

THE MINORITY REPORT: A DIFFERENT ASSESSMENT FOR INTERPRETING JUDE, PART 2

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ABSTRACT

Part 1 surfaced problems with the majority report for the epistle of Jude—the common assumption that Jude was concerned with false teaching, whether Gnostic or antinomian, and unrestrained sexuality. Part 2 suggests instead that Jude wrote in response to a Zealot uprising against Rome shortly after the death of James in AD 62. Concerns shared between Jude and Josephus indicate that the “godless” in Jude are Zealot rebels who were seducing the church away from Jesus, while “salvation” refers to physical deliverance or preservation.

PART 1 LOOKED AT THE MAJORITY REPORT for the epistle of Jude, involving the common assumption that Jude was concerned with false teaching, whether Gnostic or antinomian, and unrestrained sexuality. This survey showed that the majority report often contradicts itself and that nothing in the letter unequivocally points to these issues. Part 2 therefore examines the minority report—the possibility that Jude was responding to a Zealot-led rebellion in Judea—and suggests that this historical occasion better accounts for the evidence in the epistle.¹

THE MINORITY REPORT: ZEALOT-LED REBELLION

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¹ For a full exegesis of Jude based on the view taken in this article, see Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Jude*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017).

The minority report often agrees with the majority report. For instance, evidence presented within the minority report concurs with at least six Christian false-teacher commentators who have determined that (1) James's brother Jude wrote the letter (2) to Judean believers (3) during the mid-60s.² Yet the minority report suggests that Jude's distress (vv. 3–4) is over a zealot-led rebellion that was challenging the early church throughout all of Judea.³ This conclusion is based on what was happening in Judea during the mid-60s when Jude was alive and writing his letter.

Although Witherington has a wider range for dating Jude (late 50s and 60s), his resolve is based on “the wave of rising tension and rebellion leading to the Jewish war in the 60s.”⁴ Furthermore, Weiss hypothesizes that “Jude would not have taken up the pen before the death of his renowned brother” and that the year 62 should be “regarded as the *terminus a quo* for the composition of the Epistle.”⁵ Weiss's theory seems reasonable because while

² Paton J. Gloag, *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1887), 360–65; S. D. F. Salmond, *Jude*, Pulpit Commentary (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1907), iv; Gary Holloway, *James and Jude*, College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), 137; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 404–9; William F. Brosend II, *James and Jude*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3; John Painter and David A. deSilva, *James and Jude*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 179–83, 186.

³ With great tenacity, Zealots prompted, promoted, and pursued Judeans to join in the violent rebellion against Rome. Battles with Rome erupted in Galilee (e.g., Sepphoris, Jotapata, Gamala), in Samaria (e.g., Mount Gerizim, Shechem), along the coastal plains (e.g., Joppa, Jamnia, Azotus), in Perea (e.g., Bethennabris, Abila, Juias, Besimoth), in Judah (e.g., Jericho, Hebron, Jerusalem) and eventually at Masada. The revolt was cross-generational and cross-gender as evidenced in the suicides at Gamala and Masada. See Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 157; Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.*, trans. David Smith (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 330–76; L. I. Levine, “Jewish War,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:839–45.

⁴ Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 564.

⁵ Bernhard Weiss, *A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. A. J. K. Davidson, vol. 2 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1889), 124. Mayor also appeals to Jude's writing after the death of James, but for Mayor Jude writes much later (AD 70s–80s) to the same eastern Diaspora Jews as James had previously in AD 45. Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1907; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), cxlvii–cxlviii. Yet Robinson offers a rather weak contention that if Jude were written after the death of James, then Jude would have added an epithet to the name of James, like “blessed” (μακάροϛ) or “good” (ἀγαθός). John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*

James was alive, he was the spokesperson and authority figure for Judean Jewish Christian believers (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal 2:9, 12; 1 Cor 15:7). If difficulties arose within the Judean Jewish Christian community, James would have dealt with them.

