

The Use of Tradition-Material in the Epistle of Jude

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The history of the interpretation of Jude, broadly speaking, is one of omission or misunderstanding. Most commentary on the epistle over the last hundred years, while being highly derivative in nature, has lacked thoughtful inquiry. One factor that has discouraged serious study is the writer's use of OT and extrabiblical tradition-material. Surviving Jewish literature from the last two centuries B.C. and first century A.D. is decisive in helping to explain the religious thought-world reflected in the NT. This is particularly the case in Jude. The use of Jewish tradition-material in the epistle invites the reader to give attention to the writer's exegetical methodology—a methodology owing to a distinctly Palestinian Jewish-Christian cultural milieu. In Jude, significant theological truth is wrapped in literary arguments of the day. Literary sources, all part of a well-calculated literary strategy, are marshalled for the purpose of addressing urgent pastoral need. Lessons from the past bear forcefully on the present as a means of admonishing the Christian community.

Key Words: Jude, tradition, apostasy, haggadah, paradigms

The epistle of Jude is a remarkable piece of literature. Yet, in spite of its originality in style, vocabulary and imagery, one is hard-pressed to find a single monograph in this century dealing exclusively with exegetical or theological issues raised by the epistle. Much discussion of Jude has traditionally been centered around the epistle's literary relation to 2 Peter. Rather than treating the question of literary dependence, however, the present analysis represents an attempt to focus on literary *strategy*.

By means of strategic use of OT themes and characters and extrabiblical Jewish sources, the writer, employing a concise and pungent literary style, mounts a sharp polemic against his opponents who are distorting the faith. He has marshalled selected pieces of Jewish haggadah that are recognized as conventions of his day, for the purpose of addressing specific pastoral needs in the Christian

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community. Use of particular sources may in some way be reflective of the readers' devotion to the Hebrew scriptures and/or Jewish pseudepigraphical literature.¹

¹ Most attempts in the past to reconcile Jude's use of extracanonical source-material with his use of OT themes and characters have failed to measure fully how the sources serve the author's agenda. For example, it is broadly recognized that Jude employs a theophany-statement from *1 Enoch* (see, e.g., C. D. Osburn, "The Christological Use of 1 Enoch 1.9 in Jude 14, 15," *NTS* 23 [1976/77] 334-41). Why is it that the writer chooses a theophany-statement from *1 Enoch*? Would a theophany-statement from the OT not have generated as full a force with the audience? Is it possible that the readers were devotees of Enochic literature? Rather than merely ascribe to Jude "respect" for *1 Enoch* as a prominent first-century work circulating among certain sectarian or Jewish-Christian circles (the approach taken by most commentaries), we might suggest that the writer could well be exploiting the

It should be noted that allusions in Jude to extracanonical source-material are appropriate inasmuch as they amplify particular OT notions that the writer will incorporate into his literary-theological strategy. Although not a single explicit citation from the OT is found in Jude, the brief epistle is nonetheless replete with examples of prophetic typology. No fewer than nine subjects—unbelieving Israel, the fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Michael the archangel, Moses, Cain, Balaam, Korah, and Enoch—are employed to counter certain ungodly "antitypes" who have "wormed their way in"² among the faithful, thus posing a danger to the community of faith (v. 4).

Specific use of Jewish tradition-material in Jude would suggest a deliberate exegetical strategy on the part of the writer—a strategy reflective of the Jewish matrix of early Christianity. Not unlike commentary on the OT found in Qumran pesharim,³ the epistle of Jude links prophetic types of the past with the present. The writer hereby has modified texts or traditions to suit his particular need. Much of this, logistically, is sustained by the use of key catchwords⁴—ἀσεβείης, κρίσις, οὔτοι, πλάνη, πλασφημέω and τηρέω—that forms links in Jude's polemical argument.

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Not unlike the epistle to the Hebrews and James, Jude shows a familiarity with the Jewish haggadic tradition. The writer's use of tradition-material, moreover, reflects audience's familiarity with broader Palestinian-Jewish traditions as well. The writer takes great liberty in the synthesis of OT and extracanonical material for use in the present situation. In the hands of the haggadist, illustrations from the past are united with the needs of the present in a forceful and thoroughly Jewish mode.⁵

I. THEOLOGICAL MOTIFS IN JUDE

The Antithesis of the Ungodly and the Faithful

The fundamental dichotomy expressed in the epistle is the tension between the ungodly and the faithful. Οὔτοι (vv. 8, 10, 11 [ἀύτοίς], 12, 14, 16, 19) and ἡμεῖς (vv. 5, 17, 18, 20)

readers' own relationship to Enochic literature. Viewed in this way, the pastoral needs correspond to the unique historical situation being reflected in the epistle.

