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JUDE'S ENOCHIAN APOCALYPSE

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JUDE'S ENOCHIAN APOCALYPSE

Jude's was an apocalyptic imagination much like that of the writer of Revelation, but he had no need to write his own apocalypse. In his brief epistle, written sometime before 62 CE, Jude revealed that the apocalyptic imagery fueling his own mythos was none other than that of Enoch and various other ancient stories of the Hebrew people.

This paper may not be duplicated.

“The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds – all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well.”

Matthew 13:24-26

Jude’s was an apocalyptic imagination much like the writer of Revelation, but he had no need to write his own apocalypse. In his brief epistle, written sometime before 62 CE,¹ he revealed that the apocalyptic imagery fueling his own mythos was none other than that of Enoch and various other ancient stories of the Hebrew people. Through the application of an Enochian hermeneutic to Jude, one can better appreciate the way in which Jude envisioned the enemies of his community, his use of apocalypse as a literary device, as well as shed light on some of his more obscure Old Testament allusions.

Jude’s writing of his epistle was for the purpose of addressing a problem in his community, which he identified immediately as “intruders.” Who were these intruders, and what did Jude say about them? In verse 4, Jude described them as “godless persons, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” In verses 5-16 Jude conjured allusions to well-known biblical stories that pitted the good against the bad, and described the punishment that came to the wicked, including his well known quote from Enoch:

1 Joseph J. Simon, “‘Seventh from Adam’ (Jude 1:14-15): Re-examining Enochic Traditions and the Christology of Jude.” *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, Vol. 64, Pt. 2 (2013): 464.

“Enoch, of the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied also about them when he said, ‘Behold, the Lord has come with his countless holy ones to execute judgment on all and to convict everyone for all the godless deeds that they committed and for all the harsh words godless sinners have uttered against him’.”²

From Enoch’s inclusion, and Jude’s other allusions to Old Testament and pseudepigraphical texts, one can further identify the kind of wickedness Jude attributed to his intruders. In verse 5 Jude described those who were “once saved” from Egypt, and the destruction of those who “did not believe.” In verses 6 and 7 Jude alluded to the angels that “deserted their proper dwelling,” the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah who “indulged in sexual promiscuity and practiced unnatural vice.”

In verse 8 Jude referred to “dreamers,” who “defile the flesh, scorn lordship, revile glorious beings.” Jude also specifically addressed the inappropriate behavior of the intruders at the Eucharistic table in verse 12, calling them “blemishes on your love feasts,” and condemning the way in which they “carouse fearlessly and look after themselves.” The following poetic imagery in verses 12 and 13 illustrated that these people were more than troublesome, but described them as “waterless clouds,” and “fruitless trees;” physically present but ultimately useless. They were inauthentic members of the community. What was worse, like “wild waves” and “stars of gloom,” they poisoned the community with their negative presence.

From the above statements, a great deal may be said about these intruders already. They were disruptive in the assembly, “party crashers,” and insincere in their presence in the community. The intruders, compared to Enoch’s fallen angels and the inhabitants of

2 Enoch 2, as cited in Jude 1:14-16

Sodom, may have been engaging in scandalous sexual immorality because of their falseness.³ The message of Christianity had not truly reached them, and this was exhibited by their inconsistent behavior. Various scholars have speculated as to who these intruders could have been historically. There is evidence that, beyond the organized Christian community, there were also so-called “itinerant charismatics” in the early Church, prone to mooching, and making “claims of authority and receiv[ing] free meals and hospitality.”⁴

One theory identified these intruders with the disciples of Paul. “By 60 CE, i.e. by the time Jude was written, Paul had been active for over 20 years, founding communities based on what some have seen as law-free teaching.”⁵ Indeed, a misperception of a certain group of Christians’ “law-free teaching” might lead one such as Jude to believe that the group was willing to condone licentious behavior, though one may never have had evidence of specific examples.

