

The Eschatology of the Epistle of Jude and Its Rhetorical and Social Functions¹

Robert L. Webb

Regina, Saskatchewan

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Jude's eschatology is oriented around the twin poles of eschatological salvation and judgment with the latter being more prominent. Judgment in Jude includes not only past and future judgment but present judgment as well. Allusions to past judgment highlight the punishment aspect of the judicial process while references to future and present judgment highlight laying charges and producing a guilty verdict. The rhetorical function of Jude's eschatology is: (1) to convince his readers also to engage in judgment: to pronounce the intruders guilty of ungodliness, and (2) to reassure his readers that they themselves will not be judged but instead are being guarded by God. The social function of Jude's eschatology is to bring about a separation between the original community and the intruders. These two functions address both the external threat of the intruders themselves and the internal threat of their negative impact on the readers' ethics, theology, and unity.

Key words: Jude, eschatology, judgment, rhetoric

1. INTRODUCTION

The epistle of Jude suffers from being among the most neglected books of the New Testament.² It has also frequently been seriously misunderstood when attention has been paid to it. For example, it has been misunderstood by being characterized as a product of "early catholicism."³ In his superb commentary on Jude, Richard Bauckham has countered this view quite convincingly, arguing that Jude should

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not be viewed as a product of early catholicism, but rather as having arisen within apocalyptic Jewish Christianity. Not only does the epistle manifest a strong Jewish character, it has been significantly influenced by Jewish apocalyptic texts. Bauckham observes that Jude "does not assert apocalyptic eschatology against denials of it (as Paul in 1 Cor 15 does, and as 2 Pet 3 does). Jude's apocalyptic is not at all self-conscious. It is the world-view within which he naturally thinks and which he takes it for granted his readers accept."⁴

¹ I wish to acknowledge several people who have contributed to this article by reading earlier drafts: Gordon Fee, Rodney Remin, Paul Spilsbury, and Sara Winter.

² Douglas J. Rowston, "The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament," *NTS* 21 (1974-75) 554-63.

³ E.g., Karl Hermann Schelkle, "Spätapostolische Briefe als frühkatholisches Zeugnis," in *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze: Festschrift für Josef Schmid zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. J. Blinzler, O. Kuss, and E. Mussner; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1963) 225-32.

⁴ Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco, TX: Word, 1983) 8-11, quote from 11.

A second way in which Jude has been misunderstood is by being pejoratively characterized as concerned almost exclusively with harsh judgment. J. N. D. Kelly describes modern readers as being "put off by Jude's almost unrelievedly denunciatory tone."⁵ Bauckham has also helped to correct this misunderstanding. He has demonstrated that Jude has a careful literary structure in its use of the theme of judgment and makes extensive use of midrashic exegesis in the development of this theme.⁶

In both these examples, Bauckham has contributed to a better understanding of Jude by appreciating its eschatology. The present article builds upon the work of Bauckham by analyzing the nature of the eschatology presented in Jude in order to appreciate the rhetorical and social functions that this eschatology has in the strategy of the epistle.

2. THE NATURE OF THE ESCHATOLOGY IN JUDE

Jude's eschatology is oriented around the twin poles common to most eschatological schemata: eschatological judgment and eschatological salvation. We examine each of these in turn beginning with eschatological salvation.

2.1. *Eschatological Salvation in Jude*

The theme of eschatological salvation is most clearly stated in the appeal in verse 21, in which Jude exhorts his readers to be "looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." The term "mercy" (ἔλεος) was frequently used to identify the hope of

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eschatological salvation,⁷ and the verb "to look forward" (προσδέχομαι) is used to express anticipation of that hope.⁸ Eschatological salvation is also hinted at in the opening salutation, in which the readers are described as those who are "kept safe for Jesus Christ" (v. 1b).⁹ Both

⁵ J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (BNTC; London: Black, 1969) 233. Cf. Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1901) 311.

⁶ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 3-6. For this latter point Bauckham is dependent on the earlier work done by E. Earle Ellis, "Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Judea" in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 220-36.