² J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 248.

³ E. E. Ellis, "Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude," *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1978) 226; R. J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco: Word, 1983) 45; idem, "James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honor of B. Lindars* (ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 303, 305.

⁴ Aside from the writer's unusual verbal economy, the reader is further struck by several stylistic phenomena—e.g., rampant use of triplets (see n. 57 below), the frequency of *hapax legomena* (fourteen within twenty-five verses), and the writer's repeated use of catchwords. The frequency of the latter, in light of the epistle's brevity, is astounding: ten terms occur four or more times. See J. D. Charles, "Literary Artifice in the Epistle of Jude," *ZNW* 82 (1991) 106-24.

⁵ R. Beckwith has written: "The penumbra of the Christian movement... would be almost bound to include certain people (whether originally Essenes, Pharisees, or of some other mixed or obscure allegiance) who... could think of no better service to the new faith than to adapt existing apocalypses to make them support Christianity" (*The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985] 399-400).

represent antipodal characters throughout. "These" whom Jude is countering are depicted in terms of ἀσεβείς (vv. 4, 15 [3x], 18), ἀσέλγεια (v. 4) and ἐπιθυμία (vv. 16, 18). Both in doctrine and conduct, in belief and ethic, they deny the Sovereign Lord himself (v. 4). The faithful, on the other hand, are portrayed as ἅγιος (v. 14), ἄμωμος (v. 24), and μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον (v. 23). The juxtaposition of the faithful and the faithless is reminiscent of OT wisdom literature, notably the book of Proverbs, where the righteous and the wicked stand as irreconcilable opposites.

In addition to the general antithesis in Jude between the ungodly and the faithful, numerous other contrasts or contradictions appear; indeed, they are rampant. Both synonymous and antithetic parallelism are exploited for maximum effect in this short epistle.⁶ The writer is a true interpreter of Israel's wisdom of old.

Two sets of triplets (vv. 5-7, 11) are employed by the writer as paradigms of ungodliness (ἀσέβεια or a cognate form occurs five times in the letter's twenty-five verses). In vv. 5-7 unbelieving Israel, the rebellious angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah all serve to illustrate a

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crucial point. Each departed from a normal condition, thus undergoing judgment and subsequent disenfranchisement. Unbelieving Israel, after having been delivered once for all (ἄπαξ) from Egypt, was destroyed "the second time" (τὸ δεύτερον). The angels, who had not "kept" their rule, have hence been "kept"⁷ for "the judgment of the great day." And the cities of the plain presently serve as an example (πρόκεινται δεῖγμα) of divine judgment.

The second triad of ungodly appears in v. 11. Cain, Balaam, and Korah are united by means of a woe-cry, and each is signified by a formula—"the way of Cain," "the error of Balaam," "the rebellion of Korah"—which would suggest that a standardization of type had already been formulated in Judaistic circles. The three verbs of v. 11— πορεύομαι, ἐκχέω, and ἀπόλλυμι—describe the course of οἱ ἀσεβείς in three levels of ascending gravity.⁸ First they walk, then they abandon, and finally they perish.

Theophany and Judgment

One of the most central of OT themes is that of Yahweh's "coming." This appearance is frequently in the context of judgment and destruction.⁹

In his examination of the relevance of Jewish apocalyptic, L. Hartman¹⁰ has noted the extent to which the OT furnishes the source of many details and motifs found in these works.

⁶ Charles, "Literary Artifice," 112-14.

⁷ Note the perfect tense of τηρέω.

⁸ See R. Knopf, *Die Briefe Petri and Judae* (MeyerK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912) 231; and G. H. Boobyer, "The Verbs in Jude 11," *NTS* 11 (1958/59) 45.

⁹ J. Jeremias (*Theophanie. Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* [WMANT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965] 2), following C. Westermann (*Das Leben Gottes in den Psalmen* [Berlin: Töpelmann, 1963] 74), differentiates between "theophany," revelation with the purpose of bringing a message, and "epiphany," an appearance that brings help or salvation. Four categories of theophany in the OT are cited by Jeremias: hymns to Yahweh, prophetic announcements of judgment, prophetic announcements of deliverance, and narrative prose (123).

Specifically, the Enoch prophecy (*1 Enoch* 1:9), cited in Jude 14-15, is explicitly derived (cf. *1 Enoch* 1:4) from the Sinai theophany and blessing of Moses in Deut 33:2-3:

The Lord came from Sinai
And dawned over them from Seir;
He shone forth from Mount Paran.
He came with myriads of holy ones
From the south, from his mountain slopes.
Surely it is you who love the people,
All the holy ones are in your hand.