Finally, Josephus recalls how the high priest Ananius (ca. AD 62) had James stoned to death.⁶ Naturally, the death of James would have created a leadership void for the Judean churches. Jude's letter may have been a means of filling that void (v. 3).⁷ Thus on the one hand, the death of James (ca. AD 62) provides the *terminus a quo* for dating Jude. On the other hand, the *terminus ad quem* would be the Judean war with Rome, a war that began in AD 66, since Eusebius notes that the Jewish believers fled to Pella due to the Zealot threat and conflicting messianic beliefs.⁸

Consequently, the minority report contends that Jude was written around the rising tension and rebellion of the Zealots leading up to the Jewish war against Rome in AD 66. Furthermore, the minority report presumes that Jude wrote his letter shortly after James's death in AD 62 and just prior to the total outbreak of the Judean war with Rome in AD 66. So whenever the "godless" (vv. 4, 15) and "these people" (vv. 8, 12, 16, 19) appear in Jude, Jude is speaking against those who have joined the Zealot-led rebellion just before the outbreak of war in AD 66. Yet what evidence does the minority report offer to validate this perspective?

(Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 197.

⁶ *Ant.* 20.9.1 §§200–204. Admittedly, no one knows exactly when James died or the circumstances surrounding his death. Eusebius tells of James being thrown from a pinnacle of the temple, stoned, then clubbed to death prior to the temple's destruction in AD 70 (*Hist.* 2.23.4–25). See James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 476–82; Herbert W. Bateman, "High Priests of the Herodian Period (37 B.C.E.–70 C.E.)," in *Charts on the Book of Hebrews*, Kregel Charts of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 89–91.

⁷ Along with the leadership vacuum, hostility against Rome and pressure to join the Zealot revolt were mounting. Jude was eager to recall "our common deliverances" and "our shared safety" (τῆς κοινῆς ἡμῶν σωτηρίας) that the Jewish Christian community had experienced during the early beginnings of the church (v. 3a). Jude would have been an eyewitness to and even experienced the divine deliverances recorded in Acts (4:1–3, 19–23; 9:1–28; 12:1–17 [cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 19.8.2 §§343–52]; 21:17–19 [cf. 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 9:1–5, 12–15]). Who was better qualified than Jude to write a letter putting things into a positive perspective?

⁸ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5. Cf. Mark 13:14–18; Luke 21:20–24; Acts 11:28. "It is extremely unlikely that Jewish Christians could have participated in the uprising against Rome," says Hengel, and adds that the two eschatological movements (Christianity and Zealotism) were "firmly opposed to each other" (Hengel, *The Zealots*, 301).

JUDE'S PROFILE OF THE GODLESS

Like the Christian false-teacher report, the minority report derives its profile about the godless from the text of Jude and from Jewish literature of the Second Temple period (e.g., 1 Enoch, Assumption of Moses). What differs is the amount of interaction with the Jewish historian Josephus, because both Josephus and Jude lived through the Jewish uprising against Rome. While Jude wrote during the Judean revolt, Josephus wrote in retrospect. Consequently, they share terminology, echo similar concerns, and draw attention to some of the same Old Testament figures to describe those promoting and participating in the Zealot movement against Rome.

First, they share similar terminology. While the majority report provides evidence to suggest that “our common salvation” (τῆς κοινῆς ἡμῶν σωτηρίας) reflects a spiritual salvation,⁹ others who contribute to the Christian false-teacher report provide evidence for a different understanding. Gene Green offers a wide range of evidence that suggests “our common salvation” (τῆς κοινῆς ἡμῶν σωτηρίας) references a “struggle against national enemies.” He explains, “Concerns for the ‘common safety’ or ‘security’ of a people were paramount (similar to the contemporary idea of ‘national security’).”¹⁰ The minority report concurs with Green’s assessment

⁹ From within the Gnostic false-teacher report: “Common salvation,” avers Kelly, means “(presumably) to prepare a general and positive presentation of the faith for their benefit.” J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, Thornapple Commentaries (1969; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 243–44. See also Hans Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1951), 39; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968; repr., 1983), 158–59; Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre, L'épître de saint Jude*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1980), 157. From within the Christian false-teacher report: Moo suggests the same idea when he says, “We are to imagine Jude preparing to write generally and joyfully about the salvation that he and his readers share together when he learns about a new and serious threat to his readers’ faith: the false teachers” (Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 228). See also Simon J. Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 370; D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expositional Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1989), 216; Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 236; Donald Senior and Daniel J. Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 189; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 434–35; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 42.

