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

Introduction

In 1965, Charles Caldwell Ryrie published Dispensationalism Today, a text which is arguably the most significant contribution to the development of dispensationalism in the 20th century. In this important work, one written as an apologetic for dispensational thought, 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 hermeneutics, and (3) The glory of God as the unifying theme of Scripture and history.

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. 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. 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, while others seek to define dispensationalism in different terms.


3 Ryrie, 43-47; See also Baker, 57; Lightner, 48.


6 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, 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.

7 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...
In *Dispensationalism Today*, Ryrie proposed 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. 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, but such support is limited in favor of theological and theoretical discussions of Ryrie’s third point, and much of that is critical.

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 Jude's Epistle of Jude...

8 Ryrie, 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* 17:2 (Fall 2013), 82. See also Thomas Baurain, “A Short Primer on Hermeneutics,” *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 10:31 (Dec 2006): 41; Jonathan R. Pratt, “Dispensational Sanctification: A Misnomer,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 07:1 (Fall 2002): 99.


10 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 Scripture because non-dispensationalists also recognize the glory of God. On one level this is methodological, for it is argued that dispensational 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,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145:579 (Jul 1988): 268; Michael Vlach, “What is Dispensationalism?”, in *Christ’s Prophetic Plans: A Futuristic Premillennial Primer*, ed. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 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.
“The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,”11 and between its short length, difficult and controversial content, and its reception and perception throughout church history, it is easy to understand such neglect.12 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 a great 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 saving acts upon the recipients and the judgment of the apostates throughout the dispensations.13

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.14 In contrast, Ryrie argued, “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.”15 Ryrie’s references to Ephesians 1 provide solid evidence for Ryrie’s position,16 and others have offered Scriptural proofs for the glory of God as the end goal of salvation.17

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 New Testament

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13 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,” Bibliotheca Sacra 108:429 (Jan 1951): 112.
15 Ryrie, 103.
17 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 10:29 (May 2006): 79.
survey clarifies, the majority of Jude’s text is devoted to warning its readers of apostate teaching and the fate awaiting apostate teachers. However, bracketing the body of Jude’s apology against the apostates is four verses containing clear soteriological statements (vv. 1, 3, 21, 24). 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.” Jude’s 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; Tit. 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,” implies objective. 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 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”).” 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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19 The two verses not reviewed in this paper are v. 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 v.21, “Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.” All Scripture is taken from the New American Standard Version.


21 There is some disagreement on the translation of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τετηρημένος as a dative agent with a passive voice, i.e. “kept by Jesus Christ,” as in the NIV and NLT, or as Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τετηρημένος 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 03:2 (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 New Testament generally speaks of both believers and unbelievers as being “kept for” the last day (Jn. 7:11-12; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Pet. 1:4-5; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7; Jude 6. 13). See Green, 48. See also Davids, 38; Moo, 223.

22 Green, 48.
What does it mean to be “kept for Jesus Christ”? That statement is further explained in verse 24, 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 Old Testament thought in this verse, which is fitting for an epistle that frequently draws from events recorded in the Old Testament (cf. vv.5-7, 11). Specifically, Jude applies to the Old Testament theme of sacrifice to God’s saving acts upon His elect. After the coming of Jesus Christ, believers, who are kept for Jesus Christ, are presented before God as sacrifices prepared for glory. 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.”

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 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.”