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A closer examination of the Jude 14-15 text and *1 Enoch* 1:9 indicates a relative conformity to the general pattern of theophany statements in the OT.¹¹ The importance of the Sinai-theophany tradition (Deuteronomy 33) can scarcely be overestimated. In Yahweh's self-revelation, the nature of covenant and Israel's unique relationship to Yahweh are defined—for Israel of the OT as well as for postbiblical Judaism.

In Jude the catchword ἀσέβεια, appearing three times in v. 15, forms the link between *1 Enoch* and the epistle. This statement, rooted in antecedents from the OT, rings prophetically true with regard to Jude's opponents. Jude's hermeneutic here, we would suggest, is facilitating two goals: faithfulness to the OT tradition of theophany statements ("Behold the Lord comes") and exploitation of a literary work of sectarian Judaism to which his audience possibly may have been devoted. The use of theophany in Jude is strategic. In Jude, as in *1 Enoch*, theophany and judgment merge in response to the ungodly. The fate of the wicked is certain, and the ungodly must know this: truly the Lord comes, warlike and with irresistible force.

Divine Foreknowledge and "Keeping"

A feature not uncommon to the OT and Jewish apocalyptic literature in general is the notion of names written in heavenly scrolls.¹² These "heavenly books" reflect a religious self-understanding fundamental to Hebrew thought, namely that the divine purpose, though hidden from human view, is predetermined and revealed in history. These books point to the divine foreknowledge by which "the chosen" of Israel were called to be Yahweh's own possession and, hence, his instruments.¹³ Reminiscent of Ps 69(68):29 ("May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous"), Jude 4 refers to the ungodly as of οἱ

¹⁰ *Asking for a Meaning. A Study of 1 Enoch 1-5* (ConB 12; Lund: Gleerup, 1979).

¹¹ "Behold he comes..." (cf. Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4; Ps 18:9; Isa 19:1; 26:21; 31:4, 27; 40:10; Dan 7:10; Amos 1:2; Mic 1:3; Hab 3:3; Zeph 1:7; Zech 9:14; 14:1, 3; Mal 3:1-3); "...with the myriads of his holy ones..." (cf. Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17; Isa 40:10; 66:15; Dan 7:10); "...to execute judgment upon all..." (cf. Deut 10:18; Pss 76:9; 96:13; Isa 33:5; Jer 25:31; Dan 7:10, 13, 26; Joel 3:2; Zeph 3:8; Hab 1:12; Mal 2:17; 3:5); "...and he will destroy all the wicked..." (cf. Pss 46:8-9; 76:3-6; Isa 19:3; 27:1; 66:15-16; Jer 25:31; Zeph 3:8-18; Hab 2:22; Zech 14:2-3, 12); "...and he will reprove all flesh..." (cf. Isa 66:15-24; Jer 25:31; Zeph 1:8, 9, 12; Mal 3:3-5).

¹² E.g., Exod 32:32-33; Pss 40:4; 56:8; 69:29; 139:16; Isa 4:3; Jer 22:30; Dan 7:10; 12:1; Mal 3:16; *1 Enoch* 81:1-2; 89:62; 90:14, 17, 20, 22; 104:7; 108:3, 7; T Ass. 7:5; 2 Apoc. Bar. 24:1; Rev 3:5; 5:1, 7, 8; 10:8-11; 20:12.

¹³ See Ps 139:16 and Jer 1:5.

προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα ("those whose judgment was written down long ago"). The essence of προγράφειν is

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juridical.¹⁴ It carries a specific penal sense: that of a public accusation against criminals.¹⁵

The verb προγράφειν corresponds to προεφήτευσεν in v. 14 and τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων in v. 17; the past speaks prophetically to the present, finding fulfillment in "these" ungodly. Both the righteous and the wicked are "kept" (τηρέω, vv. 1, 6[2x], 13, 21) for their appointed end. The contrast is strengthened by Jude's description of the faithful. Those to whom he is writing are addressed as κλητοῖς and τετηρημένοις (v. 1); they are assured, in the epistle's doxology, of the fact that God is able to "safely guard" (φυλάσσω, v. 24)¹⁶ them.

II. TYPOLOGY IN JUDE—A CLOSER LOOK

Unbelieving Israel (v. 5)

In Jude historical paradigms are marshalled chiefly to warn against the cancer of apostasy.¹⁷ Evidence is compounded against the guilty. The writer calls up exhibit after exhibit as supporting proof of his argument. The past, in Jude, explains the present and serves as a token for the future.