¹⁰ Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 52–54. Philo, a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher of Alexandria (ca. AD 38), used the term to speak of those “who die in defense of the common safety” (κοινῆς σωτηρίας) (*Agriculture* 34 §156). The Greek

and reinforces it with similar usage found in the writings of Josephus. When Josephus employs the words “common” (κοινός) and “salvation” (σωτηρία) as Jude does in verse 3, his literary context always conveys some sort of physical welfare or deliverance of the Jewish community.¹¹ In Jude’s context, like that of Josephus, there is a concern for Judea’s national safety but ultimately for the safety of the Judean church. Thus the noun σωτηρία refers to physical “survival,” “deliverance,” or “preservation” from pressing circumstances, similar to Jude’s use of σωτηρία in verse 5 (cf. Acts 27:34; Phil 1:19; Heb 11:7; 2 Macc 3:32),¹² and therefore is not a reference to one’s salvation as contrasted with false teaching.

Another example of shared terminology with Josephus evident in the minority report is Jude’s use of “godless” (ἄσεβεις; vv. 4, 15), which is synonymous with “these people” in Jude (vv. 8, 12, 16, 19). “Godless” (ἄσεβεις) appears in Josephus to describe the leaders of the Zealot rebellion.¹³ In verse 4, Jude describes the godless as people who deny Jesus as “the only Master and Lord” (τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον). That description corresponds with a Zealot declaration: “God is to be their only Ruler and Lord” (μόνον δεσπότην καὶ

military leader and author Xenophon, who courageously led his men back to Greece after having marched into the heart of the Persian Empire (ca. 401 BC), at one time declared, “The safety (σωτηρίας) of all is the need of all” (*Anabasis* 3.2.32). Finally, Isocrates, in his view of a public leader in the act of war, stated, “Nevertheless I should be ashamed if I showed that I am more concerned about my own reputation than about the public safety” (*De pace* 39). Although without much comment, deSilva renders σωτηρίας as “deliverance.” Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 192.

¹¹ Josephus alludes to the physical welfare of the community when he muses about the need “to pray for the common welfare” (κοινῆς εὐχεσθαι σωτηρίας) (*Ag. Ap.* 2.24 §196). He also speaks of Moses suffering for the “common safety” (κοινῆς σωτηρίας) of Israel, and again of Hezekiah’s request that Isaiah pray for the “common safety” (κοινῆς σωτηρίας) of Israel when the nation was threatened by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. For Moses, see Josephus, *Ant.* 3.12.6 §297 (cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life* 86); for Hezekiah, see *Ant.* 10.1.3 §12 (cf. Isa 37:1–20).

¹² See also Josephus, *J.W.* 7.8.6 §331.

¹³ Josephus uses the term “godless” or “without God” (ἄσεβεις) some sixty times in *Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews* mostly to depict tyrannical leadership over Israel and Judah. 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), and Pekah (9.11.1 §234). A few examples of tyrants over Judah are Rehoboam (8.10.2 §§251, 256), Ahaz (9.12.1 §243), and Manassah (10.3.1 §37). The Judean Zealots are also described as ἄσεβεις (*J.W.* 4.3.8 §157; 5.8.15 §§401–42). These depictions are in keeping with the overall purpose of his work, particularly *Jewish War*. The essential thesis of the *Jewish War* (1.4 §9–12) is 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.” See Steve Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 60; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 181–85.

κύριον τὸν θεόν).¹⁴ “They think little of submitting to death in unusual forms,” writes Josephus, “and permitting vengeance to fall on kinsmen and friends if only they may avoid calling any man master.”¹⁵ Jude’s statement in verse 4 parallels a Zealot belief and perhaps was even their slogan. It identifies the Zealots as being at odds with those who follow Jesus.¹⁶ So as in Josephus, the rebellious Zealots are described as godless, but Jude links their godlessness to their denial of Jesus as “the only Master and Lord” (τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον) and thereby their rejection of Jesus’s sovereignty.¹⁷

Second, Jude and Josephus echo similar issues. To begin with, the minority report offers evidence revealing that both are consumed with rebellion. Josephus presents the Zealots as ruthless revolutionaries who lashed out at anyone who submitted to Rome’s

¹⁴ Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.5 §23.