Scholars such as Joseph Simon elaborated upon this theory by associating Jude’s community with that of the apostle James. Both Jude and James boasted of their kinship ties with Jesus himself,⁶ and this would situate Jude’s community ideologically with that of the more conservative James, both acting as missionaries to their fellow Jews in the Christian community, “with James as their undisputed leader.”⁷ Jude’s provenance among the Jewish community of Palestine may also be evidenced by his use of the Aramaic version of Enoch.⁸

3 Simon, ““Seventh from Adam,” 465.

4 Simon, ““Seventh from Adam,” 465.

5 Simon, ““Seventh from Adam,” 466.

6 Simon, ““Seventh from Adam,” 468.

7 Simon, ““Seventh from Adam,” 469.

8 Simon, ““Seventh from Adam,” 472.

Simon mentioned that in Jerusalem, Paul “encountered there ‘a religious group which had reached a fairly high degree of development in doctrinal tradition, cultic practice, common life and internal organization’.”⁹ Simon suggested that Paul may have been referring to communities such as those of James and Jude in 2 Corinthians 4-5 when he spoke of his message being “not in any way inferior to these ‘superapostles’.”¹⁰ Presumably what would make James and Jude considered “superapostles” was their kinship claims on Jesus and the implication on their authority. There is no contest that Paul was a controversial figure, known to cause “division within the larger Jesus movement, which was composed predominantly of Jewish Christians who sought to retain their Jewish ethnic identities;”¹¹ anti-Pauline traditions continuing “well into the fourth century CE.”¹²

Could Jude have been one of these Jewish Christians, seeking to retain Jewish ethnic identities? Jude began his letter stating that he wished to “encourage you to contend for the faith that was once for all handed down to the holy ones.”¹³ In his conclusion, he once again repeated, “remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁴ This was Jude’s ideal, an emphasis on *fides quae creditur*, that was being subverted by intruders. In verse 4 he identified these intruders as “causing division,” and living “according to their own godless desire.”¹⁵

Whoever these intruders may have been, perceived “law-free” disciples of Paul, itinerant charismatics, or any other group, the issue for Jude went beyond disruptive

9 Holmberg Bengt, *Paul and Power* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), p. 180. As quoted in Simon, “Seventh from Adam,” 466.

10 Simon, “Seventh from Adam,” 467.

11 Simon, “Seventh from Adam,” 467.

12 Simon, “Seventh from Adam,” 468.

13 Jude 1:3

14 Jude 1:17

15 Jude 1:18, 19

behavior in the midst of his tender and vulnerable Christian community, holding fast to its preserved deposit of faith. For Jude, the issue at hand was much more dire indeed. These intruders represented nothing less than the cosmic forces of evil from of old. They were likened to the most pivotal conflicts of good versus evil throughout scripture. They were devils with a new face, but the same ones that fueled the ancient primordial conflicts that set the story of salvation history in motion. As evidence of the scope of this conflict, Jude employed an apocalyptic literary technique, typical for this era in Christian literature.

By verse 4 of his epistle, Jude set an apocalyptic scene by referencing “intruders, who long ago were designated for this condemnation.” Packed within this small phrase is an immense eschatological vista which presupposes a time beforehand, one of prophecy that bears significance in this time, the present where these mysterious “intruders” are working some kind of evil, and a cosmological punishment, that of “condemnation.” Three eras are identified that come together in one. This is the scope of the apocalyptic imagination.

Jude’s epistle was written in a period in history when apocalyptic literature was at its height in the West. Apocalyptic scenes fueled the imagination of the New Testament writers, and though only one book of the New Testament is specifically called “Apocalypse,” that is the Revelation, there is no doubt that apocalyptic imagery peppers the entirety of the New Testament, from some of Jesus’ more cryptic sayings in the Gospels about the end times, Gehenna, and even some of his parables that discuss the separation of the wheat from the chaff, sheep from goats, being thrown out of wedding banquets, and many others; to sayings of other epistolary authors such as Peter and Paul.

Not only among early Christian sources of late antiquity, but Jewish and Pagan authors had been utilizing apocalyptic literature to address contemporary political issues since antiquity. The *Syballine Oracles* were perhaps one of the best examples of an amalgam of Jewish-Christian-Pagan apocalyptic literature, predominantly “of Hellenistic Judaism adapting a well-known form of pagan prophecy for its own needs.”¹⁶ Parts of this text have been attributed to early Christian authors, and are also vividly reminiscent of passages in the Revelation.¹⁷

Scholars have paid close attention to the significance of the apocalyptic images in Revelation and the possible connections to contemporary politics. Images such as that of the New Jerusalem may have served as a promise of material prosperity for a people currently struggling under persecution under the Roman Empire.¹⁸ Various Roman emperors may have been alluded to throughout the text, describing the varying situations under which the Christians suffered throughout the era, from Augustus to Domitian.¹⁹

Jude, however is distinct from Revelation in that Jude did not propose a new apocalyptic literature. By utilizing a midrash technique, that is taking classic apocalyptic texts and applying them to his present circumstances, much like the pesher method of Qumran, Jude adopted Enoch, a well-known apocalypse that would have resonated with his readers, lending more authority to his comparisons, and perhaps a dire tone to his exhortation.²⁰ It must be noted that for Jude this was much more than a literary

16 Hans-Joseph Klauck, “Do They Never Come Back? Nero Redivivus and the Apocalypse of John.” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 63 (2001): 686.

