

A Study in the Book of James
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INTRODUCTION

The Setting:

Simon and his wife Martha were in a bad way. They had come under the influence of some men known as the disciples of Jesus. God touched their hearts and they became followers of “the way.” And then everything went to pot. Their relatives would not speak civilly to them. Their neighbors were even more hostile. They were put out of their synagogue. They had a small business in town, but now no one would buy anything they had to sell. They needed to buy food and other things as well but when they walked by outdoor shops, the owners turned their backs and would not talk to them.

It finally got so bad that they and other followers of Jesus had to sell everything and move to a city under Gentile control instead of Jewish control. That was a sad day, but it got even worse when they tried to sell their home and land. The rich buyers were far and few between and the offers were for half their value. They had little choice, they had to sell, but now they were in serious financial trouble.

When they got to their new city, they were of course forced by law to live in the Jewish area. But buying a home there was a disaster. The rich land owners saw them coming and they paid twice the going rate for a new place to live. And it was much smaller than their other house. So now the money problems were bigger than ever. The days were long and hard and the pay was small.

And all this time they were asking themselves, did we make a big mistake here?

And then they started receiving letters from home asking them to come back and reject this new cult and they would be welcomed back into their family, their synagogue and they were assured, their business would prosper.

Maybe that is what they should do.

Author: *James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...* This appears to be James the half-brother of Jesus

There are five possibilities as to who this James might be in the NT.

First, *James the father of Judas* (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).

Second, *James the Less or Younger, son of Mary wife of Cleopas* (Mark 15:40; Matt 27:56; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10).

Third, *James the son of Alphaeus, one of the Twelve* (Mark 3:18; Matt 10:3; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13).

Fourth, *James the son of Zebedee and brother of the apostle John and also one of the Twelve* (Mark 1:19; 3:17; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). This James, according to Acts 12:2, was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I.

Fifth, *James the brother of Jesus, son of Mary* (Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55; Gal 1:19; 2:9, 12; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Jude 1; John 7:3–5; 1 Cor 9:5).¹

The Lord's Half Brother

Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" Matthew 13:55-56 (NIV)

For even his own brothers did not believe in him. John 7:5 (NIV)

Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? 1 Corinthians 9:5 (NIV)

I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. Galatians 1:19 (NIV)

A Leader in the Early Church

Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 1 Corinthians 15:7 (ESV)

"And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers." (Acts 1:13–14, ESV)

"But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place." (Acts 12:17, ESV)

After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. Acts 15:13 (ESV)

On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. Acts 21:18 (ESV)

*James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as **pillars**, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. Galatians 2:9 (NIV)*

¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (14–15). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.” (Galatians 2:12, ESV)

“None of the other Jameses mentioned in the NT lived long enough or was prominent enough to write the letter we have before us without identifying himself any further than he does.”²

James in Church History

4 “James, the brother of the Lord, succeeded to the government of the Church in conjunction with the apostles. He has been called the Just by all from the time of our Saviour to the present day; for there were many that bore the name of James.

6 He alone was permitted to enter into the holy place; for he wore not woolen but linen garments. And he was in the habit of entering alone into the temple, and was frequently found upon his knees begging forgiveness for the people, so that his knees became hard like those of a camel, in consequence of his constantly bending them in his worship of God, and asking forgiveness for the people.”³

“...Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned; (201).”⁴

“Eusebius (HE ii.23.3–18) quotes Hegesippus to the effect that James was noted for his piety and constant prayers in the temple. He was called “camel-knees” and was respected by Christians and Jews alike, especially as he was (like Jesus) of David’s line. Eventually the Jews cast him down from a pinnacle (or corner) of the temple and, as he still lived, they stoned him to death.”⁵

“With such a prominent role in the Jerusalem church, the leaders of Judaism—Hegesippus calls them “Jews and the Scribes and the Pharisees” (2.23.10)—attempted to persuade James to reroute the people’s belief in Jesus as Messiah toward safer ground (2.23.10–11). So, they got him to mount the “battlement” of the Temple at Passover to persuade the crowds.

“What is the gate of Jesus?” they asked James to answer publicly, to set him up for a safe confession (2.23.12). His answer reverses their wishes: “Why do you ask me

² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (10). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³ Eusebius of Caesaria. (1890). *The Church History of Eusebius* A. C. McGiffert, Trans.). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Volume I: Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine* (P. Schaff & H. Wace, Ed.) (125). New York: Christian Literature Company.

⁴ Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The works of Josephus: Complete and unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson.

Eusebius (HE ii.23.3–18) HE *Historia ecclesiastica* (Church History)

⁵ Vol. 2: *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*. 1988 (G. W. Bromiley, Ed.) (959). Wm. B. Eerdmans.

concerning the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven on the right hand of the great power, and he will come on the clouds of heaven" (2.23.13). We are told that many responded to James in faith and that this led the offended and worried leaders to mount the same battlement, toss him down, and, in accordance with sacred texts (Wis 2:10; Isa 3:10), stone him (2.23.14–16; see 2 Apoc. Jas. 61–62). James then prayed nearly the same prayer Jesus did for his persecutors: "forgive them, for they know not what they do" (2.23.16). The 2 Apoc. Jas. expands the prayer (62–63). He died, according to Eusebius, from a blow to the head by a club (2.23.18) and was buried on the spot."⁶

The Conclusion of the Matter

"So the evidence about James in the New Testament and in the earliest Christian traditions comports with what we find in the letter, though it cannot be said to prove that the brother of Jesus wrote this letter. Furthermore, the connection of James to the letter from the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 and a parallel connection to the Jesus traditions make the authorship by James the brother of Jesus credible and even make him the James most likely in mind in the letter's salutation."⁷

Date: Between A.D. 44 and A.D. 49. James is probably the earliest New Testament book written.

James was written between A.D. 44, the beginning of the persecution that spread to the Diaspora (Acts 8 and 12) (See Dispersion below), and A.D. 62, the year of James's death. Since no mention is made of the controversy leading to the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), it is probable that James was written before A.D. 47-49.

"For these reasons, we think that James was probably written in the middle 40s, perhaps just before the Apostolic Council. This period witnessed some severe economic crises (there was a famine in Judea in A.D. 46 [Acts 11:28]) and the beginning of the serious social-political-religious upheavals that would culminate in the Jewish war of rebellion in 66–70. Both circumstances fit the situation implied in the letter."⁸

"And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius)." (Acts 11:28, ESV)

Theme: Similar to a corporate board meeting which would address very diverse topics such as new construction projects, legal issues, hiring and firing policies, raw materials acquisitions, product development and political considerations, so James brings before his audience an array of topics that on the surface seem somewhat unrelated: Perseverance, Faith, The tongue, Heavenly and Earthly Wisdom, Submission to God's Will and Patience. Yet each topic pursues the goal of instructing the persecuted Jewish-Christian community in how to live their new life in Jesus Christ.

⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (22). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (28). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (26–27). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

The Books Relationship to the Teachings of Jesus

The theme of joy in trial/testing is found in 1:2 and Matthew 5:10–12 par. Luke 6:22–23.

The word “perfection” in 1:4 finds an important parallel in Matthew 5:48 (contrast Luke 6:36) and 19:21 (contrast Luke 18:21).

The generosity of God for those in need is found in 1:5 and Matthew 7:7–9 par. Luke 11:9–11.

The call to suspend anger in 1:20 connects to Matthew 5:22.

The important theme of being a doer of the word, not just hearing the word, as seen in 1:22–25 reminds one of Matthew 7:24–27 par. Luke 6:47–49.

The demand to do all the Law in 2:10 is matched in part by a similar demand in Matthew 5:19.

The paramount significance of mercy in 2:13 finds something similar in Matthew 5:7.

The call to peace in 3:18 is also matched by a Beatitude in Matthew 5:9.

James’s concern with the either-or of love/friendship with God or the world finds something similar in Matthew 6:24 par. Luke 16:13.

The connection of humility and eschatological exaltation in 4:10 finds a substantive connection with yet another Beatitude in Matthew 5:5.

The theme of not judging in 4:11–12, which in many ways brings to completion what has been said in 3:1–4:10, not to mention other subtle connections in other parts of James, is also important to the Jesus traditions, as seen in Matthew 7:1–5 par. Luke 6:37–38, 41–42.

The hostile reaction to rich oppressors in 5:2–6 finds close associations with Matthew 6:24, 25–34 par. Luke 16:13; 12:22–31.

The patience of the prophets in 5:10 matches Matthew 5:12 par. Luke 6:23.