¹⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.6 §§23–25; cf. *J.W.* 2.8.1 §117–118. This cry of the Zealots was first introduced around AD 6, when Judas the Galilean founded the movement. Jesus was probably around twelve years old at the time. Similar sentiments are expressed elsewhere in Josephus: “God is the father and Lord of all things” (*Ant.* Preface 4 §20); Seth esteems God as Master and Lord (*Ant.* 1.3.1 §72), and even after the Romans conquered Judea, “they could not get anyone of them to comply so far as to confess or seem to confess, that Caesar was their master; but they preserved their own opinion” (*J.W.* 7.10.1 §418). See Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. 1, ed. Geza Vermes et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973), 456; Hengel, *The Zealots*, 229–30.

¹⁶ At the time of Jude’s writing (AD 62–66), Judea’s frenzy with Rome manifested itself in pockets of civil disobedience led by Zealots (= godless; v. 4; cf. vv. 8, 10, 11–13, 16, 19). The nation had already rejected Jesus and the kingdom message he proclaimed (Matt 13:53–58; 26:57–68; 27:1–43; cf. Mark 6:4–6; 14:53–65; 15:1–37), explained away the resurrection and denied the current reign of Jesus (Matt 27:62–66; 28:11–15), and rejected the message and messengers who preached that Jesus had fulfilled God’s covenantal promises (Acts 4:1–4; 5:29–33; 7:1–60; 13:45–46, 50–51; 14:19; 17:5, 13; 18:5–6; etc.). Thus godless Zealots had already rebelled against God and his Messiah. Now they wished to rebel against Rome and reestablish the kingdom of Israel according to their standards, in their own strength, and with Jewish leaders vying for self-imposed leadership rights. Consequently for Jude, belief in the messiahship of Jesus was the Judean believer’s most holy faith. They need not feel compelled to get involved in Judea’s rebellion against Rome.

¹⁷ 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 (cf. Titus 2:13, 2 Pet. 2:1). We have in Jude τὸν (article)-δεσπότην (noun)-καὶ-κύριον (noun), thereby indicating that both designations, “Master” (δεσπότην) and “Lord” (κύριον), refer to Jesus. In turn, these two terms may form a hendiadys in that they unite the coordinate terms “Master” (δεσπότην) and “Lord” (κύριος) to express a single concept, namely that Jesus is sovereign. For a more extensive discussion of the Granville Sharp construction, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Granville Sharp’s Canon and Its Kin: Semantics and Significance*, Studies in Biblical Greek (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

rule over Judea.¹⁸ Jude likewise draws explicit attention to God's view of rebellion by first remembering how God dealt with past rebellions (vv. 5–7) and then by directing attention to current rebels (vv. 4b, 8, 11) as well as their condemnation (vv. 4a, 11, 14–15). Jude's attention centers on God's judgment of rebellion.

- 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)
 - C' *Present Rebellion* and Future Divine Judgment (vv. 8–16)
- B' Stated Strategy: Contend for the Faith (vv. 17–23)
- A' Doxology (vv. 24–25)

Furthermore, Jude and Josephus exhibit the same concern about speech (vv. 8, 16, 19). For example, Jude warns his Judean readers about those who have slipped in undetected (vv. 3, 12) and thereby create discord (v. 16). Jude says, “These people are grumblers and faultfinders” (οὗτοί εἰσιν γογγυσταί, μεμψίμοιροι). While some contributors to the Gnostic and Christian false-teacher reports link the two terms to mean “whining,”¹⁹ their evidence is

¹⁸ Josephus describes the Zealots as “tyrants” (τυράννος) and “foolish” (ἀφοροσύνη) people who acted “rashly” (τόλμω) and exhibited “madness” (ἀπονοία) as they promoted and pursued rebellion, pillaged and burned homes, and kidnapped and murdered Romans and countrymen alike. Josephus, *J.W.* 1.1.4 §10; 2.13.6 §651; 3.10.2 §479; 4.5.5 §347; 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.

