

# The Glory of God in the Book of Jude: A Defense of Ryrie's Third Point in the *Sine Qua Non* of Dispensationalism

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In 1965, Charles Caldwell Ryrie published *Dispensationalism Today*, a text which is arguably the most significant contribution to the development of dispensationalism in the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> In this important work, one written as an apologetic for dispensational thought,<sup>3</sup> Ryrie presents (among other things) his case for the “*sine qua non*” of dispensationalism, or the absolute essentials of dispensationalism, which Ryrie identifies as (1) a distinction between Israel and the church, (2) the consistent use of literal

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<sup>2</sup> Lightner gives *Dispensationalism Today* the greatest possible compliment when he notes, “I don’t think you can adequately understand progressive dispensationalism or normative dispensationalism unless you use this book as a foundation.” See Robert Lightner, “Progressive Dispensationalism,” *Conservative Theological Journal* 4, no. 11 (April 2000): 47. See also Bruce A. Baker, “Israel and the Church: The Transcendental Distinction Within the Dispensational Tradition,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 57; Craig A. Blaising, “Dispensationalism: The Search for Definition,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 23; Alistair W. Donaldson, *The Last Days of Dispensationalism: A Scholarly Critique of Popular Misconceptions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 2; Jonathan R. Pratt, “Dispensational Sanctification: A Misnomer,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 98.

<sup>3</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 7, 9. See also Russel H. Bowers Jr., “Dispensational Motifs in the Writings of Erich Sauer,” *BibSac* 148, no. 591 (July 1991): 261; Larry D. Pettegrew, “Dispensationalists and Spirit Baptism,” *MSJL* 8, no.1 (Spring 1997): 36.

hermeneutics, and (3) the glory of God as the unifying theme of Scripture and history.<sup>4</sup>

Since the publication of *Dispensationalism Today*, both Ryrie's supporters and opponents have written numerous books and articles on the legitimacy of Ryrie's *sine qua non* as the acid test for dispensationalism.<sup>5</sup> However, the final point, that of God's glory as the unifying theme of Scripture and history, has received a greater amount of rejection as a valid indicator of dispensationalism.<sup>6</sup> At first glance, such rejection appears valid. Is the glory of God too broad to identify as the unifying theme of Scripture and history? How can Ryrie claim the glory of God as a distinguishing mark of dispensationalism when non-dispensationalists also value the glory of God? Do other possible unifying themes better fit the specifics of dispensationalist thinking? These criticisms have led some dispensationalists to dismiss the third point as a valid indicator of dispensationalism,<sup>7</sup> while others seek to define dispensationalism in different terms altogether.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 43-47; See also Baker, "Israel and the Church," 57; Lightner, "Progressive Dispensationalism," 48.

<sup>5</sup> Russel H. Bowers Jr., "Dispensational Motifs," 262.

<sup>6</sup> Mike Stallard, "Literal Interpretation, Theological Method, and the Essence of Dispensationalism," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 33.

<sup>7</sup> Blaising, "Developing Dispensationalism Part 2: Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145.579 (Jul 1988): 268. In his article, "Dispensational Motifs in the Writings of Erich Sauer," Bowers remarks that, due to a lack of discussion in Ryrie's contribution to the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Walter A. Elwell [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984], s.v. "Dispensation, Dispensationalism," 321), some might believe that Ryrie dropped the third point of his *sine qua non*. However, in a personal conversation with Bowers, Ryrie reaffirmed his commitment to the third point. See Bowers, "Dispensation Motifs," 262. Although Bowers never directly links the absence of the third point in Ryrie's contribution with the criticisms mounted against it, it does make one wonder.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Sweetnam argues that all three of Ryrie's points are not sufficient identifiers of dispensationalism. However, he then defines dispensationalism using five points: "1. A Commitment to Evangelical doctrine. 2. A commitment to a literal Biblical hermeneutic. 3. A

In *Dispensationalism Today*, Ryrie offers three defenses of his third point: (1) Scripture states that salvation is to the glory of God; (2) God has a plan for the angels that is not soteriological; and (3) God's kingdom program is not confined to salvific purposes.<sup>9</sup> Although scholars have criticized Ryrie's third point, there exists very little academic writing interacting with Ryrie's defense of his third point and its biblical warrant. Such neglect is unfortunate and regrettable, for the defense of any theological statement finds its climax in its answer to the question, "Does the Bible support this theological statement?" This is not to say that no one has ever offered Scriptural support for Ryrie's third point,<sup>10</sup> but such support is limited in favor of theological and theoretical discussions of Ryrie's third point, and much of that is critical.<sup>11</sup>

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recognition of distinction in manifestations of Divine dealing with mankind, which insists on the uniqueness and importance of both Israel and the Church in the Divine plan. 4. An expectation of the imminent return of Christ in the Rapture. 5. An emphasis on apocalyptic and millennial expectation." Ryrie's first two points are included, but notably absent from Sweetnam's list is Ryrie's third point. See Mark S. Sweetnam, "Defining Dispensationalism: A Cultural Studies Perspective," *Journal of Religious History* 34, no. 2 (June 2010): 196, 198.

<sup>9</sup> Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 103. Paul Weaver helpfully frames this argument as follows: "(1) Scripture itself points to the purpose of salvation as the glory of God; (2) all theologians recognize that God has plans for other created beings, not just humanity; (3) God's kingdom program, although it includes and requires the salvation of man, is not limited to it. See Paul D. Weaver, "The Theological Method of Charles Caldwell Ryrie," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 17, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 82. See also Thomas Baurain, "A Short Primer on Hermeneutics," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 10, no. 31 (Dec 2006): 41; Jonathan R. Pratt, "Dispensational Sanctification: A Misnomer," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 99.

<sup>10</sup> For a general defense of Ryrie's third point in the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism, see Elliot E. Johnson, "A Biblical Theology of God's Glory," *BibSac* 169, no. 676 (Oct 2012): 402-11.

<sup>11</sup> Most of the criticisms thrown at Ryrie's third point are either methodological or appeals to emotion rather than arguments drawn from the biblical text. For example, critics of Ryrie's third point argue that dispensationalists cannot use the glory of God as the unifying theme of

On a more positive note, the lack of biblical evaluation concerning Ryrie's third point creates many possible research opportunities. For example, one area of Scripture which has yet to receive treatment concerning this important discussion is the Epistle of Jude. Such a statement may come across as curious to the reader. Douglas J. Rowston famously titled his article on

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Scripture because non-dispensationalists also recognize the glory of God. On one level this is methodological, for it is argued that dispensationalism cannot use a principle to distinguish itself from other methods if the other methods recognize that principle. On the other hand, it is also an appeal to emotion, for certainly covenant theologians would not appreciate the implication that dispensationalists recognize the glory of God "more" than covenant theologians (see, for example, Craig A. Blaising, "Developing Dispensationalism Part 2: Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *BibSac* 145, no. 579 [July 1988]: 268; Michael Vlach, "What is Dispensationalism?" in *Christ's Prophetic Plans: A Futuristic Premillennial Primer*, ed. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue [Chicago: Moody, 2012], 21).