Most notably, the statement about oaths in 5:12 must be connected to Matthew 5:33–37.⁹

“...we stand on sure footings when we conclude that James has made Jesus’ teachings his own. It is entirely appropriate to describe these observations with the words that James is “emulating” Jesus’ words.”¹⁰

Audience:

First: They were Jews

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.” (James 1:1, ESV)

“For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly (συναγωγή synagogue), and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in,” (James 2:2, ESV)

⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (25–26). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (26–27). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” (James 2:19, ESV); The Shema: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” (Deuteronomy 6:4, ESV)

References in the book to “the law” strengthen the view that they were Jews: James 2:24-25; 2:8-13; 4:11-12

Second: They were poor and oppressed (James 5:4-6; 2:6-7)

Third: They had severe behavioral issues in their community

- Failures in prayer—1:5-8
- Double-mindedness—1:8; 4:8
- Worldly pollution—1:27
- A fawning deference to the rich—2:1-4
- Failure to practice faith—2:14-26
- Uncontrolled critical speech—3:9-12; 4:11-12; 5:9
- Earthly wisdom—3:15
- Violent Quarrels—4:1-3
- Friendship with the world—4:4
- Arrogance—4:13-17

Fourth: “...the intended audience of the letter. The best explanation, one that has unfolded in this commentary, is that James writes to messianic communities that are embedded in Jewish communities, with boundary lines that are simply not clear. Some in the crosshairs of James, so we think the evidence suggests, are violent. It also appears that they are leaders at some level, for they have enough influence to shape who sits where in the synagogue and can dominate the courtroom.”¹¹

Genre¹²: “...the most popular genre identification for James is wisdom.”¹³

“The letter speaks directly about wisdom in a central passage (3:13–18; cf. also 1:5), and the brief, direct, and practical admonitions found at many places in the letter resemble the style of wisdom books from the OT....”¹⁴

Ethics

“And his focus on ethics is on doing good, speaking the right way, and expressing the gospel in the socio-economic ways of compassion and mercy. Hence, he targets

¹¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (397). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹² A class or category of artistic endeavor having a particular form, content, technique, or the like: *the genre of epic poetry; the genre of symphonic music*.

¹³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The Letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (8). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The Letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (8). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

prophetic barbs at the (compassion-less) rich, at the unloving work-less, at the unmerciful abuse of power, and at teachers who unlovingly divide and murder.”¹⁵

The Book’s Appeal to Believers:

But why is James so popular among believers generally? Three characteristics of the letter seem to provide the answer.

First, James is intensely practical; and believers looking for specific guidance in the Christian life naturally appreciate such an emphasis.¹⁶

A second factor making James so attractive to believers is his conciseness. He rarely develops the points he makes at any length, being content to make his point and to move quickly on.¹⁷

Third, James’s lavish use of metaphors and illustrations makes his teaching easy to understand and to remember. The billowing sea, the withered flower, the image of a face in a mirror, the bit in the horse’s mouth, the rudder of the ship, the destructive forest fire, the pure spring of water, the arrogant businessman, the corroded metal, and moth-eaten clothes — all are images of virtually universal appeal.¹⁸

¹⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (7). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (1). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (1–2). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (2). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

James 1

I. ADDRESS AND GREETING (1:1)

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

James Ἰάκωβος = Jacob

See the introduction for details on which James this might be.

Servant δοῦλος = "...one who is a slave in the sense of becoming the property of an owner ...—'slave, bondservant.'"¹⁹

"By calling himself a "servant" James aligns himself with Israel's noble heritage of the servants of God, most notably Moses, David, and the prophets. The entailments are many, not the least of which is that James has authority as a distinguished leader in the community that believes Jesus is the Messiah."²⁰

James does not imply special honor or authority because he was the half-brother of Jesus. He describes himself simply as a servant or slave of Jesus—like everyone else.

God and of the Lord Jesus Christ

The phrase gives the same honor to Jesus as it does to God. "What "servant" also indicates is that neither James nor Jude, both traditionally "brothers" of Jesus, used their family status to leverage power."²¹

Lord κύριος = "Lord, master, owner. Also the NT Gr. equivalent for the OT Hebr. Jehovah."²²

Dispersion διασπορά = to scatter

And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. Acts 2:8-11

¹⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (740). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (39). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (63). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Acts 8:1

“But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.” (Acts 8:3–4, ESV)

“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.” (Acts 11:19, ESV)

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: 1 Peter 1:1-2

Jews were “scattered” all over the Mediterranean world, however, “...the phenomenon of early rain (October-November or December-January) and latter rain (March-April), both of which are utterly necessary for proper growth, is limited to the east end of the Mediterranean... [James 5:7].”²³ This would suggest that the first recipients of James letter were those in the broader area of “the east end of the Mediterranean”.

II. THE PURSUIT OF SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS: THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY TRIALS (1:2–18)

James 1:2 Count it all joy [a genuine joy], my brothers, when you meet [fall into] trials [test or temptations] of various kinds,

Count ἡγέομαι = “Metaphorically, to lead out before the mind, i.e., to view, regard, esteem, count, reckon....”²⁴ Also = judge, value, consider, deem, think, account.

“To “consider” [count] trials as an occasion of joy involves an act of faith, for instead of looking *at* the trial, the messianic Jewish community is instead encouraged to look *through* the trial to its potential outcome.”²⁵

All joy Πᾶσαν χαρὰν = Genuine joy. ““Pure joy” is a good rendering of the Greek phrase *pasan charan* (lit., “all joy”) since the word *pas* here probably suggests intensity (complete and unalloyed joy) rather than exclusivity (nothing but joy). James does not, then, suggest that Christians facing trials will have no response other than joy, as

²³ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (183). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

²⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

²⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (71). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

if we were commanded never to be saddened by difficulties. His point, rather, is that trials should be an occasion for genuine rejoicing.”²⁶

“*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”* (Matthew 5:10–12, ESV)

“*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”* (Romans 5:3–5, ESV)

“*In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* (1 Peter 1:6–7, ESV)

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. Acts 5:41 (ESV)

But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 1 Peter 4:13 (ESV)

“*For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”* (Hebrews 12:11, ESV)

“*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”* (Matthew 5:4, ESV)

meet περιπίπτω = or “fall into” “...to experience somewhat suddenly that which is difficult or bad—‘to come to experience, to experience, to encounter, to be beset by.’”²⁷ “...to make trial of, try, tempt. Trial, temptation, a putting to the test, spoken of persons only. When God is the agent, *peirasmós* is for the purpose of proving someone, never for the purpose of causing him to fall. If it is the devil who tempts, then it is for the purpose of causing one to fall.”²⁸

²⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (53). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (807). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁸ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Trials πειρασμός = "...to try to learn the nature or character of someone or something by submitting such to thorough and extensive testing—to test, to examine, to put to the test, examination, testing."²⁹ Test, try, temp

James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

James 1:14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Various kinds ποικίλος =

"In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials," (1 Peter 1:6, ESV)

What were the "trials" or temptations that James's readers were enduring? Certainly persecution but also poverty must certainly have been prominent among them. By stressing that the trials were "of many kinds," James deliberately casts his net widely, including the many kinds of suffering that Christians undergo in this fallen world: sickness, loneliness, bereavement, disappointment.³⁰ And unfulfilled expectations.

James 2:6–7 makes pretty clear that religious persecution was one of the causes of the poverty the believers were experiencing.

One can compare the trials of Christians in Communist and Muslim countries to get some idea what many Christians were suffering from Jews at this time.

"Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:1–3, ESV)

"...but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." (Hebrews 10:38, ESV)

James 1:3 for you know that the testing [refining] of your faith produces steadfastness [endurance].

²⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (331). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (54). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

know γινώσκω = “...to possess information about—‘to know, to know about, to have knowledge of, to be acquainted with, acquaintance.’”³¹

“The capacity to see through a test to character formation at the hand of God’s grace is based on knowledge.”³²

“Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’” (Hebrews 3:10, ESV)

“For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.” (Hebrews 10:34, ESV)

Testing δοκίμιον = ‘to test, to examine, to try to determine the genuineness of, testing.’³³ “The means of proving, a criterion or test by which anything is proved or tried, as faith by afflictions (James 1:3). In NT times it was used of metals that were without alloy.”³⁴

...the two OT occurrences both denote the process of refining silver or gold....

...so that the tested genuineness (refining) of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I Peter 1:7

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. Job 23:10 (ESV)

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern (δοκιμάζω) what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2, ESV)

“The general sense appears to be “the process of testing will determine the *genuineness* of your faith, and *what is genuine* emerging from that test” will produce “endurance,””³⁵

of your faith

What is tested by these trials is “faith.”

³¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (333). New York: United Bible Societies.

³² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (77). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (331). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (77). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“...but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.” (Hebrews 10:38–39, ESV)

“These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.” (Hebrews 11:13–16, ESV)

“We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,” (Hebrews 6:19, ESV)

Produces κατεργάζομαι = “To work out; ... to bring about, accomplish, to carry out a task until it is finished.”³⁶

Steadfastness ὑπομονή = ““remaining under” or “holding up under” endurance, perseverance, patience. The picture is of a person successfully carrying a heavy load for a long time.”³⁷ “...to persevere, remain under. A bearing up under, patience, endurance as to things or circumstances. Hupomoné is associated with hope (1 Thess. 1:3) and refers to that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial.”³⁸

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,” (2 Peter 1:5–6, ESV)

“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,” (Romans 5:3, ESV)

“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” (Hebrews 10:36, ESV)

“remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 1:3, ESV)

I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil.... Revelation 2:2

³⁶ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (55). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁸ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:7 (ESV)

“When the trials are borne in the right way they serve to test the quality of faith by producing the result of ὑπομονή (“patient endurance”). The endurance thus becomes “[the] new facet of the believer’s character that could not exist without testing....”³⁹

“Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” (Habakkuk 3:17–18, ESV)

Habakkuk was written 608-607 BC; the destruction of Jerusalem was in stages from 605 BC to 586 BC.