⁷ E.g., 2 Macc 7:23, 29; *Pss. Sol.* 8:27-28; 10:4; 14:9; *1 Enoch* 5:5-6; 27:4; *T. Jud.* 23:5; *T. Zeb.* 8:2; *T. Naph.* 4:5; *Matt* 5:7; 2 *Tim* 1:18; 1 *Clem.* 28:1; *Herm. Vis.* 3:9:8. Cf. ἐλεέω in *Pss. Sol.* 7:10; 10:6; *T. Dan* 5:9; cf. ἐλεήμων in *Pss. Sol.* 10:7; cf. ἔλεως in 2 Macc 2:7 (A reads ἔλεος).

Jude's use of ἔλεος in v. 21 to allude to Christ's parousia may be influenced by the Greek text of *1 Enoch* 1:8 in particular, for it describes eschatological salvation as "mercy shall come upon them" (ἐπ' αὐτοὺς γενήσεται ἔλεος). Jude has already cited the succeeding verse (*1 Enoch* 1:9) in vv. 14-15 as a reference to Christ bringing judgment at the parousia.

⁸ For the verb προσδέχομαι, "to wait for, expect" (BAGD, 712), in eschatological contexts see *Mark* 15:43 = *Luke* 23:51; *Luke* 2:25, 38; *Tit* 2:13. Cf. ἀπεκδέχομαι in *Rom* 8:19, 23, 25; 1 *Cor* 1:7; *Gal* 5:5; *Phil* 3:20; *Heb* 9:28. Cf. the following synonyms: ἐκδέχομαι in *Heb* 11:10; *Barn.* 10:11; 2 *Clem.* 12:1; προσδοκῶ in *Matt* 11:3 = *Luke* 7:19-20; 2 *Pet* 3:12-14; *1 Clem.* 23:5; *Ign. Poly.* 3:2.

⁹ The verb, τηρέω, "to keep, guard, preserve" (BAGD, 814-15), is used in early Christian literature with an eschatological orientation. E.g., 1 *Thes* 5:23; 1 *Pet* 1:4; 2 *Pet* 2:4, 9, 17; 3:7; *Mart. Pol.* 2:3; compare *Jude* 21 and *John* 17:11-12; compare *Jude* 6, 13 with *T. Reub.* 5:5.

these references allude to the parousia.¹⁰ In verse 21 the parousia of Jesus Christ is not only a time when he will extend mercy to believers, the parousia is itself mercy for believers—that which has been anticipated is now fulfilled; that which has been endured is now done away. In verse 1 the parousia of Jesus Christ is the anticipated goal for which God guards believers.¹¹

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Similarly, in the first half of the letter's concluding benediction, Jude affirms for his readers that God "is able... to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing" (v. 24). This reference probably pictures "the eschatological festival of worship."¹² After the parousia the people of God are presented before him as sacrifices without blemish, who worship the one who kept them safe (v. 1b) and guarded them (v. 24).¹³

2.2. Eschatological Judgment in Jude

While this epistle does refer to eschatological salvation, it is quite evident that the most prominent feature of this epistle's eschatology is the theme of judgment.

Two general observations need to be made before we proceed to examine this theme more closely. First of all, the concept of eschatological judgment is an analogy drawn from human judicial systems.¹⁴ A judicial system incorporates various elements, including a charge laid

Jude uses the verb τηρέω in a wordplay. Believers are "preserved" by God in anticipation of the parousia (v. 1). The disenfranchised angels (v. 6) did not "preserve" their first position, and so their punishment is that they are "preserved" in eternal chains. Similarly, judgment of deep darkness is "preserved" for the wandering stars (v. 13). In response to what God is doing (v. 1) and the examples of judgment (vv. 6, 13), Jude exhorts the believers in the climax to ensure that they "preserve" themselves in God's love. Cf. the use of the synonym, φυλάσσω, in Jude's benediction: "Now to him who is able to 'preserve' you from falling....."