The initial case illustration of the typological triplet in vv. 5-7, all three of which seem to have belonged to popular tradition,¹⁸ is Israel.¹⁹ Jude's interest in "the chosen" would suggest that the apostate are former "orthodox," i.e., that they had previously experienced divine redemption. The language in v. 5 is emphatic: they knew "all things." Israel had been delivered once for all (ἅπαξ) from Egyptian

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bondage; the second time (τὸ δεύτερον), God did not deliver; rather, he judged.²⁰

¹⁴ Cf. in this regard Jer 22:30 ("This is what the Lord says, 'Record this man...'") and Mal 3:16.

¹⁵ E. Fuchs and P. Reymond, *La deuxième Epître de Saint Pierre: L'Épître de Saint Jude* (CNT 13b; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980) 159.

¹⁶ Note a strengthened form of "keep" here.

¹⁷ Typology flowers particularly in the late Judaistic period, notably 150 BC-AD 100. It is to be found in both Alexandrian (e.g., the Book of Wisdom, 4 Maccabees, Philo, the Letter of Aristeas) and Palestinian writings (e.g., 1-3 Maccabees, Judith, Tobit, Ben Sira), in the Pseudepigrapha (e.g., 1 and 2 Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, 2 Apocalypses of Baruch, the Psalms of Solomon, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Jubilees), and in rabbinic literature. For general discussion of typological exegesis, see G. W. H. Lampe and R. J. Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology* (Naperville: Allenson, 1957) and L. Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

¹⁸ Similar paraenetic sayings are found in Ben Sira, Jubilees, 3 Maccabees, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Damascus Document and the Mishnah. Hard-heartedness and apostasy are the common thread running through all.

¹⁹ Note that Jude uses Israel whereas Lot appears in 2 Peter. Different redactive interests are at work.

²⁰ Cf. Num 14:11, 22-23.

By implication Jude is saying the same applies of κύριος Ἰησοῦς to the opponents. Having formerly experienced the effects of God's redemptive work and having chosen to disregard this, they have effectually denied the Sovereign Lord. The present calls for a prophetic reminder: εἰδότης [ὕμῶς] πάντα.

The Disenfranchised Angels (v. 6)

Aside from "the angel of the Lord," angels generally receive less prominence in the OT before the Exile. Jewish interest in angels appears to reach a zenith during the intertestamental period. Several features differentiate intertestamental angelology markedly from that of the OT. In the former their depiction becomes far more systematic,²¹ with particular names and functions expressly stated.²² Michael the archangel,²³ notably, achieves in intertestamental Jewish literature incomparable stature.²⁴

Furthermore, the intertestamental period exhibits a proliferation in speculative explanations as to Gen 6:1-4 and the בְּנֵי-הַאֱלֹהִים, the "sons of God."²⁵ Virtually all commentary past and present has related Gen 6:1-4 in some way to Jude 6 and 2 Pet 2:4. However, whereas in *1 Enoch* 6-10, *Jub.* 5:1 and *2 Apoc. Bar.* 56:12-16 the angels' fall is related explicitly to fleshly lust and in Origen²⁶ the fall is attributed to pride, in Jude it is a fall from *authority, domain and position.*²⁷ The picture is one of contrast. As with unbelieving Israel (v. 5),

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the issue at hand is one of *privilege.*²⁸ Having deserted their position, the angels were cast down.²⁹

²¹ See W. O. E. Oesterley, "The Belief in Angels and Demons," *Judaism and Christianity—Vol. I: The Age of Transition* (ed. W. O. E. Oesterley; London: Sheldon, 1937) 195-96.

²² Apocalyptic literature knows from four to nine echelons in heaven's multi-tiered hierarchy. The chief angels in *1 Enoch* develop strategies (chaps. 6-9), superintend nations (20:5), reveal secrets (chaps. 41-43; 46:2; 71:3), and filter the prayers of the righteous (14:4). In *T Dan* 6:2 Michael intercedes for the saints, and in *1 Enoch* 40:6 the archangel prays on behalf of those on the earth, "supplicating in the name of the Lord of the Spirits."

²³ On the archangels of intertestamental literature, see J. Strugnell, "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran, 4Q Serek Širôt 'Olat Haššabāt," *Congress Volume: Oxford—1959* (SVTP 7; Leiden: Brill, 1960) 318-45.

²⁴ See L. Leuken, "Michael," *RGG* 4.369-70.

²⁵ By the time of the Christian advent, most of Judaism—mainstream and sectarian—had embraced the notion that the "sons of God" had introduced sexual promiscuity among the "daughters of men."