“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.” (Habakkuk 2:4, ESV)

“but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” (Hebrews 10:38, ESV)

James 1:4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Let ἔχω = To have “...to experience a state or condition, generally involving duration—‘to experience, to have.’”⁴⁰ This word is in the imperative mood—“*Imperative Mood* (1625 times) is the mood of command or entreaty. The speaker directs that the verbal idea happen. It is used in commands, exhortations, and prayers.”⁴¹

Full effect τέλειος ἔργον = full work

“...a “complete work,” ἔργον τέλειον, which on face value implies a completeness of character, producing the choice fruits of Christian disposition and expressed in good works....”⁴² “The translation of τέλειον with “full” is colorless; the word speaks of excellence, maturation, and splendid virtue. ἔργον refers to “effect” or “impact.””⁴³

Mature impact

Perfect τέλειος = complete, finished, full, mature; free from defects

“You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48, ESV)

³⁹ Martin, R. P. (1998). *Vol. 48: James*. Word Biblical Commentary (15). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

⁴⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (806). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴¹ Chapman, B., & Shogren, G. S. (1994). *Greek New Testament Insert* (2nd ed., revised.). Quakertown, PA: Stylus Publishing.

⁴² Martin, R. P. (1998). *Vol. 48: James*. Word Biblical Commentary (16). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

⁴³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.” (James 1:25, ESV)

“For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.” (James 3:2, ESV)

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Philippians 3:12 (ESV)

Complete *ὁλόκληρος* = whole, entire. “That which retains all that was initially allotted to it and wanting nothing for its wholeness. It expresses the perfection of man before the fall (1 Thess. 5:23; James 1:4; see Sept.: Deut. 27:6; Ezek. 15:5). The *holóklēros* is one who has persevered or, having once suffered loss, has now regained completeness. In the *holóklēros* no grace which a Christian man should possess is deficient.”⁴⁴

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23, ESV)

Perfect and complete = fully mature and developed

Lacking (*λείπω*) in nothing:

*For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness (*ὑπομονή*), and steadfastness with godliness,⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹ For whoever **lacks** (*πάρειμι*) these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 2 Peter 1:5–10 (ESV)*

“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3–5, ESV)

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any

⁴⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."
(Philippians 4:8, ESV)

"To sum up, τέλειος is obviously a key term for James ..., with five occurrences (1:4, twice; 1:17; 1:25; 3:2). "... Three ideas are to be seen in the use of τέλειος in our verse: (1) it is primarily a statement about a person's character, not simply a record of his or her overt acts ...; (2) the achieving of a "perfect work" of moral character is not simply human endeavor writ large as in the Stoic ideal ... but is modeled on the divine pattern which sets the standard and inspires the believer...; (3) "the 'perfection' of James is eschatological" ..., that is, it looks ahead to its fullest maturity at the end time when God's purposes will have been achieved. Until then, the believer has to endure trials en route to the goal and to strive to attain the fulfillment of God's plan, not excusing himself or permitting any failure to block the way thereto"⁴⁵

James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach [without finding fault], and it will be given him.*

Lacks λείπω = "...to not possess something which is necessary—'to not have, to be in need of, to lack."⁴⁶

*For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness (ὑπομονή), and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever **lacks** (πάρειμι) these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 2 Peter 1:5–10 (ESV)*

Wisdom σοφία = skill in living, how to function at a practical level in life

Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—⁴ to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, ⁵ to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. Exodus 31:1–5

"Skill in the affairs of life, practical wisdom, wise management as shown in forming the best plans and selecting the best means, including the idea of sound judgment and good sense...."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Martin, R. P. (1998). *Vol. 48: James*. Word Biblical Commentary (17). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

⁴⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (562). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁷ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
Proverbs 2:6

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason,
full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.¹⁸ And a harvest of
righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:17–18
(ESV)

“The readers are facing some real problems arising from persecution, and it is the gift and application of wisdom to see these trials in their proper light and respond accordingly.”⁴⁸

“This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.” (James 3:15, ESV)

let him ask αἰτέω = “...to ask for with urgency, even to the point of demanding—‘to ask for, to demand, to plead for.’”⁴⁹ This word is in the imperative mood—“*Imperative Mood* is the mood of command or entreaty. The speaker directs that the verbal idea happen. It is used in commands, exhortations, and prayers.”⁵⁰

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7.7

Generously ἀπλῶς = sincerely, liberally, bountifully

Without reproach ὀνειδίζω = without finding fault, without criticism

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting [judge, make a distinction or discriminate], **for the one who doubts** [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] **is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.**

Doubting [judge or make a distinction]

- 1) διστάζω “...to think that something may not be true or certain—‘to doubt, to be uncertain about, doubt.”⁵¹

“Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”” (Matthew 14:31, ESV)

- 2) ἀσφαλῶς “...pertaining to being certain and thus completely believable—‘worthy of being believed, certainly true, completely believable.’”⁵²

⁴⁸ Martin, R. P. (1998). *Vol. 48: James*. Word Biblical Commentary (17). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

⁴⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (406). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁰ Chapman, B., & Shogren, G. S. (1994). *Greek New Testament Insert* (2nd ed., revised.). Quakertown, PA: Stylus Publishing.

⁵¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (369). New York: United Bible Societies.

“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” (Acts 2:36, ESV)

- 3) ἐξαπορέω “...to be in extreme despair, implying both anxiety and fear—‘to be in utter despair, to despair completely.’”⁵³

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair,” (2 Corinthians 4:8, ESV)

- 4) διαλογισμός “...to think that something may not be true or certain—‘to doubt, to be uncertain about, doubt.’”⁵⁴

“And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?” (Luke 24:38, ESV)

- 5) **διακρίνω** = To make distinctions, to judge, to discriminate. “...from δια meaning through and κρίνω meaning to separate or split apart. In time κρίνω came to mean “to judge.” Διακρίνω was an intense form of judging. To hesitate, waver, to dispute with oneself, the opposite of confidently. To be in strife with oneself.”⁵⁵ “To make a distinction between persons,” Ac. 15:9: God has made no distinction between (us) Jews and the Gentiles; also 11:12.”⁵⁶

διακρίνω:

- I. *separate one from another.*
- II. *distinguish.*
- III. *decide, of judges.*
- IV. *set [a place] apart for holy purposes.*
- V. *interpret a dream.*
- VI. *question.*
- VII. *doubt, hesitate, waver.*⁵⁷

In the LXX: “Altogether, διακρίνω in any form occurs less than thirty times in the LXX, and is almost always used of judging, judging between, or separating people.”⁵⁸

⁵² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (370). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (313). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (369). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (369). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁶ *Vol. 3: Theological dictionary of the New Testament.* 1964- (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (946). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁵⁷ Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996). *A Greek-English lexicon* (399). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

⁵⁸ *JETS* 48/4 (December 2005) 733!55, SOME DOUBTS ABOUT DOUBT: THE NEW TESTAMENT USE OF διακρίνω, DAVID DEGRAAF

Matthew 16:3 And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

"And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt [judge, make a distinction or discriminate], you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen." (Matthew 21:21, ESV)

"Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him." (Mark 11:23, ESV)

Acts 10:20 Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation [judge, make a distinction or discriminate], for I have sent them.

Acts 11:2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] him, saying,

Acts 11:12 And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (middle voice)]. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.

Acts 15:9 and he made no distinction [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

Romans 4:20 No unbelief made him waver [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (passive voice)] concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

Romans 14:23 But whoever has doubts [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (middle or passive voice)] is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

1 Corinthians 4:7 For who sees [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

1 Corinthians 6:5 I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] between the brothers,

1 Corinthians 11:29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

1 Corinthians 11:31 But if we judged [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] ourselves truly, we would not be judged.

1 Corinthians 14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] *what is said.*

Jude 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (middle or passive voice)] *with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."*

Jude 22 And have mercy on those who doubt [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (middle or passive voice)];

James 2:4 have you not then made distinctions [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (passive voice)] *among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

The translations used in these verses: Interpret, hesitation, criticized, distinction, distinction, waver, doubts, sees, dispute, discerning, judged, weigh, contending, doubt, distinctions.

"When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked. Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (passive voice)], not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done." (Matthew 21:20–21, NIV)

Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (passive voice)] in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. (Mark 11:23)

The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. (Revelation 8:8, ESV)]

"They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge (κρίνω) the inhabitants of the earth (γῆ land) and avenge our blood?" (Revelation 6:10, NIV)

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting [judge, make a distinction or discriminate (middle or passive voice)], for the one who doubts [judge or make a distinction (middle or passive voice)] is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

This is James own commentary on the use of this word:

"If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor

by my feet,” have you not discriminated [distinctions ESV] among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” (James 2:3–4, NIV)

What kind of “judgments” or “distinctions” can we make?

1) Is it the will of (Jesus) God?

Do we always know God’s will in a matter?

“Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.””
(James 4:15, ESV)

2) Does (Jesus) God care?

3) Is (Jesus) God able?

4) Or a distinction in the congregation that James is writing to?

“Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.” (James 1:9–10, ESV)

“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” (James 2:1, ESV) *James 2:4 have you not then made distinctions [judge, make a distinction or discriminate] among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” (James 2:8–9, ESV)

“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.”
(James 5:1, ESV)

“This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.” (James 3:15, ESV)

“Doubts, Disputes and Distinctions of διακρίνω

“In 2001 I submitted a suggestion to the NET Bible translation committee for translating διακρινόμενος in James 1:6 as 'making distinctions' instead of 'doubting'. The suggestion was rejected.

