

THE PILLAR NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

General Editor

D. A. CARSON

The Letters of
2 PETER *and* JUDE

PETER H. DAVIDS

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Series Preface

Commentaries have specific aims, and this series is no exception. Designed for serious pastors and teachers of the Bible, the Pillar commentaries seek above all to make clear the text of Scripture as we have it. The scholars writing these volumes interact with the most important informed contemporary debate, but avoid getting mired in undue technical detail. Their ideal is a blend of rigorous exegesis and exposition, with an eye alert both to biblical theology and the contemporary relevance of the Bible, without confusing the commentary and the sermon.

The rationale for this approach is that the vision of “objective scholarship” (a vain chimera) may actually be profane. God stands over against us; we do not stand in judgment of him. When God speaks to us through his Word, those who profess to know him must respond in an appropriate way, and that is certainly different from a stance in which the scholar projects an image of autonomous distance. Yet this is no surreptitious appeal for uncontrolled subjectivity. The writers of this series aim for an evenhanded openness to the text that is the best kind of “objectivity” of all.

If the text is God’s Word, it is appropriate that we respond with reverence, a certain fear, a holy joy, a questing obedience. These values should be reflected in the way Christians write. With these values in place, the Pillar commentaries will be warmly welcomed not only by pastors, teachers, and students, but by general readers as well.

* * *

The two epistles treated in this volume, 2 Peter and Jude, present peculiar challenges to the twenty-first-century commentator. Their strong

SERIES PREFACE

denunciations seem out of tune with the times; their allusions to non-biblical Jewish sources raise some eyebrows; their transparent interdependence (one of them is borrowing from the other) raises the kinds of issues faced by those commenting on the Synoptic Gospels or on 1 and 2 Chronicles. Moreover, historical criticism has sometimes left us with a legacy of suspicion about these two brief contributions to the NT. So I am grateful for the work of Peter Davids, whose lifelong interest in the General Epistles is well known and widely respected, and whose mix of service, in both academic and ecclesiastical settings, has doubtless contributed to his ability, on the one hand, to form sharp, independent judgments, and, on the other, to apply them to the contemporary church. In epistles so controverted, no commentary, including this one, will win universal agreement. But all of us will happily acknowledge how much we stand in debt to Dr. Davids.

D. A. CARSON

Author's Preface

When Don Carson presented me with the opportunity to write the present volume, I was both humbled and thankful. Humbled, because I realized that he was trusting me to complete the job of exegeting some difficult literature. Thankful, because, having written commentaries on James (NIGTC, 1982) and 1 Peter (NICNT, 1990), I had wanted to complete my work on the General Epistles. I had thought that having given away the 2 Peter–Jude NICNT volume (to Robert L. Webb), I might never get to finish my coverage of these letters.

What I did not realize at the time I accepted the invitation to write was that life would take me from Langley, British Columbia, where I could foresee having time to do significant writing, to Mittersill, Austria, where I had little time at all to write, to Innsbruck, Austria, where Jude and half of 2 Peter were finished, and finally to Meadows Place, Texas, where the work was completed. A project I had expected to complete in three to five years has taken more than ten. I appreciate the patience of the editors and the publishers for waiting all of that time.

While I was not actively writing all of that time, I was certainly learning. Parts of this volume could not have been written as well as they are without various experiences along the way, ranging from what I learned from Ralph P. Martin, Daniel Reid, and the many contributors during the editing of the *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997) to what I learned from colleagues in seminars of the Studiorum Novi Testamentum Societas and Colloquium Biblicum Lovenienses and the four-year-long Bard College James project chaired by Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner and sponsored by Frank T. Crohn. I also must not forget the Facharbeitsgemeinschaft für Neuen Testament of Arbeitsgemeinschaft für evangelikale Theologie

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

(AfeT), the members of which encouraged me by their collegial friendship and example during my time in Austria.

The Pillar commentaries aim to combine good scholarship with application to church life. Here again our time in Austria was helpful. During much of this time Martin Bühlmann, the leader of the Vineyard movement in the German-speaking world, allowed me to advise and teach the leaders of the movement that he led. His friendship and support allowed us to remain in Europe, his interest in scholarship goaded me to continue to write, and his opening of the movement to me, a foreigner, kept me in contact with real churches with real problems, enriching my insights into the text. Among these churches one stands out, Vineyard Innsbruck, whose leader, Gernot Kahofer, was the reason for our move to Innsbruck. That church provided us with friendship, financial support, and a place to study — much of this material was written in my office under the stairs of that church. It is to Martin Bühlmann and Gernot Kahofer that I dedicate this book.

I am also thankful to my wife, Judith, who has continued to believe that I would eventually complete this book. Furthermore, for the past two years it has been her salary as a pastoral counselor that has enabled me to continue to write here in Meadows Place, Texas.

PETER H. DAVIDS

Abbreviations

I. JOURNALS, PERIODICALS, REFERENCE WORKS, AND SERIES

AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries or Augsburg New Testament Commentary
APOT	<i>Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</i> , by R. H. Charles
BAG	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, <i>A Greek- English Lexicon of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDF	F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BFCT	Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>
BTN	Biblica Theologica Norvegica
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CGTSC	Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges
ConNT	Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
DLNT	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments</i>
DPL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>
EB	Etudes bibliques
EKK	Evangelische-katholischer Kommentar
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
L&S	H. D. Liddell and R. Scott, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
MSGVK	Mitteilungen der schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde
NAC	New American Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , edited by James H. Charlesworth
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
SB	Sources bibliques
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

ABBREVIATIONS

SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>Scr</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
SD	Studies and Documents
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigrapha
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

II. BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

ASV	American Standard Version (1901)
ESV	English Standard Version
GNB	Good News Bible
JB	Jerusalem Bible
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint, i.e. the main Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures
NAB	New American Bible
NASV	New American Standard Version
NEB	New English Bible
NET Bible	New English Translation (©1996, Biblical Studies Press)
NKJV	New King James Version
NIV	New International Version
NLV	New Living Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RV	English Revised Version
TEV	Today's English Version (1966)

ABBREVIATIONS

III. APOCRYPHA

Because they are part of the Septuagint, and thus part of the Bible of the early Jesus movement, the Apocrypha are cited in the same manner as any other biblical book.

1 Esdr	First Esdras
2 Esdr	Second Esdras
Jdt	Judith
1 Macc	First Maccabees
2 Macc	Second Maccabees
3 Macc.	Third Maccabees
4 Macc.	Fourth Maccabees
Sir	Sirach, or the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira, or Ecclesiasticus
Tob	Tobit
Wisd	Wisdom of Solomon

IV. PSEUDEPIGRAPHIA

<i>Aḥikar</i>	<i>Aḥiqar (The Words of Aḥiqar) or Aḥikar</i>
<i>1 Enoch</i>	<i>First (Ethiopic) Enoch</i>
<i>2 Enoch</i>	<i>Second (Slavonic) Enoch</i>
<i>2 Apoc. Bar.</i>	<i>Second Apocalypse of Baruch (also called 2 Bar.)</i>
<i>3 Apoc. Bar.</i>	<i>Third Apocalypse of Baruch</i>
<i>Asc. Isa.</i>	<i>Ascension of Isaiah</i>
<i>4 Ezra</i>	<i>Fourth Ezra (an expanded form of 2 Esdr)</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
<i>Paral. Jer.</i>	<i>Paraleipomena Jeremiou (Things Omitted from Jeremiah, also known as 4 Bar.)</i>
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>Test. Abr.</i>	<i>Testament of Abraham</i>
<i>Test. Moses</i>	<i>Testament of Moses</i>
<i>T. Ash.</i>	<i>Testament of Asher in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
<i>T. Benj.</i>	<i>Testament of Benjamin in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
<i>T. Jud.</i>	<i>Testament of Judah in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>T. Levi</i>	<i>Testament of Levi in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
<i>T. Naph.</i>	<i>Testament of Naphtali in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
<i>T. Reub.</i>	<i>Testament of Reuben in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
<i>T. Zeb.</i>	<i>Testament of Zebulun in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>

V. DEAD SEA SCROLLS

1QapGen	The <i>Genesis Apocryphon</i> from Cave 1 in Qumran
1QH	The <i>Thanksgiving</i> scroll from Cave 1 in Qumran
1QM	The <i>War</i> scroll from Cave 1 in Qumran
1QpHab	<i>Commentary (Peshar) on Habakkuk</i> from Cave 1 in Qumran
1QPs ^a Zion	<i>Psalms of Zion</i> scroll from Cave 1 in Qumran
1QS	The <i>Rule of the Community</i> from Cave 1 in Qumran
1QSa	The <i>Rule of the Congregation</i> or <i>Messianic Rule</i> from Cave 1 of Qumran
4QAmram	The scroll about Amram from Cave 4 of Qumran
4QEn ^a	4QEnoch ^a
4QEn ^c	4QEnoch ^c
4QEnGiants ^a	Aramaic Fragments of <i>1 Enoch</i> from the <i>Book of Giants</i> from Cave 4 of Qumran (4Q203)
4QFlor	<i>Florilegium</i> from Cave 4 of Qumran
4QpNah	<i>Commentary (Peshar) on Nahum</i> from Cave 4 in Qumran
4QTest [4Q175]	<i>Testimonia</i> from Cave 4 of Qumran
CD	<i>Cairo Damascus Document</i>

VI. RABBINIC WRITINGS

<i>m. Abot</i>	<i>Mishnah</i> tractate <i>Abot</i>
<i>m. Sanh.</i>	<i>Mishnah</i> tractate <i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>m. Sot.</i>	<i>Mishnah</i> tractate <i>Sotah</i>
<i>b. B. Bat.</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i> , tractate <i>Baba Bathra</i>
<i>b. Hag.</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i> , tractate <i>Hagigah</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>b. Kidd.</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud, tractate Kiddushin</i>
<i>b. Menah.</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud, tractate Menahoth</i>
<i>b. Mes'ia</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud, tractate Mes'ia</i>
<i>b. Sanh.</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud, tractate Sanhedrin</i>
<i>b. Yoma</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud, tractate Yoma</i>
<i>y. Ta'an.</i>	<i>Jerusalem Talmud, tractate Ta'anit</i>
<i>Gen. R.</i>	<i>Genesis Rabba (the great midrash on Genesis)</i>
<i>Lev. R.</i>	<i>Leviticus Rabba (the great midrash on Leviticus)</i>
<i>Num. R.</i>	<i>Numbers Rabba (the great midrash on Numbers)</i>
<i>Pirqe R. El.</i>	<i>Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer</i>
<i>Sifré Num.</i>	<i>Sifré on Numbers</i>
<i>Tg. Neof.</i>	<i>Targum Neofiti</i>
<i>Tg. Ps.-J.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>