²⁶ *GCS* 10.22.15.

²⁷ Significantly, Jude does not associate the fall of the angels with the flood as in 2 Pet 2:4-5. In that the writer is using source-material from *1 Enoch* (1:9 = Jude 14, 15), it is possible that he is here distinguishing between the tradition of the fall of rebellious angels and Enochic theology, which includes a supremely elaborate expansion of Gen 6:1-4.

²⁸ So M. Green, *2 Peter and Jude* (TNTC; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1984) 164. For further discussion of the contextual link that unites the paradigms in Jude 5, 6 and 7, see J. D. Charles, "Jude's Use of Pseudepigraphal Source-Material as Part of a Literary Strategy," *NTS* 37 (1991) 134-37.

²⁹ While theories on Genesis 6 and the בְּנֵי-הַאֱלֹהִים are intriguing, the present focus is *Jude's use of 1 Enoch*, not *1 Enoch's use of Genesis 6*. To speculate as to how much Enochic theology Jude might have endorsed remains inconclusive. M. E. Stone ("The Book of Enoch and Judaism in the Third Century B.C.E.," *CBS* 40 [1978] 479-92) has argued that material from *1 Enoch* should not be construed as commentaries on Genesis, rather as distinctly new articulations that are divorced from Genesis. Similarly, M. Delcor ("Le mythe de la chute des anges et de l'origine des géants comme explication du mal dans le monde dans l'apocalyptique juive. Histoire des traditions," *RHR* 190 [1976] 51-53) notes the two contrasting views of the world found in the OT and later Jewish apocalyptic writings. Delcor views the former as "demythological," an approach adapted by the

Significantly, neither the OT nor the NT makes any explicit reference to the fall of the rebellious angels, although the NT implies the notion of Satan as a fallen chief angel among many who was cast down (cf. Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Rev 12:4, 7, 9, 10).³⁰

Corresponding typology from the OT to the fallen angels of Jude might conceivably be drawn from two portions of the prophetic corpus. In Isa 14:5-23 we find a taunt against the king of Babylon, who seeks to raise his throne "above the stars of God" and thereby make himself like the Most High. He is consequently "cast down" and "brought low." Ezek 28:1-19, a prophetic funeral dirge against the king of Tyre, reflects a similar scenario, in which the king boasts that he is a god. As a result of his splendor he becomes corrupted and is thus "cast down." The portraits in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, both of which in their design resemble Canaanite creation myths,³¹ enunciate the same principal reason for the king's demise. What unites these two figures with the angels of Jude 6 is their status: both are stripped of their exalted rank.

While the idea of imprisonment of spirits in the OT is unrefined, in Jewish apocalyptic literature it is pronounced (e.g., *I Enoch* 10:4,

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12-14; 13:1; 18:14, 16; 21:3, 6, 10; 67:4; 69:8; 88:1, 3; 90:23; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 56:13; *Jub.* 5:10; cf. also Rev 18:2; 20:7), along with the notion of a pit or "abyss" (e.g., *I Enoch* 10:4; 18:11; 21:7; 22:1-2; 54:4; 56:3; 88:1, 3; 90:24, 26; cf. also Rev 20:3). The apocalyptic imagery of Jude 6 is strengthened by v. 13, where Jude's opponents are compared to ἀστέρεις πλανήται, "wandering stars," a description that would have triggered immediate association with *I Enoch* (cf. 18:14-16; 21:6; 86:1-3; 90:24).³² Within apocalyptic mythology, a frequent pattern tends to emerge: (1) war erupts in heaven, often depicted in astral terms, followed by (2) a spilling over of this rebellion to the earth, then culminating in (3) ultimate vindication and punishment by the king of heaven.³³

Utilizing a play on the catchword "keep" (τηρέω), Jude unites typologically in v. 6 the events of the fall with the theme of judgment. Without necessarily endorsing apocalyptic conceptions of cosmic warfare that have their roots in pagan mythology, the writer combines typological treatment of the OT with his assimilation of apocalyptic Jewish conventions and imagery current in his day. His purpose is to illustrate the effects of "rebellion" in the community of faith in a way that would have been readily understood by his readers.

NT writers, whereas the latter is considered to be "re-mythological," in the sense of its assimilation of pagan mythology.

³⁰ Interpretation of Satan's ruin is varied. Representative positions can be found in G. Aulen, *Christus Victor* (New York: Macmillan, 1956) 111; J. W. Boyd, *Satan and Māra* (SHR 27; Leiden: Brill, 1975) 39, and G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956) 31.