1 Enoch 1:9 is quoted in Jude 14-15 as a prophecy of eschatological judgment, but if Jude's readers are aware of this quote's context, then they would be aware that *1 Enoch* 1:8 is a promise of eschatological salvation for the righteous which contrasts with the judgment of the ungodly in 1:9. In the Greek text of *1 Enoch* one element of this promise of eschatological salvation is expressed with the τηρ- word group: συντήρησις, "preservation."

¹⁰ For discussion see e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 26.

¹¹ The dative Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is best understood as a dative of advantage (e.g., Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 19; Karl Hermann Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe, der Judasbrief* [HTKNT 13.2; 5th ed.; Freiberg: Herder, 1980] 146; Henning Paulsen, *Der Zweite Petrusbrief and der Judasbrief* [MeyerK, 12.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992] 53) rather than a dative of agent (e.g., J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* [1907; reprint Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1978] 18; Jerome H. Neyrey *2 Peter, Jude* [AB 37C; New York: Doubleday, 1993] 43) or a dative of reference or location. It is also inadequate to understand the ἐν in the preceding clause to govern this dative as well (e.g., J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* [Westminster Commentaries; London: Methuen, 1934] 196).

¹² Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 124.

¹³ In light of these allusions to salvation which are eschatologically oriented, Kelly is incorrect to exclude the eschatological dimension of salvation from Jude's reference to "the salvation we share" in v. 3 (*Peter and Jude*, 246).

¹⁴ I am not claiming here that Jude draws his concept of judgment from human judicial systems rather than themes of judgment in the Hebrew Bible, for he is clearly dependent on themes and motifs drawn from the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish literature. Rather, what I am observing is that, when Jewish and Christian authors talk about divine, eschatological judgment, much of their language and imagery are drawn by analogy from human judicial systems. For example, the form of the lawsuit oracle used by the biblical prophets portrays God, Israel, and the nations functioning as judge, defendant, prosecuting attorney—roles taken by

against a defendant, evidence to support the charge, a verdict, a passing of sentence, and an execution of the punishment. Eschatological judgment incorporates these same elements. It is important when examining the theme of eschatological judgment to distinguish between these various elements that contribute to this theme.

Second, in Jude the theme of judgment is not only a future eschatological event. Past and present are woven together with the future

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to produce a rich tapestry of intimations, allusions, and interpretations. Yet allusions to past and present judgment are still part of the eschatological orientation of the epistle, for they contribute to understanding the theme of the future, eschatological judgment. Such a relationship between past and future is one of the features of the apocalyptic genre. While Jude is an epistle, not an apocalypse, Jude's perspective is clearly informed by an apocalyptic orientation.¹⁵ The definition of the apocalyptic genre as developed by the SBL Apocalypse Group included as part of its paradigm the principle that primordial events are often understood to have paradigmatic significance for the readers in their own time.¹⁶

Applying these two observations to the text of Jude allows us to be more discerning about how this eschatological theme is functioning in Jude.

Explicit references to past judgment have been grouped together by the author into two sets of three. The first triad, verses 5-7, summarizes three illustrations of judgment gathered from stories of the past: the Israelites being destroyed in the wilderness, the disenfranchised angels being kept in chains awaiting judgment, and Sodom and Gomorrah being punished with eternal fire. In the second triad, verse 11, the mere names of three infamous characters conjure up images of judgment: Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

These two sets of triads, however, do not merely refer to judgment in the past. They also allude to the present and the future. The disenfranchised angels are not simply described as having been judged in the past, but are described as "kept in perpetual chains under darkness" in the present. And with respect to the future, these chains hold them until "the judgment of the great day" (v. 6). Similarly, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were not merely punished

analogy from human judicial systems. Cf. Kirsten Nielsen, *Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge: An Investigation of the Prophetic Lawsuit (Rib-Pattern)* (JSOTS 9; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978); W Eugene March, "Prophecy," in *Old Testament Form Criticism* (Trinity University Monograph Series in Religion 2; ed. John H. Hayes; San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1974) 165-68; Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," *JBL* 78 (1959) 286-95.