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

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23 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 (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries) (Nashville: Abington Press, 2002), 28. See also Bauckham, 26; Daniel Keating, First and Second Peter, Jude (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 220;
24 The adjective ἁμώμους, “blameless,” is a cultic term that originally had reference to the state of sacrificial offerings that God demanded (e.g., Ex. 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. and C. Black, 1969), 291.
27 Bauckham, 124.
28 Robert L. 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 08:1 (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.
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.”28

Although Ryrie offers no Scriptural support for his argument in Dispensationalism Today, that angels follow a distinct program in the decree of God is a biblical conclusion. The cumulative witness of Scripture indicates that God does not offer a salvific program for the angels.29 Furthermore, that God has a unique program for the angels is also documented.30 Angels may not possess the same share of focus in the record of Scripture as that of man, but nevertheless the biblical witness reveals a program for the creation, present state, and destiny of angels that is distinct from 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.31 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.32 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.”33

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 for the judgment of the great day.” This passage contains two major interpretive issues: (1) What was the “domain” of these

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28 Ryrie, 103.
29 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, that receive soteriological help from the Lord (Heb. 2:16). Second, Scriptures 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 (The New International Greek Testament Commentary) (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 238], or to participate in specific tasks [William D. Mounce, Pastoral Epistles (Word Biblical Commentary) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 316], in contrast to God’s choosing of fallen angels to salvation.
30 For a brief comparison between the Lord’s program for the angels and that of man, see Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976), 4:4-14.
31 See Wiley, 104-105.
33 Bauckham, 118.
angels, and (2) What does it mean to say that they “abandoned their proper abode.” 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 ἀδίδως, “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, 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 affect by apostate teaching, who, according to Jude have an opportunity to turn to the Lord.

However, 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 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. 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.

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, 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 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

35 The second issue involves the sin of these angels: Does τὸ ἦλθον ἀξιοθάνατον 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, 26; Robert C. Newman, “The Ancient Exegesis of Genesis 6:24,” Grace Theological Journal 05:1 (Spring 1984):13-36.
37 This is in reference to Moses’ murder of the Egyptian in Exodus 2:12. See Bauckham, 61; Kelly, 264.
38 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.
39 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,” Bibliotheca Sacra 121:481 (Jan 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,” Bibliotheca Sacra 029:116 (Oct 1872): 624-625.
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.”

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,\(^{40}\) and thus would make excellent fodder for Jude resounding condemnation. Unfortunately, the text never reveals the answer to this question.\(^{41}\) The only possible solution is that Jude understands Satan to be a key player in God’s program for the ages.\(^{42}\) 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.\(^{43}\) 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.

**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 premillenialist (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. Obvious, God has other purpose in this world besides the redemption of mankind.”\(^{44}\) 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.\(^{45}\)

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\(^{40}\) 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),” *Tyndale Bulletin* 50:2 (NA 1999): 273].

\(^{41}\) Some argue that Satan is not an angel [See William G. Bellshaw, “The New Testament Doctrine of Satan, *Grace Journal* 09:3 (Fall 1968): 29-30] and 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.


\(^{43}\) 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, 98]. See also John Walvoord, “Is Satan Bound? Part 1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 100:400 (Oct 1943): 501-502.

\(^{44}\) Ryrie, 103.

\(^{45}\) 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
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 Jesus movement we must assume that most of its 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.”46 The most obvious kingdom element of Jude is the return of Christ (14-15, 24), when, according to David, “Refer to the coming of Christ to usher his true followers into the full experience of his reign.”47 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,”48 and such order is manifested through “judgment.”49

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; Tit. 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 Old Testament 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 Lord’s judgment of apostasy throughout redemptive history.50 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

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46 Davids, 29.
47 Ibid., 32.
48 Ibid., 29.
49 Ibid., 29.
50 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 12:1 (Spring 2008): 3.
kingdom objective of salvation instantaneously following the fall, so also does God administer judgment, not all at once, but throughout redemptive history and through each manifestation of his kingdom program.

In his attack upon the apostates, Jude draws from the record of six people or events referenced in the Old Testament. These references to famous historical apostasies act as examples of prophetic typology, meaning that the apostates of Jude’s letter and their ensuing condemnation become a fulfillment of the historical apostasies of the Old Testament. These six types stretch across the various dispensations, yet, in the mind of Jude, their end is the same, and thus the Lord’s consistent plan to judge apostasy serves as a warning to apostates in the present age.


52 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 05:3 (Jul 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.