VII. JEWISH WRITERS

Josephus	Flavius Josephus
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>C. Ap.</i>	<i>Contra Apion (Against Apion)</i>
<i>Life</i>	<i>Life of Flavius Josephus</i>
<i>War</i>	<i>The Jewish War</i>
Philo	Philo Judaeus of Alexandria,
<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo (Abraham)</i>
<i>Aet.</i>	<i>De aeternitate mundi (On the Eternity of the World)</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De cherubim (on the Cherubim)</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De confusione linguarum (On the Confusion of Tongues)</i>
<i>Cong.</i>	<i>De congressu quaerendae eruditionis gratia (On Mating with the Preliminary Studies)</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>De decalogo (On the Decalogue)</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>De ebrietate (On Drunkenness)</i>
<i>Fug. et inv.</i>	<i>De fuga et inventione (On Flight and Finding)</i>
<i>Leg. alleg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae (Allegorical Interpretation)</i>
<i>Migr. Abr.</i>	<i>De migratione Abrahami (On the Migration of Abraham)</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum (On the Change of Names)</i>
<i>Opif. mundi</i>	<i>De opificio mundi (On the Creation)</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De plantatione (Concerning Noah's Work as a Planter)</i>
<i>Post. Caini</i>	<i>De posteritati Caini (Descendants of Cain)</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Quaest. Gen.</i>	<i>Questiones et solutiones in Genesis (Questions and Answers on Genesis)</i>
<i>Quis her.</i>	<i>Quis rerum divinarum heres (Who Is the Heir of Divine Things)</i>
<i>Sacr. Abel</i>	<i>De sacrificiis Abelis et Cain (On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain)</i>
<i>Somn.</i>	<i>De somniis (On Dreams)</i>
<i>Spec. leg.</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus (The Special Laws)</i>
<i>Vit. Mos.</i>	<i>De vita Moses (Life of Moses)</i>
<i>Pseudo-Philo</i>	<i>The Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo</i>
<i>Bib. Ant.</i>	

VIII. EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

<i>Acts Paul</i>	<i>Acts of Paul</i>
<i>Apoc. Paul</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Paul</i>
<i>Barn.</i>	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i>
<i>1 Clem.</i>	<i>First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians</i>
<i>2 Clem.</i>	<i>Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians</i>
<i>Clement of Alexandria</i>	<i>Clement of Alexandria</i>
<i>Clem. Hom.</i>	<i>Pseudo-Clementine Homilies</i>
<i>Did.</i>	<i>Didache (Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)</i>
<i>Diogn.</i>	<i>Letter of Diognetus</i>
<i>Ep. Apost.</i>	<i>Epistle of the Apostles (Epistula Apostolorum)</i>
<i>Eusebius</i>	<i>Eusebius</i>
<i>Eccl. Hist.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical History. In some works abbreviated as H.E. or cited as Church History</i>
<i>Gnostic writings</i>	
<i>Corp. Herm.</i>	<i>Corpus Hermeticum</i>
<i>G. Thomas</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>
<i>Testim. Truth</i>	<i>The Testimony of Truth</i>
<i>Treat. Seth</i>	<i>The Second Treatise of the Great Seth</i>
<i>Hermas</i>	<i>The Shepherd of Hermas</i>
<i>Man.</i>	<i>Mandate or Command</i>
<i>Sim.</i>	<i>Similitude or Parable</i>
<i>Vis.</i>	<i>Vision</i>
<i>Hippolytus</i>	<i>Hippolytus</i>
<i>Apos. Trad.</i>	<i>The Apostolic Tradition</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

Ignatius	Ignatius
<i>Eph.</i>	<i>The Letter of Ignatius to the Church in Ephesus</i>
<i>Philad.</i>	<i>The Letter of Ignatius to the Church in Philadelphia</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>The Letter of Ignatius to the Church in Rome</i>
<i>Smyrn.</i>	<i>The Letter of Ignatius to the Church in Smyrna</i>
Irenaeus	Irenaeus
<i>Adv. haer.</i>	<i>Adversus haereses (Against Heresies)</i>
Justin	Justin Martyr
1 <i>Apol.</i>	<i>First Apology</i>
2 <i>Apol.</i>	<i>Second Apology</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogue with Trypho the Jew</i>
<i>Mart. Pol.</i>	<i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>
Maximus Con- fessor	Maximus Confessor
Origen	Origen
<i>C. Cels.</i>	<i>Against Celsus</i>
Polycarp	Polycarp
<i>Phil.</i>	<i>The Letter of Polycarp to the Church in Philippi</i>
<i>Sent. Sextus</i>	<i>Sentences of Sextus</i>
Tatian	Tatian
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Oratio (Oration or Address)</i>
Tertullian	Tertullian
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apology</i>
Theophilus of Antioch	Theophilus of Antioch
<i>Autolytus</i>	<i>Letter to Autolytus</i>

IX. GREEK AND ROMAN LITERATURE

Aristotle	Aristotle
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
Cicero	Cicero (Marcus Tullius Cicero)
<i>De nat. deor.</i>	<i>De natura deorum (On the Nature of the Gods)</i>
Dionysius of Halicarnas- sus,	Dionysius of Halicarnassus
<i>Ant. Rom.</i>	<i>Antiquities of Rome</i>
Epictetus	Epictetus
<i>Disc.</i>	<i>Discourses</i>
Homer	Homer

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Il.</i>	<i>Iliad</i>
<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssey</i>
Juvenal	Juvenal (Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis)
Lactantius	Lactantius
<i>Div. Inst.</i>	<i>Divinarum institutionum (Divine Institutions)</i>
Lucian	Luciano of Samosata
<i>Peregr.</i>	<i>The Passing of Peregrinus</i>
Minucius Felix	Minucius Felix
<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Octavius</i>
Pausanias	Pausanias (Pausanius)
<i>Arcad.</i>	<i>Description of Greece, bk. 8: Arcadia</i>
Plato	Plato of Athens
<i>Phaed.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
Pliny	Pliny the Elder
<i>Hist. Nat.</i>	<i>Natural History</i>
Plutarch	Plutarch
<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Moralia (Morals)</i>
<i>Sera numinis vindicta</i>	<i>De sera numinis vindicta (On the Delay of Divine Justice) = Moralia 548-68</i>
Severus	Severus Iatrosophista Medicus
<i>Clyst.</i>	<i>De instrumentis infusoriis seu clysteribus ad Timotheum</i>

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General Introduction

A person could think of a number of reasons for writing a commentary on 2 Peter and Jude. One reason might be, to put it crassly, that they are there. That is, they are in the canon of the NT, for better or worse, so one must write on them if one is to have a commentary series on the NT. Surely there are some who would embrace this reason for writing. It is simply a job that needs to be done. Some of these writers would consider it a mistake that these works were included in the canon (and, as we shall see, many people in the church of the first centuries would have agreed with them, especially when it comes to 2 Peter), but since the books are there, one must write on them.

A second reason might be to counterbalance Paul. The overwhelming focus in NT studies has clearly been on the four Gospels and Paul's letters. For many since the Reformation Paul's letters have been more central than the Gospels. They have been a canon within the canon. By focusing on 2 Peter and Jude (and along with them on James and perhaps 1 Peter) one shows that Paul was not the only voice in the earliest phases of the Jesus movement. There were other voices and other theologies, even if their output was not so prolific (or, perhaps, not so well preserved). Certainly there are scholars who embrace this view. Both of these views would get the job done, but neither of them does justice to these letters.

Thus a third reason for writing on these letters would be that they are so fascinating and make a significant contribution to the NT. In them we see communities of the Jesus movement coming to terms with Greco-Roman culture. The author of 2 Peter, does this in some daring ways as he appropriates the language and thought forms of that culture. This appropriation of culture can be instructive for us as we come to terms with our

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postmodern culture. In these works we see communities using the Jewish traditions we know from the OT. But they do not simply quote their Greek OT (the LXX). Instead they cite the traditions as they were being retold in their first-century world. This methodology needs to be taken into account as we explore how to apply the OT to a community that lives after Jesus. In these works we see communities coming to terms with teachers who were rejecting the ethical teachings of Jesus but who still claimed to be followers of Jesus. In Jude we do not learn how these teachers justified their position. Jude is not about to set out their arguments as the teachers would have done. But judging from his vehemence, they must have been at least somewhat effective in their presentation. In 2 Peter we discover that one of the justifications used by the teachers he confronts (not necessarily the same group that we meet in Jude) was that there would be no final judgment. Did they think that this had already happened in Jesus? Did they justify this as the only position worthy of a perfect God (who should therefore not have to meddle with his creation)? We do not learn the answer to those questions, but we do learn how 2 Peter confronts them. Perhaps these writers are particularly important today when there is a tendency in the Western church to ignore the teaching of Jesus as a practical way of life — and sometimes to emphasize grace so much that it seems as if the final judgment does not matter.

Along the way there are some surprises for us. We will see the compassion that Jude has for those involved in the error that he is attacking. Jude, compassionate? See if this is not the case. We will learn how these authors define belief in Jesus. We will discover that “Savior” is not so much attached to Jesus’ cross as to his return in power. We will marvel again at how our Father has shared himself with us, giving us abilities that we may not believe that we have (or perhaps do not want to use). Perhaps we will recognize that we in the West have become entrapped in the very things from which our Father’s plan was to free us. And we will certainly receive a new appreciation for coming judgment, which perhaps stands out most clearly here since it is separated from a presentation of the nature of the resurrection and the details of the coming new age (which are subjects for Paul and Revelation). Yet, more than the final judgment, we will see that the coming new age of the earth is the hope of the believer in Jesus and that that vision should determine how he or she lives in the present.

There is a final pair of fascinating things we can learn from this literature. In it we meet a Peter who is different from 1 Peter and even more different from the Peter most people find in Galatians. He is not Jesus’ delegate to the Jews (Galatians), nor even a believer steeped in the OT who is writing to the Gentiles (1 Peter), but a follower of Jesus who is

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fully acculturated to the Gentile world. Are we seeing the development of a man who starts out as a Galilean fisherman attracted to the revolution announced by John the Baptist that he later came to believe had come in Jesus? Certainly if Peter bar Jonah wrote 2 Peter (an issue that we will discuss at some length), that is just what we are seeing. Could that say something about our own adaptation as we go through life?

The second of these fascinating things is that 2 Peter uses Jude, which is why we will discuss Jude first. This usage (the evidence for which belongs in the introduction to 2 Peter) should not raise the old smokescreen, “Why would an apostle use the work of another church leader?” The answer to that would be, “And why would he not use the work of another church leader?” The first question surely tells more about us and our conception of an apostle than it does about 2 Peter. If one found a gold mine of material, why would one not use it, just as Matthew uses Mark (or, for some, Mark uses Matthew)? What is fascinating is to discover how 2 Peter uses Jude. He does not slavishly copy it as if he knew it would become holy writ, but instead he adapts it to his own perspective and his own argument. This is why we need separate sections of commentary on each of these books, that 2 Peter is not Jude expanded but Jude adapted. We need to look at Jude on its own to understand Jude’s own argument and perspective, and then we need to look at 2 Peter on its own to find out his somewhat different perspective. Great minds in the first century were no more cookie-cutter images of some ideal type than they are now. The differing situations and the originality in thinking of the two writers are instructive in an age when many are tempted to parrot party lines or adopt slogans from great leaders without thoroughly digesting them and making them their own.