'Doubting' is proposed in the Greek lexicons as a special New Testament meaning, but this simply is not necessary. The same word is used in James 2:4 with its normal sense. James 1:6 should not be read as "he should ask in faith without *doubting*." It is better read like this...

But he must ask in faith without making distinctions, for the one who makes distinctions is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed around by the wind.

I wonder how many people have struggled to understand the logic of not allowing for doubts in James 1:6 when the whole point in James 1:5 is that a person *lacks* wisdom and God gives it generously to those who ask for it *without* finding fault...

If anyone of you is lacking wisdom, let him ask of God, the one giving generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given him.”⁵⁹

In Conclusion:

“But when you ask, you must believe and not [judge, make a distinction or discriminate), because the one who (judge, make a distinction or discriminate) is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:6, NIV)

James 1:7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 1:8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Double-minded δίψυχος = suffering from divided loyalties. On the one hand, he wishes to maintain a religious confession and desires the presence of God in his life; on the other hand, he loves the ways of the world and prefers to live according to its mores and ethics.⁶⁰

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4:8, ESV)

“The double-minded person does not love God wholeheartedly, does not love the neighbor properly, and does not live out the Torah as God intends.”⁶¹

Unstable ἀκατάστατος = uncontrolled, unsettled

““Unstable” (*akatastatos*) refers to the condition of the person who, because he (or she) does not simply trust God for wisdom, finds himself (or herself) wavering and incapable of handling the stress created by opposition to the messianic community. While it might refer to the sort of instability that could lead to apostasy, it more likely refers to the instability created by lack of simply trusting God for wisdom to endure trials.”⁶²

James 1:9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation,

boast καυχάομαι = to express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone or something being exceptionally noteworthy—“to boast.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Posted by Zephyr - <http://agaphseis.blogspot.com/2007/09/doubts-disputes-and-distinctions-of.html>

⁶⁰ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁶¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (92). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁶² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (92). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁶³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (430). New York: United Bible Societies.

“but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.” (Hebrews 3:6, ESV)

“As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.” (James 4:16, ESV)

Exaltation ὑψος = high position “...a position of high status—‘high position, high rank, prominence.’”⁶⁴ “The height on high as used for heaven, meaning the highest heaven, the abode of God...”⁶⁵

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Philippians 3:20–21 (ESV)

Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? James 2:5 (ESV)

“and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” (Romans 8:17, ESV)

James 1:10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

Humiliation ταπεινωσις = “...the quality of unpretentious behavior, suggesting a total lack of arrogance or pride—‘humility, humble behavior.’”⁶⁶

“...the rich believer is to boast not in his wealth or his elevated social position, but in his identification with Christ and his people, a matter of “humiliation” in the eyes of the world.”⁶⁷

“Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”” (Jeremiah 9:23–24, ESV)

“who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” (Philippians 3:21, ESV)

⁶⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (735). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁶⁵ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁶⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (747). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁶⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (66). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. ²⁴ *“But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.”* Luke 6:23–24 (ESV)

James 1:11 *For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.*

“As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field;”
(Psalm 103:15, ESV)

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. Matthew 6:24 (ESV)

“James’s overriding concern throughout this section: that Christians display a consistent and integral spirituality that avoids the “double-souled” attitude typical of too many who claim to be followers of Christ.”⁶⁸

James 1:12 *Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*

“...1:12 summarizes the direction James has been going in 1:2–11. This recapitulation establishes the theme: God rewards those who endure testing.”⁶⁹

Blessed μακάριος = to be the recipient of God’s favor

“His satisfaction (the one who is blessed) comes from God and not from favorable circumstances.”⁷⁰

Remains steadfast ὑπομένω = “To remain under, i.e., to persevere, endure, sustain, bear up under, suffer, as a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions or provocations with faith”⁷¹

“But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings,” (Hebrews 10:32, ESV)

Trials πειρασμός = temptation or trial. “...temptation to sin but also: sickness, loneliness, bereavement, disappointment, unfulfilled expectations. As in v. 2, “trial”

⁶⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (69). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁶⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (106). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁷⁰ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁷¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

refers to any difficulty in life that may threaten our faithfulness to Christ: physical illness, financial reversal, the death of a loved one.”⁷²

“It can mean either “test” or “temptation,” and James moves from one to the other in 1:12–18.”⁷³

“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:12, ESV)

for ὅτι = “...markers of cause or reason, based on an evident fact—‘because, since, for, in view of the fact that.’”⁷⁴

when he has stood γίνομαι = “...to exist and to conduct oneself, with the particular manner specified by the context—‘to conduct oneself, to behave, conduct.’”⁷⁵ Verb, aorist, middle, participle, nominative, masculine

Test δόκιμος = “...pertaining to being genuine on the basis of testing—‘genuine, sincere.’”⁷⁶

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:6–7, ESV)

Crown of life στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς =

Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8 (ESV)

And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 1 Peter 5:4–5 (ESV)

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. Revelation 2:10 (ESV)

⁷² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (70). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁷³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (110). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁷⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (780). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁷⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (503). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁷⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (674). New York: United Bible Societies.

So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!”⁶ When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” John 19:5–6 (ESV)

“The actual reward is salvation itself, for (eternal) life is certainly the content of the crown....”⁷⁷

...those who love him

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” John 14:21 (ESV)

“... faith and endurance are dimensions of love.”⁷⁸

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

Tempted (Trials) πειράζω= temptation; to tempt or to test.

“James shifts from *peirasmos* as “test” to *peirasmos* as “temptation” because someone has called God’s goodness into question.”⁷⁹ Some are failing in the test and are blaming God for their failure by “tempting” them.

For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:18 (ESV)

God cannot be tempted ἀπειραστος = “...pertaining to not being able to be tempted—‘unable to be tempted, one who cannot be tempted.’”⁸⁰

and he himself tempts no one

“And lead us not into temptation [testing], but deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13, ESV)

“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13, ESV)

⁷⁷ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (80). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁷⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (113). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁷⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (114). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁸⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (775). New York: United Bible Societies.

James 1:14 *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*

Lured ἐξέλκω = “To draw or drag out, as from the right way, to draw away, hurry away....”⁸¹

Enticed δελιάζω = “To bait, entrap. In the NT metaphorically to entice, beguile.”⁸²

They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! 2 Peter 2:14 (ESV)

For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. 2 Peter 2:18 (ESV)

The two Greek words are fishing and hunting images.

his own ἴδιος = pertaining to being the exclusive property of someone—‘one’s own,’⁸³

Desire ἐπιθυμία = “...to desire greatly. Strong desire, longing, lust.”⁸⁴

“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire [ἡδονή] and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.” (James 4:1–2, ESV)

“The essential point in ἐπιθυμία [desire] is that it is desire as impulse, as a motion of the will. It is, in fact, lust, since the thought of satisfaction gives pleasure and that of non-satisfaction pain. ἐπιθυμία [desire] is anxious self-seeking. ... In ἐπιθυμεῖν [desire] man is seen as he really is, the more so because ἐπιθυμία [desire] bursts upon him with the force of immediacy. Even after the reception of the divine Spirit, ἐπιθυμία [desire] is always a danger against which man must be warned and must fight.”⁸⁵

“The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”” (Genesis 3:12–13, ESV)

⁸¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁸² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁸³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (557). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁸⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁸⁵ *Vol. 3: Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964- (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (171). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

“...instead of appealing to the devil as the source ... he calls to his aid the Jewish teaching on the evil impulse in man which allows him to keep the responsibility squarely on the individual.”⁸⁶

James 1:15 *Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*

Conceived συλλαμβάνω = “to take or receive” plus the word “together with.” It came to be figuratively used of a women taking or receiving seed “with” their husband and thereby “to conceive” or become pregnant.

gives birth Τίκτω – “To bring forth, bear, bring. ...to cause the growth and production of plants—“to grow, to produce.”⁸⁷

For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. Hebrews 6:7 (ESV)

Sin ἁμαρτία - “not to hit” or “to miss” ...that which is done wrong, sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act⁸⁸

fully grown ἀποτελέω - To perfect, accomplish, achieve the natural purpose as in James 1:15, to be of full stature.⁸⁹

Brings forth ἀποκυέω = “...to swell, be pregnant. To beget, bear.”⁹⁰

Death θάνατος – physical, spiritual or eternal which is determined by context

“The process is now over: desire conceives sin, and sin, when it is grown up, delivers death.”⁹¹

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (John 5:24, ESV)

“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake

⁸⁶ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (79). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁸⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (274). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁸⁸ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

⁸⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁹⁰ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁹¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (121). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8, ESV)

James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

deceived *πλανάω* = “To cause to wander, lead astray, ... to wander, go astray.”⁹²

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above = Where does this fit in the flow of the text? “Believers, James is saying, must not be led astray into thinking that God himself is tempting them to evil; on the contrary, he is the invariable giver of good gifts to his children.”⁹³ See verse 1:5.

