have alleviated the suffering, when raids are made by great hordes of *robbers* (sic, ληστηριων) and men of the highest standing are assassinated, it is supposed to be the common welfare that is upheld, but the truth is that in such cases the motive is private gain” (Feldman; *Ant* 18.1.1 §§7–8).

³² Hengel, *The Zealots*, 44; or Hengel’s complete discussion, see 24-46.

Explicitly stated, greed drove their *Balaam-like* promotion of foolish choices that led to rebellion against Rome (Philo Moses 1.266–68; cp. Josephus *Ant* 4.6.5 § 118). Implicitly understood, greed drove their *Korah-like* confrontation that led to rebellion against Rome and their imminent death. Korah’s rebellion plays a driving thematic literary role in Josephus. In *Antiquities*, “the high priesthood,” according to Mason, “is a core concern in Josephus’s *magnum opus* as the guarantor of the aristocratic constitution established by Moses (*Ant* 1.5, 10, 13,15; 4.45, 184, etc.; 20.229, 251, 261; cf. *Ag. Ap.* 2.287—reflection on *Antiquities*).”³³ The power struggle or the “strife” (στράσις) that existed within Judea’s upper priesthood during the 60s actuality began with Korah soon after God established the high priesthood position (*Ant* 4.2.1–4.3.4 §§ 12–59),³⁴ a power struggle that surfaces as a predominant theme throughout *Antiquities* yet climaxes with the various segmented groups of Zealots.³⁵ Thus Jude’s reason (ὄτι) for identifying the Zealots demise was due to their greedy behavior that was wreaking havoc throughout the land and similar to individuals from the past.

³³ Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins*, 124. For the complete retelling of the Korah-Moses event in Numbers 16:1-35, see Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.2.1 – 4.3.4 §§ 11-58.

³⁴ **Descriptive Terms in Josephus:** Greek terms like “strife” (στράσις) and “tyrant” (τυράννος) occur frequently in Josephus. Whereas the Greek noun “strife” (στράσις) occurs 151 times, the noun “tyrant” (τυράννος) also has a prominent place in his writings, occurring 61 times. Tyrants, one the one hand, come in the form of Gentile leaders like Cassius (*Ant.* 14.12.1 § 297; 19.2.2 § 182), Jewish kings like Jeroboam (*Ant.* 8.9.1 §§ 243-45), Baasha (*Ant.* 8.12.3 § 299), Ahab (*Ant* 9.1.1 § 1), Pekah (*Ant* 9.11.1 § 234), Rehoboam (*Ant* 8.10.2 §§ 251,256), Ahaz (*Ant* 9.12.1 § 243), Manassah (*Ant* 10.3.1 § 37), and Judean rebels (*Ant.* 20.11.3 §§ 10-11, 27; *War* 1.10-11 § 27). On the other hand, according to Mason (and others), the motif of “strife” (στράσις) “constitutes the principal thesis of *War*, announced in the prologue (1.9-10; cf. 1.25, 27, 31, 67, 88, 142; 2.418, 419, 434, etc): Jerusalem owed its destruction to domestic strife (στράσις οἰκεία) led by those seeking power for themselves (τυράννοι). The theme assumes a prominent place also in *Antiquities-Life* (e.g. *Ant.* 1.117, 164; 4.12-13, 140; 13.291, 299; 18.8; *Life* 17, 134).” Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins*, 123.

³⁵ Mason identifies these continual struggles by way of “the meddling of Abiathar, who was removed in favor of Zadok (*Ant.* 8.9–10), with the notorious trio Onias, Jason, and Menelaus (*Ant.* 12.154–236), then with Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II (*Ant.* 14.432). Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins*, 125. For a discussion of the Second Temple priesthood see VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas* or Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Charts on the Book of Hebrews* in Kregel Charts of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 84-91.

Positive Images or Exemplars

While attention has been given to negative images and exemplars, Jude appeals to positive exemplars as well. Two worth noting are the Michael the archangel and Enoch. While Michael is an exemplar that serves to promote restraint in speaking, Enoch is an exemplar that predicted a forthcoming judgment of all ungodliness.

Exemplar of Speech

Jude’s discussion about the godless (οὔτοι; cf. v 4) in verses 8–10 is a portrayal of people who are religiously contaminated (σάρκα μὲν μαιίνουσιν) rebels (κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσιν), who lack restraint, and who engage in reckless and unreasoned slander (vv 8–10). Yet bracketed between the audacious defamation of angels (δόξας βλασφημοῦσιν; v 8c) and their unlimited destructive criticism revealing their stupidity (οὐκ οὔδασιν βλασφημοῦσιν; v 10a),³⁶ Jude inserts a positive exemplar, the archangel Michael.³⁷ While arguing (διακρινόμενος) with the devil, Michael disputes (διελέγετο) *aggressively* over the corpse of Moses.³⁸ He “does not act rashly”

³⁶ Chaine rightly captures Jude’s statement when he avers, “Great is their stupidity” (*Grande est leur stupidité*). Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques*, 312. The various forms of verbal spinning are a moral issue for Jude as it was for his brother, James (cf. 3:5–12; 4:11–12). See Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, 439; Fuchs/Reymond, *La deuxième de Saint Pierre, L’Épître de Saint Jude*, 170; Huther, *The General Epistles James, Peter, John, and Jude*, 685.