17 Klauck, “Nero Redivivus,” 690.

18 Robert H. Gundry, “The New Jerusalem: People as Place, not Place for People.” (*Novum Testamentum XXIX*, 3, 1987): 261.

19 Klauck, “Nero Redivivus,” 696.

20 Nicholas J. Moore, “Is Enoch Also Among the Prophets? The Impact of Jude’s Citation of I Enoch on the Reception of Both Texts in the Early Church.” *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, Vol. 64, Pt. 2, October (2013): 502.

technique, but a practice of piety. Most likely Jude cited Enoch from memory,²¹ and his community would have found the text not solely applicable to their situation, but “it was written about them, to them, and for [them].”²²

Enoch itself was a collection of books that may have been written over the course of a few hundred years throughout the inter-testamental period.²³ It is not clear to how much of the totality of this book Jude may have been exposed.²⁴ Much has been said about Enoch’s prevalence in the early Church because of the facility with which it lends itself to a Christological hermeneutic. Old Testament scriptures were first utilized by early Christians as proofs of Jesus’ being the Messiah, but after a time the reverse was the case: “there came a point when the Old Testament scriptures no longer functioned as the assumed authority which validated Jesus as the Messiah, but rather passages which could be understood christologically – on the presupposition that Jesus was the Messiah – validated the Old Testament for Christians.”²⁵ Enoch would have been one of these texts that enjoyed a temporary prevalence because of its strong Christological imagery. Enoch was eventually rejected for reasons “including its absence from the Hebrew Bible, its use by Manichaeans, and its alternative explanation of evil.”²⁶ Nevertheless, it is enough to point out that the acceptance of Enoch was commonplace in Jude’s own community. Other than by Jude, Enoch was utilized by late antique authors such as Barnabas, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.²⁷

21 Moore, “Is Enoch Also Among the Prophets?,” 504.

22 Cory D. Anderson, “Jude’s Use of the Pseudepigraphical Book of 1 Enoch.” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* Vol. 36, No. 2 Summer (2003): 52-53.

23 Moore, “Is Enoch Also Among the Prophets?,” 501.

24 Moore, “Is Enoch Also Among the Prophets?,” 501.

25 Moore, “Is Enoch Also Among the Prophets?,” 505.

26 Simon, “Seventh from Adam,” 471.

27 Simon, “Seventh from Adam,” 470.

Scholars have discussed Jude's acceptance of Enoch as authoritative due to his calling Enoch a "prophet," as well as his inclusion of Enoch alongside other Old Testament works without any distinctions or qualifications as to its canonicity.²⁸ A great deal has been said about the early Church's use of a Christological hermeneutic to interpret Old Testament texts, as well as pseudepigraphical texts such as Enoch. If indeed a Christological hermeneutic validated Enoch's narrative in the imagination of early Christians, such as Jude and his community, then what would be the implications for the reception of the narrative of Enoch, and how that narrative may have been instrumental in forming the belief of early Christians such as Jude and his community? In a reciprocal sense, to what extent would this narrative, that is Enoch's cosmology, have been taken at face value and affected the reception of other Old Testament texts as well as the understanding of Christology itself? It may be difficult to imagine the implication of Jude's deeming Enoch "valid" due to its Christological significance. One might be tempted to liken this sense to that of a scholar who accepts a source as legitimately peer-reviewed to cite in a publishable article. But this was not the sense in which Jude experienced Enoch as "valid." For Jude, to accept Enoch was to intimately appropriate the cosmology of Enoch as part of his mythos. To suggest that Jude (and his community) adopted Enoch as part of a coherent cosmological narrative has implications on a close reading of the entire epistle itself!

By reading Jude's condemnation of the intruders in light of the overall story of Enoch, I wish to suggest that the very sin Jude condemned concerning the intruders is that which is wrestled over throughout Enoch. These intruders were first and foremost a *presence*, weeds sown among so much wheat. This presence put the believer at risk of

being led astray from the simple, orthodox “faith that was once for all handed down to the holy ones,”²⁹ “spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”³⁰ As stated before, Jude’s theology was one of preservation. The content of faith was paramount, tender, vulnerable, and at risk of corruption by intruders by “adding on” elements of destruction, licentiousness, selfishness, and divisions.

