

BLASPHEMING ANGELS: THE PRESENCE OF MAGICIANS IN JUDE 8–10

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Abstract: *This essay argues that the description of “dreamers,” “blasphemers,” and the positive counterexample of Michael’s engagement with Satan in Jude 8–10, when understood together, demonstrate that the opponents were magicians. We explore the significance of magicians during the Greco–Roman period and how angels are described within the magical papyri. This reading furthermore provides an alternative interpretation on how the apocryphal tradition of Michael is included in order to portray Michael as an exemplary exorcist. Michael is an example on how to properly engage the demonic, not by invoking angels like the magicians, but by calling upon the Lord. Engaging with spiritual beings and revealing dreams would have provided possible proof that these opponents were marked by the Spirit, as the readers assumed in verse 19. But as the magical papyri reveal, the disciples of Jesus did not have a monopoly on the magical arts.*

Key words: *magicians, magical papyri, dreams, Michael, blasphemy, exorcism*

The letter of Jude concerns itself with individuals who are described to have infiltrated a community. In the history of scholarship, it was once affirmed that they were a mixture of early Gnostics.¹ Others identified the opponents as false teachers with antinomian practices² or teachers whose doctrine of the Spirit justified unethical behaviors.³ There is also a move to understand the opponents rhetor-

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¹ Philipp Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), 590; P. A. Seethaler, “Kleine Bemerkungen zum Judasbrief,” *BZ* 31 (1987): 261–64; Douglas Rowston, “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,” *NTS* 21.4 (1975): 562; Henning Paulsen, *Der Zweite Petrusbrief und der Judasbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 47–49.

² Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961), 316; Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* (AB 37; New York: Doubleday, 1964), 192; Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 11; Stephan Joubert, “Persuasion in the Letter of Jude,” *JSNT* 58 (1995): 78–79; J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (BNTC 17; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 227–31; Thomas Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC 37; Nashville: B&H, 2003), 414–15; Peter Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 20–22; idem, “Are the Others Too Other? The Issue of ‘Others’ in Jude and 2 Peter,” in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students* (ed. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin; SBL Resources for Biblical Study 77; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 208; Herbert Bateman proposes that the opponents were immoral zealots in *Jude* (Evangelical Exegetical Commentary; Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017), 78–80; Alexandra Robinson, *Jude on the Attack: A Comparative Analysis of the Epistle of Jude, Jewish Judgement Oracles, and Greco–Roman Invective* (LNTS 581; New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 110; Jörg Frey, *The Letter of Jude and the Second Letter of Peter: A Theological Commentary* (trans. Kathleen Ess; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 34.

³ Pablo Alberto Deiros, *Santiago y Judas* (Comentario Bíblico Hispanoamericano; Florida: Editorial Caribe, 1992), 289–92; Gerhard Sellin describes the intruders as “enthusiastischen Häretiker” in “Die

ically with the writer's accusations as polemical characterizations.⁴ Although Lewis Donelson asserts that "all the accusations in Jude can be read in several ways and fit with a variety of theological profiles,"⁵ there is another description of the opponents' identity that still needs further elaboration. In Jude 8–10, the opponents are described as dreamers and engaging in blasphemy. In the midst of these descriptions, the angel Michael rebukes Satan over the body of Moses in verse 9. This inclusion of Michael and Satan is often understood as the writer's attempt to affirm how the readers should respect authority which is in contrast to the activity of the opponents.⁶ But out of all the examples one can choose to demonstrate a proper respect for authorities, why Michael's rebuke of Satan? More specifically, how does this positive portrayal of Michael relate to the charge that the opponents are blasphemers and dreamers?

This essay contends that the description of the opponents as blasphemers, dreamers, and the positive portrayal of Michael's rebuke of Satan in verses 8–10 are not solely polemical tropes. They illuminate the opponents' identity as magicians who inappropriately conjure angels to serve their will and reveal dreams. This view is briefly alluded by Klaus Berger who described the opponents coming from a "collective exorcist practice of Jewish Christian origin."⁷ While Berger draws from the Qumran curse texts to support his case, this essay turns to the magical papyri and Jesus tradition. This essay will not make a hard case for authorship or date. It presumes that the letter is pseudonymous and written between the late first century and the early second century.⁸ I take a literary-historical approach in attempting to discern how the text could be read during a period when magicians were utilizing angels in their invocations, exorcisms, and dream divinations. But first, we will review the difficulties of identifying the letter's opponents and the reasons why we

Häretiker des Judasbriefes," *ZNW* 77 (1986): 206–25 [esp. 224]; Bauckham identifies this issue also in early Christianity (*Jude*, 35); See Matt 24:24; Acts 13:6; 1 Cor 14:29–32; 37–40; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1–6; Rev 16:13–14; 19:20; *Did.* 11.10–21; *Ps.-Clem.* 17.14–19; *Herm. Mand.* 11.

⁴ Michel Desjardins, "The Portrayal of the Dissidents in 2 Peter and Jude: Does It Tell Us More about the 'Godly' than the 'Ungodly?'," *JNT* 30 (1987): 97; Andreas Du Toit, "Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian Epistolography," *Bib* 75 (1994): 403–12; Lauri Thurén, "Hey Jude! Asking for the Original Situation and Message of a Catholic Epistle," *NTS* 43 (1997): 451–65; Jerome Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude* (AB 37C; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 31–32; William Brosend, "The Letter of Jude: A Rhetoric of Excess or an Excess of Rhetoric?," *Int* 60.3 (2006): 303; Lewis Donelson, *I & II Peter, Jude* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 164.

⁵ Donelson, *Jude*, 164.

⁶ Bauckham, *Jude*, 11–12, 57–63; Neyrey, *Jude*, 64–69; Kelly, *Jude*, 260–65; Reicke, *Jude*, 201–3; Peter Spitaler, "Doubt or Dispute (Jude 9 and 22–23): Rereading a Special New Testament Meaning through the Lens of Internal Evidence," *Bib* 87 (1987): 207; Desjardins, "Portrayal," 91; J. Daryl Charles, "The Use of Tradition—Material in the Epistle of Jude," *BBR* 4 (1994): 12–13; Robinson, *Jude*, 186; Frey, *Jude*, 41.

⁷ Klaus Berger, *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums* (Tübingen: Francke, 1994), 311.

⁸ The case for a post-apostolic date for Jude is made from v. 17 which presumes at least one generation after the apostles. Clement of Alexandria is the first to mention Jude (*Strom.* 3.2.11; *Paed.* 3.8.44), although he held to the belief that Jude, the brother of Jesus and James, wrote the letter (*Frag.* 2.1). Others such as Origen (*Comm. Matt.* 10.17) and Tertullian (*Cult. fem.* 1.3) demonstrate that there was an awareness of the letter by the late second century.

cannot overlook verses 8–10. We will then evaluate how the writer’s descriptions fit the profile of magicians and conclude with some final observations.

I. THE OPPONENTS

Trying to identify the opponents has brought many challenges given that the letter may reveal more about how the writer perceives the opponents rather than how the opponents view themselves.⁹ However, this should not lead us to dismiss the accusations as pure rhetoric. The original situation is not totally inaccessible¹⁰ and the readers are persuaded to respond to the opponents.¹¹ They were members of the community who were known to flatter and teach.¹² As Daniel Harrington suggests, they may have looked like any other highly liberated Jews or Gentiles who were interested in the faith.¹³ The writer, however, considers them to have “secretly entered” (παρεισδύω; v. 4), which suggests that they once were outsiders. Furthermore, Robert Webb finds that by calling the opponents “intruders,” the writer evokes a visual image of a particular group engaged in a covert act, thus provoking the readers to view all newcomers dimly.¹⁴ Although the writer has never met the opponents, there was something about these intruders that the writer found troubling and he charges them for being unethical.¹⁵ As Alicia Batten remarks, the letter utilizes effeminate rhetorical devices to demonstrate the opponents’ immorality and lack of self-control.¹⁶ A vast array of Jewish texts are utilized to remind the community of God’s punitive action toward those who participate in behaviors condoned by these “intruders.”¹⁷ But these are not intertextual references, allusions, and citations that would have been unfamiliar to the readers. Scholars agree that the

⁹ Neyrey, *Jude*, 32; Donelson, *Jude*, 164; Brosend, “Letter,” 293.