Thus these works are well worth our time. They are well worth a commentary of this size and even larger. So it is with anticipation that we dive in and examine the two books in order, first Jude and then 2 Peter.

One further issue is worth mentioning. The danger in reading the NT is that we will read our present culture and history back into the text. In order to help us avoid this pitfall, this commentary will reserve the terms “church” and “Christian” for the post-first-century period, when there was a clear break between the Christian movement and Judaism. During the first century the Jesus movement viewed itself and was often viewed as another movement under the larger Jewish umbrella. This does not mean that the followers of Jesus saw themselves as just one Jewish movement or party among other equally valid Jewish movements or parties, but that they saw themselves as *the* true remnant of Israel or *the* true renewed Judaism. Thus “from the inside” they viewed themselves as the only true expression of the faith of Israel (e.g., Acts 4:12); they were,

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as Paul states, the “Israel of God,” whether ethnically Jewish or Gentile in origin (Gal 6:16). Whether for reasons of legitimacy (Judaism had limited legal recognition by the Roman Empire) or of theology (and for Paul the theological continuity with Abraham and Israel certainly dominated), the Jesus movement firmly insisted that they were the sole true expression of Judaism and thus heirs of its promises and protections.

On the other hand, “from the outside” they were just another sect or party within Judaism, a sect that other Jewish sects often claimed was outside the Jewish umbrella (especially the Pauline version with its inclusion of Gentiles) and that Gentiles mockingly named “Christians” because of their claim to follow a Messiah who translated into Greek as “Christ” (which would sound strange as a title). Yet, although they were called “Christians” by others, they seem to have referred to themselves as believers or followers of Jesus or of the Way or simply as brothers and sisters. So we shall adopt this language of referring to them as the Jesus movement to continually remind ourselves that we are in a different world, before the many developments of church history, when Judaism reorganized with a far more unified theology and practice than it had in most of the first century and when the church both rejected Judaism (as we see, e.g., in *Barnabas*) and adopted Roman structure and organization. Similarly, when we come across other language that was not religious in the first century but became religious later, we will often use a modern nonreligious synonym to keep us from importing our contemporary conceptions into the text. It is not the goal of this commentary to change modern Christian language, but to help us as much as possible to climb into the world of the first century and then apply it to the twenty-first.

The Letter of JUDE

Introduction to Jude

I. INTRODUCTION

Jude is a book that has often been treated with “benign neglect.”¹ Rarely the text for a sermon, even in the university or seminary classroom it is often given only brief treatment at the end of a course on the General Epistles, perhaps as part of the last lecture on the final day of the course. Apparently it was more valued in the period right after it was written, for it is the only letter in the NT to be extensively incorporated into another (i.e., into 2 Peter). Indeed, 2 Peter is the earliest evidence for the existence of Jude. Jude was circulated as a separate book in Egypt and Italy by the end of the second century, for both Clement of Alexandria and Origen cite it (both lived in Egypt), and it was included in the Muratorian Canon (which was Italian). However, subsequent to this doubts arose (so Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.23.25; 3.25.3) since Jude cites works such as *1 Enoch* that by then were considered noncanonical. Of course, this was the age of the consolidation of authority and of the delimitation of the canon (meaning the list of what was to be read in church as reflecting the rule of faith).² Thus a work that did not fit the developing patterns was doubted

1. Elliott, *I-II Peter/Jude*, 161.

2. A “canon” means a rule or a list, in this case the list of which works should be read publicly in church as reflecting the rule of faith (i.e., canon meaning “list” took on the sense of canon meaning “rule” because the term was applied to the rule of faith before it was applied to a list of books). In an oral-mnemonic society most people received their only scriptural knowledge through this public reading. The concern was that works would be read that misled the congregation in the house church and later the larger church. This concern was stimulated by Marcion’s truncated canon (and his truncating of Luke to fit his position), but became even more significant as Gnostic works became

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despite its relatively good pedigree.³ These doubts appear to have been short lived everywhere but in Syria (where it was accepted only in the sixth century).⁴ Jude appears in the major fourth-century canon lists (which are from the southern and northern Mediterranean areas, not the eastern end where Syria is located). This acceptance, of course, did not make the letter popular. Its shortness, its apparent absorption into 2 Peter (although we will see that in reality each work has its own perspective), and its apparent lack of theological discussion all worked against it. In modern times its seemingly harsh tone has also contributed to its neglect. We will discover, however, that many of these issues are the result of reading an ancient work through later lenses, or the imposition of Reformation or modern concern or standards on a first-century work. Thus the neglect is more the result of our problems than of Jude's problems.

II. AUTHORSHIP

Problems with Jude start with the first verse, where the author is named. Jude claims to be written by "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James." While the name Judah (the Hebrew form) or Judas (the Greek form) was extremely frequent in Jewish groups (Jesus, according to Luke,

available, some of which were written under the names of apostles (the *Apocryphon of John*, *Apocryphon of James*, *Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of Philip*, *Apocalypse of Paul*, etc.). This defensive stance produced a tendency to "play it safe," so works that were valued tended to be attributed to apostles whether or not the apostle took an active part in their production (Mark was associated with Peter and Luke-Acts with Paul; Matthew was attributed to Matthew) and works that were nonapostolic stopped being read, even if they were orthodox and helpful (e.g., the *Didache*). Jude did not reflect this "canon consciousness" (since it came from before the period when the canon was actively discussed) and had some ideas to which certain later church leaders objected. Besides, Jude was not known to be either an apostle or a major leader in the early Jesus movement. On canon see F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), especially 17-18 on the definition of the term.

3. Jude was never cited frequently, but contrast Jude's early use by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian with that of James, which is *never* explicitly cited until Origen (although a word that James may have invented does appear more than once in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which *could* indicate that James was known in Rome by the end of the first century). One would not expect a short work like Jude to be cited often.

4. Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 305-10, lists the evidence, as do Mayor, *The Epistles of Jude and II Peter*, cxv-cxxiii, and Cantinat, *Les Épitres de Saint Jacques et de Saint Jude*, 276-82. The main issue was apparently Jude's citation of 1 *Enoch* by name (and for Didymus the Blind the content of his citation of the *Testament of Moses*). While Tertullian believed that this made 1 *Enoch* canonical (*De cultu feminarum* 1.3), other church leaders thought that this disqualified Jude.

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had two men named Judas among the Twelve, Judas son of James and Judas Iscariot; Luke 6:16, NIV), this Jude/Judas expected his identity to be recognized by members of the Jesus movement, at least by those members to whom the letter was written. Who could this person be? The issue is important, for it will tell us where this letter fits into the story of the Jesus movement.

We know for sure who it could not be, namely Judas son of Simon Iscariot (to use John's designation, John 6:71), since every tradition about him indicates that he felt so much shame as a result of his betrayal of Jesus that he committed suicide about the time of Jesus' crucifixion. A more realistic possibility would be the prophetic Judas Barsabbas, who, according to Luke (Acts 15:22, 27, 32), accompanied Silas in carrying the letter from the Apostolic Council. However, while this person was surely capable of giving a prophetic denunciation such as that found in this letter, he is never identified with a James (Jacob in its Hebrew form).⁵ Another possibility would be that other Judas who was part of the Twelve (mentioned in Luke 6:16; John 14:22; Acts 1:13). John identifies him simply as "not Iscariot," but both Lucan references identify him as "Judas son of James" (NIV; Greek translation, "Judas of James"). (He is apparently the same person whom Mark 3:18 [followed by Matt 10:3] identifies as Thaddaeus [glossed as Lebbaeus in some later manuscripts of both Mark and Matthew]). On the one hand, this person could not have been very well known if the tradition contains some confusion about his name (although it is possible that Mark was trying to avoid identifying him with Judas Iscariot, and that Matthew follows him in this). On the other hand, while he is associated with a "James," the "of James" probably indicates "son of James" rather than "brother of James" (unless one argues that "brother" has dropped out of the text, for which there is no evidence). Thus our apparently well-known "Judas brother of James," the designated author of Jude, most likely does not intend to indicate that he is the otherwise obscure Judas of the Twelve.

Therefore, the most likely Judas being designated as the author of

5. E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in the Early Church* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1978; repr. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), 226-30, argues that "brother" means "co-worker"; thus our Jude is indeed Judas Barsabbas, who had been a co-worker of James. However, (1) the argument that Jude would have called himself "brother of the Lord" had he been a brother of Jesus would have to mean that the James who wrote the letter of James also could not have been a brother of the Lord since he does not call himself by that title (Jas 1:1), and (2) while "brother" can mean "co-worker," it means this only when someone is referring to another person as "my brother" or "our brother," not when a person calls himself "brother of." In each of its occurrences in biblical literature, "brother of" indicates that the individual is a relative of the person in question.

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this letter is Judas the younger brother of Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3).⁶ Even here there is some uncertainty in the tradition, for while the two Synoptic Gospels agree on the order of the first two brothers (although not on the form of the name of the second), they disagree on the order of the last two.⁷ Despite this uncertainty, however, we clearly have a Judas who had a brother James who was well known in the early Jesus movement, for James the brother of Jesus was the main leader of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem (and probably in all Palestine) from at least A.D. 44 (the latest date when Peter had to flee Jerusalem, although James was probably the leader long before this) to his martyrdom in A.D. 61.

This Judas brother of Jesus and James has in some parts of the church been identified with Thomas the Twin, one of the Twelve. The fact that the name "Thomas" is a transliteration of the Aramaic term for "twin" and thus was not a personal name lends credence to the idea that his personal name could have been Judas, dropped to avoid confusion with the two other members of the Twelve.⁸ However, the further identification of this Judas Thomas with the brother of Jesus is unlikely, for it does not appear to be the position of the earlier sources, and those sources that do make the identification (e.g., the some manuscripts of the Syriac translation of John 14:22; *Gospel of Thomas*) have a theological reason for doing so.⁹ Furthermore, while Judas Thomas may well have been the name of this member of the Twelve, he is never said to have a brother James (this is not even brought out in passages calling him the twin brother of Jesus) and thus does not qualify as a candidate for our author, whose brother James appears to be better known than he is.

We remain, then, with Judah bar Joseph, that is, Judas son of Joseph, a younger brother of Jesus. We have very little information about this

6. If one takes one of the views about the family of Jesus in which his "brothers" were either stepbrothers (sons of Joseph from before he married Mary) or cousins (sons of Clopas, John 19:25 with Matt 27:56), this Judas could be the same as Judas of James, but, while that was once a popular position in the Roman Catholic Church, few Catholics take that position today. On the other hand, many would argue that Jesus' "brothers" were all either older (if Joseph had sons before he married Mary) or contemporaneous with him (if they were cousins). For a modern presentation of the view that Jesus' brothers were cousins, see Patrick J. Hartin, *James of Jerusalem: Heir to Jesus of Nazareth* (Interfaces; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 1-43.

7. Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 6-9. This probably indicates an uncertainty about which brother was older.

8. Gary M. Burge, "Thomas, the Apostle," in Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 2:2057.

9. Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 *Peter*, 32-36. The theological reason was to make Judas Thomas the twin of Jesus, at least in a spiritual sense.

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brother, who could have been younger than twenty when Jesus died.¹⁰ We are told that Jesus' brothers were not his followers at one point during his ministry (John 7:5); while Johannine references are difficult to evaluate in the light of the data in the Synoptics, the reference to Judas in Mark 6:3 points to his still living in Nazareth and leading a "normal" life at a time in Jesus' ministry when Jesus had already moved to Capernaum. Yet whatever the situation before Jesus' last trip to Jerusalem, Acts 1:14 identifies Jesus' mother Mary and his brothers as being among those in the upstairs room right after Jesus' ascension. One suspects that the author of Luke-Acts also assumes that they were in that same room for Passover forty days earlier, but he does not say that. Only the Johannine tradition (John 19:25) places Mary with Jesus at that time. At the least the tradition indicates an awareness that Jesus' brothers were part of the Jesus movement from its earliest days in Jerusalem. But after this single reference all of Jesus' brothers except James disappear from the text of the NT.

There is a series of later traditions about this Judas. The *Acts of Paul* apparently identifies our Judas with the one mentioned in Acts 9:1, which is an understandable confusion.¹¹ Eusebius cites a tradition from Julius Africanus to the effect that Jesus' relatives spread the good news throughout Palestine (*Eccl. Hist.* 1.7.14). This tradition is hardly improbable, given that we know that they were committed members of the Jesus movement, although it may or may not exaggerate their influence and/or range of travel. Eusebius also reports Hegesippus claiming that the grandsons of Jude were brought before the Roman emperor Domitian as being politically dangerous, but that they persuaded him that they were simply poor farmers (*Eccl. Hist.* 3.19–3.20.8). Despite the fact that one fragment of Hegesippus actually identifies these men as Zoker (Zecha-

10. Judas was the youngest or the next to the youngest of Jesus' brothers and thus at least the third child born after Jesus, since we are not told where the sisters came among the siblings (he would be third as all of the sisters were born after Jesus' three oldest brothers and of these brothers Judas was born third; if Judas was the youngest sibling, he could be the sixth or seventh child, assuming that at least two (sisters is plural) and possibly three or more sisters were older than he (and that no children died in infancy). Given this latter assumption, if Jesus was born in 4 B.C., it would hardly be surprising if he were fourteen years or so older than Judas (that would mean a child every two years, which would not be surprising for a woman who nursed her children for two or three years, as was normal in that day). Since the crucifixion is usually dated A.D. 29 or 30, that would mean that Judas may well have been younger than twenty. However, we must remember that in that culture he certainly carried adult responsibilities and may well have been married and had a family by that age.

11. E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* (London: Lutterworth, 1965), 2:388. "[In Damascus] I entered into a great church with the blessed Judas, the brother of the Lord, who from the beginning gave me the exalted love of faith," says Paul.

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riah) and James,¹² there are enough historically dubious parts to this tradition that it is highly suspect. We are far wiser to say that we know nothing about the later life of Jude/Judas other than that it is probable that for the rest of his life he remained part of and (at some level) a leader in the Jesus movement in Palestine.

Whether this Judas son of Joseph was the actual writer of Jude is a matter of dispute. Many scholars believe that the son of a carpenter would not have been equipped to write such a letter. Others argue that the evidence points in that direction. In order to examine this question, we need to take other information into account, namely, the place and date of composition, the addressees, and the language and structure.

III. PLACE AND DATE OF COMPOSITION

If this Jude wrote this letter, if he is, then, the main character in the implied story contained in the document, where and when did he write it? The issue of the “when” is easier to answer than the “where.” That is, if 2 Peter did indeed use Jude, then Jude must have been written first. But that answer begs the question since the date of 2 Peter is disputed. That is, if Simon Peter bar Jonah wrote 2 Peter, then it was probably written before A.D. 68, the death of the Roman emperor Nero, assuming the accuracy of the tradition that Peter was martyred under Nero. (As we will discuss in the Introduction to 2 Peter [p. 125], it probably is accurate, although, given its late date, one cannot be certain that it is.) That would put Jude around A.D. 60 at the latest, given that Peter would have to get it and read it before he could use it. However, if 2 Peter is, as Richard Bauckham claims,¹³ a posthumous *testament*, then the dates of 2 Peter and of Jude could easily be a couple of decades later. Even this *could* have been within Jude’s lifetime, for while we have no information as to how long he lived, it is conceivable that in that age a man might have written a letter like this in his late 70s or 80s, although not many actually did. Those who place 2 Peter in the early to middle of the second century tend to date Jude toward the end of the first century, and for them neither of these books was actually written by its implied author.¹⁴ As we continue our discussion, we shall be looking for information that proves or disproves these various hypotheses.

12. This fragment is found in Carl de Boor, *Neue Fragmente des Papias, Hegesippus und Pierius* (TU 5/2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1888), 169.

13. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 158-62.

14. See Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der zweite Petrusbrief*, 128-29.

PLACE AND DATE OF COMPOSITION

A story involves place as well as date, so the question of date is connected to the question of where the letter was written. Given that the letter was accepted early in Egypt, some scholars have argued for an Alexandrian place of composition.¹⁵ While the reception of the letter there might point in this direction (as well as the fact that it was not well accepted in Syria until the sixth century), the strongest argument in this direction is the quality of the Greek. But here we must be careful. It is not so much the style of Jude that is so excellent as his rhetorical skill and use of relatively rare vocabulary. The author is well educated and knows at least the basics of classical rhetoric, but one could learn that in Jerusalem or Antioch as well as in Alexandria. Furthermore, the finding of manuscripts of *1 Enoch* in Qumran shows that that source of Jude was in circulation in Palestine and so would not make the Egyptian provenance more likely due to our having found Ethiopic manuscripts.

The other likely location for the beginning of our implied story is somewhere in Palestine or Syria. Helmut Koester argues for Syria on the grounds that Judas Thomas Didymus was revered in Gnostic circles there and that opposing him to Judas brother of James would make sense.¹⁶ The argument, however, depends on Jude's having been written against Gnostics, and that identification of his opponents is not persuasive since he does not describe any specifically Gnostic teaching. There is also no tradition placing any of the relatives of Jesus that far north. Thus it is more likely that Jude was written toward the southern end of this range, which would be Palestine. A number of commentators opt for this location.¹⁷ What the decision turns on is the degree to which one believes that Jude reflects Palestinian sources. That is, we have learned long ago that there was plenty of Hellenistic culture in first-century Palestine (e.g., there was a gymnasium, among other Hellenistic institutions, in Jerusalem), so one can easily conceive of a writer obtaining a good Hellenistic education there (if he had not obtained the education elsewhere before arriving in Jerusalem) and writing in proper Hellenistic style (if he or she were writing to recipients in the wider Greco-Roman world), but it is harder to imagine an author who lived outside of Palestine consulting sources in Hebrew or Aramaic or an author born outside of Palestine allowing Semitisms or Semitic enhancements to creep into his Greek (unless, like Paul, they had done significant study in Palestine). As we will see, there is some evidence that our author did have contact with Hebrew or Aramaic source material.

15. John J. Gunther, "The Alexandrian Epistle of Jude," *NTS* 30:4 (1984) 549-62.

16. Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol 2: *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 246-48.

17. E.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter, 15-16*; Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 234.

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A further argument for a Palestinian place of writing is that Jude and especially James were well known in Palestine. Neither they nor the other relatives of Jesus appear to have been revered outside the eastern Mediterranean. The simple attribution implies that this work was written where Jude was known and where James was better known.

Thus our decision is for a Palestinian provenance. This does not have a definitive effect upon authorship. We simply do not know enough about the life of Jude to argue that, if he wrote it, it must have been written in Palestine. For all we know, Jude could have traveled extensively. On the other hand, all we know about Jude and even all of the traditions that we have about him and his descendants are connected to Palestine, so a Palestinian provenance might make his authorship somewhat more likely. Still, surely plenty of people in the Palestinian Jesus movement were well educated in Greek even after the scattering of the Hellenists (Acts 8:1). Thus someone other than Jude could have written the letter even if it was written in Palestine.

The story implied in a letter is that it was written at a given time from someone in a given place to someone in another place. Date is thus also dependent upon the decisions that one makes about the addressees and their circumstances. A number of authors have viewed the following statements as indicating circumstances that fit the late first century.¹⁸

	<i>Content</i>	<i>Comment</i>
v. 3	The faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints	The faith entrusted in the past
v. 17	Remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold	Apostles are remembered, not present.
v. 18	In the last times	This is an issue only if it separates the addressees from former times.
v. 20	Build yourselves up in your most holy faith	The faith

These authors argue that references to “the faith” indicate a later date, particularly because “the faith” is a body of faith and practice that was entrusted to the church in the past. Furthermore, the apostles are spoken of as a group, and that group does not appear to be present. Many scholars think that this indicates that they are now dead. What are we to

18. E.g., Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der zweite Petrusbrief*, 8; Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 234.

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make of these indications of time? First, frequent references to “the faith” do appear to come late in the NT period.¹⁹ Such references appear in Acts 13:8 and 14:2, but also in 1 Cor 13:16, 2 Cor 13:5, and Gal 1:23. In the Prison Epistles the expression is rare (Phil 1:27 and Col 2:7 are the only possible instances). The term occurs in Heb 4:14 (and perhaps in 1 Pet 5:9) and then some thirteen times in the Pastoral Epistles. In other words, while it does occur on occasion by the 50s of the first century (Galatians and Corinthians), it is clearly far more common in works that are dated in the 60s or later.²⁰ It does tend to appear in conflict situations (“fight for the faith” contexts), and while this is especially true in the Pastoral Epistles, it is also true for Hebrews and other references to “the faith.” We conclude that the reference to “the faith” is not a sure indicator of a post-60 date, but that it would tend toward grouping this work with the Pastoral Epistles.

Interpreters also point out that Jude refers to the apostles as a group involved with the past history of his addressees. This is clearly the case, but the accompanying assumption that the apostles are dead and therefore Jude comes from the late first century assumes a position on a number of issues. First, who are these “apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ”? If this is a second-century book, then we are talking about the Twelve and Paul, or some such fixed group as that. In that case it is a little surprising that “holy” or some such adjective has not been added. But in the first century many missionaries were referred to as “apostles.” Paul refers to a couple (or perhaps to a group of missionaries) by this designation in Rom 16:7,²¹ and even in the early second century a Chris-

19. In the listing that follows some data will be assumed that do not show up in English. The issue will be where the definite article indicates “the faith” and where it is only a (Greek) case indicator, meaning “with respect to faith” or something like that. Since this commentary is for English readers, we will not go into detail about these data.