³¹ T. H. Robinson, "Hebrew Myths," *Myth and Ritual* (ed. S. H. Hooke; London: Oxford, 1933) 183, and B. S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (Naperville: Allenson, 1960) 68-69.

³² The phraseology from much of *I Enoch* is mirrored in Jude 6—e.g., "binding," in prison," "darkness," "Watchers who have abandoned the high heaven," "bind them... until the great day," "chains." For further comparison of *I Enoch* and Jude 6, see R. Rubinkiewicz, *Die Eschatologie von Henoch 9-11 und das Neue Testament* (ÖBS 6; Klosterneuburg: Österreichisches Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984) 128-33.

³³ See P. D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in *I Enoch* 6-11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 208.

Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7)

Consistently throughout the OT and Jewish literature the example of Sodom and Gomorrah stands out. Sodom's overthrow is reiterated again and again (e.g., Deut 29:23; 32:32; Isa 1:9-10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Ezek 16:46-59; Amos 4:11). Most striking about OT depiction of Sodom is its flaunting of sin (Gen 19:4-5, 12; Isa 1:9; Jer 16:49-50) and the permanent nature of its judgment—the prophet enunciates that no man would henceforth live there (Jer 49:18; 50:40). In intertestamental Jewish literature, Sodom remains a paradigm for the certain and consuming nature of divine judgment.³⁴ "In the same way God will bring judgment on places where the people live by Sodom's uncleanness, in accordance with the judgment of Sodom" (Jub. 16:5); "But you, my children, shall not be like that... discern

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the Lord who made all things, so that you do not become like Sodom, which departed from the order of nature" (*T Naph.* 3:4).

For Jude, Sodom and Gomorrah are the type par excellence of the finality of divine judgment. In the words of the writer, the fate of these cities is always open to exhibit: [πρόκειται δειγμα τυρός αιωνίου δίκην υπέχουσαι.]

Cain, Balaam and Korah (v. 11)

A second triplet of historical Jewish paradigms³⁵ appears in v. 11, belonging to a contextual flow that began in v. 8 (οἱ [v. 8] ...οἱ [v. 10] ...οὐαὶ αὐτοῖς [v. 11]). These are objects of a woe-cry, a prophetic denunciation, issued by the writer. Having blasphemed (v. 8), much in contrast to Michael (v. 9), the opponents of Jude have brought themselves under the divine curse.³⁶

Cain, in the OT, is said to have brought as an offering to the Lord the fruits (מִפְרֵי, Gen. 4:3) of the earth, whereas his brother Abel is said to have brought firstfruits (מִבְּכֹרוֹת, Gen 4:4). The Lord consequently looked upon Abel with favor, but not Cain.³⁷ To the Jewish mind, Cain represents the epitome of wickedness, the prototype of ungodliness.³⁸ He is the first man in the Hebrew scriptures to defy God and despise man. It is significant that the rabbis, taking note of the wording of Gen 4:10 ("your brothers' bloods [דְּיָרֵיךָ וְדֵי יְרֵיךָ] cry out"), charge Cain with destroying a whole world, for the Scriptures themselves point both to "his blood and the blood of his succeeding generations."³⁹

³⁴ Similar to Jude's language (πρόκειται δειγμα τυρός αιωνίου δίκην υπέχουσαι) is that of Wis. 10:7 (ἡς ἐπιμαρτύριον... χέρος) and 3 Macc 2:5 ([Σοδομίτας] γενόμενους πυρί καί θεώ κατεφλέξας παραδειγμα).

³⁵ In 2 Peter only Balaam is mentioned.

³⁶ Consider the seven woes by Jesus in Matthew 23 that are brought against Pharisaical distortionists. In the view of Jesus, these were past the point of change. See L. Brun, *Segen and Fluch im Urchristentum* (Oslo: I Kommissjon Hos J. Dybwad, 1932), esp. 87-88.

³⁷ Cf. Heb 11:4.

³⁸ E.g., Wis. 10:3; also, 1 John 3:12 (Καθώς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν).

³⁹ m. Sanh. 4:5.