¹⁰ Contrary to Thurén, “Hey Jude!” 464–65.

¹¹ Robert Webb, “The Eschatology of the Epistle of Jude and Its Rhetorical and Social Functions,” *BBR* 6 (1996): 149; Joubert, “Persuasion,” 87; Robinson, *Jude*, 94–110.

¹² Paulsen, *Judasbrief*, 47; Betsy Bauman–Martin, “Postcolonial Pollution in the Letter of Jude,” in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude* (ed. Robert L. Webb and Peter Hugh Davids; LNTS 383; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008), 69–76.

¹³ Daniel Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter* (SP 15; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 181–82, 194.

¹⁴ Webb, “The Rhetorical Function of Visual Imagery in Jude: A Social Rhetorical Experiment in Rhetography,” in *Reading Jude with New Eyes*, 126.

¹⁵ Ungodly (vv. 4, 15, 18), pervert grace (v. 4), deny Jesus’s lordship (v. 4), anti-authority (v. 8), grumblers (v. 16), malcontents (v. 16), lustful (vv. 16, 18), speak arrogantly (v. 16) and self-serving flattery (v. 16).

¹⁶ Alicia Batten, “The Letter of Jude and Graeco–Roman Invective,” *HTS* 70.1 (2014): 1–7; Robinson, *Jude*, 131–147.

¹⁷ Charles, “Tradition–Material,” 1–14; idem, “Polemic and Persuasion: Typological and Rhetorical Perspectives on the Letter of Jude,” in *Reading Jude with New Eyes*, 97; idem, “Those and These: The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle of Jude,” *JSNT* 38 (1990): 109–124; Webb, “The Eschatology of the Epistle of Jude,” 139–51; “The Use of ‘Story’ in the Letter of Jude: Rhetorical Strategies of Jude’s Narrative Episodes,” *JSNT* 31.1 (2008): 66; Duane Watson, “The Epistolary Rhetoric of 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude,” in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude*, 62; Joubert, “Persuasion,” 75–87; Batten, “Jude and Graeco–Roman Invective,” 1–7.

scriptural references stem from the tradition in which both the writer and the readers were well versed.¹⁸

Along with these characterizations, they are also called “dreamers” (v. 8), engage in “blasphemy” (v. 8, 10), and do not have the “Spirit” (v. 19). These descriptions, although minimally mentioned, cannot be overlooked in our assessment of the opponents’ identity. As Frey observes, the accusations in verses 8–10 are unusual, which suggests that they are not merely polemical but descriptions that bring us closer to their profile.¹⁹ In other words, it is not the unethical behaviors that reveal the opponents’ identity—it is the dreaming and blaspheming activity against angels. We thus cannot agree with Henning Paulsen who finds no charismatic significance in these descriptions in verses 8–10.²⁰ Dream divination and blaspheming angels are descriptions that are too important to overlook. Strikingly, they are also activities that would characterize magicians in the Greco–Roman world.

1. *Magicians in antiquity.* Before we continue to argue that the opponents are magicians, it is important to delineate what we mean by “magicians” while also making the case for their presence in early Christianity. Wendy Cotter finds that the terms “magic” and “miracle” are synonymous.²¹ Graham Twelftree suggests that “magic” and “magician,” along with related expressions, are neutral terms and should not have a pejorative association. Instead, he argues that they describe ideas, people, and activities of miracle workers.²² David Aune, however, suggests that “magic” is a form of “religious deviance whereby individual or social goals are sought” through activities unauthorized by the “dominate religious institution.”²³ He points out that magicians (μάγος) or sorcerers (γόης) are negative terms because they engage with divine beings or use their incantations to deceive people.

This negative association of magicians is found in the writings of Plato. He notices that sorcerers seek out rich people in order to persuade them to have power from the gods, special incantations, and charms to harm or cure people.²⁴ Plato furthermore finds that sorcerers “persuade the gods” with “sacrifices and prayers and spells” for the sake of money.²⁵ It is money that motivates these sorcerers. Plato even compares sorcerers to “poison” given that they deceive people into believing that they have power.²⁶ But not all held a firm opinion of magicians or their ability or inability to communicate with divine beings. Pliny the Elder considered magic and its incantations as a fraudulent art that held sway over public opinion.²⁷

¹⁸ Robinson, *Jude*, 26–27; Webb, “Story,” 64; Charles, “Tradition–Material,” 2–3; Thomas Wolthuis, “Jude and Jewish Traditions,” *CTJ* 22 (1987): 21–41.

¹⁹ Frey, *Letter of Jude*, 35.

²⁰ Paulsen, *Judasbrief*, 47, 66.

²¹ Wendy Cotter, *Miracles in Greco–Roman Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 175–78.

²² Graham Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism Among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 36.

²³ David Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 376.

²⁴ Plato, *Resp.* 364b–e.

²⁵ Plato, *Leg.* 909a–d.

²⁶ Plato, *Leg.* 933a–b, e.

²⁷ Pliny, *Nat.* 28.3.10.

Its influence, as he admits, is found “throughout a great part of the world and rules the kings of kings in the East.”²⁸ This is not to suggest that Pliny did not believe in magical incantations. He notes that omens and the recital of prayers, when perfectly performed, were able to change the events of history.²⁹ Pliny, however, had a preference that magic be performed by Roman magistrates.³⁰

Pliny and Plato provide us with two examples on how magicians or their magical practices had mixed reviews but were present in the Greco-Roman period. But, as Aune states, it is difficult to distinguish magic from religion, or between magical incantations and religious prayer, or magical ritual and religious ritual.³¹ It is thus not surprising that Justin Martyr needs to defend the charge that Jesus is a “magician and deceiver of people” because of his miraculous activities.³² Although Fritz Graf also notices the difficulties in defining a magician, he asserts that it is the intention of the practitioner that should distinguish magic from religion, or even magic from prayer.³³ That is, something is religious when it is made with good intentions but magic when it is made with malicious ones. But this definition gives us problems as well. As Aune finds, the goals of magic were very similar to the goals of religion. It brought protection, healing, success, and knowledge to the client.³⁴ Clinton Arnold makes a similar observation. He states that magic was not something separate from organized religion but part of the official religions including the not sanctioned ones.³⁵ Perhaps Twelftree was correct from placing too much negative weight on the term “magic.” As we notice with Pliny and Plato, magic is clearly distinguished when it is perceived as form of unauthorized engagement with the divine beings. At the same time, we must also notice that this is what they project onto the practices of others.

Graf furthermore notes that what is common in all the magicians and sorcerers is their ability to communicate with supernatural beings. He asserts that “magic has its foundation in the possibility of contact between humans and superhuman beings, and its main vehicle is speech, the powerful word (and not ritual, the powerful act).”³⁶ We find this understanding of magic most clearly in Apuleius’s defense of the charge to seduce his wife with magic. He admits that a magician is “someone who, through the community of speech with the immortal gods, possesses an incredible power of spells for everything he wishes to do.”³⁷ Likewise, Seneca’s *Hercules Oetaeus* also illustrates this understanding of a magician. In a

²⁸ Pliny, *Nat.* 30.1–2.

²⁹ Pliny, *Nat.* 28.3.11, 13; 28.4.14–19.

³⁰ Pliny, *Nat.* 28.4.19.