¹⁹ Gnostic False-Teacher Presentations: James Moffatt, *The General Epistles*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (1928; repr., London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), 241; Joseph Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques: La seconde épître de Saint Pierre, les épîtres de Saint Jean, l'épître de Saint Jude*, 2nd ed., Études bibliques (Paris: Gabalda, 1939), 324; Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, 278; Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der 2 Petrusbrief* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1994), 79–80; and apparently Henning Paulsen, *Der zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief*, Kritischer-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 77. Christian False-Teacher Presentations: Johann Eduard Huther, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude*, trans. Paton J. Gloag and Clarke H. Irwin (1883; repr., Winona Lake, IN: Alpha, 1979), 831; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*, Lenski's Commentary on the New Testament (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1945), 642; Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 98; Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, 399; Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 286; Ruth Anne Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 63; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

countered to suggest that these are two distinct activities.²⁰ Jude’s use of “faultfinder” (μεμψίμοιρος), which occurs only here in the New Testament, validates the minority report’s presumed historical context. Josephus employs “faultfinding” (μέμψις)²¹ to reveal how Jewish people in the past found fault with Moses,²² as well as to recall how faultfinding generated fear against various leaders prior to the war with Rome. The high priest Jonathan (AD 53–58?) feared Jewish faultfinders (μέμψις) and frequently warned Felix (AD 52–60) of his need to be more cautious.²³ Furthermore, Josephus testifies about how he himself encouraged Galileans not to be misled and encouraged a hundred older men to go to Jerusalem in order to issue a complaint (μέμψιν) against those who were splitting the country.²⁴ Agrippa II says, “If servitude to Rome is intolerable, raise complaints (μέμψις) against your governors.”²⁵ Sidebottom, a contributor to the Gnostic false-teacher report, renders the term “malcontents,”²⁶ which fits well the public form of Zealot complaining or faultfinding with both Roman and Jewish leaders. Faultfinding became more and more visible, and escalating discontentment permeated Judea during the early AD 60s. Josephus contends that

2006), 27; Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 221.

²⁰ John Trapp, *A Commentary or Exposition upon all the Books of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (1865; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 739. Gnostic False-Teacher Presentations: Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième épître de saint Pierre*, 177; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 178; Walter Grundmann, *Der Brief des Judas und der zweite Brief des Petrus*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1974), 43. Christian False-Teacher Presentations: W. H. Bennett, *The General Epistles*, New Century Bible (New York: Henry Frowde, 1901), 340; Holloway, *James and Jude*, 164; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 473n125; Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 63–64; Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 100; and perhaps Robert Harvey and Philip H. Towner, *2 Peter and Jude*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 216–18. See also Lewis R. Donelson, *I and II Peter and Jude*, New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 191.

²¹ Lucian captures the conceptual parallel between μέμψις and μεμψίμοιρος when he observes: “You are satisfied by nothing that befalls you; you complain about everything. You don’t want what you have got; you long for what you haven’t got. In winter, you wish it were summer, and in summer that it was winter. You are like some sick people, hard to please and a *mempsimoiros*.” Lucian, *Cynic* 117, as translated by Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, 259. Cf. Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques*, 324; Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 178.

²² Josephus, *Ant.* 2.13.4 §290.

²³ Josephus, *Ant.* 20.8.5 §162.

²⁴ Josephus, *Life* 52 §266.

²⁵ Josephus, *J.W.* 2.16.4 §349.

²⁶ Sidebottom, *James, Jude, 2 Peter*, 91.

this faultfinding was based on (κατά) personal desires (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας ἐαυτῶν) for freedom from Rome.²⁷

Finally, Jude draws attention to the Old Testament figure Korah, who is rather significant in Josephus's writings.²⁸ For example, according to Josephus, the power struggle or "strife" (στάσις) that existed within Judea's upper priesthood during the 60s began with Korah soon after God established the high priesthood.²⁹ This power struggle surfaces as a prominent theme throughout *Antiquities*.³⁰ Josephus paints Korah and Zealot leaders as tyrants. The mention of Korah in Jude recalls a pattern of conduct that surfaced regularly among the priestly authority figures in Judea during the 60s.³¹ Judean priests were maneuvering, positioning, and monop-

²⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* 17.10.5 §§271–72. Later Josephus uses the noun "desire" (ἐπιθυμία) of the Zealots' "desire for freedom" (ἐλευθερίας ἐπιθυμία) (*J.W.* 4.3.10 §175).

²⁸ According to Mason, "the high priesthood 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*)." 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)." Steve Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 124–25. For the complete retelling of the Korah-Moses event in Numbers 16:1–35, see Josephus, *Ant.* 4.2.1–4.3.4 §§11–58.

²⁹ Josephus, *Ant.* 4.2.1–4.3.4 §§12–59.