¹⁵ Cf. Bauckham who states: "the dominance of the apocalyptic outlook in Jude and his use of the Jewish apocalypses... locates him in circles where apocalyptic was not just one influence, but the dominant vehicle through which faith in Jesus found expression" (*Jude, 2 Peter*, 10).

¹⁶ Cf. John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (1979) 7; cf. John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1984) 6.

in the past; their punishment is "eternal fire" in which they continue to be "exhibited as an example" in the present (v. 7).¹⁷ Not only does

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the language used in describing these primordial events suggest they have a paradigmatic significance for the readers, the text makes this explicit by linking these three examples to the readers' own current situation in verse 8: "Yet in the same way also these dreamers...."

In much the same way, the brief references to Cain, Balaam, and Korah (v. 11) are not only references to past judgment. They are contained within a woe pronounced upon "them," that is, the intruders Jude is opposing. Past judgment upon these three characters becomes a present condemnation of the intruders.

A closer examination of these references to past judgment clarifies more precisely the aspects of judgment being emphasized. With respect to the first triad (vv. 5-7), the main point of each illustration of judgment is expressed by the finite verb. In each case the emphasis is upon the execution of some form of punishment: the wilderness wanderers are "destroyed" (ἀπόλεσεν); the disenfranchised angels are "kept (τετήρηκεν) in perpetual chains and darkness," and the immoral cities are "exhibited as an example (πρόκεινται δείγμα) by undergoing the punishment (δίκην) of eternal fire." While the emphasis of this triad is on the execution of punishment, the evidence brought against each of them is also mentioned in a participial clause: the wilderness wanderers were those "who did not believe (τοὺς μὴ πιστεύσαντας);" the disenfranchised angels were those "who did not keep their own dominion, but abandoned their proper dwelling (τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν ἀλλὰ ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον)," and the cities were those which "indulged in sexual immorality and went after different flesh (τούτοις ἐκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας)."

With respect to future judgment, the strongest statement is the quotation of Enoch's prophecy in verses 14-15. "Behold, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly¹⁸ of all the deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." The parousia, which is anticipated as the time of eschatological salvation, is in this text announced as the time of eschatological judgment. It is important to note, however, that certain elements of judgment are highlighted. Jude's quotation of *1 Enoch* 1:9 does not follow any extant version. Richard Bauckham has demonstrated that Jude probably

¹⁷ The present participle in the clause δίκην ὑπέχουσαι ("undergoing punishment") in conjunction with the present tense verb in the clause πρόκεινται δείγμα indicate the ongoing nature of the punishment and thus its particular effectiveness in continuing to serve as an example.

Sodom and Gomorrah were understood in the first century to have been located in the south-eastern region of the Dead Sea. The natural features of the region's geography were interpreted as ongoing evidence of their destruction. For example, Philo describes the site of Sodom and Gomorrah in *Vit. Mos.* 2:56: "to the present day the memorials to the awful disaster are shown in Syria, ruins and cinders and brimstone and smoke, and the dusky flame still arises as though fire were smouldering within." Cf. *Wis* 10:7. (On the use of the term "Syria" to include the region of the Dead Sea, see "Syria," *OCD* 873-74).

¹⁸ On the textual variant represented in this translation, see below.