³¹ Aune, *Magic*, 374.

³² Justin, *Dial.* 69; *1 Apol.* 30.

³³ Fritz Graf, “Theories of Magic in Antiquity,” in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (ed. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer; RGRW 141; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 93–104 [esp. 103–4].

³⁴ Aune, *Magic*, 379.

³⁵ Clinton Arnold, *Power of Darkness: Principalities & Powers in Paul’s Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 21

³⁶ Graf, “Theories,” 94.

³⁷ Apuleius, *Apol.* 26.6.

speech that a nurse gives to the wife of Hercules, she claims to have the ability to invoke the gods and to have power over nature through the magical art of incantations. She states, “by magic arts and prayers commingled do wives oft hold fast their husbands . . . the night, the sea, land, heaven and Tartarus yield to my will, and naught holds to law against my incantations. Bend him we will; my charms will find the way” (453–463).

Speech acts are fundamental to the activity of magicians. We can observe how a magician’s communication with divine beings and nature would be a distinguishing activity. This also means that when the terms “magic” or “magicians” (*μαγεία*, *γόνης*, or the Latin *magus*) are not found, this does not mean that the idea is not present. Matthew Dickie cautions us from presuming that before the idea of magic in the Roman world may “exist and be expressed, an abstract term has to exist with which to name it.”³⁸ Therefore, we do not need to rely upon the presence of *μαγεία* in the letter of Jude in order for us to presume that magicians or their activities were present. It is the speech act that give clues to their presence, not the identification of the individual as a “magician.”

What, then, are magicians? They are people who invoke divine beings with speech acts and have the purpose of serving a particular need. As Hans Dieter Betz puts it, they were crisis managers, miracle healers, and all-purpose therapists who helped people solve life problems through the manipulation and communication with the gods, demons, and the dead.³⁹ Magicians were not “evil” people but sought to make life manageable and better. They were pragmatic problem solvers who communicated with divine beings. This also means that they would have utilized various Jewish and pagan names, gods, spirits, and characters—not because they believed in them—but because they sought out their authority for personal use and activity, including exorcisms and dream divination.⁴⁰

Knowledge of magicians and their presence was evident in early Christianity. In Acts, Simon of Samaria was not just a magician but was converted and baptized through the ministry of Philip (Acts 8:9–24). Simon’s practice in the magical arts did not cease at his conversion. He assumed its compatibility with the activity of the Spirit until rebuked by Peter. From Simon’s perspective, Peter’s role in granting the Spirit was not entirely different from his use of magic.⁴¹ Peter, however, considers Simon’s request inappropriate (Acts 8:20–23). This episode in Acts demonstrates that magical activities can be confused with appropriate appeals to the Spirit. Although we do have some instances, for example, in Ephesus where converts burned their “magical books” (Acts 19:19), we cannot assume that all who entered the Christian community made a clean break with their pagan past. The boundaries between what was permissible and unauthorized was fluid, as noticed in the con-

³⁸ Matthew Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 135.

³⁹ Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells* (2nd ed.; paperback ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), xlvii.

⁴⁰ Betz, *Magical Papyri*, xlvii–xlviii; See Origen, *Cels.* 4.33–34.

⁴¹ See *Px.-Clem. Homily* 17.14–19; Justin, *1 Apol.* 26, 56; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.23.1–4; Tertullian, *An.* 34.2–4; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.1; 2.26; 4.7; 4.22.

sistent attempts to define the appropriate manifestations and people who bear the Spirit.⁴²

In the late first to early second century, Ignatius of Antioch remarks that when Jesus appeared on earth, his incarnation destroyed “every kind of magic (μαγεία).”⁴³ The letter of Barnabas, another late first-/early second-century text, includes magic to describe those who follow the way of darkness. Like the letter of Barnabas, the Didache includes magical practices and witchcraft within in a list of vices that are to be avoided (5.1). Specifically, the Didachist asserts, “thou shalt not practice magic, thou shalt not practice witchcraft” (2.2). The Didachist also exhorts that readers not to be “an observer of omens, since it leadeth the way to idolatry; neither an enchanter, nor an astrologer, nor a purifier, nor be willing to look at these things, for out of all these idolatry is engendered” (3.4). This exhortation against magical practices reveals that the early Christian community would have encountered magicians and perhaps in danger of being influenced by them.

Furthermore, we also notice that Justin Martyr and Origen also dealt that magicians who were commonly using various names and means to control demonic powers.⁴⁴ Specifically, Justin notices that Jewish exorcists were adjuring demons by various names and had exorcist practices that were similar to those of Gentile magicians. He states,

If any of you were to exorcise by the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, it will perhaps be made subject. Now however, I said, those of your race who practice adjuration use art in their exorcising like the heathen and use fumigations and (magic) knots (*Dial.* 85).

This not only provides early evidence that Gentile magical rites influenced certain Jewish exorcists, it also demonstrates that the boundaries between what was permissible and sanctioned was not always observed. Origen even notices that the name of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are found in many magical rites that expel demons.⁴⁵ Magic indeed pervaded the Greco-Roman world and was considered by Justin to have influenced Jewish exorcism practices.

We thus cannot assume that magic and magicians would not impact early Christianity. As David Frankfurter asserts, Christianity has never been in a pure state of cultural or religious accomplishment or identity but in an ongoing process of negotiation and syncretism, with vestiges of older religious traditions.⁴⁶ Therefore, it would be a mistake to presume that magicians would not have a presence or relation to the letter of Jude’s context within the late first/early second century,

⁴² 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 11:4; Eph 2:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 4:1; 1 John 4:1–6; Jude 19; Ayse Tuzlak, “The Magician and the Heretic: The Case of Simon Magus,” in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, 416–26; Lawrence Hoffman, “Censoring In and Censoring Out: A Function of Liturgical Language,” in *Ancient Synagogues: The State of Research* (ed. Joseph Gutmann; BJS 22; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 22–23.

⁴³ Ign. *Eph.* 19.3.

⁴⁴ Justin, 2 *Apol.* 6; *Dial.* 85; Origen, *Cels.* 1.24; 4.33–34.

⁴⁵ Origen, *Cels.* 4.33; PGM IV.1230; PGM VII.285; PGM XIII.815; PGM XXXV.15; PGM IV.1230.

⁴⁶ David Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 6–11; Aune, *Magic*, 381.

especially when dream divination and speech acts with angels are mentioned. Magicians and their activity would provide an ongoing tension between permissible and unauthorized forms of speech acts with angels, especially since Justin also admits that those who engaged in magical rites had now become followers of Jesus.⁴⁷

II. REREADING JUDE 8–10

In this next section, we will closely review the description of the opponents in verses 8–10. Specifically, we will explore how the description of the opponents as dreamers, blasphemers, and portrayal of Michael's confrontation with Satan, when understood together, point us to the identity of the opponents as magicians. The writer remarks that these opponents are dreamers,⁴⁸ blaspheme the glorious ones,⁴⁹ and blaspheme things that they do not know (vv. 8, 10). Between this description of the intruders' activity, Jude includes an apocryphal encounter between Michael and Satan in verse 9. The text follows:

⁸ Yet in the same way these dreamers (*ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι*) also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander (*ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι*) the glorious ones.⁹ But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander (*βλασφημίας*) against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke (*ἐπιτιμήσαι*) you!"¹⁰ But these people slander (*βλασφημοῦσιν*) whatever they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that, like irrational animals, they know by instinct (NRSV).

When we focus on verse 9, scholars have recognized the difficulties in reconstructing the reference to Michael and Satan.⁵⁰ The writer utilizes an apocryphal tradition that elaborates upon the death of Moses found in Deut 34:1–6 and alluded to in Num 27:12–13. There is, however, a focus on the activity of blaspheming that is characteristic of the opponents (vv. 8, 10) and not Michael (v. 9). Why would the opponents blaspheme angelic beings or any celestial beings in general? And why couch this encounter between Michael and Satan between a description of the opponents' blasphemous activity?