Both arguments are invalid. If one argues that the glory of God is the unifying theme of Scripture and history, then by necessity one stands in contrast with those who hold to covenant theology and its insistence that salvation is the unifying theme of Scripture. The fact that covenant theologians recognize the glory of God is irrelevant because covenant theologians recognize the glory of God as playing a different role than salvation (one commits a category error if he fails to make this distinction). Furthermore, to argue that Ryrie's third point implies that covenant theologians hold to a lower view of God's glory is special pleading. With this logic, the dispensationalist should find offense with the assertion of covenant theology that the salvation of the elect is the central interpretive motif of Scripture, i.e., are covenant theologians claiming that they care more about the salvation of the elect than non-covenant theologians? The answer is a resounding "no," for the dispensationalist recognizes that the covenant theologian is not claiming that dispensationalists do not value salvation. It is also special pleading because, using the same logic that attempts to prevent the dispensationalist from using the glory of God as a unifying theme, i.e., one cannot use the glory of God because others recognize the glory of God, one could argue that covenant theologians cannot use salvation as a unifying theme because dispensationalists recognize salvation.

Jude “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,”<sup>12</sup> and between Jude’s short length, difficult and controversial content, and its reception and perception throughout church history, it is easy to understand such neglect.<sup>13</sup> In relation to the current discussion, one might ask, “How does Jude offer data in defense of Ryrie’s third point?”

This paper accomplishes the following tasks. First, it explains how Jude defends the proposition that redemption is one of the means by which God glorifies himself. Second, it explains how Jude reveals that God has a distinct plan for the angels. Third, it explains how Jude presents case studies from the various dispensations to prove that the Lord, to preserve his glory and to administer his kingdom program, consistently judges apostasy throughout the dispensations and redemptive history, and thus provides a necessary unifying principle across the dispensational spectrum. Following the completion of these tasks, the reader will recognize that Jude’s epistle provides an effective defense of the dispensational understanding of the glory of God as the unifying theme of Scripture, for, as the content of Jude reveals, the glory of God is the end goal of God’s saving acts upon the recipients and the judgment of the apostates throughout the dispensations.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Douglas J. Rowston, “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,” *NTS* 21 (1975): 554-63.

<sup>13</sup> See Daniel Wiley, “Contributing to the Faith Once Delivered: Jude, Systematic Theology, and an Appeal to Pastors,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 77-109.

<sup>14</sup> Throughout this paper, apostasy is defined as “knowing the truth, and then departing from it.” See C. I. Scofield, “Part 3: The Course and End of the Age,” *BibSac* 108, no. 429 (January 1951): 112.

Before proceeding, it is worth noting that covenant theologians will find little to disagree with regarding the exposition of Jude and its relevant passages, even if they do disagree with the conclusion. The purpose of this paper is not to critique covenant theology outrightly, but to demonstrate that dispensationalism, and particularly the glory of God as the unifying theme of Scripture, is compatible with Jude’s message, and thus Ryrie’s third point has biblical support.

## The Glory of God as the End Goal of Salvation

Ryrie's first defense of the glory of God as the unifying principle of Scripture and history is his observation that salvation is a means to the end of God's glory rather than the end itself. For covenant theology, the unifying theme of Scripture and history is soteriological, that is, God's redemptive plan to save his elect.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, Ryrie argues, "The plain statement of Scripture declares that salvation is to the praise of God's glory which simply means that redemption is one of the means to the end of glorifying God (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). Salvation, for all its wonder, is but one facet of the diamond of the glory of God."<sup>16</sup> Ryrie's references to Ephesians 1 provide solid evidence for Ryrie's position,<sup>17</sup> and others have offered Scriptural proofs for the glory of God as the end goal of salvation.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ernest Pickering, "The Nature of Covenant Theology," *Central Bible Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1960): 2; Pickering "Dispensational Theology," *Central Bible Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 31; Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 18, 102.

<sup>16</sup> Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 103.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 204, 234, 245; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 26; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 118, 123. Although none of the previous references defend dispensationalism *per se*, all three argue that God's glory is the end goal of God's saving acts.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Cone makes the following Scriptural defense of Ryrie's first argument: "Here is present the third element of Ryrie's *sine qua non* of dispensationalism, namely that the underlying purpose of God in all of His creation is the glory of God - Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 46. This is in full agreement with the Biblical record as evidenced in Ps. 19:1; 21:5; 97:6; 106:47; 115:1; Is. 6:3; 43:7; 49:3; Jer. 33:9; Hab. 2:14; Jn. 17:1; 2 Cor. 4:15; 8:19; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; Php. 1:11; 2:11; Rev. 4:11; 5:12-13; 15:4. This is the doxological center: The glorification of God as the understood purpose for all things." See Christopher Cone, "Presuppositional Dispensationalism," *Conservative Theological Journal* 10, no. 29 (May 2006): 79.

The Epistle of Jude also contributes to Ryrie's position through its robust soteriology. That salvation is a primary theme of Jude will strike some as odd. As any good NT survey clarifies, the majority of Jude's text is devoted to warning its readers of apostate teaching and the fate awaiting apostate teachers.<sup>19</sup> However, bracketing the body of Jude's apology against the apostates is four verses containing clear soteriological statements (vv 1, 3, 21, 24).<sup>20</sup> Two of these verses (vv 1, 24) provide Ryrie's first argument for his third point with solid biblical evidence.

The first of these two great soteriological statements is found in verse 1: "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." Following Jude's introduction of himself as the author, he identifies his recipients as both τοῖς...κλητοῖς, "the called," and further clarifies "the called" as Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τετηρημένοις, "kept for Jesus Christ." Both the identification and its clarifying participle identify the eternal plan of God in salvation. As commentators rightly point out, to be "called" is not a reference to invitation, but rather to God's eternal elective decree through which men, as Schreiner notes, "Are powerfully and inevitably brought to faith in Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the gospel."<sup>21</sup> Jude's

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<sup>19</sup> For example, see D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 688-89, 694; Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarborough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 354; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, Guthrie NT Reference Set (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 909-913.

<sup>20</sup> The two verses not reviewed in this paper are verse 3, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints"; and verse 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life." All English quotations of Scripture are taken from the New American Standard Version.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter, Jude*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 429. See also Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*,

recipients were not merely invited into God's kingdom, but were selected by divine decree to be part of God's kingdom as part of God's eternal plan for the ages (cf. Acts 13:48; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13-14; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 1:1-2). This election is further described by use of two participles, ἠγαπημένοις, "beloved," and τετηρημένοις, "kept." The second of these two participles is most important for the current discussion. The phrase, "kept for Jesus Christ,"<sup>22</sup> implies purpose. God is not saving Jude's recipients simply to save them, but to save them for a purpose, and that purpose is for Jesus Christ. As Gene Green notes, "Jude's emphasis ... appears to be not only on the ground of their calling ("beloved by God") but its goal and end ("for Christ Jesus")."<sup>23</sup> By identifying his recipients as "the called," Jude is not tipping his hat to their salvation, but is recognizing the Lord's purpose in their salvation.