20. We will not discuss the date of the Pastoral Epistles in this commentary. If they are by Paul and if the tradition of his martyrdom under Nero is correct, then they were written before 68. But of course many scholars believe that they come from a later period of the church. Thus they do not help us until we have settled the question of their dating.

21. Michael H. Burer and Daniel B. Wallace, “Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16:7,” *NTS* 47:1 (2001) 76-91, argue that “outstanding among the apostles” is a construction that most likely means “well known by the apostles” or “whose fame is known to the apostles.” However, (1) if they are correct, then it is likely that “apostles” means the wider group of missionaries rather than the Twelve since Paul is writing to Rome, not to people resident in Palestine, which is the only place where the Twelve were as a group, (2) the authors admit that the NIV translation is possible, even if they do not think that it is probable, and (3), upon reading their evidence, we found that at least some of what they felt supported the “exclusive” position (“well known by the apostles”) could as naturally be read as supporting the “inclusive” position (“outstanding among the apostles”). Yet it is unlikely that they are correct, for Linda Belleville again

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tian writer can refer to traveling apostles (*Did.* 11:3-6), so to assume that this refers to a deceased group that is identical with the Twelve may say more about our reading than about Jude's writing. All we know is that these were individuals commissioned at some time (before or after Easter) by Jesus Christ.

Second, the assumption that the expression means that this group of apostles has died is unfounded. Clearly they are no longer present (for if they were present, one would not need to remember what they said), but missionaries often moved on. We need think only about Paul, whose longest stay in a church he founded was about three years. During the founding of the church the missionaries (or the Twelve, if this church were founded by a pair or more of them) made predictions of dangers in the future. Acts records Paul as sometimes doing this when he left a church (e.g., Acts 14:22; 20:29-30). This means that at least by the time of Luke's writing such prophetic warnings were deemed appropriate for traveling missionaries; if Luke is referring to an accurate tradition, then such prophetic warning goes back to the 40s and 50s. Thus the expression in Jude does not necessarily mean that the apostles are dead.

Finally, even if Jude is talking about apostles who are dead, not apostles who have left, there is no reason why this fact should put the date of Jude past A.D. 70. If our traditions are correct, by then Peter and Paul and James were all dead, and likely many of the rest of the Twelve as well.²² Before the execution of James, Peter, or Paul many Christians had died (2 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians both deal with that issue, and both were written before A.D. 60) and certainly missionaries would be among the most likely to die, given the rigors of travel, not to mention the dangers of persecution (Paul survived his travels, but it was not because people did not try to kill him; Stephen did not even leave Jerusalem before he was killed). Thus well within the lifetime of a reasonably long-lived brother of Jesus this language makes sense.

But, we might ask, did such false teachers as those mentioned in Jude live before the end of the first century? For that we will have to consider a wider set of issues, which we will handle below, but let us say at this point that unless the addressees turn out not to have existed during the first century, there are no other date indicators in the work that would

lays out the evidence in "Ιουνην . . . ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις: A Re-examination of Romans 16.7 in Light of Primary Source Materials," *NTS* 51:2 (2005) 231-49, showing that "outstanding among the apostles" is indeed the better translation.

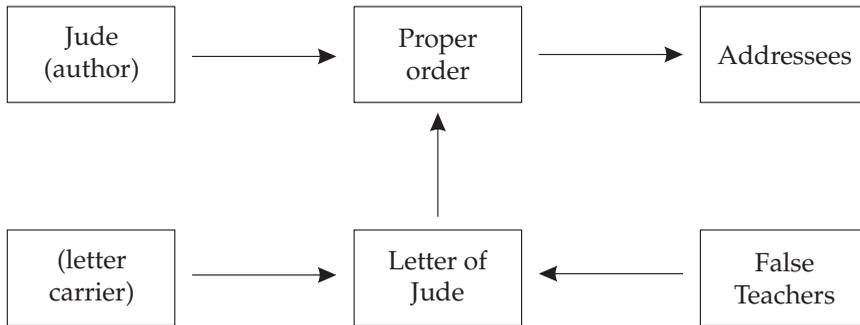
22. If the tradition about the writing of Mark is correct, then it was the silencing or the threat of silencing the apostolic voice that led to the writing of that Gospel, which is the earliest of the Gospels.

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not be at home in pre-70 Palestine, although we freely admit that a date later in the first century is also possible.²³

IV. ADDRESSEES

Our implied story requires a group of addressees for whom the instruction is needed. We could diagram this as follows:²⁴



What this diagram shows is that Jude is trying to bring proper order to his addressees or, perhaps more accurately, to their community. His “agent” is the letter we are reading. The opponent is the false teachers. The presumed letter carrier (without a public postal system there had to be one) functions as the helper. (In those days he would indeed have been a helper, for he may well have read the letter to the addressees and then explained its contents.) Thus, having talked about the author, we now turn to the addressees and then to the false teachers. We take up the letter itself in the commentary text.

Turning to the issue of addressees, then, we discover that Jude does not address a specific group. “Those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ” could designate any group of people committed to Jesus as Lord, whether they were Jewish or Gentile, whether they were Palestinian, Egyptian, or northern Mediterranean. There is neither a geographic descriptor nor even the use of a gen-

23. Jude does not refer to the type of argument found in 2 Peter 3. So we must be careful not to read into Jude a doubting of the Parousia. Jude was useful to 2 Peter, but some of the issues in 2 Peter are unknown to Jude.

24. For a discussion of this type of diagramming of an implied narrative, see N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 69-77. Its origin is in the literary analysis of A. J. Greimas.

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eral term like “Diaspora” (as in Jas 1:1) that would at least indicate that the addressees were external to Palestine. The only thing that we can discern from this address is that Jude is not an evangelistic tract.

Thus we must examine the internal data of the letter to see if we can discover more about this community, however large and scattered it may be. (Any larger believing community in that period, such as the church in Corinth, was a network of house churches, but some letters, e.g., 1 Peter, were not addressed to a single network but to a large, scattered group of networks.) The internal data about the community itself are limited. That is, as noted above, the people are described as believers (Jude 1) whose community is threatened by “intruders” of some type (i.e., “certain men have secretly slipped in among you”; Jude 4). Whether these “intruders” are traveling teachers, who appear to have been common in the first century, or whether by referring to them as intruders Jude is indicating that their teaching means that they are not really part of the Jesus movement or that their teaching is foreign to the movement, we cannot tell. By calling them “intruders” Jude separates them from the community and thus implies that the community itself has not succumbed, which may or may not be a polite or charitable assumption.²⁵

These believers apparently respect James, since Jude identifies himself with respect to James rather than with respect to his own location or parentage.²⁶ We know that the letter of James circulated in the eastern Mediterranean (and possibly Rome) before being widely accepted, and that James was the leader of the Jesus movement in Palestine, so that would be one possible location, although James was also respected in other parts of the church where he was not personally known and his letter was not read. The community Jude addresses is expected to be familiar with the narratives of the Hebrew scriptures, but while many groups in the Jesus movement probably could not afford their own copies of either the Hebrew texts or the Septuagint (the choice of version depending on where they lived and which languages they read), all valued those texts. More telling is the fact that they are expected to be familiar with both 1 *Enoch* and the *Testament of Moses*. The former was probably composed in Palestine (fragments were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls),

25. Neyrey, 2 *Peter, Jude*, 51-53.

26. Jude does include his relationship to Jesus: servant. In other words, he is representing the king, as a servant of Caesar represented Caesar. Paul also likes to use this designation. Both Paul and Peter often add “apostle.” This latter is also a relationship to Jesus in that he had commissioned them to travel with the message of the kingdom, making it appropriate for them to relate to far-flung communities of believers. The titles are not so much offices as “bishop” would become as they are functional relationships vis-à-vis Jesus. They are saying, “I represent Jesus in what I am doing.”

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although it later circulated more widely in both Greek and Ethiopic translations.²⁷ The latter was probably written in a Semitic language by members of the Hasidic movement in Palestine in the early first century.²⁸ It was later translated into Greek and then into Latin. As we look at these data, we conclude that either the author or the addressees probably lived in Palestine since that is where the lines converge (James, *1 Enoch, Testament of Moses*), and that if the author lived in Palestine, then the addressees were a group in the Jesus movement who lived in a Greek-speaking area not too far away. Anywhere in the eastern Mediterranean, including Syria and Egypt, would fit that description. We cannot tell what the racial makeup of the group was. We might suspect that they were predominantly Jewish given the biblical-prophetic tone of the work and the expectation that they will revere the name of James, but then many readers know people who grew up without any significant contact with the church who, after conversion, became fluently bilingual in King James biblical vocabulary, and, as we noted above, Jewish believers were not the only ones to revere the name of James. Still, the evidence does point in a Jewish direction, even if it is far from decisive.

Can the identification of the false teachers tell us anything about the addressees? This is a far more difficult issue. First, we possess little information about the false teachers. Not only do we lack their own presentation of their doctrines, but also Jude does not try to give us a systematic presentation of those doctrines. He gives enough information so that his readers would presumably recognize whom he was referring to, but we are not in their privileged position. Second, it is risky to mirror-read the doctrines of a group from its critics. The language of the critic may be stereotyped rather than a literal description of the people he or she is criticizing, for an important part of rhetoric was to describe the opponent as dishonorable. Thus we have to be careful to read the descriptions through eyes attuned to the first-century culture in which it was written.²⁹ With these caveats in mind, however, we must still attempt to describe those whom he considers false teachers.

27. E. Isaac, "1 Enoch," in Charlesworth, *OTP* 1:6-8.

28. J. Priest, "Testament of Moses," in Charlesworth, *OTP* 1:920-22.

29. Robert J. Karris pointed this issue out for the Pastoral Epistles ("The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *JBL* 92 [1973] 549-64). See also Frederik Wisse, "The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology," in Martin Krause, ed., *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honor of Alexander Bohlig* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 133-43. While we are not as sceptical as either Karris or Wisse, the point we need to take from these studies is that ancient authors did use stereotyped terms to attack their opponents, and thus we should be cautious about reading detailed descriptions out of their accusations.