There are a variety of positions on the significance of this account. Bateman holds that the meaning of the "glorious ones" as well as the blasphemous activity

⁴⁷ Justin, *1 Apol.* 14.

⁴⁸ The term *ἐνυπνιάζομαι* can be adverbial or an anarthrous participle. The CSB, NAB, NIV, NKJ, and NRSV prefer the adjectival participle translation while the ESV, NAU, and NET translate the term as an adverbial participle. John Hanson notices the difficulty of translating *ἐνυπνιάζομαι* given its interchangeable application and interpretation as "dreams" or "visions." See "Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity," *ANRW* 23.2 (1980): 1408; See G. G. Stroumsa, "Dreams and Visions in Early Christian Discourse," in *Dream Cultures: Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 189–212 [esp. 190].

⁴⁹ The "glorious ones" are angelic beings in 1QH 10:8; 1QPS^aZion 22:13; 2 En. 22:7, 10; 2 Pet 2:10.

⁵⁰ We do not have the precise content of the Assumption of Moses or the Testament of Moses but various quotations which enable us to have a critical reconstruction of the text. See R. H. Charles, *The Assumption of Moses* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1897), 105–110; Clement of Alexandria, *Fragments*, 2; Origin, *Princ.* 3.2.

remains open to interpretation.⁵¹ Some view the opponents' behavior as parallel to the activity of Satan, who criticizes authority.⁵² The implication is that the readers should emulate Michael and not Satan. Others prefer to focus upon the antithetical parallels between the opponents' disrespect of angelic beings and Michael's respect of Satan. Actually, Paulsen finds that Jude is simply confronting the opponents' behavior and theology because they have views of angelic beings that do not cohere with the Jewish tradition.⁵³ Others assert that since the opponents championed antinomian practices, the angels are blasphemed because of their relationship with the law and moral authority in the Jewish tradition. Bauckham thus explains that the opponents' immorality coheres with their blasphemy of angels who were considered guardians of the law.⁵⁴ Thus, to blaspheme, according to Bauckham, was a way of "detaching the Law from God and interpreting it simply as an evil."⁵⁵ Both Frey and Neyrey also notice how the blasphemy should be understood in terms to a general attack on authority. Along with others, they suppose that Michael's confrontation with Satan serves to confirm the traditional roles of authority which the writer of Jude perceives to be threatened.⁵⁶ As Robinson puts it, Michael is "an example of a powerful figure acting humbly before God, a stark contrast to the foolishness of the false teachers who proudly boast and blaspheme angelic beings."⁵⁷

These interpretations agree that the apocryphal account of Michael serves as an antithetical parallel to the intruders' blasphemous activity of angelic beings. But is the writer insisting that the readers and opponents must respect all glorious beings, and by extension, Satan? Bauckham notices the implications that his view proposes. He suggests that the opponents' blasphemy of the angels does not need to be paralleled by Michael's respect for Satan. The point, as he proposes, should focus on how Michael could not reject Satan's accusation on his own authority.⁵⁸ Bauckham's explanation attempts to mitigate the implications this has on viewing angelic beings, both evil and good. He therefore suggests that we are not to find any parallel between Michael and the opponents.

⁵¹ Bateman, *Jude*, 208; See also Donelson, *Jude*, 183–185; Schreiner, *Jude*, 457.

⁵² Bigg, *Jude*, 331.

⁵³ Paulsen, *Judasbrief*, 65.

⁵⁴ Bauckham, *Jude*, 57–58; Sellin, "Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes," 221–22; Davids, 2 *Peter and Jude*, 62–63; Josephus, *Ant.* 15.163; *Jub.* 1.27; 2.1; 6.22; 30.12, 21; 50.6, 13; Acts 7:15; Gal 3:19 and Heb 2:2 describes the role of angels in mediating the law. Mediation is found in Exod 23:20–22 and Judg 2:1. Likewise, principalities were considered to hold people to sin in Rom 8:38–39; Gal 4:3, 9; Col 2:15, 20. Reverence for angels is found in Col 2:18; Rev 19:10; 22:8–9.

⁵⁵ Bauckham, *Jude*, 59.

⁵⁶ Frey, *Jude*, 97, 101; Neyrey, *Jude*, 65–67; Also Desjardins, "Portrayal," 91; Joubert, "Persuasion," 83; Kelly, *Jude*, 263–65.

⁵⁷ Robinson, *Jude*, 186; Deiros, *Santiago y Judas*, 335; Charles, "Tradition–Material," 13; Bateman, *Jude*, 225; Dieudonné Tamfu, 2 *Peter and Jude* (Africa Bible Commentary; Cumbria, UK: Langham, 2018), 104; Spitaler argues that Michael's deference of judgment "functions as a central paradigm for non-judgmental conduct towards the community's infiltrators" ("Doubt or Dispute," 207–8).

⁵⁸ Bauckham, *Jude*, 60–61.

There is an agreement that the opponents are blaspheming angelic beings, a speech act that Michael does not emulate, and by extension, the readers should not either. Although scholars differ as to the reasons the opponents engage in this speech-act and the role that Michael serves, there is a tendency to focus upon the positive role that Michael has within the confrontation. Yet this interpretive move brings its challenges. If the readers are to respect angelic beings like Michael, does this include the respect of all angelic beings by extension, whether good or evil? But as briefly alluded earlier, what if the point is simpler? What if the blasphemous activity is about how one communicates with celestial beings and Michael serves to demonstrate how one should confront without being disrespectful?

Although the text may appear inconclusive, the charge that the opponents were blaspheming angelic beings reveals that there is something specific that the writer has in mind. Thomas Schreiner suggests that the opponents are described as “criticizing demonic powers” but does not explain what this means.⁵⁹ Frey dismisses the possibility that the opponents could have employed magical practices in their demonstration of power over the angelic world.⁶⁰ He does not think that a negative conclusion can be drawn from Michael’s positive example in verse 9. I, however, propose that it can. Indeed, Berger notices that the cursing of angelic beings in the letter of Jude is similar to the cursing of angelic beings in 4Q287 fr. 6.⁶¹ Within these Qumran texts the community is described as cursing “Belial in his hostile design” and cursing all the “spirits of his lot.” The community is to say,

be cursed, angel of perdition and spirit of destruction, in all the thoughts of your guilty inclination and all your abominable plots and your wicked design, and may you be damned. . . . Amen, amen (4Q287 fr. 6, 5–10).

Berger points to these texts to demonstrate that a similar situation was occurring in the letter of Jude. He finds that the writer is attempting to prevent any cursing of a spiritual adversary. In a sense, the writer delegitimizes the opponents’ exorcist practice and all their effects.⁶² Although Berger does not call the opponents magicians, he does identify them as exorcists. However, he does not consider how this exorcist activity is positively reinforced with the example of Michael’s confrontation with Satan, how exorcism and dream divination relate to one another, and how these practices were characteristic of magicians who were present in the late first and early second centuries.

We know that magicians lurk in this context on four primary reasons. First, dream divination was a practice that was associated with magicians. Although magicians did not hold a monopoly on dream divination, we cannot exclude them from this practice. Second, the term “blasphemy” is a speech act. Specifically, it is exaltation language which is also utilized to describe the exorcist activity of Jesus. Third, angels and Michael are popular figures cited in the various spells found in

⁵⁹ Schreiner, *Jude*, 455–458.

⁶⁰ Frey, *Jude*, 97.

⁶¹ See 4Q280 fr. 2 which includes the cursing of the angelic being Melchiresa.