In verse 4 Jude identified these “intruders,” and his conclusion summarized their sin as “causing division,” living “according to their own godless desire,” and that they “live on the natural plane, devoid of the Spirit.”³¹ In Enoch, it is angels that have intruded upon the “natural plane” among mortals, and that “revealed secrets to the sons of men and have seduced the sons of men to the commission of sin.”³² Much like the story of the Deluge in Genesis, Enoch singled out Noah as the only one who was “pure and good, free from the reproach of discovering secrets” and thereby free from the judgment which would come upon the angels (intruders) and those that had been seduced by them. Noah was an apt representation of Jude’s community, a faithful minority that persisted despite the presence of subversive elements. It is no coincidence that the sin identified by Jude in his “intruders” is similar to the sin that prompted the apocalypse of Enoch.

In Enoch, humanity was thriving blissfully in its ignorance of many things that it did not need to know. One fateful day, the angels noticed the attractiveness of mortals and decided, at one surreptitious meeting at Ardis, on mount Armon,³³ to give in to their desires and have carnal relations with the inferior species. This was not all, however.

Various angels then taught the mortals terrible things they should not have known –

29 Jude 1:3
30 Jude 1:17
31 Jude 1:18, 19
32 Enoch 63: 1
33 Enoch 7

things beyond what God ordained, ultimately destructive, but things that incited the mortals' greedy passions. These things included sorcery, divination, astrology, the making of weapons of war, even methods for creating jewelry, cosmetics, and other adornments of vanity.³⁴ These events ushered in a new era for humanity – a world of magic, and warcraft. But even more dramatic, it was an era of monsters and strange creatures, as the offspring of the angels and humans began to spread about the earth.³⁵ These Nephilim, as they were called, were often described as great giants, the heroes of old.³⁶

The Ancient of Days, or Lord of Spirits, as God was often called throughout the book, would not allow this to continue. Enoch was swept up in a vision³⁷ and taken to the four corners of the earth where he himself received great knowledge about the construction of the cosmos (the gates of wind and water at the four directions), various metaphysical planes of existence, as well as, and more significantly, the punishments that would be exacted upon the various angels, often referred to as “stars.”³⁸ Among the many beings Enoch encountered, including the archangels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel, he met a mysterious Son of man that abided near the throne of God, “whose countenance resembled that of a man,” but “full of grace, like that of one of the holy angels.”³⁹

34 Enoch 8

35 Enoch 7:11

36 Genesis 6:4

37 Enoch 12

38 see Enoch 17-37.

39 Enoch 46: 1

Finally Enoch met Noah, whom he had been searching him out to find him in his seclusion at the ends of the earth.⁴⁰ Enoch then revealed to Noah the destruction that was to come to rid the earth of this evil, destroying mortals and their angelic offspring alike, but that Noah would be spared because of his righteousness.⁴¹

As mentioned above, Noah was spared essentially because of his “ignorance.” These intruding angels had not corrupted him, and he was thus worthy to continue on the earth. In Jude’s community, his concern was lest the faithful in his community become corrupted by these intruding forces that would introduce elements into the lives of these Christians – elements of which they did not need to know. These elements “added on to,” confused, and corrupted the simple and important message “handed down by the apostles.” For this reason the intruders could not be taken lightly. Nevertheless, Jude did not explicitly exhort the community to expel the intruders. What he said about them was that their judgment would come, an approach similar to the narrative of Enoch as well as Jesus’ parable in Matthew 13 about the weeds sown among the wheat.

Jude employed use of various Old Testament allusions in verses 5-16 to further illustrate the sinfulness of the intruders, and the kind of punishment they would incur. It is here, utilizing the Enochian hermeneutic, that these passages may best be understood. Nicholas Moore noted that Jude’s mention in verses 12 and 13 of “waterless clouds,” “fruitless trees,” “wild waves,” and “stars of gloom,” was a direct allusion to Enoch 2.1-5.5 and 80.1-8.⁴²

In verse 11, Jude introduced three significant allusions that require more unpacking, as these intruders are said to “follow the way of Cain,” “abandon themselves

40 Enoch 64: 1-2

41 Enoch 64:10.

42 Moore, “Is Enoch Also Among the Prophets?,” 503.

to Balaam's error for the sake of gain," and, utilizing the prophetic perfect tense, Jude stated that the intruders "perished in the rebellion of Korah."