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WBC 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 26; Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 46-47; Douglas Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 222. Peters, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 37.

<sup>22</sup> There is some disagreement on the translation of Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις that could influence the current argument. Should one understand Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις as a dative agent with a passive voice, i.e., "kept by Jesus Christ" as in the NIV and NLT, or as Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις is translated in the NASB, RSV, and others, "kept for Jesus Christ"? In the former, those who are chosen persevere because they are kept by the power and work of Jesus Christ (see Mark Webb, "What Difference Does it Make? – II," *Reformation and Revival* 3, no. 2 [Spring 1994]: 104), a position that emphasizes Christ's work in sanctification rather than perseverance as a means to the end goal of Christ's glory. In contrast, Green advocates for the latter and argues that (1) The dative agent with a passive voice is rare in the New Testament, and (2) The NT generally speaks of both believers and unbelievers as being "kept for" the last day (John 7:11-12; 1 Thess 5:23; 1 Pet 1:4-5; 2 Pet 2:9; 3:7; Jude 6, 13). See Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 48. See also Peter Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 38; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 223.

<sup>23</sup> Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 48.

What does it mean to be “kept for Jesus Christ”? That statement is further explained in verse 24,<sup>24</sup> the second of the two soteriological verses in Jude, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.” Commentators have noticed the allusion to OT thought in this verse, which is fitting for an epistle that frequently draws from events recorded in the OT (cf. vv 5-7, 11). Specifically, Jude applies the OT theme of sacrifice to God’s saving acts upon his elect.<sup>25</sup> After the coming of Jesus Christ, believers, who are kept for Jesus Christ, are presented before God as sacrifices prepared for glory.<sup>26</sup> As Michael Green points out, “It sees the faithful Christians among his readers, after all the pressures of contending for the faith in a licentious age and permissive church, standing before God like perfect sacrifices in his heavenly sanctuary, in self-offering to the glory of God amidst the joyous jubilation of the redeemed.”<sup>27</sup> Although the primary objective of Jude’s letter is to call his recipients to defend the faith in the wake of apostate teaching (vv 3-4), the goal of Jude’s exhortation is not to defend the faith for the sake of

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<sup>24</sup> Commentators rightly make a connection between verses 1 and 24. For example, Kraftchick, commenting on verse 1, argues, “God’s love also involves God’s protection: the believers are “kept safe,” i.e., established by God and maintained for the second coming when the ultimate consummation will occur (v.24).” See Stephen J. Kraftchick, *Jude & 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 28. See also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 26; Daniel Keating, *First and Second Peter, Jude*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 220;

<sup>25</sup> The adjective ἀμόμους, “blameless,” is a cultic term that originally referred to the state of sacrificial offerings that God demanded (e.g., Exod 29:1; Lev 1: 3, 10; LXX) and came to signify the moral purity the Lord demanded from his worshippers (Ps 15:2; Prov 11:5; Eph 1:4; Heb 9:14). See J. N. D. Kelly, *Epistles of Peter and Jude* (London: A&C Black, 1969), 291.

<sup>26</sup> Robert L. Webb, “The Eschatology of the Epistle of Jude and Its Rhetorical and Social Functions,” *BBR* 6, no. 1 (1996): 142.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Green, *2 Peter & Jude*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 206.

defending the faith, but to defend the faith to preserve the recipients for their presentation before God. As Bauckham rightly concludes, “All Jude’s concerns in the letter, to combat the false teaching for the sake of the health of the church and the Christian obedience of its members, are finally aimed at this goal: that they should in the end be found fit to be a sacrificial offering to God.”<sup>28</sup>

The significance of Jude’s words in relation to Ryrie’s first argument for his third point is evident. In the mind of Jude, the salvation of his “called” recipients is not the end, but the means to the end. This end is the glory of God, a glory he receives when the recipients are kept from the teachings of the apostates and stand before the Lord as a living sacrifice fit for a holy God.

### **The Glory of God as Displayed in the Destiny of the Angels**

Ryrie’s second defense of the glory of God as the unifying principle of Scripture and history is the Lord’s distinct plan for the angels. To requote Ryrie a second time, “All theologians of whatever persuasion realize that God has a plan for the angels. It does not involve redemption, for the elect angels do not experience it and the nonelect angels cannot. And yet for the angels God has a distinct program—a distinct purpose, and it is not soteriological.”<sup>29</sup>

Although Ryrie offers no Scriptural support for his argument in *Dispensationalism Today*, that angels follow a

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<sup>28</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 124. Farstad explains the imagery in Jude 24 in slightly different terms. Commenting on Jude 24 and sanctification, Farstad notes, “The ultimate in sanctification is being presented “faultless,” as to a monarch at court.” See Arthur L. Farstad, “We Believe in: Sanctification Part 5: Future Sanctification: Perfect, or Ultimate, Sanctification,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 7. Although the imagery is different in this explanation, the goal is the same: Glorified believers will stand before their Lord for the glory of their Lord.

<sup>29</sup> Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 103.

distinct program in the decree of God is a biblical conclusion.<sup>30</sup> The cumulative witness of Scripture indicates that God does not offer a salvific program for the angels.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, that God has a unique program for the angels is also documented.<sup>32</sup> Angels may not possess the same share of focus in the record of Scripture as that of man, but nevertheless the biblical witness

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<sup>30</sup> In his work, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, Vern Poythress argues, “It is not fully relevant when some dispensationalists bring in the topic of God’s dealing with the angels. They say, ‘If God has separate purposes for angels, well then, he may have separate purposes for Israel and the church.’ But the angels were never united under Adam’s headship. They did not fall with Adam; neither are they redeemed from their sins by being united to Christ by faith. Hence the destiny of the angels does not confront us with the same types of questions” (Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1994], 43). The problem with this argument is that it misses Ryrie’s point. Dispensationalists do not argue that a distinct plan for the angels indicates a distinction between Israel and the church, but rather that a distinct plan for the angels—a plan which does not include an effort to save fallen angels—demonstrates that God’s eternal purpose is not limited to soteriological concerns.