⁶² Berger, *Theologieggeschichte*, 311.

the magical papyri. And fourth, the term ἐπιτιμάω that Michael uses to engage Satan is also found within the Synoptic gospels to describe Jesus's exorcisms. These four points are critical to the argument that the opponents were magicians, and now will be reviewed in more detail.

1. *Dream interpretation in the ancient world.* The term “dreamers” (ἐνυπνιάζομαι)⁶³ in verse 8 suggests that the opponents had spiritual revelations by visions or dreams.⁶⁴ This term is also found in Acts 2:17 which quotes Joel 2:28 [LXX 3:1]. In Acts 2:17, Peter links the experiences of God's Spirit to the promise of dreams and visions from Joel's prophecy. John Miller contends that “for the most part, dream-visions in Luke–Acts are presented as divine communication.”⁶⁵ The reliability of dream-visions in the ancient world was not accepted unanimously, as Miller also points out.⁶⁶ Early pre-Socratic philosophers such as Hippocrates understood dreams as a biological phenomenon.⁶⁷ Hippocrates interpreted pleasant dreams as “health for the dreamer, and that the body with all its circuits, diets, and secretions are proper and normal.”⁶⁸ On the other hand, if the dreamer experienced anything contrary, it was a sign of sickness and disease.⁶⁹ Hippocrates notices that dreams are not always divine omens but the soul's way of revealing health.⁷⁰ Others such as Homer, Aristotle, and Cicero also doubt the divine origin of dreams and their reliability.⁷¹ In particular, Aristotle understands dreams in relation to sleep, given that the imagination operates while sleeping.⁷² Aristotle agrees that it is not a simple matter to either despise or believe in the divine nature of dreams. He suggests that most dreams are coincidences and have no divine fulfillment.⁷³

In the Jewish tradition there is both a suspicion and openness to the divine origin of dreams. Early in Deut 13:2–5, the penalty of death is expected to befall dreamers who promote revelations that would lead to the worship of idols.⁷⁴ We find a similar suspicion of dreamers in Jeremiah and Sirach. Jeremiah observes that dreamers are false prophets who use their dreams to justify the worship of idols.⁷⁵ Sirach 34:1–7 also casts suspicion upon dreamers, including his contemporary

⁶³ On the rendering of the term ἐνυπνιάζομαι, see note 48 above.

⁶⁴ Paulsen, *Judasbrief*, 64–65.

⁶⁵ John B. F. Miller, “*Convinced that God Had Called Us: Dreams, Visions and the Perception of God's Will in Luke–Acts*” (BIS 85; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 7.

⁶⁶ John B. F. Miller, “Dreams/Visions and the Experience of God in Luke–Acts,” in *Experientia*, vol. 1: *Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Rodney Werline, Colleen Shantz, and Frances Flannery; SBLSymS 40; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 179.

⁶⁷ Hippocrates, *Vit.* 4.90.1.

⁶⁸ Hippocrates, *Vit.* 4.90.10.

⁶⁹ Hippocrates, *Vit.* 4.15.10–40.

⁷⁰ Hippocrates, *Vit.* 4.86.10–15.

⁷¹ Homer, *Od.* 19.560–569; Aristotle, *Somn.* 1.459a; Cicero, *Div.* 2.62.

⁷² Aristotle, *Somn. vig.* 1.453b.5–453b.15; 1.458b.9; 1.459a.15–20; 2.455a.25–455b.5; 3.462a.5–15; 3.462a.30; Aristotle also describes dreams as φάντασμα in *Somn. vig.* 3.456b.15.

⁷³ Aristotle, *Div. somn.* 1.462b.1–25; 1.463b.1–10; 1.464a.20–25.

⁷⁴ See Zech 10:2.

⁷⁵ Jer 23:25–28; 29:8–9; 36:8; Lam 2:9; 4:12–15.

Enochian Jews who used apocalyptic experiences to anchor their revelations.⁷⁶ Sirach pointedly recognizes that dreams are unreal, mental fantasies, and deceptive (vv. 5–7). In sum, they reflect the dreamer’s own perceptions and have no divine origin. Although Sirach expresses the slight possibility of the divine origin of dreams, he expresses much doubt by comparing those who trust in dreams to fools.⁷⁷

Although there was a suspicion, dreams in the Jewish tradition were plentiful and considered by some to be a form of divine communication.⁷⁸ The belief that dreams reveal God’s will is found in the Christian tradition. Yet we must notice that dream interpretation was not always associated with prophets or magicians. Matthew narrates various dreams (*ὄναρ*) that give Joseph direction in the infancy narrative,⁷⁹ which he regards as a symbol of divine providence and guidance.⁸⁰ Later the Gospel recounts Pilate’s wife communicating a message to Pilate that was prompted by a dream (Matt 27:19). Dreams also appear in Luke-Acts as important revelatory mediums. Luke prefers the term *ὄπτασία* and *ἕκστασις* in describing the dreams/visions experienced by various characters.⁸¹ Miller finds that Luke-Acts portrays God’s active role in dreams which highlights the “irruptive nature of God’s actions, vividly depicting God at work within the scenes of human history.”⁸² We do not find suspicion toward dreams in the Matthean and Luke-Acts tradition. In fact, the Pentecost event of Acts 2 legitimized dreams and visions as experiences that marked the eschatological age of the Spirit. Later in the second century, Tertullian appeals to Acts 2 as proof for the divine origin of dreams.⁸³ Tertullian undeniably recognizes the diverse origins of dreams but does not deny that they can come from God.⁸⁴

Greco-Roman writers and the Jewish tradition had both suspicion toward and openness to the divine origin of dreams. In Matthew and Luke-Acts, dreams were considered to be a medium for understanding God’s will. Although dream divina-

⁷⁶ Randal Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative Literary and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment* (EJL 8; Atlanta: SBL, 1995), 85; Gabriele Boccacini, “Where Does Ben Sira Belong? The Canon, Literary Genre, Intellectual Movement, and Social Group of a Zadokite Document,” in *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira* (JSJSup 127; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 35.

⁷⁷ R. MacKenzie, *Sirach* (OTM 19; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 130; also Eccl. 5.2.

⁷⁸ See Esther Hamori and Jonathan Stökl, eds., *Perchance to Dream: Dream Divination in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ANEM 21; Atlanta: SBL, 2018); A. Leo Oppenheim, “The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. With A Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book,” *TAPS* 46.3 (1956): 179–373; The primary Hebrew term for “dream” is *חלום*, although we also find the term “visions” to include *מַרְאֵה* and *חִזֵּוֹן*. God speaks and reveals his will through visions/dreams (Gen 20:3–7; 28:10–17; 31:10–13, 24; 37:5–11; Num 12:6; 1 Sam 3:1; 1 Kgs 3:5–15; Job 33:15; Dan 2:22–23, 28; 7:1–28; Joel 2:28). Interpretations are divine revelations with the Egyptian Cupbearer and Baker (Genesis 41), Pharaoh (Genesis 42), Gideon (Judg 7:13–15), and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:45; 4:1–9, 18).

⁷⁹ Matt 1:20–25, 2:12, 2:13–15, 2:19–21, 2:22.

⁸⁰ Robert Gnuse, “Dream Genre in the Matthean Infancy Narratives,” *NovT* 32 (1990): 119.

⁸¹ Zechariah (Luke 1:22), Ananias (Acts 9:10), Cornelius (Acts 10:3), Peter (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 12:9), and Paul (Acts 9:12; 16:9–10; 18:9; 22:17; 26:19).

⁸² Miller, “Dreams/Visions,” 191.

⁸³ Tertullian, *An.* 47.