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	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Comment</i>
v. 4	They are godless.	General statement of impiety
v. 4	They change the grace of our God into a license for immorality.	Immoral
v. 4	They deny Jesus Christ, our only Sovereign and Lord.	We are not told in what sense they deny Jesus, but the titles indicate that it has to do with his authority.
v. 8	These dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority, and slander celestial beings.	Immoral and rebellious
v. 10	These men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand.	Rebellious
v. 11	They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.	Immoral and rebellious
v. 12	Shepherds who feed only themselves	Greedy
vv. 12-13	They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted — twice dead. ¹³ They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars. . . .	Images that will take their meaning from other texts, although "waves of the sea" appears to indicate immorality
v. 16	These men are grumblers and fault-finders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.	Immoral, greedy, rebellious
v. 18	Scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires	Immoral
v. 19	These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.	Immoral, cause divisions

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When we look at this list, a consistent picture begins to appear. First, we do not see any doctrinal issues appearing. Contrary to what is true of most second-century splinter groups, there is hardly any mention of a christological issue. Some have seen the denial of “Jesus Christ, our only Sovereign and Lord” (Jude 4) as a proto-Gnostic denial that the human Jesus was the exalted Christ. While this verse is found in the commentary literature, it is not the position of modern commentators because Jude never discusses the nature of Christ. If some form of Docetism was the belief of his opponents, then Jude totally misses the point. Unlike 2 Peter, Jude does not discuss the delay of the Parousia. Vögtle and Neyrey believe that a denial of the Parousia (or a claim that the Parousia had already taken place) on the part of the false teachers may be implied in (1) the denial of “our Lord Jesus Christ” and the following emphasis on judgment, and (2) the slandering of the angels, whom the NT often pictures as coming with Christ at the time of the judgment.³⁰ This is certainly far more defensible than the proto-Gnostic arguments of a previous age, but it still raises the question as to whether it accurately reflects Jude. It is 2 Peter that defends the Parousia, not Jude. Jude’s false teachers are threatened with judgment, but we never learn on what basis they apparently did not fear it. Did they argue that they were free from the law? Did they argue that deeds done in the body did not matter? (Both of these arguments appear among Paul’s opponents.) Or did they argue that the final judgment would not come,³¹ or, if it did come, that it would not involve them, perhaps like modern church members who do not believe that they will face judgment for their bad behavior because they have “accepted Christ as [their] Savior”? We do not know, for the doctrinal issue is not one that concerns Jude.

So, second, what we do see is a pattern of two basic charges: (1) immorality³² and (2) rebellion. The rebellion is against the angels, Je-

30. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der zweite Petrusbrief*, 7-8; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 31-32.

31. While the delay of the Parousia is not mentioned in Jude, even if it were, it would not necessarily indicate a date later than A.D. 60. Given Jesus’ language about everything being fulfilled in “this generation” and the repeated language in the NT about the climactic events happening “soon,” and given that the average life span in that day was about thirty-five to forty years, within thirty years of Jesus’ resurrection some people must have wondered what the delay was about and by forty years most of the first generation was dead. That reality would lead to the question of whether Jesus was wrong about “this generation” and whether “soon” could be stretched that long. The idea that it had somehow already happened (seen in 2 Thessalonians 2) was only one solution; another was surely that the Christian leaders had interpreted Jesus wrongly and there was no Parousia, at least none in the way it had been presented.

32. Since immorality in Jude generally points to sexual misconduct, and since it certainly does in the minds of modern readers, we should note that there is also the less

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sus (in that they are not following his lifestyle), and probably the leadership of the Jesus movement (this would explain the reference to Korah, those in vv. 10 and 16 to evil speech, and that in v. 19 to their causing divisions). The immorality is at root a giving way to their “desires.” What we have, then, is some form of antinomianism in which the teachers whom Jude opposes are following a lifestyle that he believes is characterized by unbridled desire and whose position is an honor challenge to the leadership of the Jesus movement and the holy angels (whom Paul believes have something to do with the holiness of the community — 1 Cor 11:10). While these descriptions are general and stereotyped, they are the only information that he gives us and thus must have been enough to let his readers know which group or groups he was warning against. We do not think that this is merely an honor challenge and that the immorality accusations are simply a way of labeling the opponents impure,³³ for if that were the case, too much space is devoted to the issues of immorality and not enough to the issue of rebellion. Also, somewhere one would expect Jude to indicate what the challenge was about.

When and where did such teaching arise? If it arose in Palestine, it certainly was not in circles of the Jesus movement influenced by Pharisaism. Most likely we are talking about communities in areas whose surrounding community was Gentile and where there was less support for Jewish moral standards. Syria (Antioch) and Egypt (Alexandria) would both fit this description, for in both places there are highly Hellenized cities where we know that there were communities of the Jesus movement. Furthermore, both had concentrations of Jews and thus of Jewish followers of Jesus, which would ensure contact with the core of Jewish followers of Jesus in Palestine and ensure that Gentiles joining the community would be well versed in the Jewish scriptures and traditions. Given that there is no language that we can specifically identify with Alexandrian thought and that the sphere of influence of James appears to have extended north of Judea more than south, Galilee (with its Gentile cities such as Sepphoris and Tiberias) and Syria might be the more likely areas (one should include in this area the largely Gentile coastal cities of Palestine such as Joppa and Caesarea), but given that Jude is as much a tract as a letter, there is no real reason not to include the whole sweep of the eastern Mediterranean where the Jerusalem leaders were revered.

As for date, we should think of a time after Paul’s law-free teaching had become accepted. Our letter often cites stories of judgment from the

frequent charge of their being greedy. But we include greed under immorality, since a person is controlled by desire whether he or she is greedy for money, sex, or food.

³³. So Neyrey, 2 *Peter, Jude*, 51-52.

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OT, but it never cites the decalogue as law. Apparently a “you shall not” from the Torah would not have been a convincing argument or was not an argument that our author was inclined to use. Yet the stories carry weight. It is difficult to tell whether or not the temple in Jerusalem is still standing. One would think that the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple would be a fine example of divine judgment on sinners. But given that the sins of Jerusalem were not of the same type as the apparent sins of the false teachers, the destruction of Jerusalem might not have been thought relevant. Virtually any date after 50 or 55 could be defended.³⁴ It does not take too long for libertinism to infiltrate a church, at least in a Gentile context, as Paul would attest from his experience in Corinth. Furthermore, the later one goes after the death of James (A.D. 61 or 62), the more likely that James would have received some title (e.g., “holy,” “blessed,” “martyr”). Whatever the case with the titles for James, the latest date possible is the date of 2 Peter, since we will argue in the Introduction to 2 Peter that 2 Peter uses Jude (pp. 136-43). But, as we noted above (pp. 14-17), that allows a wide range of dates, given that the date of 2 Peter is disputed. With this vagueness we have to be content, for Jude did not see fit to give us more specific information.

V. LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE

Jude is an actual letter. That is, unlike 2 Peter where the letter salutation appears to be tacked onto something that is more like a tract (there is no letter closing), Jude follows the conventions of Hellenistic letter writing, producing an outline like this:

Letter Opening: Salutation (vv. 1-2)

Letter Body

Body Opening (vv. 3-4)

Body Proper (Sometimes Called “Body Middle”) (vv. 5-16)

Body Closing (17-23)

Letter Closing: Benediction (vv. 24-25)

34. Even if Paul’s teaching was officially accepted by A.D. 50 (i.e., the Jerusalem Council came after Gal 2:11-14) — and this is not at all sure, for many scholars believe that Gal 2:1-10 indicates Paul’s version of the Jerusalem Council rather than its coming after Galatians, and in this case Peter had not gotten the point fully sometime later (Gal 2:11-14) — it would take some time for the teaching to become widespread and teachers to start taking it to extremes that Paul would not have countenanced.

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Having noted that this structure is clearly visible, we should also note that Jude's use of it differs somewhat from the standard forms that we have in the NT. First, while the letter opening is normal enough (although the recipients are described only as believers with no location being given or implied), there is no thanksgiving. This is not unprecedented in the NT letters (e.g., Galatians also has none), but it is a bit different. Second, the letter closing has only a benediction. There are no greetings, summary, health wish, or purpose statement such as we find in many NT letters. Given the general nature of the addressees, one would not expect personal greetings, and it is possible that the purpose statement is implied in the benediction, which also serves as a type of health wish, but even if we accept those as the reasons for the truncation, Jude has a rather sudden and brief letter closing.

Rhetorically the letter is deliberative rhetoric, which is to say that it is asking its readers to make decisions on a course of action with reference to the future.³⁵ Watson's rhetorical analysis looks like this:³⁶

- Epistolary Prescript* (vv. 1-2)
- Exordium* (v. 3) (Purpose)
- Narratio* (v. 4) (Shared Assumptions)
- Probatio* (vv. 5-16) (Arguments)
 - First Proof (vv. 5-10)
 - Second Proof (vv. 11-13)
 - Third Proof (vv. 14-16)
- Peroratio* (vv. 17-23) (Concluding Exhortation)
- Doxology (vv. 24-25)

The only problem with this neat structure is that, while an educated Greco-Roman would in all likelihood consciously structure his argument following more or fewer such steps, in Jude the letter form has an over-riding literary structure, and within the letter structure rhetorical form is secondary and often modified.³⁷ This is why Jude's rhetorical pattern does not fit the Greco-Roman ideal. What we can say is that Jude has had some rhetorical education, but it is unclear whether he has had

35. Duane Frederick Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (SBLDS 104; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 32-33.

36. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style*, 77-78.

37. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 26-27. This is also true for the Pauline letters, which is one reason why Galatians, e.g., starts out looking very much like forensic rhetoric in a letter format and then becomes more deliberative in style, the rhetorical structures blurring after the start of ch. 3. The rhetorical handbooks were studied during one's education, but in the practice of letter writing they were often not followed too closely.

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more than the rhetorical education that would come with a basic Hellenistic education.

It is also clear that Jude uses repetitive patterns for emphasis. The most obvious are the triplets that he cites from Jewish tradition:

People who left Egypt — Angels who did not keep position —
Sodom/Gomorrah (vv. 5-7)
Cain — Balaam — Korah (v. 11)

However, notice these other repetitive patterns, some triplets and some longer:

Called — loved — kept (v. 1)
Grace — mercy — love (v. 2)
Pollute — reject — slander (v. 8)
Clouds — trees — waves — stars (vv. 12-13)
Ungodly — ungodly — ungodly (v. 15)
Divide — follow — without the Spirit (v. 19)
Be merciful — save — show mercy (vv. 22-23)

Various authors have detected far more patterns in Jude than this, some of which are convincing and some less convincing.³⁸ The point is that Jude loves to pile up terms for rhetorical effect, a phenomenon that appears elsewhere in the OT and NT. This means that the individual terms need to be taken as less important than the total picture generated, which fact is often forgotten given the atomistic nature of modern exegesis.

Clearly Jude has a good command of Greek vocabulary. He introduces eighteen words into the vocabulary of the NT (four may be borrowed from one or another Greek translation of the OT), only three of which were picked up by 2 Peter. He also uses another twenty-two words that are rare in the NT. Now, as Bauckham notes, these data require careful evaluation. Jude uses some unusual images, so his use of unusual vocabulary is not surprising. Furthermore, some of the terms he uses are quite common in nonbiblical Greek, just not in the NT. At the end of the day only a few of his words turn out to be truly rare.³⁹ Still, we certainly have an author who is skillful in Greek, although not without the occasional Semitism, which may come from his familiarity with biblical literature.

38. See the list in Neyrey, 2 *Peter, Jude*, 28. He is following J. Daryl Charles, "Literary Artifice in the Epistle of Jude," *ZNW* 82 (1991) 106-24.

39. Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 *Peter*, 6.