“Evidently, God’s goodness is under question for some in the messianic community, and there are some traces of what they were thinking: God’s simple response of goodness has been questioned (1:5), some have suggested that God is temptable and tempts (1:13), and there is the suggestion that God shifts like shadows (1:17). Thus we are led to think that 1:16–18 is a commentary on ... 1:2–15: the poor messianic community is undergoing (economic) suffering and is tempted to react with violence and verbal abuse. At least some in the community are tempted to think God is not good, that he does not dispense his wisdom to those who trust him, that he does incite his people into sin, and that he is hard to trust because he changes. The tendency of some to idealize the earliest messianic community can, in light of these points from James 1 alone, be laid to rest. James was a pastor to a community filled with typical human questions, problems, and sins.”⁹⁴

“James has in mind throughout this section is the economic stresses on the messianic community. James, if this view be accepted, may understand these gifts as a token of the eschatological nature of the messianic community (cf. 1:18: “first fruits”).”⁹⁵

“There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.” (Acts 4:34–35, ESV)

“Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the

⁹² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁹³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (76). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁹⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (123). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁹⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (126). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.” (Acts 11:27–30, ESV)

the Father of lights = refers to God as the creator of the stars (Gn. 1:14–18; Ps. 136:7; Je. 4:23; 31:35; Sir. 43:1–12; the sun and moon....⁹⁶ The Creator.

variation παραλλαγή = “...to change alternately or in succession from one to another, which is from *pará*, denoting transition, and *alláttō* or *allássō*, to change. Change, alteration, variableness, vicissitude....”⁹⁷

Shadow ἀποσκίασμα = “...to shade. Metaphorically, the slightest trace, or degree....”⁹⁸ This may have reference to the shadows at night caused by the movement of the moon and stars.

change τροπή = “...to turn. A turning, turning back as of the heavenly bodies in their courses....”⁹⁹

“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.” (Malachi 3:6, ESV)

“So both “variation” and “shadow due to change” probably (though not certainly) come from language used to describe stars and heavenly bodies in their various sorts of changes and shifts across the sky.”¹⁰⁰

“James could be saying both: the messianic community can either trust God’s goodness, which never changes in its faithfulness, or be like the stars in their constant fluctuations.”¹⁰¹

“...if God gives good and does not change, he cannot be trying to trap people into evil....”¹⁰²

James 1:18 *Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

This verse gives us an example of God’s unchanging goodness to his people.

⁹⁶ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (87). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁹⁷ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁹⁸ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁹⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹⁰⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (128). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁰¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (128). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁰² Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (87). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

“James looks at this birth in three stages: (1) God’s *choice of regeneration* (1:18a), (2) the *means* of that new birth (1:18b), and (3) the *intended goal* of that new birth (1:18c).”¹⁰³

First:

Of his own will βούλομαι = “to desire to have or experience something, with the implication of some reasoned planning or will to accomplish the goal—‘to desire, to want, to will.’”¹⁰⁴

“*who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*” (John 1:13, ESV)

he brought ἀποκυέω = “...to swell, be pregnant. To beget, bear To bring forth, as sin brings death.”¹⁰⁵

“*Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*” (James 1:15, ESV)

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter 1:3 (ESV)

Sin brings forth death (1:15), but God brings life (1:18)

Second:

by the word of truth = “All four of the other occurrences of the phrase in the NT refer to the gospel as the agent of salvation (2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15).”¹⁰⁶

James 1:18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

James 1:21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

“The first thought that comes to mind for a first-century Jewish reader would be Genesis 1, where God stanching the flow of the *tohu wa-bohu* and turned it all into a pleasing

¹⁰³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (129). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁰⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (287). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹⁰⁵ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹⁰⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (79). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

order through his word. God's creative word surrounds everything in James 1:18. The addition of "of truth" (*alētheias*) could well indicate that James is thinking of the gospel message, perhaps the gospel of the kingdom, for the early Christians were clearly convinced that Jesus unraveled the meaning of history and life. "Word" as gospel and "truth" is common enough in the New Testament to make one think that it is in James's mind."¹⁰⁷

Third:

firstfruits ἀπαρχή = "...to believers first converted in any particular place or country...."¹⁰⁸

Romans 8:23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Romans 11:16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Romans 16:5 Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:15 Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints—

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Revelation 14:4 It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,

"The language is remarkable: the first fruit offering was always a Jewish obligation to respect God's ownership of the *Land*, but here that language has perhaps become the act of God (not Israel) for the sake of the world (not the *Land*)."¹⁰⁹

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of

¹⁰⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (131–132). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁰⁸ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹⁰⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (131). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” (Romans 8:19–23, ESV)

III. THE EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS: OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD (1:19–2:26)

A. Hasty Speech and Anger Do Not Please God (1:19–20)

James 1:19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; James 1:20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Know this οἶδα = to see, to understand, to comprehend. “Know” is an imperative, that is, a command.

quick to hear, slow to speak

Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent. Proverbs 17:28 (ESV)

When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent. Proverbs 10:19 (ESV)

Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. Proverbs 13:3 (ESV)

slow to anger

“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.” (Matthew 5:22, ESV)

Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly. Proverbs 14:29 (ESV)

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention. Proverbs 15:18 (ESV)

Uncontrolled anger leads to uncontrolled speech.
Uncontrolled speech leads to uncontrolled anger.

Ps 37:8. Pr 14:17, 29. 15:18. 16:32. 17:14. 19:11, 19. 25:15, 28. Ec 7:8, 9. Mt 5:22. Ga 5:20, 21. Ep 4:26, 31. Col 3:8, 15. ¹¹⁰

Produce ἐργάζομαι = To work, labor.

¹¹⁰ Smith, J. H. (1992). *The new treasury of scripture knowledge: The most complete listing of cross references available anywhere- every verse, every theme, every important word* (1466). Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson.

“But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” (James 2:9, ESV)

righteousness δικαιοσύνη = “Justice, righteousness. Righteousness fulfills the claims of [right behavior], which, in the case of the believer, are God’s claims.... *Dikaíosúnē*, righteousness, is thus conformity to the claims of higher authority and stands in opposition to *anomía*, lawlessness.”¹¹¹

“and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.” (James 2:23, ESV)

“And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (James 3:18, ESV)

B. Obedience to the Word Is the Mark of Genuine Christianity (1:21–27)

James 1:21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant [abundant] wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Notice the put off, put on style of instruction.

put away ἀποτίθημι = “To renounce, lay off or down. To lay aside, put off in a figurative sense....”¹¹²

“...the imagery is applied metaphorically in the NT to the “stripping off” of the pre-Christian lifestyle from the believer....”¹¹³

1 Peter 2:1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Romans 13:12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Ephesians 4:22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

¹¹¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹¹² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹¹³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (86). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

Colossians 3:8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

Filthiness *ρύπαρία* = Filth, filthiness, figuratively in a moral sense....

For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in.... (James 2:2, ESV)

Rampant *περισσεία* = An abundance. A superfluity, an overflowing, something above the ordinary¹¹⁴

Like an army with many soldiers, sin attacks us persistently and in many guises. Knock down one sin, and another quickly arises to takes its place in the spiritual conflict in which we are engaged.¹¹⁵

Wickedness *κακία* = "... bad. Wickedness as an evil habit of the mind. ... Evil in a moral sense meaning wickedness of heart, life, and character..."¹¹⁶

Receive (accept) *δέχομαι* = "To accept an offer deliberately and readily. To take to oneself what is presented or brought by another, to receive."¹¹⁷ This is the main point in verses 21-27.

Meekness *πραΰτης* = "It is that attitude of spirit we accept God's dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist."¹¹⁸

"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom." (James 3:13, ESV)

Implanted *ἐμφυτός* = "...to implant, which is from *en*, in, and *phúō*, to germinate, to grow or spring up, produce. Inborn, implanted, engrafted from another source (James 1:21, the gospel being here represented under the figure of a seed or shoot implanted or engrafted, as elsewhere by seed sown [cf. Mark 4:14ff.])."¹¹⁹

"And when he had said this, he breathed (ἐμφυσάω) on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22, ESV)

¹¹⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.).

Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹¹⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (86). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹¹⁶ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.).

Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹¹⁷ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.).

Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹¹⁸ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.).

Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

cf (compare, comparison)

¹¹⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.).

Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Word λόγος = word or speech or content of what is said.

...which is able to save your souls

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit....” (Ephesians 1:13, ESV)

“...and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:2, ESV)

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

be γίνομαι = to possess certain characteristics, with the implication of their having been acquired—‘to be.’¹²⁰ This word “be” is the imperative, meaning it is an order.

What does it mean to receive (or accept) the word (v. 21)? To receive, accept, the word means to “do” it.

doers ποιητής = “...one who does—‘doer.’”¹²¹

“For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.” (Romans 2:13, ESV)

““Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21, ESV)

“But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”” (Luke 8:21, ESV)

“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” (John 13:17, ESV)

hearers ἀκροατής = one who hears—‘hearer.’”¹²²

“For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.” (Romans 2:13, ESV)

“And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain. And behold, you are to them like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an

¹²⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (149). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹²¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (512). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹²² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (282). New York: United Bible Societies.

instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it." (Ezekiel 33:31–32, ESV)

deceiving παραλογίζομαι = "To reason falsely or incorrectly. In the NT to deceive, to mislead...."¹²³

James 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. **James 1:24** For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

looks intently κατανοέω = "...to discover something through direct observation, with the implication of also thinking about it—"to notice, to discover."¹²⁴ "...from *katá*, an intens., and *noéō*, to think. To observe, notice, consider, contemplate...."¹²⁵

goes away ἀπέρχομαι = "...motion away from a reference point with emphasis upon the departure, but without implications as to any resulting state of separation or rupture—"to go away, to depart, to leave."¹²⁶

"When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." (Matthew 19:22, ESV)

What would that look like on a painter's canvas?

James 1:25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and PERSEVERES, being no hearer who forgets but a DOER who ACTS, he will be blessed in his DOING.