⁸⁴ Tertullian, *An.* 46–49.

tion is not a practice solely restricted to magicians, we cannot exclude magicians from this activity. For example, one of the most important figures in dream interpretation during the second century was Artemidorus of Ephesus. His writing, the *Oneirocritica*, is a manual on dream interpretation. He develops his manual after consulting and spending much time with sorcerers, whom he calls “public diviners.” He claims to have spent many years with them, “attending them in the cities and festivals in Greece and Asia and Italy and in the biggest and most populous of the islands, to hear about old dreams and their outcomes.”⁸⁵ That is, Artemidorus sought out these “diviners” in order to understand their techniques and methods. He developed his dream interpretation manual in consultation with them. In other words, magicians did not have a monopoly on dream interpretation. They were involved in dream interpretation, but they were not the only ones.

Does this explain why dreams were easily accepted and practiced by the opponents that the writer of *Jude* addresses? Bauckham, Deiros, and Sellin suggest that these opponents may have used their dreams to justify their authority and anti-nomian practices.⁸⁶ Bateman proposes that we are to understand “dreams” as metaphorical descriptions of Judaeans who longed for independence.⁸⁷ But, as we find with Artemidorus, we cannot rule out the notion that the opponents would not be involved or associated with dream divination and known as magicians.

2. *Blasphemy in Jewish context.* The description of the opponents as “blaspheming the glorious ones” (v. 8) and “blaspheming what they do not understand” (v. 10) points to speech acts. The term βλασφημέω refers to abusive and disrespectful speech and activities. It relates to the act of reviling, slandering, or defaming someone, a group of people, leaders, pagan deities, or God.⁸⁸ Blasphemy is found in relation to idolatry and the desecration of Jerusalem by Gentiles in Maccabean literature,⁸⁹ including the inappropriate slander of God’s name and people.⁹⁰ Josephus describes Goliath as one who “reproaches” the Israelite army.⁹¹ Apion is portrayed as one who utters blasphemes against the Jews in Alexandria.⁹² In addition, Josephus mentions that the Jews are instructed not to blaspheme other deities, even though they do not regard them as gods.⁹³ Philo also utilizes this term in reference to speech that is directed to God, divine beings, disabled people, and even unspoken speech.⁹⁴ In particular, he finds blasphemous activities to include exaltation claims of divinity or equality with God. According to Philo, blasphemers also direct

⁸⁵ Artemidorus, *Onir.*, pref.

⁸⁶ Bauckham, *Jude*, 56, 106–7; Deiros, *Santiago y Judas*, 290–92; Sellin, “Die Häretiker des Judasbriefes,” 223.

⁸⁷ Bateman, *Jude*, 200.

⁸⁸ βλασφημέω, βλασφημία, BDAG, 142–43; Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, “βλασφημέω, βλασφημία, βλάσφημος,” *TDNT* 1:621–25.

⁸⁹ 1 Macc 2:6.

⁹⁰ 1 Macc 1:37–49, 59–61; 2 Macc 8:4; 10:34–35; 12:14; 15:24.

⁹¹ Josephus, *Ant.* 6.177.

⁹² Josephus, *Ant.* 18.257; *Ag. Ap.* 1.59.

⁹³ Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.237.

⁹⁴ Philo, *Fig.* 1.84; *Migr.* 1.115; *Mos.* 2.206; *Decal.* 1.63; *Spec.* 1.53; 4.197.

their speech to those who are considered inferior which includes animals and celestial powers.⁹⁵

We thus notice that the term “blaspheme” is an inappropriate speech–act or activity. It is found in reference to curses on people, nature, pagan deities, and God. One can be accused of being a blasphemer for engaging in speech or actions that are deemed offensive or inappropriate. But what is considered blasphemous from one perspective may also be appropriate speech or action from another. Undeniably, we find the Jewish religious leaders and Jesus charging each other with blasphemy. The religious leaders call Jesus a blasphemer because of his exaltation claims.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Jesus warns the Jewish religious leaders of blasphemy when they attribute his exorcism activity to the powers of Beelzebub. According to Mark, the Jewish religious leaders claimed that Jesus was “possessed by Beelzebub”⁹⁷ and casting out “demons by the ruler of the demons” (3:22).⁹⁸ This is a striking accusation. It presumes that one can invoke spirit beings in the expulsion of other spirit beings. Jesus, however, responds with a parable of the strong man which illustrates the futility of Satan acting against his own interest (vv. 23–27). Jesus’s statement on the unforgivable sin is prompted by the religious leaders’ claim that Jesus had “an unclean spirit” (v. 30). Since they failed to identify the power of the Spirit behind Jesus’s authority, they inadvertently engage in blasphemy by claiming that Jesus’s authority was derived from Satanic powers.⁹⁹

What then does blasphemy have to do with exorcisms? Being an exorcist is not itself a blasphemous activity. But the speech act in invoking celestial beings does create the possibility of receiving the charge of blasphemy. As we find in the encounter between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, Jesus was accused of invoking “the prince of demons” in the expulsion of demons. It does not become improbable that the writer of Jude would also charge the opponents of blasphemy for inappropriately conjuring angels, regardless if the writer was correct. This charge would especially emerge if one is engaging the demonic with a sense of unsanctioned invocation of angels to bid the magician’s desire. This reading of Jude 8–10, however, assumes that angels, including Michael, were involved in the magical arts, or at least conjured in the confrontation with demonic powers. In the next section we will see that this was the case in the magical papyri.

3. *Michael in the magical papyri.* When we turn to the Hebrew Bible and NT, Michael’s appearances are minimal. He appears in the book of Daniel as a “chief

⁹⁵ Philo, *Somm.* 2.130–132.

⁹⁶ Matt 9:3; 26:65; Mark 2:7; 14:64; Luke 5:21; John 10:33, 36. Darrell L. Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism: The Charge against Jesus in Mark 14:53–65* (Biblical Studies Library; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016).

⁹⁷ Matthew and Luke omit the Markan phrase βεελζεβούλ ἔχει.

⁹⁸ Matt 9:34; 12:24; Luke 12:24. The name “Beelzebub” possibly comes from the Philistine god at Ekron in 2 Kgs 1:2, meaning “lord of flies.” See Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999), 105–6.

⁹⁹ Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 266–68; idem, *Name of Jesus*, 47; Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociobiological Method* (New Haven: Yale, 1983), 204–5.

prince” who guards over Israel and confronts the prince of Persia.¹⁰⁰ In Revelation, Michael, along with the angels in heaven, wage war against Satan who is described as the dragon (12:7). But within Jewish literature we find a plethora of activity that enlarges our understanding of Michael’s role and importance.¹⁰¹ Michael is mentioned in 1 Enoch as a leader of the angels. He watches over humanity, binds the watchers, and escorts Enoch through the heavenlies.¹⁰² Michael is even called the “merciful and longsuffering.”¹⁰³ An intercessory role is also found in 3 Baruch where Michael is described as holding the keys of heaven, hearing the prayers of God’s people, and presenting the merits of humanity before God.¹⁰⁴ We also find him involved in burying the body of Adam and appearing after Eve’s death.¹⁰⁵ In the Shepherd of Hermas, he has authority over people, especially since he was involved in mediating the law.¹⁰⁶ His popularity also grew within early Christianity. He is involved in the care of Mary’s body as he escorts her into heaven.¹⁰⁷ In the Gospel of Nicodemus, Michael also presides over humanity and escorts Adam into heaven.¹⁰⁸ Caring for the bodies of God’s people is also notable in Jude 9 when Michael contends with Satan over the body of Moses.

When we turn to the magical papyri, Michael and angels appear throughout the literature. But it is important, as Arnold states, that we do not dismiss the magical papyri even though the majority of them postdate the New Testament.¹⁰⁹ Arnold and Betz notice that some magical papyri are traced to an earlier date, all the way to the first century BCE.¹¹⁰ The magical papyri represents a collection of spells, formulae, hymns, and rituals used by magicians.¹¹¹ When we explore this literature more closely, it helps us understand ordinary beliefs and practices of magicians. In fact, Betz finds that for magicians, “there was no longer any cultural difference between the Egyptian and the Greek gods, or between them and the Jewish god and the Jewish angels.”¹¹² That is, this literature reveals that magicians would have superficially adopted every religious tradition and names of gods that appeared useful. As such, Michael and other angels emerge in various exorcisms, incantations, and prayers. And just as we find in the letter of Jude, “angels” in the magical papyri

¹⁰⁰ Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1.