Targumic exegesis contrasts Abel and Cain as prototypes of the just teacher/martyr and the arch-heretic/sinner respectively.⁴⁰ Treatment of the dispute between the two brothers may suggest a background controversy between Sadducees and Pharisees concerning the future life.⁴¹ The general prominence of Cain-interpretation in the first century—e.g., the Pseudepigrapha, Philo, Josephus—not

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only assists the modern reader in appreciating NT exegesis but also suggests stereotyping that antedates the Christian advent. In sum, Cain in Jewish exegesis is "type" and "teacher" of ungodliness.⁴²

Numbers 22-24 is given to the account of Balaam, son of Beor. This material constitutes a mixed review of the Midianite prophet. In Num 31:16, Deut 23:4-5, Josh 13:22 and 24:9, Neh 13:2, and Mic 6:5, however, Balaam is portrayed as a negative memorial, having hired himself out to curse Israel.⁴³ More importantly, Balaam led Israel into idolatry and immorality at Baal-Peor.⁴⁴ In rabbinical thought Balaam represents the antithesis to Abraham. Three qualities associated with the latter were a good eye, a lowly mind, and a humble soul. Balaam, contrarily, was characterized by an evil eye, a haughty mind, and a proud soul.⁴⁵

Two different portraits of Balaam emerge from Jewish haggadic tradition—Balaam the villain and Balaam the tragic hero—although a preponderance is given to the former. Balaam personifies pride, hatred, greed and debauchery. In the main, commentators have demonstrated far more interest in Balaam's actions than in his prophecies.⁴⁶

Philo emphasizes Balaam's readiness to curse the Israelites.⁴⁷ Even though the defector was ultimately prevented by God, he nevertheless willed the destruction of the sons of Israel. The Targums devote much attention in the Balaam story to the folly of being ignorant of the ways of God: "Woe to you, Balaam the villain!... Woe to you... [for] you are without understanding."⁴⁸

The "deception" (πλάνη)⁴⁹ of Balaam" is the deception of selfish profit. Balaam typically "loved the wages of wickedness."⁵⁰

⁴⁰ E.g., *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 4:7.

⁴¹ S. Isenberg, "An Anti-Sadducee Polemic in the Palestinian Targum Tradition," *HTR* 63 (1970) 433-44, and G. Vermes, "The Targumic Versions of Genesis 4:3-16," *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1975) 116. Opposing this view is H. A. Fischel, who argues for an anti-Epicurean element present in the Targum (*Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy* [Leiden: Brill, 1973] 37).

⁴² Thus Philo, *De post. Caini* 38 and *De sacr.* 1:2, 3; 13:52.

⁴³ Note, in particular, the connection between the announcement of judgment and the curse in Numbers 22-24.

⁴⁴ Cf. Num 31:16.

⁴⁵ *'Abot* 5:19. For the rabbi Balaam is also one of those dispossessed of future bliss (m. Sanh. 10:2). In this regard see E. E. Urbach, "Homilies of the Rabbis on the Prophets of the Nations and the Balaam Stories," *Tarbiz* 25 (1956) 272-89. Notably, in the NT the disciples of Balaam are a paradigm of the ungodly (2 Pet 2:15-16; Jude 11; Rev 2:14).

⁴⁶ G. Vermes, "The Story of Balaam," *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1961) 127.

⁴⁷ *Vit. Moy.* 52.

⁴⁸ *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 22:5, 29.

⁴⁹ With Jude's description of the opponents in v. 13 as ἀστέρες πλανήται, this may be one of several wordplays.

The third of the prophetic triad in Jude 11, Korah, is perhaps the most arresting illustration of insubordination in all the OT. It is he who challenged the authority of the man who talked with God

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(Numbers 16). Moreover, siding with him were 250 men among Israel's leaders.⁵¹ Along with the men of Sodom, Korah and his following, according to the rabbis, would find no place in the world to come.⁵² In its effects, Korah's fate is commensurate with his deed.

Cain, Balaam, and Korah are united in Jude by means of a woe-cry. Although the woe-cry in the OT is found in several contexts—e.g., the call to attention, mourning the dead, a cry of excitement, a cry of revenge, and the announcement of doom—the vast majority of incidents fall in the latter category.⁵³ In the mind of the prophets, the promise of judgment was synonymous with judgment itself.⁵⁴ Most likely initially derived from a funerary setting,⁵⁵ the woe-cry came to incorporate a vengeance pattern, and hence, a "reversal" image.⁵⁶ The trio⁵⁷ of v. 11 foreshadows the fate of Jude's adversaries who blaspheme (vv. 8, 10). With a cry of condemnation and the threat of divine vengeance hanging over their heads, Jude's opponents await the execution of irrevocable judgment.

Michael as a Paradigm (v. 9)

Building upon the implied notion of demonic conflict, Jude assumes his readers' acquaintance with an apocryphal tradition concerning a dispute over Moses' body, traces of which appear to be gleaned from Deut 34:5-6, Num 27:12-13, Dan 10:13 and Zech 3:1-2.

Fanciful speculation surrounded not only the identity and hierarchy of angelic beings in Jewish theology but the tradition of Moses' burial as well. Extrabiblical Moses traditions, surfacing as early as the early third century (Origen's reference to Ἀνάλημψις Μωϋσέως) and as late as the tenth century, proliferated within main-

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⁵⁰ 2 Pet 2:15.