³⁷ **Michael, the Archangel:** Michael is one of seven archangels in *I Enoch* 20. The most frequently named archangels during the Second Temple period are Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel (Dan 9:21; 10:13; Tobit 12:15; 1 Enoch 9:1; 21:10; 4 Ezra 4:1; 1QM 9:15-16). According to the various portraits of Michael in Jewish literature, the archangel has very few limitations. He intercedes for people (*I Enoch* 9:4-11), he battles other celestial beings (1QM 9.12b-16; cp. Dan 10:13, 21), he protects Israel (Dan 12:1), he participates in the future battle between the sons of darkness and the sons of light, he subdues God’s archrival, Belial (= Satan: 1QM 9.12b-16; 17.5b-8), and he arrests, incarcerates, and executes God’s eschatological judgment (*I Enoch* 10:11-14; 54:6). Jewish literature, then, appears to present Michael as one who has very few limitations.

³⁸ “Disputed *aggressively*” (διελέγετο) is very close in meaning to the temporal participle “while arguing” (διακρινόμενος). So some translations render διελέγετο and διακρινόμενος as though the two words were a hendiadys (or as an attendant circumstantial participle), others do not. On the one hand, NIV translates διακρινόμενος and διελέγετο as “when he was disputing” (cf. NLT^{SE}). On the other hand, other translations render διακρινόμενος with a temporal force: “when he disputed” (NAB⁹⁵, CNT) or “when . . . contending” (KJV, ASV, ESV, ESVS, WEB; cf.

(οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν)³⁹ but (ἀλλά) refrains from ushering a “verbally abusive judgment” (κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας) *against Satan*.⁴⁰ While exerting an obvious clash of convictions, Michael is presented as a composed courtroom defense attorney who, though involved in an on-going dispute with the prosecution (= the devil), manages to dispute his case aggressively and yet exercise self-control.⁴¹ His self-control is revealed in Michael’s resolve: “May the Lord rebuke you” (ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος).⁴² “Michael’s remark,” says Neyrey, “serves to confirm the

NRSV) separate from the verb διελέγετο: “and argued” (NASB⁹⁵), “and disputed” (NRSV, CNT; cf. KJV, ASV, ESVS), “and debating” (NET), “and arguing” (WEB).

³⁹ **Act Rashly:** Of the fifteen New Testament occurrences of *τολμάω* translations tend to translate the verb as “I dare.” Yet the verb *τολμάω* can also mean “I act rashly” and in fact that may be a better rendering here in Jude because the term often times reflects the actions or reactions of people in the midst of deeply felt convictions about a given life situation. In the LXX, *τολμάω* reflects the Persian noble’s assertion that other women will follow Vasti’s example and “act rashly” (*τολμήσουσιν*) against their husbands (Esther 1:18). In Josephus, *τολμάω* reflects Hagar’s audacious (*ἐξυβρίζειν*) approach of Sarah as well as Hagar’s rash assumption (*ἐτόλμησε*) that her son would be the one of promise (*Ant* 1.10.4 §188). It also identifies Laban’s warning in a dream from God’s (ὁ θεὸς ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ) to approach Jacob in a peaceable manner and not “by anger act rashly” (ὕπὸ θυμοῦ *τολμᾶν*) against him (*Ant* 1.19.10 § 313). Furthermore it recalls the shepherd named Athrongeus who “acted rashly” (*ἐτόλμησεν*) to set himself up as a king of Judea (*War* 2.4.3 § 60).

⁴⁰ **Blasphemy:** In Josephus, the verb *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 Agrippa (*War* 2.406, 637) and against 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” (*πλήρησι βλασφημιῶν καὶ ψευσμάτων*; (*Life* 47.245; cf. 50.260). Similarly, Philo uses the verb to speak of Alexandrians who delight in “calumny and evil-speaking” (*διαβολαίς 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, *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 Peter 2:10, 12), or a combination of the above (Mark 3:28). Thus it seems *βλασφημέω* has the general sense of verbally defaming or insulting another person, an angelic being, or God.