<sup>31</sup> That the Lord does not offer a salvific plan for the angels is evident based upon the following points. First, Scripture plainly states that it is man, and not angels, who receive soteriological help from the Lord (Heb 2:16). Second, Scripture informs its readers that God does not spare angels when they sin (2 Pet 2:4). Third, eternal fire is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). That hell is not prepared for man suggests that man has the possibility of experiencing redemption, whereas angels do not. Fourth, it is even suggested that the angels do not even fully understand the concept of salvation (cf. 1 Pet 1:12). Scripture does describe some angels as “elect” (1 Tim 5:21), but in light of all the biblical data, the term “election” must be understood as God’s choosing of certain angels to remain safe from potential sin and fallenness (George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 238), or to participate in specific tasks (William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC 46 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 316), in contrast to God’s choosing of fallen angels to salvation.

<sup>32</sup> For a brief comparison between the Lord’s program for the angels and that of man, see Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (1947; repr. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1976), 4:4-14.

reveals a program for the creation, present state, and destiny of angels that is distinct from that of man.

As with Ryrie's first argument for his third point, Jude also offers defense for Ryrie's second argument. According to Jude, men have one of two destinies: (1) Men can fall prey to apostate teachers and join in their fate, or (2) Men can be among the "called" of God and stand before him blameless. There is no third option in the mind of Jude concerning the destiny of men. At the same time, Jude offers hope for those who have fallen to apostate doctrine. In verses 22 and 23, Jude, speaking to the proper ministry to apostates and those affected by apostate teaching, proclaims, "And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh." In these two verses, Jude identifies three kinds of people who have fallen under the influence of the apostate teachers: (1) those who have been exposed to apostate teaching and are, consequently, struggling with their faith; (2) those who are nearly convinced of apostate teaching; and (3) those who have completely fallen for apostate teaching.<sup>33</sup> Although Jude has spent much space condemning the apostates, this concluding exhortation offers hope to those who have been influenced by such teaching, and it is fairly clear that Jude sees the possibility of restoration.<sup>34</sup> Bauckham, in reaction to these verses, concludes, "But [Jude] does not give up hope of their salvation: his readers are to continue to exercise Christian love towards them, even if prayer is the only practical means of doing so."<sup>35</sup>

However, Jude never extends the possibility of restoration to the angels who committed apostasy. According to Jude 6, "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness

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<sup>33</sup> See Wiley, "Contributing," 104-5.

<sup>34</sup> As Leach bluntly notes, "Jude's priority with such brethren is both preservation and restoration." See Shawn Leach, "Keep Yourselves in the Love of God—A Study of Jude 20-23," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 24, no. 46 (Spring 2011): 57.

<sup>35</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 118.

for the judgment of the great day.” This passage contains two major interpretive issues: (1) What was the “domain” of these angels,<sup>36</sup> and (2) What does it mean to say that they “abandoned their proper abode.”<sup>37</sup> Scholars have written many articles on both issues, and readers are advised to consult those documents for further study. Having said that, Jude 6 reveals two important and uncontroversial points relevant to the subject at hand. First, these angels are δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις, “in eternal bonds.” Second, these angels are waiting for the κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας, “judgment of the great day.” It is difficult to misinterpret the imagery Jude lays before his readers: because of the actions of these angels, they are now imprisoned and awaiting the future judgment. In keeping with the rest of Scripture,<sup>38</sup> Jude never presents a scenario in which fallen angels could repent. The sentence of these angels is final, and although they are presented by Jude to remind his readers that even angels cannot avoid judgment, their fate differs from those affected by apostate teaching, who, according to Jude have an opportunity to turn to the Lord.

This is not the only reference to angels in Jude’s epistle. In verse 10, Jude writes, “But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” This account, which is also recorded

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<sup>36</sup> The first issue involves the status of these angels: Does ἀρχή mean “domain” in reference to their position of authority (J. Daryl Charles, “The Angels Under Reserve in 2 Peter and Jude,” *BBR* [NA 2005]: 45), or does ἀρχή mean “origin” with reference to the angel’s creation and their holy status (David W. Jones, “The Apostate Angels of 2 Pet. 2:4 and Jude 6,” *Faith and Mission* 23, no. 2 [Spring 2006]: 22)?

<sup>37</sup> The second issue involves the sin of these angels: Does τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον refer to the original rebellion and fall of Satan’s angels, or is it a reference to the “sons of God” and their sin in Genesis 6? For a review of these questions, the key concerns, and some conclusions, see Jones, “Apostate Angels,” 26; Robert C. Newman, “The Ancient Exegesis of Genesis 6:2, 4,” *Grace Theological Journal* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1984):13-36.

<sup>38</sup> Wayne Grudem, “Christ Preaching Through Noah: 1 Peter 3:19-20 in the Light of Dominant Themes in Jewish Literature,” *TJ* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 14.

in the pseudepigraphal work the *Assumption of Moses* (and possibly Jude's source), documents a dispute between Michael and Satan, the latter accusing Moses of murder.<sup>39</sup> Jude's purpose in citing this account is an example of an argument from "greater to the lesser," for although the apostates spoke recklessly about angelic authorities (v 9), even Michael, an archangel, did not speak evil towards Satan, one whom most would think deserves such slander.<sup>40</sup>

The observant reader of Jude notices a striking contrast between Satan and the fallen angels held in bonds: Satan, who is the example *par excellence* of apostasy,<sup>41</sup> is not used by Jude as an example of apostasy, yet the angels of Jude 6, who are certainly much less significant than Satan, are used as a warning to Jude's readers of the consequences of apostasy. In fact, Satan is used as part of a rhetorical argument against the reckless slandering of angels by Jude's opponents. Of course, this does not mean that Jude views Satan as an example of holiness or goodness, as Michael's response to Satan clearly indicates. However, what is clear is that Satan, although an apostate himself, is not among the angels who are "in chains."

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<sup>39</sup> This is in reference to Moses' murder of the Egyptian in Exodus 2:12. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 61; Kelly, 264.

<sup>40</sup> As Painter and deSilva put it, "If Michael, himself an archangel (a higher order of being than the teachers), did not dare to pronounce judgment upon [Satan] for defamation (against Moses' character) or dismiss Satan's charges on his own authority (v. 9b), how much less should the intruders, being mere humans, presume to acquit themselves of the charges that the holy angelic ministers of the law would bring against their self-indulgent and insubordinate practices?" See John Painter and David A. deSilva, *James and Jude*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 205.

<sup>41</sup> As Ryrie bluntly states, "It is quite obvious that Satan is an apostate. He knew the truth and deliberately departed from it (Isa 14:12-15)." See Ryrie, "Apostasy in the Church," *BibSac* 121, no. 481 (January 1964): 47. Satan is also associated with the "great apostasy" in the last days, as he empowers the "man of sin" who leads the world in this apostasy. See Henry Cowles, "On 'The Man of Sin,' 2 Thess. 2:3-9," *BibSac* 29, no. 116 (October 1872): 624-25.