¹⁰¹ For a fuller discussion see Maxwell Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 72–18 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (JSPSup 11; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); Johannes Rohland, *Der Erzengel Michael: Arzt und Feldherr: Zwei Aspekte des vor- und frühbyzantinischen Michaelskultes* (BZRGG 19; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 9–33.

¹⁰² 1 En. 9:1; 10:11; 20:4; 24:6; 54:6; 67:12; 71.3–8; 2 En. 22:6–9.

¹⁰³ 1 En. 40:9.

¹⁰⁴ 3 Bar. 11:1–9; 14:1–2.

¹⁰⁵ LAE 48.1–7; 49.2.

¹⁰⁶ *Herm. Sim.* 8.3.3.

¹⁰⁷ Assum. Vir. 9.2; 17.1–2.

¹⁰⁸ Gos. Nic. 14.2–3; 20.1.

¹⁰⁹ Arnold, “Magical Papyri,” *DNTB* 666–70 (esp. 667).

¹¹⁰ These include PGM XX, PGM CXVII, and PGM CXII. First-century CE magical papyri include PGM XVI and PGM CXI.

¹¹¹ Betz, *Magical Papyri*, xli–xlvi.

¹¹² Betz, *Magical Papyri*, xlvii.

are also called “glorious ones”¹¹³ and are invoked through speech acts by magicians.¹¹⁴

There are various occasions in which similarities with the letter of Jude emerge. First, in *PGM* I.325–330 the magician is instructed to call upon Michael so that he may reveal dreams. After Michael reveals himself, the magician is to proceed with the following instructions:

And when he comes, ask him about what you wish, about the art of prophecy, about divination with epic verses, about the sending of dreams, about obtaining revelations in dreams, about interpretations of dreams, about causing disease, about everything that is a part of magical knowledge.

Yet this is not the only time that an angel or Michael is associated with dream divination. In *PGM* I.42–195, *PGM* I.195–222, and *PGM* I.262–347, there is a rite for requesting angels to reveal dreams, send women, and provide money. Although *PGM* I is dated to the fourth century CE, this does not mean that angels are not found in early papyri. In *PGM* VII.795–845, which is dated to the third century CE, the magician is given a formula for dream divination by calling upon angels. The magician is to state:

I call upon you, holy angel Zizaubio ... and I also call upon you who are angels who have been stationed beneath his [Zizaubio’s] power. ... Hence I call upon you all that you may come quickly, in this night, and reveal to me clearly and firmly concerning those matters I desire I call upon you in this night, and may you reveal all things to me through dreams with accuracy, O angel Zizaubio.

Later, in *PGM* VII.1009–1016, the magician is instructed with this spell before sleep, “I call upon [you], Sabaoth, Michael, Raphael, and you, [powerful archangel] Gabriel, do not [simply] pass by me [as you bring visions], but let one of you enter and reveal [to me] concerning the NN matter.”¹¹⁵ Furthermore, in *PGM* IV.3025–3035, which is argued to have material originated from the second century CE,¹¹⁶ we also find that the God of the Hebrews, Jesus, and the “implacable angel” are invoked in order to assist the magician in an exorcism.

What does this suggest? Primarily, angels are considered by the magician to be at their disposal, especially in revelation.¹¹⁷ They are involved in interpreting dreams and assisting the magician with their personal requests. This not only fits with the profile of the writer’s opponents who are called “dreamers” (v. 8), it helps explain why the writer would include this charge next to the claim that the opponents are

¹¹³ *PGM* I.195–222: “I call upon you Lord [Helios]. Hear me, holy god who rest among the holy ones, at whose side the Glorious Ones stand continually. I call upon you ... lord over all angels.”

¹¹⁴ *PGM* I.42–195 is a rite for acquiring an angelic assistant; *PGM* XXXVI.231–255 invokes angels to harm an enemy. See *PGM* IV.3125–3171; *PGM* VII.478–490; *PGM* VII.795–845; *PGM* XXIIb.1–26; *PGM* XXXVI.35–68.

¹¹⁵ See also *PGM* VII.255–259

¹¹⁶ Twelftree, *Name of Jesus*, 263.

¹¹⁷ See Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (1996; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 23–29.

“blaspheming the glorious ones” (vv. 8, 10). Who else but magicians would want to talk to angels and to be known for dream divination? Simply put, magicians. Since angels were commanded with speech acts, it does not seem improbable that this is what the writer found troubling with these opponents.

In addition, Michael is also invoked in order to assist in facilitating immoral practices, a situation which is also reflective of the writer’s characterization of the opponents’ behavior. In *PGM XXXVI.295–311*, a fourth-century text, we find a love spell of attraction that evokes the Jewish tradition of Sodom and Gomorrah. While the magician throws the lumps of sulfur into the fire, he is to proclaim the following:

The heavens of heavens opened, and the angels of God descended and overturned the five cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Segor. . . . You are the sulfur which God rained down on the middle of Sodom and Gomorrah . . . you are the sulfur which served God, so also serve me, [name] in regards to her [name], and do not allow her to go to bed or to find sleep until she comes and fulfills the mystery rite of Aphrodite.

After the magician makes this pronouncement, various angels are named:

If I throw you into the fire, I adjure you by the great Pap Tapheio Sabaoth Arbatthiao Zagoure Pagoure and by the great Michael, Zouriel, Gabriel, Sesengenbarpharang Israel Abraam, attract her to [name].

In this rite, Michael’s authority is invoked in order to command the power that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and force a woman to engage in sexual activity.¹¹⁸ Although the letter of Jude uses rhetoric which lambasts the opponents with charges of immorality, it is striking that the magician in this text would appeal to angels in order to facilitate sexual activity. In fact, within the letter of Jude, the writer not only points out that the opponents “defile their bodies” (v. 8) but had previously pointed to their sexual immorality (v. 7) and licentiousness (v. 4). The opponents are polemically accused to engage in inappropriate sexual activity, which ironically is similar activity that would have been sanctioned within the moral framework of magicians.

Although Jewish figures and terminology are found in this love spell and throughout the magical papyri, it is difficult to determine if they are reflective or tailored for Jewish magicians. For example, Lynn LiDonnici also points out that *PGM IV.3007–3086* and *PGM V.96–172* show that the papyri were written for Jewish or Christian consumers, but others are more difficult to determine.¹¹⁹ Regardless of the difficulties of distinguishing if the magical papyri are influenced by or written for a Jewish audience, Michael is commonly invoked along with other angels to perform deeds for the magician. Within the magical papyri, Michael and

¹¹⁸ *PGM VII.892–918* commands angels to bring women.

¹¹⁹ Lynn LiDonnici, “According to the Jews: Identified (and Identifying) Jewish Elements in the Greek Magical Papyri,” in *Heavenly Tablets: Interpretation, Identity and Tradition in Ancient Judaism* (ed. Lynn LiDonnici and Andrea Lieber; JSJSup 119; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 87–108. See *PGM XII.201–269*; *PGM V.459–489*, *PGM XIII.81–86*, *PGM XIII.975–978*.

angels are servants of the magician. They reveal knowledge and dreams, show how to interpret dreams and the future, bend the will of people, control women, give direction, restrain anger, heal the sick, facilitate sexual activity, and are personal protectors from harm.¹²⁰ In sum, Michael, along with angels, are under the magician's authority and are utilized in order to reveal dreams.