Cain, perhaps the most familiar of the above personages, was the first man to kill according to Genesis. He was jealous of the favor with which his brother Abel's sacrifice was received, and murdered him. He was then driven away from the homeland. Instinctively perhaps, one might take this reference to the "way of Cain" as the fact that Cain was a murderer. But among the many sins Jude listed against the intruders, murder was not one of them. The intruders were scandalous fornicators, heavy partiers, and insincere. If the story of Cain is to be interpreted within the narrative of Enoch, where would this man Cain have learned how to kill his brother – especially if he was the first person to ever kill another? Cain would have been one of the very first to have been approached by an intruding angel and taught how to use weapons, perverting an ordinary farming tool to a lethal end. Taken in this context, Cain's sin as mirrored in Jude's community, was not that he murdered, but that he was influenced – seduced, into ungodly behavior by one that intruded into the divine order.

Balaam⁴³ was a prophet of Israel during the period in which the Israelites had escaped from Egypt and were engaged in campaigns to conquer the land of Canaan. Messengers from the Canaanite king Balak, "experts in divination,"⁴⁴ were sent to him to persuade him to curse the Israelites and call off their successful assaults. God clearly warned Balaam that the Israelites were blessed; their journey was part of God's plan. Balaam, for some unexplained reason, wished to help Balak. After bargaining with God, and not accepting God's simple will for him, he set off to do what he wanted to anyway.

43 See Nm Ch. 22

44 Nm 22:7

An angel appeared to him, but only his donkey was able to discern the presence of the angel and refused to go further. Balaam continued to beat the donkey for its insolence, unable to perceive the presence of the angel.

There are various levels to the Balaam story that fit nicely with the Enochian narrative. First, there was the reference to the “diviners.” This was explicitly a skill taught to the mortals by the angels, and something that would have resonated with one seeped in Enochian imagination. Second, Balaam allowed these intruding diviners to influence him beyond God’s plan and will for him. Finally, this blindness caused by the negative influence prevented him from being able to discern the presence of a good angel attempting to hinder his wayward path. Jude said of the intruders in his community that they “revile glorious beings,” and they “revile what they do not understand and are destroyed by what they know by nature like irrational animals.”⁴⁵ The sins of Jude’s intruders, much like Balaam, included an inability to discern spirits as a consequence of their sinfulness.

Korah⁴⁶ rebelled against Moses as the Israelites were encamped before entering the land of Canaan. He was of priestly lineage and his squabble began concerning some ritual details, tassels and colors of vestments, but principally it was his jealousy over Moses’ power and preference for Aaron as high priest. For punishment, the earth opened up and swallowed Korah and all those that rebelled against Moses. Korah himself became the “intruder” in Moses’ community, along with Abiram and Dathan, inciting great numbers of Israelites to rebel against Moses. Perhaps it is enough to identify this as Korah’s principle sin, and the destruction that befell him as parallel to the apocalyptic

45 Jude 1:8,9

46 see Nm 16

destruction that awaited both the intruding angels in Enoch and Jude's own intruders. It may be interesting to note, however, that a few chapters earlier in 13 and 14 of Numbers, the spirit of rebellion was originally kindled when a group of scouts reconnoitered the land of Canaan and returned with a report that it was inhabited by Nephilim, the dreaded offspring of mortal and angel. A sense of despair infected the people of Israel, and they cried that they would never successfully be able to overtake such formidable foes.

The purpose of Jude's epistle was to convey the urgency of the situation in which his community found itself – the fact that they harbored intruders in their midst. By utilizing apocalyptic imagery from Enoch, Jude placed these intruders within a narrative of salvation history in which the good and righteous had to survive with evil elements among them. But his epistle offered hope that the evil ones would meet with retribution, and in the meantime the good must be on guard lest they succumb to the influence of these evil intruders. Jude employed use of various images from scripture and pseudepigraphical texts, which, for him there most likely was no difference. In fact, one could say that Jude's own imagination concerning the spiritual life and the cosmos was informed by the cosmology of these texts, including Enoch. By engaging a close reading of Jude, making use of an Enochian hermeneutic, one can better understand his use of certain scriptural allusions, and envision the context in which his exhortations would have resonated for his community.

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