Why would Jude use the angels as an example of apostasy instead of Satan? Satan certainly had a reputation among the Jews of the Second Temple period as a great enemy of God,<sup>42</sup> and thus would make excellent fodder for Jude resounding condemnation. Unfortunately, the text never reveals the answer to this question.<sup>43</sup> The only possible solution is that Jude understands Satan to be a key player in God's program for the ages.<sup>44</sup> Although it is certain that Jude would describe Satan as an apostate, Satan plays a different, but equally important, role in the mind of Jude. For Jude, Satan stands as an authority that even Michael would not usurp with rash commentary.<sup>45</sup> Although Jude never identifies the entirety of this role, it is clear—based upon the negative tone set by the *Assumption of Moses*, Michael's response to Satan, and Jude's use of this event to condemn his opponents—that Satan's role is not one which leads to salvation.

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<sup>42</sup> For example, the Qumran community believed that both unfaithful Israelites and pagans were under the evil influence of Satan [Mohan Uddin, "Paul, the Devil and 'Unbelief' in Israel (With Particular Reference to 2 Corinthians 3-4 and Romans 9-11)," *TynBull* 50, no. 2 (1999): 273].

<sup>43</sup> Some argue that Satan is not an angel. See William G. Bellshaw, "The New Testament Doctrine of Satan," *Grace Journal* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1968): 29-30. Thus it is not appropriate to include him in a discussion of Ryrie's second point concerning the angels. However, even if Satan is not an angel, he still has an origin, purpose, and destiny like the angels, and thus this only proves Ryrie's point that God's program for the ages is greater than man's concerns.

<sup>44</sup> For a summary of Satan's works and his role as a servant of God, see Sydney H. T. Page, "Satan: God's Servant," *JETS* 50, no. 3 (September 2007): 449-65.

<sup>45</sup> Wiley notes, "That Michael would refuse to accuse Satan is at first a rather strange observation. However, this conclusion does not conflict with scriptural truth. Elsewhere in the Bible, evil angels are given positions of authority (e.g., Dan 10:13; Eph 6:12), and although man struggles with such authorities, he is never given the license to blaspheme these evil angels" (Wiley, "Contributing," 98). See also John Walvoord, "Is Satan Bound? Part 1," *BibSac* 100, no. 400 (October 1943): 501-2.

## The Glory of God as Displayed Through the Judgment of the Apostates

Ryrie's final defense of his third point is the diversity of purpose within the administration of God's kingdom program. Ryrie notes, "If one is a premillennialist (not even necessarily of the dispensationalist variety) he recognizes that in the kingdom program God has a purpose which, though it involves salvation, is not confined to redemption. Obviously, God has other purposes in this world besides the redemption of mankind."<sup>46</sup> Dispensationalists recognize that God's kingdom program is multifaceted, and such diversity is normally identified as the result of the distinction between Israel and the church and God's distinct program for Israel.<sup>47</sup> However, the kingdom program of God is even not limited to either salvation or the Lord's plan for the Jewish people, for the Epistle of Jude adds a third element of the program, that of judgment.

Commentators have rightly recognized the kingdom focus of Jude. For example, Davids, commenting on the theology of Jude, notes, "Jude is an extremely short letter, so the first thing one must say about its theology is that since it comes from the

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<sup>46</sup> Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 103.

<sup>47</sup> For example, David Olander argues, "The fact that all the biblical covenants are effectively with Israel (not the church) marks a complete distinction between Israel and the church with completely separate programs. Scripture is very clear on this and it is actually quite simple. This is really the *sine qua non* of classic or traditional dispensationalism. This is as true today as it was when God planned His kingdom program centered in the nation Israel from eternity. God's program centered fully in and with Israel not the church. God's kingdom program if understood correctly shows unity of purpose and design for *all* creation (Eph. 1:10). The kingdom is far more than salvation or Christological. It becomes this if the biblical covenants are not kept in first place pointing toward Messiah's kingdom and God's glory. And this must be, for the most significant design and purpose God has given concerning man will ultimately be in the kingdom of His Messiah which will be given to Jesus as the son of man (Dan. 7:13-14; Mat. 6:33) not as the Son of God. All this points to the doxological purposes of God's entire program with creation" [David Olander, "The Importance of the Davidic Covenant," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 10, no. 31 [December 2006]: 58-59].

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.”<sup>48</sup> The most obvious kingdom element of Jude is the return of Christ (14-15, 24), when, according to Davids, “refers to the coming of Christ to usher his true followers into the full experience of his reign.”<sup>49</sup> However, the return of Christ in Jude’s letter must be interpreted through its purpose and in its context. According to Davids, Jude’s purpose is “to bring proper order to his addresses,”<sup>50</sup> and such order is manifested through “judgment.”<sup>51</sup>

Judgment as part of God’s kingdom plan is most evident in Jude 14-15, “*It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’*” More will be said on this passage later, but for the moment it is important to recognize that this passage, which records the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, does not promise a glorious meeting between believers and their Lord as recorded in other passages—a meeting believers anxiously wait for (cf. 1 Cor 1:7; 1 Thess 1:9-10; Titus 2:12-14; Phil 3:20; 1 Pet 4:13). Instead, it identifies a key goal of Christ’s return: the judgment of apostasy.

It is important to remember that Jude 14-15 is not an isolated statement concerning the return of Jesus Christ and his judging of apostasy. Instead, it serves as part of a larger apologetic against apostasy, an apologetic that attacks Jude’s present opponents by drawing from OT examples of the Lord’s judgment. One implication of this apologetic is that the final judgment of apostasy at the second coming and inauguration of the kingdom is simply the consummation of the pattern of the

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<sup>48</sup> Davids, *Letters of Second Peter and Jude*, 29.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

Lord's judgment of apostasy throughout redemptive history.<sup>52</sup> The judgment of apostasy throughout history proves that God's kingdom program of the ages is not simply a matter of saving men (as important of an element as it is), but also involves the equally important matter of judgment, and just as God chose not to accomplish his kingdom objective of salvation instantaneously following the fall,<sup>53</sup> so also does God administer judgment, not all at once, but throughout redemptive history and through each manifestation of his kingdom program.<sup>54</sup>

In his attack upon the apostates, Jude draws from the record of six people or events referenced in the OT. These references to famous historical apostasies act as examples of prophetic

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<sup>52</sup> Wellum makes the following statement concerning God's judgment leading up to the inauguration of the kingdom: "The rightful rule of God over the entire creation is now rejected by the human race. Sin is essentially rebellion against the claims of the King, and, so, we now stand under God's judgment of death. In this important way, the OT makes a distinction between the sovereignty of God over the entire creation and the coming of his *saving reign* in the context of a rebellious creation. Thus, on the one hand, the kingdom of God will exclude all sin and rebellion. On the other hand, it will include all that is redeemed according to God's gracious will. Eventually, when all sin and evil is put down, we will see the fullness of God's kingdom." See Stephen J. Wellum, "Reflecting on the Kingdom of God," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 3.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Gonzalez Jr., "Where Sin Abounds: The Spread of Sin and the Curse in Primeval History," *Reformed Baptist Theological Review* 5, no. 1 (January 2008): 5.