³⁰ The Greek noun "strife" (στάσις) occurs 151 times in Josephus, while the noun "tyrant" (τυράννος) also has a prominent place, occurring 61 times. Tyrants 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; *J.W.* 1.10–11 §27). The motif of "strife" (στάσις) "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 (στάσις 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).

³¹ For instance, in the *Psalms of Solomon*, written sometime after Pompey's invasion of Jerusalem (63 BC), the author (perhaps a Pharisee) expresses his discontentment with the Jewish Hasmonean royal priests when he writes, "Those to whom you did not [make the] promise, they [the Hasmoneans] took away [from us] by force; and they did not glorify your honorable name. With pomp they set up a monarchy because of their arrogance; they despoiled the throne of David with arrogant shouting." Pss. Sol. 17:5b–8; cp. 8:18–22, trans. R. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James E. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 665–66. Though grateful for the demise of the Hasmonean royal priesthood, the author looks to God for the removal of Rome. In fact, the author's ultimate plea for Yahweh's intervention is based on the Davidic covenant of promise (Pss. Sol. 17:4). Pompey's defeat of Jerusalem and Rome's securing Judea

lizing power and financial gain for themselves; many either initiated or eventually joined in the rebellion against Rome, and thereby disrupted the Pax Romana. Perhaps the reason why, of all the New Testament authors, Jude alone mentions Korah is that greed for power and violence against Rome marked the Judean priesthood at the time of his writing.³²

CONCLUSION

There are today three reports for Jude: a Gnostic false-teacher report, a Christian false-teacher report, and a Zealot-led rebellion report. The Gnostic and Christian false-teacher reports have the greatest similarity or overlap and thereby are often merged into a majority report, which says Jude speaks against false teachers who challenged the early church. It is this majority false-teacher conclusion that has predetermined an interpretive perspective through which pastors and students read, interpret, and teach Jude's letter. Yet the lack of concord within the majority false-teacher reports, the lack of false teaching within Jude, and the lack of "pseudo-" prefixed teachers and prophets, among other characteristics, give reason to pause and entertain the minority report.

The minority report concludes that Jude is concerned about the Zealot rebellion against Rome, a revolt that was threatening the Judean church. The political-sociological events transpiring in Judea at the time Jude wrote his letter were turbulent, intrusive, and life-threatening for anyone living in the country.³³ "The effects

for herself in Psalms of Solomon 2, 8, and 17 appear to parallel Josephus, *J.W.* 1.6.1–1.7.7 §120–58.

³² While the threefold grouping of the Exodus generation, fallen angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah appears in other extant literature of the Second Temple period, the threefold grouping of Cain, Balaam, and Korah does not. Thus we would be hard pressed to assert an established Jewish tradition. A similar listing occurs in a later rabbinic work; there, Cain, Korah, and Balaam are described as follows: "What they wanted was not given to them, and what they had in hand was taken away from them" (Tosefta Sota 4:19, in Jacob Neusner, *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew with a New Introduction*, 2 vols. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002], 1:850). See also Geza Vermes, "The Story of Balaam—The Scriptural Origin of Haggadah," in *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 127–77, esp. 134. Consequently, Jude may have been the first to record or perhaps even create this threefold typological listing to condemn an emerging rebellion of the godless in Judea. Josephus, looking back and writing about the Judean war with Rome, employed these figures as historical types or precursors to the war, a war Jude appears to be writing against and warning Christians to avoid.

³³ Josephus recalls how the Sicarii "got together against those [Judeans] that were willing to submit to the Romans, and treated them in all respects as if they had been their enemies, both by plundering them of what they had, by driving away

of their frenzy,” recalls Josephus, “were thus felt throughout all Judea, and every day saw this war being fanned into fiercer flame.”³⁴ And though the Zealot-rebellion perspective builds on the Christian false-teacher view, it moves beyond it. More specifically, the Zealot-led-rebellion report underscores the increasing seduction of Judeans to rebel against Rome at the time of Jude’s writing after the death of James (AD 62) and just prior to the total outbreak of Judea’s war against Rome (AD 66). Jude is not concerned about unrestrained sexual indulgences of the Zealots. The Zealots wanted to purify Judea by way of punishing anyone who had sexual intercourse with or married a Gentile.³⁵ In order for God’s eschatological kingdom to come, Judea needed to be rid of all impurity, which included but was not limited to sexual misconduct. Yet Jude describes them as lawless (“defile the flesh,” v. 8).³⁶ Nor was Jude concerned about false teaching. He was concerned about the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah through whom deliverance and eternal life comes (vv. 1, 20), through whom God had established authority (v. 4), and through whom God is glorified (vv. 19–20).