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TABLE 1
A comparison of Jude 14b-15 with other texts of 1 Enoch 1:9 Latin Jude

Jude (vv 14b-15)	Greek ^a (1 Enoch 1:9)	Ethiopic ^b (1 Enoch 1:9)	Latin ^c (Ps.-Cyprian, <i>Ad Novatianum</i> 16)
ἰδοὺ ἦλθεν κύριος ἐν ἀγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ	ὅτι ἔρχεται σὺν ταῖς μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀγίοις αὐτοῦ,	Behold, he will arrive with ten millions of the holy ones	Ecce venit cum multis nuntiorum suorum
ποιῆσαι κρίσιν κατὰ πάντων	ποιῆσαι κρίσιν κατὰ πάντων	in order to execute judgment upon all.	facere iudicium de omnibus
καὶ ἐλέγξει πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς	καὶ ἀπολέσει πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς	He will destroy the wicked ones	et perdere omnes impois
περὶ πάντων τῶν ἔργων ἀσεβείας αὐτῶν ὧν ἠσέβησαν	καὶ ἐλέγξει πᾶσαν σάρκα	and censure all flesh	et arguere omnem carnem de omnibus factis impiorum quae fecerunt impie
καὶ περὶ πάντων τῶν σκληρῶν ὧν ἐλάλησαν κατ' αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτωλοὶ ἀσεβεῖς	περὶ πάντων ἔργων τῆς ἀσεβείας αὐτῶν ὧν ἠσέβησαν καὶ σκληρῶν ὧν ἐλάλησαν λόγων, καὶ περὶ πάντων ὧν κατελάλησαν κατ' αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτωλοὶ ἀσεβεῖς	On account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and the wicked ones committed against him.	E t de omnibus verbis impiis quae de Deo locuti sunt peccatores

^aM. Black, "Apocalypsis Henochi Graece," in *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece, Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum Quae Supersunt Graeca* (PVTG 3; ed. M. Black and A.-M. Denis; Leiden: Brill, 1970) 19.

^bJames H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983-85) 1.13-14.

^cBauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 95.

"knew the Greek version, but made his own translation from the Aramaic."¹⁹ Jude's text, however, differs from other ancient versions in several respects, of which two are relevant here.²⁰ These two redactional differences provide a clue to the elements of judgment that

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Jude wished to emphasize. The text of *1 Enoch* 1:9 is extant in four versions other than that in Jude 14b-15: Greek, Ethiopic, Latin, and Aramaic. Unfortunately, the lacunae in the

¹⁹ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 94-96, quotation from 96.

²⁰ Jude's text differs significantly from the Greek text of 1 Enoch 1:9 in five additional ways: (1) Jude begins with ἰδοὺ, while the Greek text lacks it; (2) Jude uses the aorist tense ἦλθεν while the Greek text uses the present ἔρχεται; (3) Jude adds the identifying title κύριος which the Greek lacks; (4) Jude's phrase describing the accompanying holy ones is less complex, and (5) Jude's description of the sins of which the ungodly are convicted highlights their speech, while the Greek text has both speech and deeds. While significant for other reasons, these differences do not contribute directly to the point being made here. Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 94-96.

fragmentary Aramaic version (4QEn^c 1.1:15-17)²¹ are precisely in those places which are of concern here and therefore must be left out of account.

The first difference between Jude's text and the others which is significant for our purposes is the number of elements of eschatological judgment brought by the Lord. The two elements contained in Jude's quote are: (1) "to execute judgment against all" (ποιῆσαι κρίσιν κατὰ πάντων), and (2) "to convict all the ungodly" (ἐλέγχει πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς). The Greek, Ethiopic and Latin versions do not have two elements as does Jude, but three: (1) to execute judgment; (2) to destroy, and (3) to convict. The first of these is a general reference to judgment, and by itself it does not specify any particular element of the judicial process. And Jude has used this first element. But Jude has chosen not to refer at all to the destruction of the ungodly (i.e., the element of punishment) so that he might focus attention on one specific element of the judicial process: the ungodly being convicted of the charges laid against them. This places Jude's use of *1 Enoch* 1:9 in some tension with its immediate context in *1 Enoch* 1 which is filled with echoes of the divine warrior tradition—a tradition which emphasizes the element of punishment. If, as is probable, Jude's audience was aware of this context, then Jude's redaction of the text would contribute to its rhetorical effect (see below).²²