Looks παρακύπτω = "...from *pará*, to, beside, and *kúptō*, to bend, stoop. To stoop down near or by something, bend forward or near in order to look at something more closely. Metaphorically, meaning to look into, find out, know."¹²⁷

"But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb." (John 20:11, ESV)

Perfect τέλειος = "Finished, that which has reached its end, term, limit; hence, complete, full, wanting in nothing."¹²⁸

¹²³ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹²⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (281). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹²⁵ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹²⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (186). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹²⁷ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹²⁸ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;” (Psalm 19:7, ESV)

Law νόμος = “...the first five books of the OT called the Torah (often better rendered as ‘instruction’)—‘the Law.’”¹²⁹

James 1:25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

James 2:8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.

James 2:9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

James 2:11 For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

James 2:12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.

James 4:11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

For Jews, “law” meant torah, the rules and regulations that God had given his special people to govern their nation, their religion, and their day-to-day conduct.¹³⁰

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (Matthew 5:17, ESV)

liberty ἐλευθερία = “...the state of being free—‘to be free, freedom.’”¹³¹

“Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—” (Galatians 2:4, ESV)

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1, ESV)

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13, ESV)

¹²⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (394). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹³⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (94). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹³¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (487). New York: United Bible Societies.

*“But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”
(Luke 11:28, ESV)*

Perseveres παραμένω = “...from *pará* ..., with, and *ménō* ..., to remain. To stay, remain nearby with someone, abide (1 Cor. 16:6; James 1:25, to persevere); remain in the priest’s office (Heb. 7:23).”¹³²

“and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go.” (1 Corinthians 16:6, ESV)

“The one who looks and remains in the law of freedom, i.e. the OT ethic as explained and altered by Jesus, is clearly defined: he is one who does not simply hear and forget, but practices what he hears.”¹³³

he will be blessed in his DOING.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers,” (Psalm 1:1, ESV)

*“But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”
(Luke 11:28, ESV)*

What would doing this look like on the canvas of my life?

James 1:26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.

The First Mark Of True Religion: The Tongue.

“What is true religion and what is vain religion? Failure to control one’s speech, James asserts, means that one is “deceiving” oneself about having true religion (see v. 22); that kind of religion is *worthless*.”¹³⁴

Religious θρησκος = “Religious, devout... the diligent performer of divinely ascribed duties of outward service to God.”¹³⁵

Deceives ἀπατάω = to cause someone to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth—“to mislead, to deceive, deception.”¹³⁶

¹³² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹³³ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (100). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

¹³⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (96). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹³⁵ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹³⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (366). New York: United Bible Societies.

heart καρδία = "...the causative source of a person's psychological life in its various aspects, but with special emphasis upon thoughts—'heart, inner self, mind.'"¹³⁷

"But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"
(Matthew 9:4, ESV)

Worthless μάταιος = "...to no purpose, in vain. Vain, empty, fruitless, aimless."¹³⁸

The tongue becomes the test case for true religion.¹³⁹

James 1:27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

The Second Mark Of True Religion: The Helpless.

Pure καθάρος = "...pertaining to being ritually clean or pure—'clean, pure.'"¹⁴⁰

Undefiled ἀμίαντος = "...pertaining to not being ritually defiled, with implications of accompanying moral defilement...."¹⁴¹

"Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." (Isaiah 1:10–17, ESV)

to visit orphans and widows

¹³⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (320). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹³⁸ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹³⁹ Richardson, K. A. (1997). *Vol. 36: James*. The New American Commentary (99). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹⁴⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (535). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹⁴¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (536). New York: United Bible Societies.

Exodus 22:22: “You shall not abuse any widow or orphan.”

Deuteronomy 10:18: “who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing”.

To visit ἐπισκέπτομαι = “...to care for or look after, with the implication of continuous responsibility—‘to look after, to take care of, to see to.’”¹⁴² We get the word Bishop from one of the cognates of this word. A Bishop ‘cares for or looks after’ members of the church.

“I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” (Matthew 25:36, ESV)

“One test of pure religion, therefore, is the degree to which we extend aid to the “helpless” in our world — whether they be widows and orphans, immigrants trying to adjust to a new life, impoverished third-world dwellers, the handicapped, or the homeless.”¹⁴³

The Third Mark Of True Religion: The World.

Unstained ἄσπιλος = ‘spotless, without stain,’ pertaining to being without that which might mar one’s moral character—‘morally spotless, pure.’¹⁴⁴

“... They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you.” (2 Peter 2:13, ESV)

“Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.” (2 Peter 3:14, ESV)

“... keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (1 Timothy 6:14, ESV)

World κόσμος = “...the system of practices and standards associated with secular society (that is, without reference to any demands or requirements of God)—‘world system, world’s standards, world.’”¹⁴⁵

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6, ESV)

¹⁴² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (462). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹⁴³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (97). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁴⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (745). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹⁴⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (507). New York: United Bible Societies.

“It is the whole human scheme of things organized in terms of human wisdom to attain a human goal, without reference to God, his laws, his values or his ultimate judgment. The world is, in fact, anything and everything that is at odds with the Lordship of Jesus over our lives.”¹⁴⁶

“Once again, we are in touch with themes that resonate throughout James 1: wisdom, good works, and a gentle life of good works—and this in contrast to social disruption, violence, and arrogance.”¹⁴⁷

“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4, ESV)

¹⁴⁶ Motyer, J. A. (1985). *The message of James: The tests of faith*. The Bible Speaks Today (77). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

¹⁴⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (172). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

James 2

C. Discrimination against the Poor Violates Kingdom Law (2:1–13)

1. Discrimination in the Community Is Wrong (2:1–7)

James 2:1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

Partiality [favoritism] προσωποληψία = “...(an idiom, literally ‘to accept a face’): to make unjust distinctions between people by treating one person better than another—‘to show favoritism, to be partial, partiality.’”¹⁴⁸ To discriminate

“To “receive the face” means to make judgments about people based on external appearance.”¹⁴⁹

“*You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.*” (Leviticus 19:15, ESV)

“*For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.*” (Deuteronomy 10:17–18, ESV)

“*Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.*” (Ephesians 6:9, ESV)

“*but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.*” (Romans 2:10–11, ESV)

“The OT repeatedly stresses that God himself is impartial, looking at the heart rather than at the outside of a person, and God’s people are to imitate him in this respect.”¹⁵⁰

in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory [the glorious one]

glory δόξα = “... the quality of splendid, remarkable appearance—‘glory, splendor.’”¹⁵¹

“*None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*” (1 Corinthians 2:8, ESV)

¹⁴⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (767). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹⁴⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (102). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁵⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (102). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁵¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (695). New York: United Bible Societies.

“And Stephen said: “Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,” (Acts 7:2, ESV)

“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.” (Hebrews 1:3, ESV)

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14, ESV)

“And she said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”” (1 Samuel 4:22, ESV)

“...a common NT pattern, in which attributes and titles given to God in the OT are applied also to Jesus Christ. As the manifestation of God’s presence, he is “the glorious one.””¹⁵²

Jesus exists in glory and one day we will share his glory:

“who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” (Philippians 3:21, ESV)

“When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:4, ESV)

“To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 2:14, ESV)

“Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.” (1 Timothy 3:16, ESV)

“waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,” (Titus 2:13, ESV)

“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” (Hebrews 2:9, ESV)

James 2:2 For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, James 2:3 and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,”

¹⁵² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (101). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

assembly συναγωγή = Synagogue

“Jewish Christians who had recently embraced Jesus as their Messiah would naturally carry over into their new covenant worship the terms and conventions familiar to them from their past experience....”¹⁵³

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church [ἐκκλησία], and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”
(James 5:14, ESV)

a gold ring and fine clothing

““Fine” translates a Greek word that means “bright, shining” and is applied, for instance, to the clothing of heavenly beings (Acts 10:30; Rev. 15:6).”¹⁵⁴

shabby ρυπαρός [filthy] clothing

“Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21, ESV)

“The image James conjures up is of the typical homeless person in our day, dressed in mismatched, stained, and smelly rags.”¹⁵⁵

pay attention ἐπιβλέπω = “...to regard a person as deserving special respect—to pay special respect to, to look upon as being someone to be honored.”¹⁵⁶

“This word “often has the connotation of “look at with favor,” “have regard for” (as in both other occurrences of the word in the NT: Luke 1:48; 9:38).”¹⁵⁷

“The messianic community gazes upon the rich man but, whether star-struck, envious, manipulative, or hoping to gain something, it chooses to break down its essential commitment to showing mercy to the poor. Instead of treating a person according to his or her God-given eikonic status, the community chooses to honor the wealthy man for what his ostentatious attire represents.”¹⁵⁸

“You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,”

¹⁵³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (103). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁵⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (103). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁵⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (103). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁵⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (735). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹⁵⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (103). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁵⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (187). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“Christians in positions of some authority in the community ... are fawning over the rich and treating the poor with disdain and contempt.”¹⁵⁹

“Jesus’ words about the Pharisees and scribes are similar and just as comical and caricatured as those in James: “They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi” (Matt 23:6–7). Jesus subverted the social rank evident in some meals as unjust rigmarole in the Parable of the Banquet (Luke 14:7–14). The messianic community confessed this Jesus to be the Messiah, the glorious one, but they were not listening to his teachings or following his customs.”¹⁶⁰

James 2:4 have you not then made distinctions [διακρίνω] among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

distinctions διακρίνω = “...*diá* (1223), denoting separation, and *krínō* (2919), to distinguish, decide, judge.”¹⁶¹ Translated “doubt” in James 1:6. Discriminate would be a good translation.