<sup>54</sup> Fruchtenbaum identifies five facets of God's kingdom program. The first is the "universal kingdom," which refers to God's rule over all creation and history. The second is the "spiritual kingdom," which belong to all those who have experienced the new birth. The third is the "theocratic kingdom," which is God's rule over Israel. The fourth is the "messianic" or "millennial kingdom," which is that kingdom which the Messiah will come to rule over in the future. The fifth is the "mystery kingdom," which reigns between Christ first and second comings. See Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology, Part 2 of 6," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 5, no. 3 (July 1999): 33-39. Excluding the first example, which is more general, Jude's examples of apostasy specifically involve the last four manifestations of God's kingdom program.

typology,<sup>55</sup> meaning that the apostates of Jude's letter and their ensuing condemnation become a fulfillment of the historical apostasies of the OT.<sup>56</sup> These six types stretch across the various dispensations,<sup>57</sup> yet, in the mind of Jude, their end is the

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<sup>55</sup> J. Daryl Charles, "The Use of Tradition-Material in the Epistle of Jude," *BBR* 4, no. 1 (1994): 2.

<sup>56</sup> That the historical examples act as typology is exemplified in Jude 4: "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." The meaning of the phrase οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα, "those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation," is hotly disputed. However, the solution that most closely fits the purpose and context of Jude sees his OT references as prophecies predicting the condemnation of the apostates. This view provides the best explanation of πάλαι, "long ago," as a reference to the OT, and offers a link between this proclamation of judgment upon the apostates and the historical examples of apostasy following this condemnation. As Moo notes, "The simplest explanation [of Jude 4] ... is that Jude introduces the evidence for the false teachers' condemnation that will adduce in the rest of the letter. He makes his case by citing from the Old Testament (vv.5-8, 11), from Jewish traditions (vv.9, 14-16), and from the teaching of the apostles (vv.17-18. In all of these sources, he says, the 'condemnation' of these false teachers has long been established" (Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 230).

<sup>57</sup> As is commonly understood, the number of dispensations is not essential to dispensational belief. Traditionally, dispensationalists identify seven dispensations: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace, and Millennium. If this organization is maintained, the Jude references apostasy in five of the seven dispensations. Although examples of apostasy in the dispensations of Innocence and Human Government are absent from Jude's epistle, their absence should not defeat the thesis of this paper for two reasons: (1) As Ryrie himself points out, the number of dispensations is not an essential identifying characteristic of dispensationalism (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 50-57; see also Lightner, "Theological Perspectives on Theonomy Part 1: Theonomy and Dispensationalism," *BibSac* 143, no. 569 (January 1986): 34], which means that one could theoretically redefine the dispensations and thus have Jude include examples of apostasy from more dispensations [for example, Philip Heideman removes the dispensation of human government, an arrangement which would cover all of Jude's examples of apostasy save one from the dispensation of Innocence; see Philip Heideman,

same, and thus the Lord's consistent plan to judge apostasy serves as a warning to apostates in the present age.<sup>58</sup>

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“Dispensational Theology,” *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 4, no. 3 (July 1998): 41-42; and (2) It seems rather illogical to argue against the thesis of this paper on the grounds that Jude fails to mention examples from the dispensations of Innocence (a dispensation in which there would be little chance of apostasy), and Human Government (a dispensation that covers only three chapters of Scripture). The main point is that the Lord consistently judges apostasy as part of his kingdom program rather than how many dispensations the examples are drawn from.

<sup>58</sup> That such consistency of judgment exists across the dispensations as part of God's kingdom program is helpful in providing an apologetic for dispensationalism. Critics of dispensationalism argue that the distinctions resulting from its methodology, and particularly its recognition of dispensations, compartmentalizes the Bible and destroys its unity. For example, Broadwater remarks, “But we fear that the dispensationalist method of interpretation does violence to the unity of the scriptures and to the Sovereign continuity of God's purposes.” See Billy Broadwater, *Exposing the Fallacies of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture: A Biblical Examination of Christ's Second Coming* (Bloomington: WestBow P, 2014), 58; see also Anthony Am Hokema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 195; Mal Couch, *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 95]. This view is even understood by unbelievers, as Hood, Hill, and Williamson note, “Over the course of the previous 350 years of Protestant Christianity, the most common method of interpreting the Bible was the covenantal view, which emphasized the unity of all scripture.... Dispensationalism, however, instead of stressing the continuity between the Old and New Testaments, emphasized the discontinuity between the two by setting forth a series of separate ‘dispensations,’ each governed distinctly by God” (Ralph W. Hood Jr., Peter C. Hill, and W. Paul Williamson, *The Psychology of Religious Fundamentalism* [New York: Guilford P, 2005], 58). In response, dispensationalists argue for both continuity and discontinuity as God's program moves from dispensation to dispensation (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 98-100). The judgment of apostasy serves to double-role as one aspect of that continuity and unity while also demonstrating that God's kingdom program is not limited to salvation.

### *Cain in the Dispensation of Conscience*

The first example of apostasy referenced by Jude in accordance to biblical chronology is that of Cain. Describing the apostates, Jude laments, “Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain.” Jude does not elaborate on what he means in his argument that the apostates have “gone the way of Cain,” but simply assumes that his readers understand the context. Waltke points out that Jude identifies Cain with unreasoning animals (cf. v 10).<sup>59</sup> An unreasoning animal seeks to satisfy its own desires rather than think critically about a situation, and this rationale perfectly describes Cain.

Scholars have debated the reasons for the Lord rejecting Cain’s offering.<sup>60</sup> This debate aside, the text suggests that Cain was given instructions concerning the worship of the Lord yet did not follow them (for whatever reason), for when God rejected Cain’s offering, the Lord reasoned with him (Gen 4:6-7). However, instead of taking the Lord’s advice by offering a sacrifice fitting for the Lord, Cain became even more envious and killed his brother Abel. As a result, Cain and his family were completely cut off from the Lord.<sup>61</sup> The record of his descendants ends with the account of Lamech and his vowing of revenge (vv 23-24), and Cain’s family is never mentioned against in the biblical record. In the NT, Cain is used as an example of evil (1 John 3:12) and contrasted with his brother Abel, who is identified as a “righteous man” (Heb 11:4).

What is the significance of Cain, his apostasy, and ensuing judgment? First, scholars recognize that God’s kingdom program is not simply about salvation, but separating those who

<sup>59</sup> Bruce Waltke, “Cain and His Offering,” *WTJ* 48, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 371.