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It is surprising that Jude does not show great familiarity with the Septuagint (LXX). The fact is that, while he has picked up some expressions from the LXX (expressions that were probably common in the community in which he lived), there is no place in the work where he actually quotes it and there are some places where what he does say is significantly different from it, assuming that he is indeed alluding to the OT and not using a phrase that has passed into Christian usage (see Jude 11 and Num 26:9; Jude 12 and Ezek 34:2; Jude 23 and Amos 4:11 or Zech 3:3). Richard Bauckham argues that in two places (Jude 12 alluding to Ezek 34:2 and likely to Prov 25:14, and Jude 13 alluding to Isa 57:20) Jude must be referring to the *Hebrew* text since the LXX text does not make the point that Jude is making.⁴⁰ Bauckham's point is that the phrase "clouds without rain," "feed only themselves," and "foaming up their shame" (with respect to waves) allude to these Old Testament passages and the phrases that they allude to are not found in the LXX, but only in the Hebrew text of the respective passages. In order to establish this, he has to argue two things: (1) Jude is consciously referring to these passages, and (2) the language is not found in the LXX but is in the Hebrew. He certainly does establish (2), for in two of the three cases the LXX diverges enough from the Hebrew that Jude cannot be directly referring to the LXX (in the case of "clouds without rain" and Prov 25:14 Jude is rather unlike either the LXX or the Hebrew). What is not as well established is (1) in that "clouds without rain" could have become proverbial (as noted above, the Hebrew text has "clouds and wind without rain," so it is not identical) even if it did come from the Hebrew text. The same is true for "shepherds who feed only themselves" (Jude shares only the grammatical form and the meaning with the Hebrew). "Foaming up" in Jude is also not identical to the Hebrew "waves [of the sea] cast[ing] up mire and mud," although, since the Isaiah reference is to "the wicked," it does fit Jude's context. Our conclusion is that Bauckham could be right, but the evidence is not conclusive. If he is correct, then Jude clearly knows Hebrew as well as Greek. If he is not, all we know about Jude is that he is educated in Greek and knows at least some phrases that came from the Hebrew OT. We believe that, while the evidence is not conclusive, it is at least likely that Jude lived in a community that was in contact with the Hebrew text, whether or not his reference to that text is totally conscious.

This discussion of language and structure also has something to say about the cultural background of the work. What it indicates is that our author was a person who had roots in a community where the Hebrew

40. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 7. He further argues that in Jude 6 and 14 Jude is using the Aramaic text of *1 Enoch*, although in Jude 15 he shows knowledge of the Greek text.

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scriptures were used and who quite possibly read Hebrew and Aramaic himself. In addition, he had a good Hellenistic education. We should not think of him as being among the intellectually elite, but neither was he an uneducated peasant. It is not that he simply knows the Bible, but that he knows the Bible and has a decent education. Whether or not this describes Jude the brother of Jesus we cannot know. The level of education our author has was available in Palestine, but for him (whether he is Jude or someone else) to receive it someone had to value it enough to finance it. While Jude appears to be “normal” enough in the eyes of his surrounding culture when he appears in the Gospels, we do not know his profession and thus do not know if he had somehow received an education. When it comes to how much education Jude the brother of Jesus had, we are going by guesswork.

In our discussion of authorship above, we put off any decision until we had examined the addressees and the literary style of Jude. Without samples of writing known to be from Jude and without knowledge of his education and history, we cannot establish that Jude is the author of this work. But without significant speculation about what Jude *could have* written and what education he *could have* received, we cannot know that he could not have written this work. Could a carpenter working on Sepphoris (a major building project within walking distance of Nazareth that was under construction during the years of Jesus’ youth) have developed contacts that enabled one of his sons to gain a good Hellenistic education? Would the son of a Jewish carpenter have wanted that education if he had had the opportunity?⁴¹ We are told that his brother Jesus could read Hebrew and possibly Greek (he could certainly converse in Greek); had that stimulated Jude to seek an education?⁴² Might a carpenter’s son who joined the Jesus movement in his late teens or early twenties have pursued a Hellenistic education in support of his ministry? We do not know the answers to any of these questions. What this means is that we do not have the capacity to evaluate the quality of Greek that Jude could or could not write.⁴³ “Carpen-

41. See A. R. Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (Biblical Seminar 69; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), for an examination of the issue of the extent of reading and writing in Palestine in the first century.

42. In Luke 4:16 Jesus is reported to have read the Scriptures (which would have been in Hebrew unless it were a Greek-speaking synagogue, and there is little reason to suppose that it was). If Mark 12:16 (and parallels) indicates that Jesus knew the content of the inscription on the coin (e.g., the claims of divinity for Augustus and the claim to be high priest), then he may well have been able to read Greek. But it is possible that he guessed the inscription from the picture and did not intend to make any other point than the identity of the image on the coin.

43. One can, of course, assert that a secretary or amanuensis was responsible for

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ter” may sound lower class enough that one may think that the quality of Greek is problematic for his son.

On the other hand, none of the explanations why someone would use Jude as a pseudonym is convincing. There were too many better-known leaders in the Jesus movement. The name does fit the likely provenance of the author and his obvious saturation with stories from the OT, but his brother James was far better known, and Peter would have been an even better pseudonym if one wanted a wide circulation. Jude was not so well known to his target audience that he did not have to identify himself by James. Thus, unless we posit a person with a particular personal interest in Jude, there is no good explanation for the choice of the name unless Jude were indeed the author. Perhaps we should let the language of the letter define for us Jude’s education rather than to posit a possible education for the relative unknown Jude, and then argue that he could not have written the letter because he did not have the required education. Was Jude the author of Jude? God alone knows, but the arguments against his authorship do not have the type of historical data needed to establish them.

VI. THEOLOGY

Theology in its broadest sense is reflection upon a worldview (worldview including especially the nature of God and his relationship to the world)⁴⁴ and its implications; thus for our purposes it is shorthand for the

the Greek, but given that the Greek style is intricate, that makes the amanuensis in some sense the co-author of the letter (assuming that the named author had a chance to read the work and agreed to what had been written). This also introduces a complicating hypothesis. It is not that anyone doubts that an amanuensis was used. Most people in the first century A.D. used an amanuensis for any actual writing that they did, since such people were skilled not only in writing but also in preparing and keeping ink and papyrus in the proper condition for writing. (See E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004].) However, to posit that such a scribe (whose name, skills, and relationship to our author we know nothing about) was a co-author (or the dominant author if the named author gave him only a general impulse for writing the letter and/or did not have a chance to review and correct it) of the letter is a step into the hypothetical. Is it possible? It certainly is. Do we have any reason to assume that it is what happened? The only reasons would be that (1) we are convinced that the attribution to Jude is historically accurate, and (2) we are convinced that this Jude that we know so little about could not have written the letter that we have before us.

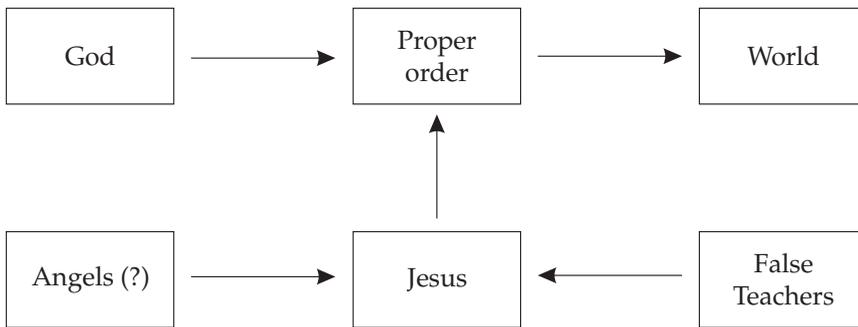
44. Strictly speaking, theology is “the study or science of God” (so Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985], 21), but, as Erickson himself

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worldview that informs the letter. To put it a different way, theology arises from the story or set of stories that underlies the worldview of the author.

Jude is an extremely short letter, so the first thing one must say about its theology is that since it comes from the Jesus movement we must assume that most of his theology is held in common with that movement, that is, the expectation of the kingdom of God, come in Jesus of Nazareth and coming to fruition in the future. This is the interpretation of the phase of the story of Israel that the early Jesus movement held. However, even such a short letter as this reveals the particular shape of the story that is the focus of Jude's attention, the implied story that he is applying.

Returning to our narrative diagram, the general story looks like this:



Jude reveals the most about four of the narrative functions: (1) the sender, namely, God, (2) the agent, namely, Jesus, (3) the opponents, namely, the false teachers (who show the nature of evil in general), and then (4) what good order looks like, namely, judgment. This judgment recalls a number of earlier phases of the larger story, phrases found in the Pentateuch and literature that expanded on the Pentateuch. We will look at these narrative functions in order.

First, the letter is framed by references to God. In v. 2 it is "God the

goes on to state, this includes reflection upon creation as a work of God and issues of general culture and learning (e.g., natural science, psychology, and philosophy, all of which are named by Erickson, whom we chose because he does carefully define theology). In other words, it reflects upon the elements of a worldview. Properly speaking, it should be a theistic worldview, but given that nontheistic worldviews often have elements that function as God does in theistic worldviews, broadly speaking we could say that to the extent that they are reflective they also have a theology, even if it is a theology without an acknowledged *theos* (god).

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Father" or "Father God" who loves his people (or in whom they are loved, depending on how one reads the Greek *en*, although the passive could be a circumlocution for the active), and in v. 25 it is "God our Savior" who is keeping them from falling and preparing to present them in his royal court. In both cases this being is distinguished from "Jesus Christ"/"Jesus Christ our Lord." Unlike 2 Peter, Jude does not allow for the possibility that the title "God" is being applied to Jesus. But this means that God the Father is the "sender," the active agent in loving, probably in selecting, protecting, and saving his readers. This is not an austere or absent God, but a God very much involved in their lives. He has been present in their selection, he is present in his love, and he will be present in their salvation, since the title "Savior" here as everywhere in the NT is connected to eschatological deliverance rather than to the event of the cross (see the discussion of the title in the Introduction to 2 Peter, pp. 152-54). With a "Father" (or family head) like this, his readers are in a privileged position.

If God is presented as the family head, as the framework, so to speak, of all the good his people have received, Jesus is presented as his agent, as the leader of the people of God, as the sovereign of God's kingdom. Jude is Jesus' servant, probably thought of in relationship to a king. They are kept "by" (NIV) or "for" (NRSV) Jesus Christ (depending on how the Greek dative is read), the one reading viewing him as the king protecting his people and the other viewing him as the king who will receive his people. Jesus is "our only Sovereign and Lord," a politically explosive title, given that Caesar was known by those terms⁴⁵ (it would be similar to calling Jesus "our only Commander in Chief and President" in the United States).⁴⁶ This Sovereign has delegates whom he sends out with his message (Jude 17, remembering that "delegate" or "one who is sent" is the meaning of "apostle"). He is expected to come with mercy for those who keep themselves "in God's love"; that is, he will bring them eternal life (v. 21). Finally, this Sovereign is the one through whom honor is given to God (v. 25), which means that he is viewed as a subking under God as high king.