“James’s point being that the discrimination exhibited in the community is another manifestation of a wavering, divided attitude toward God.”¹⁶²

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:6, ESV)

judges (κριτής) = “...the “thought” would refer ... to the sinful standards that the judges are using to make their decisions....”¹⁶³

with evil = πονηρός “...pertaining to possessing a serious fault and consequently being worthless—‘bad, worthless.’”¹⁶⁴

thoughts = διαλογισμός “...the content or result of one’s thorough reasoning—‘what is reasoned, reasoning.’”¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (104). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁶⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (187). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁶¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹⁶² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (104). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁶³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (105). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁶⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (623). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹⁶⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (351). New York: United Bible Societies.

James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

chosen ἐκλέγομαι = "...to make a choice of one or more possible alternatives—"to choose, to select, to prefer."¹⁶⁶ To select or elect. The Biblical doctrine of election is often based on the use of this word.

"...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love" (Ephesians 1:4, ESV)

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you." (John 15:16, ESV)

"But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are," (1 Corinthians 1:27–28, ESV)

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9, ESV)

are poor πτωχός in the world

"And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." (Luke 6:20, ESV)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3, ESV)

"But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God." (1 Corinthians 1:27–29, ESV)

rich in faith

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9, ESV)

"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." (Revelation 2:9, ESV)

¹⁶⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (360). New York: United Bible Societies.

“So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”
(Luke 12:21, ESV)

Smyrna--*“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”* (Revelation 2:9, ESV)

heirs of the kingdom

“And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20, ESV)

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32, ESV)

which he has promised to those who love him?

“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:12, ESV)

Main Points:

First, favoritism toward the rich is wrong because it contradicts God’s own attitude, as revealed in his gracious election to salvation.¹⁶⁷

Second, how broadly are we to take James’s claim that *God has chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith?*¹⁶⁸

Mary’s Magnificat—*“He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.”* (Luke 1:51–53, ESV)

“Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness.” (Proverbs 8:18, ESV)

James 2:6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court?

dishonored ἀτιμάζω

“What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.” (1 Corinthians 11:22, ESV)

¹⁶⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (105). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁶⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (107). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.” (Proverbs 14:21, ESV)

the poor man

“...the observation is designed to contrast with God’s election of the poor—God chooses the poor but the messianic community, by favoring the rich and disparaging the poor, “dishonor” the poor.”¹⁶⁹

God chooses the poor but the church chooses the rich.

Are not the rich the ones who oppress you

“Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.” (James 5:4, ESV)

“The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: “It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?” declares the Lord GOD of hosts.” (Isaiah 3:14–15, ESV)

“Hear this, you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end, saying, “When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances, that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and sell the chaff of the wheat?”” (Amos 8:4–6, ESV)

“The word James uses for the actions of the *plousioi* [rich] against the poor messianic community, “oppress” (*katadynasteuousin*), implies overpowering physically, economically, socially, and legally.”¹⁷⁰

“So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.” (Habakkuk 1:4, ESV)

and the ones who drag you into court

“And the men of his city, the elders and the leaders who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters that she had sent to them, they proclaimed a fast and set Naboth at the head of the people. And the two worthless men came in and sat opposite him. And the worthless men brought a charge against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, “Naboth

¹⁶⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (196). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁷⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (197–198). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

cursed God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones.” (1 Kings 21:11–13, ESV)

Those whom God “honors” the church “dishonors.”

James 2:7 Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

Blaspheme = “It may have been Jews criticizing Christian claims about Jesus. Or, more generally, it may have involved unbelievers making fun of Christian morality and worship practices (such as the Lord’s Supper).”¹⁷¹

the honorable name by which you were called?

“So, when James refers the “excellent name” to Jesus Christ (2:1), the glorious one, we gain a glimpse into the emerging high christology of the earliest messianic, Land-of-Israel, community. Jesus Christ is the name whereby they are named, giving the community its identity, and he is—to use the worship hymn Paul uses—given the name above all names (Phil 2:9–11)”¹⁷²

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6, ESV)

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9–11, ESV)

“The *plousioi* [rich] of 2:6b–7 are not in the messianic community.”¹⁷³

This verse suggests that the oppression was in part driven by religious intolerance of “the name”.

“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.” (1 Peter 4:14, ESV)

“To sum up: The *plousioi* [rich] oppressed the messianic community, dragged its poor into court, and in front of everyone blasphemed the name of Jesus Christ. The messianic community confessed this same Jesus as the Messiah, the glorious one, and had evidently transferred the sacredness of the name YHWH to the very name of Jesus.

¹⁷¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (109). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁷² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (201). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁷³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (197). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

But, for inexplicable reasons, these same poor confessors of Jesus were favoring the rich and showing prejudice against the poor.”¹⁷⁴

2. Discrimination Is Wrong Because It Violates the Kingdom Law of Love (2:8–13)

James 2:8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.

royal (βασιλικός *kingly*) law = They are the laws of the King, King Jesus.

“Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom (βασιλεία), which he has promised to those who love him?” (James 2:5, ESV)

“James sees Jesus’ reinterpretation of the law as a new law (cf. 2:8, royal law....)”¹⁷⁵

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” = “James’s suggestion that the love command stands at the heart of the NT ethical code goes back, of course, to Jesus’ teaching.”¹⁷⁶

“And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”” (Matthew 22:37–40, ESV)

“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19:18, ESV)

“For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”” (Galatians 5:14, ESV)

“For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”” (Romans 13:9, ESV)

“I suggest then that “royal law” refers ... to Jesus’ highlighting of Lev 19:18 as the preeminent command of all commands, alongside loving God....”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (202–203). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁷⁵ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (100). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

¹⁷⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (112). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁷⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (207). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

you are doing well = “...James sees living out the second half of the Jesus Creed is a noble, excellent, and proper rule of life for the messianic community. Such a way of life meets the high standards expected of the messianic community by James.”¹⁷⁸ See James 2:19.

“All this brings us back to the topic of this section—discrimination: “...he argues that love for the neighbor, the heart of “the royal law,” forbids the church from discriminating against any who might enter its doors.”¹⁷⁹

James 2:9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

“Love for the neighbor, extended by Jesus to all people, including those different from us (Luke 10:25–37; Matt. 5:43–47), requires that poor, shabbily dressed people be given as much respect and attention as the well-dressed and prominent. And extending James’s principle, the love command also requires that we enthusiastically welcome into our church meetings people from other races, and that we give as much deference to people with no status in the community as we do to famous politicians, actors, or athletes.”¹⁸⁰

you are committing sin = “James uses the word “sin” (*hamartia*) six times. Sin is the perverse desire and choice not to do what one knows is good....”¹⁸¹ See James 1:14–15.

and are convicted ἐλέγχω = “...to state that someone has done wrong, with the implication that there is adequate proof of such wrongdoing—to rebuke, to reproach, rebuke, reproach.”¹⁸²

by the law as transgressors.

“James means “by this specific prohibition in the Torah of Moses,” that is, Leviticus 19:15 and 18. What this specific text in the Law says is that James’s readers are to live by the law of loving others as themselves, and that entails not treating the poor with contempt. Because they are not living up to Torah in this way, the Torah proves that they have behaved inadequately. Thus, the Torah labels them as “transgressors,” those

¹⁷⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (209). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁷⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (112). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁸⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (113). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁸¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (209). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁸² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (435). New York: United Bible Societies.

who break or violate specific commands of God or cross over God's established boundaries."¹⁸³

"...it has the legal sense of "convict" (of wrongdoing; cf. also John 8:46; 16:8; 1 Cor. 14:24; Jude 15). It is the law that does the convicting, since its standards are violated when favoritism is shown."¹⁸⁴

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

"For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:18–19, ESV)

"I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law." (Galatians 5:3, ESV)

Accountable ἔνοχος = "...guilty of sin and consequently obliged to punishment on that account (1 Cor. 11:27; James 2:10)."¹⁸⁵

"...James here assumes that the messianic community is committed to the Torah, is Torah-observant, and is proud of its observance. ... they are unaware that their behavior breaks the Torah of Leviticus 19:18...."¹⁸⁶

James 2:11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

"If we view the law as a series of individual commandments, we could assume that disobedience of a particular commandment incurred guilt for that commandment only. But, in fact, the individual commandments are part and parcel of one indivisible whole, because they reflect the will of the one Lawgiver. To violate a commandment is to disobey God himself and render a person guilty before him."¹⁸⁷

"Do not murder."

¹⁸³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (210–211). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁸⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (113). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁸⁵ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

¹⁸⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (214). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁸⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (114–115). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

““You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.” (Matthew 5:21–22, ESV)

“...the community’s treatment of the poor amounts to what Jesus calls murder in the Sermon on the Mount...”¹⁸⁸

“For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:18–19, ESV)

“For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Romans 13:9, ESV)

James 2:12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.