⁴¹ **Advocates for a Heavenly Court Room:** The clause “he did not act rashly to bring a judgment” (*ἐτόλμησεν κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν*) portrays a courtroom setting. “he did not act rashly to bring” (*ἐτόλμησεν ... ἐπενεγκεῖν*) speaks of boldness in bringing a legal charge to a Gentile court system (1 Cor 6:1). “Judgment” (*κρίσιν*) typically in Second Temple texts like *1 Enoch*, *κρίσιν* refers to eschatological judgment that God executes (1:7, 9; cf. *Pss Sol* 15:12; *TLevi* 3:3; *TAbramham* A 13:7). In fact, the major theme of *1 Enoch*, according to Nickelsburg “is the coming judgment in which God will adjudicate the injustices that characterize life as the authors and their readers experience it.” Jude has already expressed that angels are held in darkness until God’s future judgment (*εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας*; cf. 1 Enoch 10:5-7; *Jubilees* 10:7). George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1* in *Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 7; Vögtle, *Judasbrief, 2 Petrusbrief*, 61; Fuchs/Reymond, *La deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, L’ Épître de Saint Jude*, 168; Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter*, 349).

⁴² **Jude’s Source:** On the one hand, the statement occurs in Zechariah 3:2 “And the *angel of the Lord* said to Satan, ‘May the Lord rebuke you’” (וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה אֶל הַיְהוָה וְיִבְרַחְךָ יְהוָה), which is rendered in the LXX as “and the *angel of the*

traditional roles which Jude perceives as threatened, either those of the Lord, the angels, or Jude himself.”⁴³ So in the midst of his arguing with the devil in a aggressive manner, Michael manages to control himself in the heavenly courtroom as he disputes with the devil, and he allows God to issue the verdict (cf. James 4:12).⁴⁴ Michael does not overstep his authority as archangel. He knows and he remains within the cosmic boundaries established by God (cf. v 6) and exercises self-control in the midst of what is perhaps a heated legal debate. Michael’s restraint is an explicit contrast (δέ) to those who verbally defame angels and verbally offer destructive criticism about things they do not know or understand. Consequently, Jude’s concern about blasphemous speech is contrasted with a positive exemplar, Michael.⁴⁵

Yet how might these negative images of religious defilement, rebellion, and the unrestrained speech framed around the positive exemplar, Michael, support the idea that Jude is addressing current happenings of the Zealot movement during the late A.D. 50s and early 60s? On the one hand, Josephus features the Zealots as scoffers the prophets. He describes their attitude as verbally hostile to the Law and defilers of the temple (*War* 4.3.10 § 180-92; 6.2.1 §

Lord said to the devil, ‘May the Lord rebuke you, devil’” (καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς τὸν διάβολον Ἐπιτιμήσαι κύριος ἐν σοί, διάβולה). Both the Hebrew Scriptures and the LXX present “angel of the Lord” in verse 1 and “Lord” in verse 2 in such a way as to be identified as one and the same person. On the other hand, an abridged version of the quotation occurs in Cramer’s *Catena*. It too echoes Zechariah 3:2. Thus, Green is correct, “Jude is embedded in a tapestry of tradition that weaves in Zech. 3:1–2 as well.” Gene Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 81; cf. Mayor, *The Epistles of Jude and II Peter*, 36; Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 206.

⁴³ Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 67.

⁴⁴ Although some may suggest that “Lord” refers to Jesus, the interpretation depends on the assumption that the text critical issue surrounding “Lord” (κύριος) in verse 5 refers to Jesus. However, it was determined that “Lord” (κύριος) in verse 5 referred to God the Father and thereby here in verse 9, God the Father will pronounce judgment on Satan (Zech 3:2; cf. Rev 20:10).

⁴⁵ **Theme of Speech:** Structurally, verses 8–10 have seven independent and three dependent clauses all of which are linked by way of a μὲν ... δέ . . . δέ construction. The significant lexical feature throughout these verses is the mention of βλασφημιέω in verses 8 and 10 as well as βλασφημίας in verse 9 because they serve to link these verses together to form a single unit of thought that underscore Jude’s concern about speech.

99-102).⁴⁶ “Every human ordinance was trampled under foot,” according to Josephus, “every dictate of religion ridiculed by these men, who scoffed at the oracles of the prophets as impostor’s fables” (*War* 4.6.3 §385).

On the other hand, Josephus reveals the rash behavior of the Zealots. Their lack of self-control (Josephus *War* 4.6.3 §§ 385–88) as well as their irrational aggression against a political system (pagan Gentile rule) and its policies (taxes) (Josephus *War* 5.9.3–4 §§ 362–419; *Life* 1.4 §§ 17–20) stirred an entire Jewish nation to revolt against Rome. He portrays the Zealots as a group of people who committed “the works of war and tyranny, by acting rashly” (πολέμου καὶ τυραννίδος ἔργα τολμῶντας; *War* 4.5.5 § 347). As Josephus attempts to explain to the Greco-Roman world why the Judean revolt occurred, Mason points out that even Balaam’s advice that incited foolish acts of passion had direct bearing on the Jewish rebellion: “It was youthful passion that led the young Israelites to cohabit with the Midianite women, forcing an early crisis in Judean identity” (*Ant* 4.5.7-10 §§ 131-44).⁴⁷ So according to Josephus, a similar rash (and we might add foolish) youthful passion or infatuation was the catalyst for the Judean revolt against Rome. Some thirty years after the event, however, Josephus boasts of his ability to control his own rashness (*Life* 15 § 80-83) and how he tried to warn rash Jewish revolutionaries like Eleazar that it was ill advised to think they could defeat Rome (cf. *War* 3.5.8 § 108; *Life* 4-5 § 17-23).⁴⁸ It seems as though Jude was endeavoring to do the same.