As in Spielberg’s movie *Minority Report*, we have the freedom to choose a different path for interpreting Jude. We need not feel locked in to the false-teacher conclusions as a predetermined fact through which everyone must read, interpret, and preach Jude. In the 1950s, commentators re-evaluated the idea that Philo’s writings were key for interpreting the book of Hebrews.³⁷ Maybe the

their cattle, and by setting fire to their houses” (Josephus, *J.W.* 7.8.1 §254; cf. 2.19.6 §539; 5.2.2 §60–63; 6.1.1, 5 §§3–4, 39). For a Judean living in Judea to honor Rome’s sovereignty during this period of time might be likened to being a Tory and honoring British rule during the American revolution, or honoring Lincoln’s desire to free slaves while living in the south during the early 1860s. It would be a tough road to travel. See Darrell L. Bock, “The Coming of a 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), 331–458.

³⁴ Josephus, *J.W.* 2.8.6 §264–65; *Ant.* 20.8.6 §§172–76.

³⁵ Hengel, *The Zealots*, 189–90.

³⁶ Josephus refers to Zealots as enemies of the law (*J.W.* 4.4.3 §184; 6 §102), people who broke and trampled on the law (*J.W.* 5.9.4 §393; 4.4.3 §258; cf. 4.3.8 §157; 4.6.3 §§386), and people deserving judgment even more than the Sodomites (*J.W.* 5.8.6 §566). See Hengel, *The Zealots*, 184.

³⁷ Although Rissi at one time averred that the recipients of Hebrews were of the “hellenistisch beeinflussten, jüdischen Bereich” with conceptual nearness to Philo of Alexandria, Hurst observed that historically this “Philonic trend reached its apex in 1952 with Spicq’s massive commentary.” And though Kümmel agreed that Hebrews had a conceptual nearness to Philonic thought, Hurst provides evidence and rightly concludes that Spicq’s “plea for direct dependence [on Philonic background] must be judged to have failed.” Similarly, Williamson argued on such fundamental subjects

time has come to re-examine the historical occasion for Jude. Perhaps the occasion for Jude's letter is something other than the rise of a false teaching that challenged the apostolic tradition or the need to confront licentious or antinomian behavior. Perhaps Jude's concern was the growing Zealot insurrection against Rome that was wreaking havoc throughout Judea during the late-50s to mid-60s, just prior to the total outbreak of war with Rome in AD 66–70. If Jude was writing his letter to Judean Christians during the 60s, it is the minority report that best answers the question: "What was happening in Judea during the mid-60s when Jude was alive and writing his letter?"

as time, history, eschatology, the nature of the physical world, etc., that "the thoughts of Philo and the Writer of Hebrews are poles apart." Nevertheless, Attridge insists, "There are undeniable parallels that suggest that Philo and our author are indebted to similar traditions of Greek-speaking-and-thinking Judaism. There are also interesting parallels to the Qumran scrolls." Thus Attridge holds a both/and position concerning Philo and Qumran. Yet Bowman suggests the recipients were second-generation Christians located near Sychar (Samaria) who were influenced by the Qumranians. Ceslas Spicq, "Le philonisme de l'Épître aux Hébreux," *Revue biblique* 56 (1949): 542–72; 57 (1950): 212–42; Ceslas Spicq, "Alexandrismes dans l'Épître aux Hébreux," *Revue biblique* 58 (1951): 481–502; Matthias Rissi, *Die Theologie des Hebräerbriefs: Ihre Verankerung in der Situation des Verfassers und seiner Leser* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 25; L. D. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (New York: Cambridge, 1990), 7–11; Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed., trans. Howard Clark Kee (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1975), 395; Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 576; Harold W. Attridge, *Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 29n219; J. W. Bowman, *Hebrews, James, I and II Peter*, Layman's Bible Commentary (London: SCM, 1962), 9–16. See also F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), xxviii–xxix.