4. *Michael as a model exorcist.* The magical papyri demonstrate that magicians would speak to angels in order to command them at will. Thus, when the writer of Jude describes the opponents as blaspheming "glorious ones" (v. 8), we are hearing the accusation that the opponents inappropriately conjure angels. In other words, it is not difficult to imagine that the writer of Jude identifies the opponents as people who invoke celestial beings to serve their own pleasure (v. 12). This is not to suggest that the opponents would agree with this assessment, especially since many of the writer's accusations can reveal how the opponents are perceived rather than how they really view themselves.¹²¹ But by asserting their authority over angels with speech acts, the opponents perhaps do not realize that they are blaspheming.¹²²

How then does this influence our reading of Michael's confrontation with Satan? When we recognize that the writer of Jude is dealing with magicians who invoke angels in their magical practices, the confrontation between Michael and Satan primarily serves to demonstrate how to properly confront and command the demonic. The magicians presumed that it was appropriate to conjure angels for whatever means, as magicians would have done so during this time. But as previously mentioned, the writer seeks to contrast Michael with the opponents. It is after the writer describes them as blasphemers that he uses the coordinating conjunction δέ in order to draw the antithetical comparison: ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος ... οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας, ἀλλὰ εἶπεν, Ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος (v. 9). The comparison can thus be summarized as follows: The opponents inappropriately invoke angelic beings in their own service for purposes such as dream divination. But Michael properly invokes God's name in his confrontation with Satan, and thus does not blaspheme. Although both the opponents and Michael engage with the supernatural beings, Michael is not just an exemplary figure who respects authority. Michael is an example of a model exorcist for the readers.

A further clue to this comparison is also found in the terminology that Michael uses to command Satan: ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος. Although these words echo the Lord's rebuke of Satan in Zech 3:2, Jan Joosten suggests that this passage became a staple formula for exorcisms in later writings, beginning with Jude 9.¹²³ It is found in Abraham's expulsion of sickness, Seth's rebuke of the serpent, and a rab-

¹²⁰ PGM III.145–150; PGM III.405; PGM IV.15; PGM IV.1815–1830; PGM IV.2330–2355; PGM VII.255–259; PGM VII.593–619; PGM VII.1017–1026; PGM XIII.925–930; PGM XXXVI.161–177; PGM XLIII.1–27; PGM LXXIX.1–7; PGM LXXXIII.1–20.

¹²¹ Neyrey, *Jude*, 32; Donelson, *Jude*, 164.

¹²² The "adjuring" is not only for the gods to hear or respond to requests, but also for angels to come under the authority of the magician. See Rebecca Lesses, "Speaking with Angels: Jewish and Greco-Egyptian Revelatory Adjurations," *HTR* 89 (1996): 41–60.

¹²³ Jan Joosten, "The Verb נגח 'to Exorcize' in Qumran Aramaic and Beyond," *DSD* 21 (2014): 354; contra Aune, *Magic*, 392.

binic formula to expel the angel of death.¹²⁴ The term “rebuke” (ἐπιτιμᾶω), which is found in Jude 9 and Zech 3:2 [LXX], is also a technical term for a powerful divine word and threat.¹²⁵ Although it appears in occasions when there is a stern rebuke,¹²⁶ it also describes Jesus’s verbal confrontation with demons and unclean spirits. Howard Clark Kee argues that it is not enough simply to equate ἐπιτιμᾶω (רעג) with “reproach.” He recognizes that it was a word of command that brought hostile powers under control.¹²⁷ Jesus rebukes a demon from a sick boy (Matt 17:18/Luke 9:42), casts out an unclean spirit from a man in the synagogue (Mark 1:25/Luke 4:35), rebukes Peter and commands Satan to “get behind him” (Mark 8:33), and commands a demon to be quiet (Luke 4:41). Jesus’s command of the demonic realm leads people to have a sense of amazement.¹²⁸ Although Jesus is never called an “exorcist”¹²⁹ in the Gospels, what distinguishes Jesus from the contemporary exorcist, including the exorcist of the Greek magical papyri, is that he did not need to invoke any other celestial being, magic amulet, or power source.¹³⁰ It was Jesus’s words alone that caused demons to flee.

Neyrey, however, does not hold that ἐπιτιμᾶω has any special significance within Jude 9. Since he interprets the confrontation between Michael and Satan in terms of a challenge of authority, Michael’s remarks toward Satan “affirms some specific role of both Michael and the devil over the dead Moses in regard to judgment.”¹³¹ But when we recognize that the opponents are magicians and the description of Michael’s confrontation with Satan is similar to Jesus’s confrontation with the demonic, then the implication of Jude 9 goes beyond the mere challenge of roles or statuses. Read together, after the writer of Jude charges the opponents with blasphemy, the antithetical example of Michael serves to demonstrate how one should confront the demonic. In other words, Jude 9 is not placed to serve as an example of how to respect Satanic authority. It demonstrates how one should cast out the chief adversary by appealing to the Lord, who also already has been referred to in verse 4 as Jesus.

III. CONCLUSION

This essay has argued that the description of “dreamers,” “blasphemers,” and the positive counterexample of Michael’s engagement with Satan in Jude 8–10,

¹²⁴ Zech 3:2: יהוה יגער; הקשטן בך יהוה יגער (LXX: ἐπιτιμῆσαι κύριος ἐν σοὶ διάβολε); 1Qap Gen^{ar} 20:28; LAE 39.1; b. Ber. 51a.

¹²⁵ Ethelbert Stauffer, “ἐπιτιμᾶω,” *TDNT* 2:624.

¹²⁶ Matt 19:13/Mark 10:13/Luke 18:15; Matt 8:26/Mark 4:39/Luke 8:24; Matt 12:16/Mark 3:12; Matt 16:12/Mark 8:32; Matt 20:31/Mark 10:48/Luke 18:39; Mark 8:30/Luke 9:21; Luke 9:55; 17:3; 19:39; 23:40.

¹²⁷ Howard Clark Kee, “The Terminology of Mark’s Exorcism Stories,” *NTS* 14 (1968): 242–46.

¹²⁸ Matt 17:19; Mark 1:27; 9:28; Luke 4:36; 9:43.

¹²⁹ Acts 19:13 describes Jewish exorcists as ἐξορκιστῆς. Matt 26:63 utilizes exorcism language: “I adjure you” (ἐξορκίζω).

¹³⁰ James Dunn and Graham Twelftree, “Demons and Exorcisms in the New Testament,” *Chm* 84 (1980): 214.

¹³¹ Neyrey, *Jude*, 67–70.

when understood together, demonstrate that the opponents were magicians. This conclusion can only be drawn when we explore the significance of magicians during the Greco-Roman period and the magical papyri. These magicians conjured angels to serve their will and dream divination. This is why the opponents are described as “blaspheming the glorious ones.” Our reading furthermore provides an alternative interpretation on how the apocryphal tradition of Michael can serve as a positive example. This story is included in order to portray Michael as an exemplary exorcist. Michael is an example on how to properly engage the demonic, not by invoking angels like the magicians, but by calling upon the Lord. One would think that the practice of exorcism, or at least a successful demonstration, was limited to those empowered by the Spirit, but this was not the case.¹³² Engaging with spiritual beings and revealing dreams would have provided possible proof that these opponents were marked by the Spirit, as the readers assumed in verse 19.¹³³ But as the magical papyri reveal, magicians were also known to engage angels and invoke them for their own pleasures, including dream divination.¹³⁴

¹³² Matt 10:1, 7–8; Mark 3:14–15; 6:7–13; 16:15–18; Luke 9:1–6.

¹³³ See Rodolfo Estrada, “The Spirit in Jude 19–20,” *JPT* 25 (2016): 43–57.

¹³⁴ I would like to thank and dedicate this article to Dr. Graham Twelftree. His research on miracles and exorcisms inspired me to write this essay.