⁴⁶ For a more complete discussion about the Zealot’s misguided zeal for the Law that in reality defiled both the law and the temple, see Hengel, *The Zealots* (1989), 183-86.

⁴⁷ Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins*, 127. *Pseudo-Philo* 18:1–7 serves as a means to support the fact that a similar concept circulated prior to the writing of Josephus. *Pseudo-Philo* may have been composed in Judea around the time the temple was destroyed. One of the theological concerns evident in *Pseudo-Philo* is Jewish marital relation with Gentiles, which the author opposes throughout the work (9:1, 5; 21:1; 30:1; 43:5; 44:7). See Harrington, “Pseudo-Philo,” *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:299-300.

⁴⁸ **Josephus’ Description about Rash Behavior:** Realizing that Josephus’ book entitled *Life* combats allegations against him and his involvement in the war effort against Rome (*Life* 65 §§ 336–367), his work naturally has

So Jude, while focusing on the stupidity of the godless Zealots, people who rail indiscriminately against everything, stands in sharp contrast Michael. God will judge the current affairs of Judea. “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.”⁴⁹

Exemplar of Judgment

Time will not allow me to address Enoch as an exemplar of judgment. So allow me to conclude.

Conclusion

While it is true that Jude is silent and those about whom he is writing are unnamed, commentators are not. Jude does not explicitly name the Zealots, nor are his anonymous opponents identified as false teachers. The suggestion that Jude is combating some sort of false teaching is equally challenging. Yet the numerous commentators who suggest that Jude, the blood brother of James, wrote to Judean believers during the late 50s early 60s, opens a new possibility, that Jude’s use of images and exemplars actually mirror the group of Zealots who

historical limitations. In fact, there are several contradictions between what Josephus says in *Life* and what he says in *War*. For instance, in *Life* he presents himself as appealing with Eleazar as to the folly of the war, retreating to the inner temple, and not coming out until Menahem was murdered (17–21 § 29), while in *War* the temple precinct to which Josephus retreated was under the control of Eleazar, and Menahem controlled Antonio’s fortress (2.17.5-9 §§ 422-49). In all honesty, all the works written by Josephus have, according to Mason, “limitations as *mirrors of episodes* in Judean history,” and concludes, “The value of his narratives may lie less in what he writes about than in what he actually says: his language, its implicit assumptions, and its likely effect.” Mason, “Josephus as Authority for First-Century Judea,” 42, 43 (emphasis mine). Consequently, Josephus does not lose value as a narrative about Judea during the mid 60s as long as we recognize that Josephus is not writing as an authority of Jewish history. He retells Jewish history with a literary purpose, which of course colors Jewish history as Josephus presents it in his narratives. Nevertheless, Josephus still tells us something about the events of the Judean war through his language, assumptions, and their effect, which in turn help interpret the Judean societal struggles addressed by Jude.

⁴⁹ Gene Green, *Jude & 2 Peter* (2008), 85.

were wreaking havoc throughout Judea by stirring Judeans to rebel against Rome. Naturally, Josephus becomes an important source for interpreting Jude because his writings are about the Jewish revolt. So now Jude’s negative image “ungodly” is seen as having verbal and conceptual parallels with the Zealot manifesto. The appeal to the angelic rebellion against God’s sovereign placement in heaven parallels and draws attention to the social disorder propagated against Rome due to their discontentment as members of the Roman Empire where God had sovereign placed them. The Zealot greed as compared with the negative exemplars of Cain, Balaam, and Korah matches the current situation of Jude’s Judea. And the stellar example of Michael to reserve verbal judgment would have stood out amidst the audacious defamation of angels and their unlimited destructive criticism revealing their stupidity to think they could defeat Rome. Consequently, it would seem that Jude’s letter confronts an historically turbulent, intrusive, and life threatening Zealot seduction for religious and political freedom just prior to the total outbreak of war with Rome in A.D. 66. As a result, Jude frames the heart of his letter (vv 5–7) with a select number of historical images and exemplars in order to dissuade and encourage Judean followers of Jesus to withstand coercion, pressure, and perhaps even threats to join the Zealot revolt.