Quite possibly Jude is not only viewing Jesus as the Sovereign

45. Josephus (*War* 7.418-19) reports of a group of Jewish rebels that, despite severe torture, none of them would "confess or seem to confess that Caesar was their lord [Sovereign — same word as in Jude]." See further Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "*doxa*," *TDNT* 2:45.

46. We pick the United States because its President is simultaneously head of state and head of government and thus in a sense more sovereign (and viewed as more sovereign) than is the case in such English-speaking countries as the United Kingdom and Canada where those roles are separated between the Queen (or Governor General in Canada as the Queen's representative) and the Prime Minister (although, as those who know these countries realize, the theory may not match the reality).

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within the contemporary period but also seeing him as God's agent in the Hebrew scriptures and other Jewish literature. Having mentioned Jesus as Lord in v. 4, he goes on in v. 5 to refer to "the Lord" who delivered "his people out of Egypt." Some of the oldest manuscripts have "Jesus" or "Christ" instead of "Lord," showing at least a very old interpretation of the text and possibly the original text itself. At the least the juxtaposition of the term "Lord" in Jude 4 and 5 suggests that the same person is in view (especially since Jude never clearly uses "Lord" for God) and that Jude is reading the Exodus account in terms of Jesus. In that case Jude may be viewing Jesus as the one who imprisoned the fallen angels (Jude 6) and to whom Michael appeals in Jude 9. Whether that is the case or not, it is likely that Jude views *1 Enoch's* "Lord" as Jesus, who is coming with his angels to execute judgment. This is what we would expect from God's sovereign executive. It also fits the eschatological picture of 1 Thess 4:16; 2 Thess 1:7; and Rev 19:11-21. In other words, it is the common NT eschatological picture. Jesus, then, in Jude is the Sovereign who is coming at the end of the age to establish God's good order, but whose involvement with the world stretches back to the great events of Israel's history, as Jude, in common with other NT writers, retells Israel's history in terms of Jesus. He is God's executive agent indeed, a Sovereign who is to be respected.

In contrast to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is barely mentioned, a viewpoint that Jude shares with 2 Peter (which differs from 1 Peter, which mentions the Spirit relatively frequently). Jude's two references to the Spirit come in Jude 19 and 20. The false teachers do not have the Spirit, which is another way of saying that their inspiration is from another source than God. The positive use of the Holy Spirit is related to prayer, for true believers are to "pray in the Holy Spirit" (a similar usage occurs in 1 Cor 14:15, where Paul speaks of praying "in the Spirit," i.e., under divine inspiration or in tongues, versus praying "in my mind"). Thus the Spirit is the one who inspires the true believer and is absent from the pseudo-believer. This function of the Spirit is also similar to that referred to by 2 Peter, although in 2 Peter it is the ancient prophets who were inspired by the Spirit, while in Jude it is contemporary believers. At any rate, the Spirit's activity in this literature is limited to inspiration. We do not find the same connection of the Spirit to sanctification or evangelization that we find elsewhere in the NT.

When it comes to the human condition and its solution, the main problems mentioned are (1) the rejection of the authority of the Sovereign, whether in the past (as in the case of the angels who abandoned their honorable position) or in the present (as in the case of the false teachers who reject the authority of the Sovereign by their rebellious lifestyle), and (2) the giving in to desire (implied in v. 4 and stated explicitly

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in vv. 16 and 19). The charges of greed and slander are probably subspecies of these two basic charges. Salvation, or eternal life, is obtained by submitting to the authority of the Sovereign, which means holding “the faith,” a faith or commitment that was given to the “holy ones,” that is, those who are separate from impurity. Thus we have the contrast impurity (desire)–holiness paralleled by rebellion against–submission to the Sovereign. God grants grace or mercy so that one can shift from the dishonorable group into the holy/honorable group. This is the same mercy that the true believers received and thus should show toward the false teachers and their followers: they are not (yet) beyond hope. However, despite being capable of receiving mercy (and thus the believers are not to cut them off totally), the false teachers are polluting (apparently it is their sexual misbehavior that he views as especially polluting). It is polluting to the true believers to have these teachers in their celebrations of the Lord’s Supper (at that time a full meal); thus, when these followers of the false teachers respond to mercy and submit to the Sovereign (including his ethical standards), one must be careful not to allow their pollution to come with them. Here we have a first-century version of “love the sinner and hate the sin,” in which the focus is on rescue. While purity issues are not to be ignored, the main point is not “Kick these folk out and keep yourselves pure” but “Rescue as many as you can (but do take care, for they have a contagious disease).”

Although people who have been “delivered” can be destroyed (Jude 5), true believers are not to live in fear (other than fear of the pollution that the false teachers might bring with them), for God is able to keep them from falling. They will not be overcome by evil against their will. In this part of Jude the community becomes the agent and Jesus fades back to the position of overlord.

The ultimate hope of the believing community (i.e., the description of the ultimate proper order) is for “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.” That is, eternal life is in the future and not a present possession. This phrase apparently refers to the coming of Christ to usher his true followers into the full experience of his reign. What will happen to those who do not receive this mercy is never stated explicitly except in the words of *1 Enoch*, which speaks about “these men.” Still, even without this more explicit statement, all of the examples given are of men or angels who experienced judgment and destruction as a result of their way of life and specifically as a result of their rebellion or living lives controlled by desire. Indeed, one wonders whether an explicit description of the fate awaiting them could be as dark as the implications from the repeated references to these well-known stories. Jude leaves it to the imagination of the readers to fill in the unexpressed blanks, and shudder.

Commentary on Jude

I. LETTER OPENING: SALUTATION (vv. 1-2)

*¹Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,
To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept
by Jesus Christ: ²Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.*

A Greek letter normally begins with a salutation in the form x to y. Jude 1-2 forms that salutation in our letter. Compared to some of the Pauline letters it is quite brief (perhaps because, unlike Paul's, Jude's position and influence were not in dispute), yet it covers the basic parts of a salutation: identification of the author, identification of the addressees, and a greeting formula.

1 The author identifies himself as Jude. Obviously, Jude or Judas (the Greek form of the Hebrew name Judah) was a common name among Jewish Christians since it was a common name among Jews. For example, Jesus chose only twelve apostles, and two of them were named Judas. Therefore, to which of the many Judases in the early church does Jude 1 refer?

First, we need to look at the other elements in the author's self-description to see if they give us any more information. In the next element he identifies himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ." This type of formula is common in the NT, especially in the greetings in letters. For example, look at the following:

Rom 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God —

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- Gal 1:10 If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.
- Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings.
- Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness —
- Jas 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
- 2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,
- Jude 1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.

We quickly see that this was not a fixed formula, but a common way of referring to oneself and esteemed colleagues. It could be varied by including God with Christ or by simply saying "servant of God" rather than "servant of Christ." Yet even with this variation, it was clearly meaningful to the writers of NT epistles. The Greek term for "servant" used in this formula is *doulos*, meaning "slave," which was not a high-status position in society. Therefore, it is not immediately obvious why free men (which is the status of these NT writers) would use such a title. Is it because of their humility? If so, why would they couple the term with "delegate" (i.e., "apostle"), as is done in several of the examples in our table? This combination of terms indicates that in the minds of the users of "servant," it is not a term of humility per se ("I am just a nobody"), but an indication that in their eyes their status comes, not from themselves but from the one to whom they belong and whose delegate they are. In the Greek OT Moses, among others, is called the "servant of the LORD" (e.g., Exod 14:31; Deut 34:5; Josh 1:1-2 plus fifteen more times in that book).¹ Thus "servant" or "slave" is clearly an honorific term if it is connected with "of Jesus" or "of the Lord," not because of the personal honor status of the slave but because of the honor status of the owner. This fits with what we know of the culture of the Roman Empire, in which highly placed imperial slaves had tremendous authority, for they represented their master, Caesar. While technically they held only the social rank of slave (i.e., a social zero), because of whose slaves they were they were to be treated with respect, for to disregard Caesar's slave doing Caesar's business was to disregard Caesar.

So Jude is, in a quiet way, using a stereotyped phrase that indicates

1. Jesus is also referred to as the servant of the Lord (Acts 3:13; 4:27, 30), although in these references Acts uses a different Greek term than the one Jude does. The term in Acts can mean either "child" or "slave."

that his authority is the authority of one who represents Jesus. That is, he is recalling the implied narrative that Jesus rules and will return as world ruler and identifying his relationship to that ruler as one of “servant.” It is not that Jude himself has any authority (that he is in some way “God’s anointed”) or that Jude himself has personal social status, but that he participates in a larger story in which there is a Sovereign, whose authority Jude (and others in the NT period) represents. This is humility — or, even better, honesty as to his status — but it is a humility that also recognizes his delegated authority.²

He further identifies himself as “a brother of James.” John Calvin thought that this indicated that Jude was the member of the Twelve referred to as “Judas of James” (Luke 6:16; John 14:22; Acts 1:13).³ However, Jude clearly identifies himself as the brother (*adelphos*) of James, and the phrase “Judas of James” would normally be understood as “Judas son of James.” Furthermore, Jude nowhere refers to himself as a delegate (i.e., “apostle”)⁴ or one of the Twelve. Finally, Calvin complicates his theory further by arguing that this apostle Jude was also a brother of Jesus, which is unlikely because Jesus’ brothers are never said to be among his followers until after his resurrection (Mark 3:20-21; John 7:5; Acts 1:14). However, Calvin is correct in recognizing that there was only one James in the early church who was well enough known to be referred to simply

2. On the use of this phrase and slavery in the Greco-Roman world, see Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 670-73; James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 189-91; and Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 8; Downers Grove, IL/Leicester, U.K.: InterVarsity Press/Apollos, 2001).

3. Calvin, *The Catholic Epistles*, 428.

4. Because the term “apostle” has developed a religious connotation, we will generally use the term “delegate.” For the NT writers the term itself was used in many contexts. Although in secular Greek it was limited to military expeditions and seafaring ventures, Jews used an Aramaic/Hebrew term that our term translates to indicate a variety of people who were sent to conduct business in the name of the sender. (See the proverbial use of the Greek term in John 13:16: “delegate” and “the one sending.”) It is only by adding “of Jesus Christ” either explicitly or in the context that the NT authors are able to indicate whose delegate they are. See K. H. Rengstorf, “*apostolos*,” *TDNT* 1:407-46. Interestingly enough, the Twelve are normally called “trainees” or “apprentices” (i.e., “disciples”) or just “the Twelve” except in contexts referring to Jesus’ sending them on a mission (where “delegate”/“apostle” is used) until we enter the post-resurrection period in Luke–Acts. After that normally the Twelve are meant until Acts 14, with 14:14 making it clear that Barnabas and Paul are also authorized delegates (i.e., “apostles”). Paul, of course, is very conscious of his direct commission from Christ, as well as of the fact that being an authorized delegate of Jesus is a gift that others may receive (1 Cor 12:28-29 in the context of the discussion on spiritual gifts).