<sup>60</sup> For a discussion of the rejection of Cain’s offering and its significance in the text, see Alan J. Hauser, “Linguistic and Thematic Links Between Genesis 4:1-16 and Genesis 2-3,” *JETS* 23, no. 4 (December 1980): 300; Waltke, “Cain,” 363-72.

<sup>61</sup> See Richard L. Hester, “On Being a Marked Person Genesis 4:1-16,” *Faith and Mission* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1986): 80; Thomas A. Howe, “Calling Upon the Name of the Lord Genesis 4:26,” *Christian Apologetics Journal* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 80-81.

do not belong in that kingdom, and including Cain.<sup>62</sup> Second, scholars also recognize that Cain's apostasy essentially established another "kingdom,"<sup>63</sup> and the establishment of another "kingdom" implies that an original kingdom already existed, one in which the apostate Cain could not belong. Finally, scholars recognize that God continued his kingdom program through the line of Seth, Adam's third son (Gen 4:25-26). Maarten Paul makes this interesting observation concerning Cain, apostasy, and God's purposes:

The book of Genesis may be summarized as a theological account of creation and the origin of the people of Israel. A unifying theme appears to be that, in spite of man's sin and apostasy, God remains faithful and provides new starts time and again. When Abel is killed, God continues with Seth. Cain and his descendants are mentioned in passing, yet the story remains focused on the main line proceeding from Seth to Noah.<sup>64</sup>

By going the way of Cain, Jude's apostate opponents have not considered the consequences of their foolish actions. Although the apostates are among Jude's recipients,<sup>65</sup> just as Cain walked among Adam's family, like Cain, they will be removed. That the removal of apostates is part of God's kingdom program has been established long ago.

### ***Sodom and Gomorrah in the Dispensation of Promise***

The second example of apostasy is that of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude writes in verse 8, "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after

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<sup>62</sup> Sidney Greidanus, "Preaching Christ from the Cain and Abel Narrative," *BibSac* 161, no. 644 (October 2004): 387-97.

<sup>63</sup> Gonzalez, "Where Sin Abounds," 13-18.

<sup>64</sup> Maarten J. Paul, "Genesis 4:17-24: A Case-Study in Eisegesis," *TynBull* 47, no. 1 (1996): 144.

<sup>65</sup> This is suggested by Jude 4 and 12. The latter is likely a reference to a partaking of the Lord's supper. See Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 68-70.

strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.” It goes without saying that the nature of Sodom and Gomorrah’s sin is a controversial topic in today’s theological discourse. Yet, in the context of Jude, there is an even more pressing question: How can one identify the infamous cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as “apostates”? Can Sodom and Gomorrah truly be listed alongside men such as Cain, a man who possessed intimate knowledge of God yet rejected God, or the angels who shared an even more intimate relationship with God?

Some scholars have argued that the cities were destinations of ministry for God’s chosen people. According to biblical chronology, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed only 450 years following the flood, and thus Shem would have still been alive at this point. He would stand as a living testament to the Lord’s judgment, and with other key figures in the Genesis narrative, including Abraham, Lot, and Melchizedek, could proclaim God’s truth to the doomed cities.<sup>66</sup> Although the Genesis narrative never mentions a ministry of Shem or preaching efforts of Abraham, Lot, or Melchizedek, it is certainly true that the cities experienced the glory of the Lord. Both beheld the Lord’s work as Abram, his household servants, and his allies saved Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah from the hands of Chedorlaomer (Gen 14:13-16). Both also observed Melchizedek the priest of Salem offer worship to the Lord (vv 18-20). Even the king of Sodom offered restitution to Abram (vv 17, 21-24). It is certainly a stretch to say that Sodom and Gomorrah were part of God’s kingdom, but nevertheless the cities and their populace were familiar enough with God’s chosen patriarch and the worship of the Lord, thereby possessing enough knowledge of God’s kingdom program to be put in a place of decision.

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<sup>66</sup> Martin Luther, who was probably influenced by an earlier Jewish exegesis, argued that Abraham, Shem, Lot, and Melchizedek attempted to call Sodom and Gomorrah to repentance. See Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “The Compassionate God of Traditional Jewish and Christian Exegesis,” *TynBull* 58, no. 2 (2007): 198.

As the popular account goes, the cities rejected the Lord's sovereignty and performed wickedness (18:20), and thus the cities were destroyed (19:24-25). The most important remark concerning the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah is that the cities are marked as a δειγμα, or "example," of πυρὸς αἰωνίου, "eternal fire."<sup>67</sup> This statement implies plan and purpose on God's part.<sup>68</sup> Just as Jude's readers will stand in the presence of God without spot, so will those who turn from the Lord face eternal judgment.

### ***Korah, Balaam, and Israel in the Dispensation of Law***

The third, fourth, and fifth examples Jude uses come from the wilderness wandering during the dispensation of law. Speaking of Israel, Jude writes, "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe" (v 5) and of Korah and Balaam he writes, "Woe to them! For ... pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah" (v 11). These three events are familiar to those who know the OT well.

All three apostasies take place during the dispensation of law, a time in which the Lord was establishing his theocratic kingdom through the nation of Israel. The grace bestowed upon the nation of Israel as God's covenant people did not come without obligation. As Moses writes in Deuteronomy 7:7-11,

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of

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<sup>67</sup> That the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah served as an example of judgment was recognized prior to the writing of Jude. For example, see 2 Maccabees 2:5.

<sup>68</sup> Bauckham notes, "[The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah] serves as proof of divine punishment for later generations" (Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 Peter, 54).

slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.

The Mosaic law established both covenant blessings to those who kept the law and covenant curses to those who broke the law. As the word records, certain Israelites did not follow the Lord and his authority and thus were removed from the theocratic kingdom. As to their relationship to Jude's opponents, Bateman asserts, "Whereas the wilderness community rebelled against God's leading by rejecting Moses, who wanted to lead God's people into the land of Canaan (v. 5b), Jude's rebels rebelled against God's leading by rejecting Jesus as Messiah (vv. 4, 8b), who came to inaugurate God's kingdom rule."<sup>69</sup>

### ***The Opponents of Christ in the Dispensation of the Millennium***

Up until this point, Jude's references have referred to past examples of judgment. However, in addition to Jude's references to the past, he points to the future by way of Enoch's prophesy concerning the return of the Lord.<sup>70</sup> In verses 14 and 15, Jude writes,

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<sup>69</sup> Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Rebellion and God's Judgment in the Book of Jude," *BibSac* 170, no. 680 (October 2013): 458.