54 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, ἡ πάλαι προγεγραμμέναι 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 Old Testament references as prophecies predicting the condemnation of the apostates. This view provides the best explanation of πάλαι, “long ago,” as a reference to the Old Testament, 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, 230].

55 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 [See Ryrie, 50-57; see also Lightner, “Theological Perspectives on Theonomy Part 1: Theonomy and Dispensationalism,” Bibliotheca Sacra 143:569 (Jan 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,” Dispensational Theology,” Chafer Theological Seminary Journal 04:3 (Jul 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.

56 That such consistency of judgment exists across the dispensations as part of God’s kingdom program is helpful in providing an apologistic for dispensationalism. Critics of dispensationalism argue that the distinctions resulting from its methodology, and particularly its recognition of dispensations, compartmentalizes the Bible and
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). 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. 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. 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 again in the biblical record. In the New Testament, Cain is used as an example of evil (1 Jn. 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 do not belong in that kingdom, and including Cain. Second, scholars also recognize that Cain’s apostasy essentially established another “kingdom,” 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

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.” [Billy Broadwater, Exposing the Fallacies of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture: A Biblical Examination of Christ’s Second Coming (Bloomington: WestBow Press, 2014), 58; see also Anthony Am Hokema, The Bible and the Future (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994), 195; Mal Couch, Dictionary of Premillennial Theology (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 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: The Guilford Press, 2005), 58]. In response, dispensationalists argue for both continuity and discontinuity as God’s program moves from dispensation to dispensation [Ryrie, 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.

61 Gonzalez, 13-18.
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 summarised 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 start times 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.  

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, 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 Dispensational 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 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.  

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 exposed to God’s chosen patriarch and the worship of the Lord and thus possessed enough knowledge of God’s kingdom program to be put in a place of decision.

63 This is suggested by Jude 4 and 12. The latter is likely a reference to a partaking of the Lord’s supper. See Davids, 68-70.
64 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,” Tyndale Bulletin 58:2 (NA 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 δείγμα, or “example,” of πυρὸς αἰωνίου, “eternal fire.” This statement implies plan and purpose on God’s part. 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…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 Old Testament 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 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.”

65 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.
66 Bauckham notes, “[The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah] serves as proof of divine punishment for later generations.” See Bauckham, 54.
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 prophecy concerning the return of the Lord.68 In verses 14 and 15, Jude writes,

\[Προεφήτευσεν δὲ καὶ τούτοις ἐβδόμος ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ Ἑνώχ λέγων· Ἡλθεν κύριος ἐν ἀγίαις μυρίαν αὐτῶν, ποιήσαι κρίσιν κατά πάντων καὶ ἐλέγξαι πάντας τοὺς ἁσβείς περὶ πάντων τῶν ἐργῶν ἁσβείας αὐτῶν ὅν ἠσβέσαν καὶ περὶ πάντων τῶν σκληρῶν ὅν ἐλάλησαν κατ’ αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτωλοί ἁσβείς.\]

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 Old Testament does not record this prophecy, it is likely that Enoch received this prophecy during his deep communion with God.69 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’s prophesied against the people of his day concerning the Lord’s future judgment upon the ungodly.70 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.

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.71 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,

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68 This prophecy of Enoch is recorded in the pseudepigrapha work of 1 Enoch (1:9). For explanation’s concerning Jude’s use of this non-canonical text, see Walter M. Dunn, “The Hermeneutics of Jude and 2 Peter: The Use of Ancient Jewish Traditions,” Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 31:3 (Sept 1988): 287-292.
69 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,” Westminster Theological Journal 71:1 (Spring 2009): 93.
70 Rolland McCune, A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity (Detroit: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 121.
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 Church as a whole, in the present dispensation of grace. Jude surrounds the apostates with undeniable testimony to the Lord’s consistency in His 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.”

Jude may include encouragement to its 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.

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.

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73 Bateman IV, 469.