The second significant difference is that the identification of those being convicted is changed. In the other versions the object of the verb "to destroy" is "the ungodly," and the object of the verb "to convict" is "all flesh." The other versions of *1 Enoch* 1:9 emphasize the universality of the process of being convicted and reserve destruction specifically for the ungodly. Jude drops the universal reference to "all flesh," but he retains the specific reference to "the ungodly," making them the focus of the conviction. With this alteration Jude focuses the

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eschatological judgment, and the element of conviction in particular, on the ungodly.²³ This observation, it should be noted, is based on understanding Jude to have written πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς (with most who have written on this passage²⁴) rather than πᾶσαν ψυχὴν, the reading adopted by NA^{26,27} and UBS^{3,4,25}.

²¹ Cf. J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) 184-85.

²² It should be noted, however, that *1 Enoch* 2-5, the larger context of *1 Enoch* 1:9, does emphasize the conviction of the ungodly for unfaithfulness, disobedience, and slander. Cf. Lars Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1-5* (ConBNT 12; Lund: Gleerup, 1979).

²³ Cf. Carroll D. Osburn, "The Christological Use of 1 Enoch 1.9 in Jude 14, 15," *NTS* 23 (1976-77) 338.

²⁴ E.g., Mayor, *Jude and Peter*, 45; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 277; Schelkle, *Die Petrusbriefe, der Judasbrief*, 149; Osburn, "Christological Use," 338; Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* 93-94; B. Dehandschutter, "Pseudo-Cyprian, Jude and Enoch," in *Tradition and Re-Interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honour of Jürgen E. H. Lebram* (SP-B 36; ed. J. W. Van Henten, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1986) 114 n. 1; Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La Deuxième Épître de Saint Pierre, l'Épître de Saint Jude* (Commentaire du Nouveau Testament 13b; 2nd ed.; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1988) 174, 176; Paulsen, *Der Zweite Petrusbrief and der Judasbrief*, 76; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 80. The *NRSV* appears to have followed the NA^{26,27} and UBS^{3,4} texts.

²⁵ The textual evidence:

πάντας (τοὺς) ἀσεβεῖς	A B C Ψ 33 81 323 630 (1241) 1505 (1739) 2495 <i>al</i> <i>vg</i> <i>sy</i> ^h <i>bo</i>
πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς αὐτῶν	Maj
πᾶσαν ψυχὴν	P ⁷² Ⲛ <i>pc</i> <i>sy</i> ^{ph} <i>sa</i> <i>bo</i> ^{mss}

Both these redactional alterations in Jude's quotations of *I Enoch* do one thing: they bring greater focus and specificity to the nature and recipients of the judgment. By removing a reference to that part of the judicial process in which the punishment is carried out, judgment is specified as laying charges and convicting of those charges. By removing a reference to "all flesh," judgment is focused on those identified as ungodly. Thus, this reference to eschatological judgment focuses attention on the particular judicial elements of bringing a charge of ungodliness and producing a verdict of guilty.

What I have argued thus far with respect to judgment in Jude is that references to past judgment focus on the punishment aspect of the judicial process, while the references to future judgment focus on other elements of the judicial system, namely, laying charges and producing a guilty verdict.

As with future judgment, references to present judgment in Jude also concentrate on those aspects of the judicial process involving

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laying charges and producing a guilty verdict. For example, verses 8-10 apply the examples from the past (vv. 5-7) to the intruders. But the attention is focused on the evidence to support a charge of ungodliness, and not on punishment.

A second example may be observed in the woe oracle in verse 11 which is the second triad of allusions to stories of judgment in the Hebrew Bible. Each specific reference alludes to the evil behavior of the individual: "the way of Cain," "the error of Balaam," and "the rebellion of Korah." While the stories associated with each individual in both the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish tradition expand on both their evil behavior and their subsequent punishment, the focus of Jude's allusion in each instance is upon their evil behavior. This woe oracle is not announcing woe upon these persons from the past but upon the intruders whom Jude is denouncing. The oracle begins, "Woe to them (ὄuai αὐτοῖς)!" The antecedent of αὐτοῖς is the pronoun οὗτοι in verses 10 and 8, and alludes back ultimately to the intruders described in verse 4. Thus, each of the three statements in this triad are describing the intruders: the intruders "go in the way of Cain;" the intruders "abandon themselves to Balaam's error," and it is the intruders who "perish in Korah's rebellion."

3. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ESCHATOLOGY IN JUDE

This analysis of the epistle of Jude leads me to suggest that its eschatology, particularly its eschatological judgment, functions in at least two different ways.

The early textual evidence for these two readings is fairly evenly divided. When scribal tendencies are taken into consideration, the reading πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς is more likely because a scribe, who found the repetitive ἀσεβεῖς awkward and who knew the text of *I Enoch*, could have changed the text accordingly. Whereas a change in the other direction is difficult to explain. Jude's own concerns seem to verify this textual choice.

This variation-unit is neither included in the UBS apparatus nor commented upon by Bruce M. Metzger (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [2nd ed.; London, New York: United Bible Societies, 1975]). This is surprising because the variation alters considerably one's understanding of this text in Jude, and especially since the reading, πᾶσαν ψυχὴν, in NA²⁶ represents a change from NA²⁵.

3.1. *A Rhetorical Function*

First of all, the eschatology has a rhetorical function, which in turn has a number of distinct elements. References to past judgment, especially verses 5-7, emphasize the punishment of those who committed acts of ungodliness. These examples from the past would be familiar to Jude's Jewish-Christian readers, who would naturally respond with agreement in two ways: those people were obviously ungodly, and they clearly deserved to be punished. These references to judgment as punishment for ungodliness place the readers within a paradigm with which they were familiar and comfortable, as the author states in verse 5: "I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed...." They did not need to be convinced that God punished the ungodly.

References to future judgment, on the other hand, emphasize laying charges of ungodliness and producing a guilty verdict, as seen in verses 14-15. But these verses do not refer to such judgment in a generic fashion. The prophecy of Enoch is explicitly applied to the

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intruders in verse 14: "It was also about these [τούτοις] that Enoch ... prophesied...." The readers needed to be reassured of the divine perspective on their situation. They needed to be convinced that the Lord will lay charges of ungodliness against these intruders and will bring a guilty verdict against them.

Jude places considerable emphasis on past judgment and future judgment, but the primary focus is upon *present* judgment—judgment understood not as punishment but as laying charges and pronouncing guilty. As the author writing these words, Jude is bringing present judgment against the intruders. He is laying charges of ungodliness against them and producing evidence against them so as to pronounce them guilty. But this is not merely his own judgment on the matter. In verse 4 Jude asserts that it is also God's judgment by describing the intruders as "people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly...."

While the focus of judgment in Jude is on present judgment, the crux of the matter is not the author's present judgment on the intruders, nor even the divine verdict. The crux of the matter is, what will the *readers'* judgment be? Jude lays out for the readers the charges against the intruders, and he provides the evidence against them. But will the readers pronounce the intruders guilty? This is the rhetorical function of the theme of eschatological judgment in Jude: to convince the readers to pronounce the intruders guilty of ungodliness.

References to past judgment, future judgment, and present judgment all work together to further this rhetorical function. We may observe this by following the flow of Jude's presentation. In verses 5-7 the readers are reminded of well-known past examples of divine punishment of the ungodly. These past examples reach into the present, for they "serve as an example" (v. 7). The judgment paradigm has now been set in place. Then in verses 8-10 these past examples are explicitly applied to the intruders ("yet in the same way," v. 8) by demonstrating that their ungodliness is similar to that of the examples from the past. These verses supply the evidence to support Jude's verdict. In verse 11 the woe oracle is applied directly to

the readers' own situation with the intruders ("Woe to *them!*" v. 11), and then in verses 12-13 further evidence is presented to support a verdict of ungodliness. The six metaphors in verses 12-13 have a strong emotive content, and thus are designed to produce strong negative pathos against the intruders.²⁶ The future judgment by the Lord in verses 14-16 corroborates the judgment which has been made by Jude and which is being sought from the readers. And this is weighty corroboration

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indeed—it is the Lord who brings this judgment. Verse 16 provides the evidence against the intruders to support the claim that this prophecy is actually against the intruders. Finally, Jude brings forth his last witness: the apostles' predictions about such people (vv. 17-18) which find fulfillment in the qualities of the intruders (v. 19). All these references function rhetorically to convince the readers that they also must pronounce the intruders guilty of ungodliness.