<sup>70</sup> This prophecy of Enoch is recorded in the pseudepigraphal work of 1 Enoch (1:9). For explanation's concerning Jude's use of this non-canonical text, see Walter M. Dunnnett, "The Hermeneutics of Jude and 2 Peter: The Use of Ancient Jewish Traditions," *JETS* 31, no. 3 (September 1988): 287-92;

Προεφήτευσεν δὲ καὶ τοῦτοις ἑβδομος ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ Ἐνὼχ λέγων· Ἴδου ἦλθεν κύριος ἐν ἀγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ, ποιῆσαι κρίσιν κατὰ πάντων καὶ ἐλέγξει πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς περὶ πάντων τῶν ἔργων ἀσεβείας αὐτῶν ὧν ἠσέβησαν καὶ περὶ πάντων τῶν σκληρῶν ὧν ἐλάλησαν κατ' αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἀσεβεῖς.

*It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*

Although the OT does not record this prophecy, it is likely that Enoch received this prophecy during his deep communion with God.<sup>71</sup> Enoch's prophecy provides a striking defense of the Lord's consistent plan to judge apostasy throughout the dispensations. In fact, out of all Jude's types, Enoch's prophecy is the most revelatory of this plan for the following three reasons.

First, in its historical context (Gen 5:18-24), Enoch prophesied against the people of his day concerning the Lord's future judgment upon the ungodly.<sup>72</sup> Although the flood is not mentioned in Enoch's prophecy, reason dictates that the wickedness accumulated during the days before the flood (cf. 6:1-6) prompted Enoch's prophetic ministry. This reality proves that the Lord's plan for judgment is both ancient and normative.

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<sup>71</sup> Waltke notes, "It is not dishonest to think that the prophecy preserved in *First Enoch* is a true prophecy. Jude's point is to show that this prophecy is *very* old. It was given to Enoch, the seventh from Adam in the genealogy preserved in Gen 5. The text says he walked (and so conversed) with God. Is it not plausible that while walking with Enoch and teaching him, God prophesied that he was coming with myriads of his holy ones in his final judgment on the wicked?" See Bruce K. Waltke, "Revisiting Inspiration and Incarnation," *WTJ* 71, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 93.

<sup>72</sup> Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity* (Detroit: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 121.

Second, as to its prophetic nature, Enoch's prophecy points to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev 19:11-13). Whatever significance Enoch's prophecy had in the day it was spoken, there is no doubt that this prophecy had the ultimate intent of warning the people of the future day of judgment when Christ will return to establish His kingdom.<sup>73</sup> This reality proves that the Lord's plan for judgment is not only ancient, but has a future consummation.

Third, as it is purpose in the epistle of Jude, Jude applies Enoch's prophecy to his opponents. Of course, this leads to the question: How can Jude rightly apply a prophecy that was spoken in a context separated by thousands of years and pointed to the final judgment of apostasy at the Lord's return? The answer is that Jude applies the prophecy typologically, meaning "these *kinds* of men." In this way, Enoch's prophecy condemned Jude's opponents even though the prophecy was not spoken in Jude's day nor directly referred to Jude's opponents. Although Enoch was not directly speaking to the apostates, his prophecy applies to them because the Lord judges apostasy in a specific way.

The ultimate significance of Jude's quotation of Enoch is that God is in the business of judging apostasy. Although the prophecy ultimately points to a final day of judgment at the return of Christ, its preaching within history and application to the apostates in Jude's day reveals that God's judgment in the last day is just the consummation of a program of judgment that the Lord established from the beginning. Clearly, God's kingdom program is not limited to salvation.

### ***The Apostates in the Dispensation of Grace***

All of Jude's examples, both in dispensations prior to the dispensation of grace and following the dispensation of grace, are not documented to simply provide a historical survey of the Lord's specific acts of judgment. Instead, Jude has the deliberate purpose of warning his readers, and in turn the

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<sup>73</sup> William F. Kerr, "Apostasy According to Jude," *Central Bible Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1959): 19.

church as a whole, in the present dispensation of grace. Jude surrounds the apostates with undeniable testimony to the Lord's consistency in God's plan of judgment. Bateman summarizes Jude's conclusion well: "Anyone who rebelled against God experienced His divine ire. Jude wanted his readers to remember that God was impartial when He judged rebellion, no matter who rebelled against Him, whether Jew, celestial being, or Gentile urbanite."<sup>74</sup> Jude may include encouragement to his readers concerning their salvation, but that encouragement forms the outlier of Jude's ultimate purpose, which is to warn his readers in this dispensation about the Lord's plan to judge apostasy.

### Excursus: Jude 25

One potential difficulty for the thesis of this paper is found in Jude 25: μόνῳ θεῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν δόξα μεγαλωσύνη κράτος καὶ ἐξουσία πρὸ παντὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν, "to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen." This doxology appears to place δόξα, "glory," alongside μεγαλωσύν, "majesty," κράτος, "power," and ἐξουσία, "authority," as equal "attributes" of God. Therefore, is it possible that Jude does not understand God's glory as the ultimate end towards which all things find their end, but rather one of multiple ends?

In response, it is unlikely that Jude identifies δόξα as one of four ends based upon Jude's doxology. μεγαλωσύνη, κράτος, and ἐξουσία are used by Jude only in verse 25, yet δόξα is found in two other verses, with the previous verse being the most significant.<sup>75</sup> Here, as noted and defended above, Jude states the ultimate end of man's salvation is that man might "stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy."

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<sup>74</sup> Bateman IV, "Rebellion and God's Judgment," 469.

<sup>75</sup> Δόξα is also used in Jude 8, but this reference is not of God's glory but that of a certain class of angels and thus is irrelevant to the current issue.

Jude does not say that man might stand in the presence of His μεγαλωσύνη, κράτος, or ἐξουσία. Since the salvation of Jude's recipients is a main concern of Jude (if not the main concern of Jude), to say nothing of the great importance of salvation in God's divine decree (as covenant theologians rightly argue), this is hardly an insignificant point. Although it is impossible to fully read the mind of Jude, it is almost certain that Jude would have included these other doxological points in verse 24 if they were also to the end of man's salvation. In contrast, it is just as likely that Jude includes μεγαλωσύνη, κράτος, and ἐξουσία in his doxology (note that it is called a *doxology*) as expansions of Jude's doxology rather than "co-equal" ends of all things. Anything beyond this is reading an argument into the text that is not present in the text.

### **Conclusion**

From the above review, it is evident that Jude's content supports the overarching theme of Scripture as designated by dispensationalists. The epistle of Jude stands as a reminder that God's program for the ages includes a salvific element, but is much broader in scope. The salvation of Jude's readers is not the end in itself but the means by which they would be presented before God as a living sacrifice. This plan of salvation is not extended to the angels, nor is it the entirety of God's kingdom program. Although it might be extreme to identify Jude as a dispensationalist, his thought is certainly compatible with Ryrie's third point.

Dispensationalists and nondispensationalists may rightly critique the wording of Ryrie's third point, but nevertheless the Scriptures offer evidence for the glory of God as the unifying theme of the Bible and history. How that is expressed as a distinctive and integral part of dispensational theology will no doubt be the focus of research in years to come.