⁵¹ Num 16:17, 35.

⁵² m. Sanh. 10:3.

⁵³ See E. Gerstenberger, "The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets," *JBL* 81 (1962) 249-63, and R. J. Clifford, "The Use of HÔY in the Prophets," *CBQ* 28 (1966) 458-64.

⁵⁴ Clifford, "Use," 464.

⁵⁵ Clifford, "Use," 459-63, and W. Janzen, *Mourning Cry and Woe Oracle* (BZAW 125; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1972) 2-26.

⁵⁶ Janzen, *Cry*, 35-39.

⁵⁷ One cannot help but be struck in this extremely brief epistle by the abundance of descriptions listed in groups of "three." The writer exhibits a remarkable inclination toward the use of triplets. Not one or two illustrations suffice, but three. In a very Jewish and calculating way, the writer corroborates evidence from a threefold witness, whether in introducing prophetic types or in his midrashic explaining of those types. In this manner he condemns his opponents while exhorting the faithful. All told, twenty sets of triplets appear in the mere twenty-five verses (see J. D. Charles, "'These' and 'Those': The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle of Jude," *JSNT* 38 [1990] 117-18, 124).

stream as well as sectarian Judaism.⁵⁸ Although much regarding Jude 9 is consigned to uncertainty, two observations may be made: Jude is (1) assuming the audience's familiarity with this tradition and (2) using the tradition for the purpose of illustration.

Keeping the contextual flow of vv. 8-10 in mind, we note a superior-inferior dichotomy at work. As the faithful are to Michael, so the ungodly are to the devil. The latter boast and blaspheme yet are inferior. The choice of Jude's vocabulary may be a case of his exploiting the language of his adversaries—οἶσα, ἐπισταμαί, ἄλογα. They view themselves as superior in knowledge and thereby justify their actions; they are, nevertheless, as unreasoning animals. Michael as a paradigm presents the irony of true spirituality—humble recognition of spiritual powers over against mindless profanity.

CONCLUSION

The epistle of Jude constitutes a brief yet forceful polemic against those who represent a threat to the community of faith. The writer draws upon literary sources that apparently are readily recognized by his audience. This entails select pieces of Jewish haggadah—rooted in the Hebrew scriptures and extracanonical Jewish tradition—that are tailored to address specific pastoral needs. A fundamental tension stretching throughout the epistle—the antithesis of the ungodly and the faithful—is strengthened by the use of auxiliary contrasts. A primary focus has been to consider the writer's application of typological exegesis, by which familiar models of behavior associated with Jewish history are brought to bear on the present.

In our attention to the writer's use of sources that reflect specific needs and a unique historical setting, the task of interpreting this obscure epistle is abetted when informed by an adequate explanation of why Jude has chosen particular sources. To determine the function of a writer's resources is to unveil a literary strategy at work. Literary strategy presupposes a conscious and deliberate manipulating of

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literary "brick and mortar." The writer's exegetical method, we come to observe, is indivisible from his message.

The epistle of Jude demonstrates the extent to which OT and NT writings are rooted in culture. Substance is communicated through literary form. In Jude the reader discovers theological truth wrapped in literary arguments of the day. The "brick and mortar," it is discovered, carry significant weight with the audience and are utilized by a master craftsman to achieve specific rhetorical effects and address pastoral need.

⁵⁸ Josephus (*Ant.* 4.8.48), Philo (*Vit. Moy.* 2.291) and Origen (*De prin.* 3.2) each allude to Moses' death. Clement (*Strom.* 6.132) remarks that Joshua and Caleb witnessed Moses' ascension to heaven while his body was being buried in the mountains. The extension of this apocryphal legend even down to the sixth century is reflected by Severus of Antioch, quoted in the *Catena* of Nicephorus on Deuteronomy 34. He writes that a bodily image of Moses appeared at the time his body was being wrapped for burial. From the tenth century we learn from Ecumenius' commentary on Jude that Michael was to have administered Moses' burial with Satan standing to contest the right to a sepulchre on the grounds that Moses had murdered an Egyptian (*PG* 119.713).

Being cognizant of the writer's exploitation of the surrounding cultural milieu assists the modern reader in disentangling the historical situation of the letter. The epistle of Jude thus acquires profound significance for the community of faith down through the ages while at the same time retaining a high degree of relevance for today. It is perhaps no exaggeration to suggest that there have been periods of church history in which "the most neglected book in the New Testament" was in fact the most relevant book of all.

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