Of the two eschatological poles, judgment and salvation, clearly it is eschatological judgment which contributes most prominently to the rhetoric of Jude. However, eschatological salvation also contributes to the epistle's rhetoric. If judgment is being announced and called for, and the recipients of the judgment have mingled with the community, then this could lead to insecurity and fear on the part of the readers. The descriptions of eschatological salvation address this insecurity and fear by emphasizing that they will receive mercy at the parousia (v. 21) and they will be protected by God until that time (vv. 1b, 24). This eschatological theme functions rhetorically to reassure the readers that, in contrast to the intruders, they will receive mercy and not judgment. It also functions rhetorically to reassure them that they are able to make the judgment that Jude is calling them to render without fear—God is protecting them.

3.2. A Social Function

Not only does the eschatological emphasis in Jude have a rhetorical function, it also has a social function. The evidence in Jude suggests that the opponents against whom Jude is writing have been accepted within the community. The statement in verse 4 that "certain intruders have stolen in among you" is a pejorative way of describing newcomers entering a community and being accepted there. Similarly, verse 12 implies that these newcomers are worshipping in the community, participating in their "love-feasts." Verses 22-23 imply that these newcomers are having an influence upon other members of the community.

If this is the case, then the eschatological themes of judgment and salvation have a social function. They are designed to bring about a separation between the original community and the newcomers—it produces an "us-and-them" distinction. "We" are the ones who share salvation (v. 3) and are guarded until "we" receive it at the parousia. But "they" are the ones who are guilty of ungodliness, and "they" will be judged by the Lord at the parousia. The groups which had become intermingled are being separated by these eschatological themes.

²⁶ Duane E Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (SBLDS 104; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 64.

Our analysis of the rhetorical function contributes to this social function, for pronouncing a verdict of ungodliness against the intrud-

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ers in effect labels them. They are the "ungodly." This type of "us-and-them" division is further accentuated by the repeated rhetorical device of addressing the readers as "beloved" (vv. 3, 17, 20) in contrast to the repeated reference to the intruders as "them" (vv. 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 19).²⁷

4. CONCLUSION

This analysis of Jude's eschatology has led us to consider two functions of that eschatology. The rhetorical function is an attempt to convince the readers to pronounce the intruders guilty of ungodliness. The social function is an attempt to produce a separation between the original community and the intruders.

The two functions are related, for they both address the threat which the author perceives in the readers' situation. At first reading the threat might appear to be an external threat—intruders have stolen in. That external threat is indeed there, but the threat which is of greater concern to Jude is the internal threat, that is, the effect that the intruders are having upon the ethics, theology, and unity of the original community.

By observing the situation as having both an external and internal threat, we are able to understand the rhetorical and social functions of Jude's eschatology within the strategy of the epistle. Jude's eschatology functions to address the external threat, but the net effect is actually to address the internal threat to the community itself. By exhorting them to "contend for the faith" against the external threat (vv. 3-4), Jude accomplishes his other primary exhortation to them which addresses the internal threat, "keep yourselves in the love of God" (v. 21).

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²⁷ On the applicability of labelling theory to the study of the NT see Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, who state: "Negative labelling serves as a social distancing device, underscoring differences and thus dividing social categories into polarities such as the good and the wicked, heroes and villains, believers and infidels or the honorable and the shameful. Such labelling serves to underscore societal values by setting apart those who lack or flaunt them" (*Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew* [FFSF; Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1988] 37-38).