“Both “speak” and “act” are in a Greek tense that stresses the continuing nature of these actions: “be constantly speaking,” “always be acting.””¹⁸⁹ “With these commands, James returns to the dominant theme in this section of the letter: the need for believers to validate the reality of their “religion” by “doing” the word (1:22).”¹⁹⁰

the law of liberty = “God’s gracious acceptance of us does not end our obligation to obey him; it sets it on a new footing. No longer is God’s law a threatening, confining burden. For the will of God now confronts us as a *law of liberty*—an obligation we discharge in the joyful knowledge that God has both “liberated” us from the penalty of sin and given us, in his Spirit, the power to obey his will.”¹⁹¹

“...the law of liberty is the law of loving your neighbor as yourself (2:8).”¹⁹²

James 2:13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

¹⁸⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (217). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁸⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (116). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁹⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (116). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁹¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (117). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁹² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (220). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Mercy ““Mercy” here refers to the behaviors of the messianic community with respect to the poor.”¹⁹³

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.”
(Zechariah 7:9–10, ESV)

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” (Matthew 5:7, ESV)

“Being “merciful,” as these texts suggest, is not merely a feeling of concern, but involves actively reaching out to show love to others. The discrimination that James’s readers are practicing is the opposite of such mercy; and if they continue on this path, they will find at the end of their lives a judgment “without mercy.”¹⁹⁴

Mercy triumphs over judgment. = “...the way in which the mercy we show toward others shows our desire to obey the law of the kingdom and, indirectly therefore, of a heart made right by the work of God’s grace.”¹⁹⁵

“... our merciful attitude and actions will count as evidence of the presence of Christ within us.”¹⁹⁶

“Thus, James gives the messianic community two options: to experience the merciless judgment of God (2:13a) or to experience victory in the judgment through acting mercifully toward those in need (2:13b).”¹⁹⁷

D. Saving Faith Reveals Itself in Works (2:14–26)

“This paragraph is the most theologically significant, as well as the most controversial, in the Letter of James.”¹⁹⁸ The context is found in the failure of the church to have good works in reference to the poor; it is about “the faith” of 2:1.

“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” (James 2:1, ESV)

¹⁹³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (223). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁹⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (118). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁹⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (118). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁹⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (118). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

¹⁹⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (222). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁹⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (118). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

good ὄφελος = "...to heap up. Increase, profit, meaning furtherance, advantage...."¹⁹⁹
Also gain or benefit.

"...the "good" or "benefit" in James's question is salvation or saving benefits for the messianic community."²⁰⁰

says λέγω = "...to speak or talk, with apparent focus upon the content of what is said...."²⁰¹ The saying here demonstrates that they have a "confessional" faith. The question is: does this faith go beyond simply confession or saying?

faith πίστις = "...to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance—"to believe in, to have confidence in, to have faith in, to trust, faith, trust."²⁰²

"...the emphasis in 2:14 is not on *what* one believes but on the claim to believe, that emphasis entails the absence of mercy, love, and compassion for the poor. In James's view, that kind of faith is not able to save that kind of person."²⁰³

works ἔργον = ...work, action, deeds, accomplishment. It is in the plural (ἔργα) in this sentence.

"...for James "works" means a life of loving God and loving others, and loving others means deeds of compassion toward those in need."²⁰⁴

"The plural form we find here occurs often in the NT to denote behavior with ethical and religious consequences."²⁰⁵

Can that faith save him? = it is tantamount to an assertion: "That kind of faith can't save anyone...."²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

²⁰⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (227). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁰¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (396). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁰² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (375). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁰³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (229). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁰⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (228). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁰⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (123). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁰⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (123). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

That ó = the or that "...a demonstrative pronoun meaning this, that, but in Attic and later usage it became mostly a prepositive article, the."²⁰⁷ The use of "that" makes it clear that James is not saying that "faith" cannot save, only that "that" kind of faith cannot save.

The King James Version mistranslates the verse "*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*"

"James's main point is that this "faith" is, in biblical terms, no faith at all."²⁰⁸

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James 1:22, ESV)

Save σωζω = salvation

"Salvation, then, is regenerative, morally transforming, and eternal—and the tragedy for James is that those who claim to have faith but do not have works will not be saved. Most Protestants do not believe this today."²⁰⁹

James 2:15 *If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,*

"...the fact that James again chooses an example of mistreatment of the poor in the Christian community makes clear that the illustration represents a pattern of behavior that is all too typical for James's readers."²¹⁰

a brother or sister = James is here describing the requirements of the believing community to care for the brother or sister—believers. It is certainly not wrong to care for the material needs of the lost, but to do so *after* the community of faith is cared for.

Also keep in mind that Proverbs makes clear that there are both deserving and undeserving poor in this world. Proverbs never suggests that the undeserving poor deserve our help. In fact, Proverbs mocks their lazy, evil lifestyle and offers them no help at all.

"A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man." (Proverbs 24:33–34, ESV)

"Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty." (Proverbs 28:19, ESV)

²⁰⁷ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

²⁰⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (123). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁰⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (229). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²¹⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (124). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.” (Proverbs 23:21, ESV)

This topic and the Book of Proverbs brings up the question as to what the Church should do for those in the community who come under the curses of the undeserving poor (vs the deserving poor) and appear to do nothing but prey on the church for their own material benefit while making no effort to address the issues of Proverbs as to why they are in their destitute condition?

James 2:16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

Go in peace = “It is not the form of the statement that is reprehensible, but its functioning as a religious cover for the failure to act.”²¹¹

be warmed and filled = “...confronted with a need among his own brothers and sisters, this “believer” does nothing but express his good wishes.”²¹²

what good is that?

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:31–46, ESV)

James 2:17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

²¹¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (125). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²¹² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (125). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“...the words of an uncaring believer who fails to act to help a person in need are as useless as the profession of faith of a believer who does not have deeds.”²¹³

“James, in other words, is arguing that the kind of faith he has just described is “not merely outwardly inoperative but inwardly dead.”²¹⁴

“Once again, then, we must underscore the point: James is not really contrasting faith and works, as if these were two alternative options in one’s approach to God. He is, rather, contrasting a faith that, because it is inherently defective, produces no works and a faith that, because it is genuine, does result in action.”²¹⁵

“...faith without works is useless (2:14), cannot save (2:14), is dead (2:17), and is ineffective (2:20).”²¹⁶

James 2:18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

“In contrast to this objector, who argues that a person can have genuine faith without works, James insists that the two are always found together.”²¹⁷

Show δείκνυμι = To show or “...to make known the character or significance of something by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means....”²¹⁸ Or to prove or demonstrate.

““Prove to me this (so-called) faith of yours apart from deeds.” It is obviously impossible, for the reality of faith can only be seen in life-style.”²¹⁹

James 2:19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” (Deuteronomy 6:4, ESV)

“Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’” (Mark 12:29, ESV)

²¹³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (126). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²¹⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (126). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²¹⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (126). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²¹⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (232). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²¹⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (129–130). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²¹⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (339). New York: United Bible Societies.

²¹⁹ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (124). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

“Observant Jews recited the *Shema* at daybreak, at the time of the afternoon sacrifice, and in the evening—and probably whenever they entered or left their homes.”²²⁰

demons δαιμόνιον = “Generally, a god, deity, spoken of the heathen gods (Acts 17:18); used with the Jewish meaning of a demon, an evil spirit, devil, subject to Satan (Matt. 9:34), implying him to be a fallen angel.”²²¹

believe πιστεύω = “...to believe something to be true and, hence, worthy of being trusted—to believe, to think to be true, to regard as trustworthy.”²²²

“The demons perfectly illustrate the poverty of verbal profession in and of itself. They are among the most “orthodox” of theologians, James suggests, agreeing wholeheartedly with the *Shema*....”²²³

“It is a good thing to possess an accurate theology, but it is unsatisfactory unless that good theology also possesses us.”²²⁴

shudder φρίσσω = “...to be so afraid as to shudder or tremble—to shudder with fear, to be extremely afraid.”²²⁵

“James might be implying, as demons, knowing something of the true God, yet lacking true faith, shudder in fear of judgment, so also ought people whose verbal profession is not followed up with actions.”²²⁶

James 2:20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

“James asserted that “faith, by itself, if is not accompanied by action, is dead.” He now takes up this point to provide support for it. This support takes the form of OT evidence for the positive role of works....”²²⁷

²²⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (240–241). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²²¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

²²² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (369). New York: United Bible Societies.

²²³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (131). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²²⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (130). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²²⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (316). New York: United Bible Societies.

²²⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (131). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²²⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (131). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

shown γινώσκω = “...to come to an understanding as the result of ability to experience and learn—to come to understand, to perceive, to comprehend.”²²⁸

you foolish [senseless] person “A stubborn, “hard-hearted” ignorance is the general idea. The “fool” of Proverbs may be something of a parallel....”²²⁹

“He thinks the interlocutor’s attempted combination of faith in Christ (2:1) and monotheism (2:19) with indifference toward the poor and needy is “senseless,” which of course it is.”²³⁰

works ἔργον = that which one normally does—‘work, task.’

useless ἀργός = not-working “...pertaining to being useless, in the sense of accomplishing nothing....”²³¹ “Not at work, idle, not employed...”²³²

“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:8, ESV)

What qualities?: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love. Verses 2 Peter 1:5-7

“Faith that does not “work,” James is saying, “does not work” — it does no “good” v. 14), is “dead” (vv. 17 and 26) and useless.”²³³

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

“For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.” (Romans 3:20, ESV)

This tension between James and Paul is a product of one’s misunderstanding of the word *justify*. The modern reader views this word through the writings of Paul. But Paul focused on only one aspect of this word to make an important theological point. However, James wrote 10 years before Paul wrote Romans and had another point to make. Like most words, there are several related ideas in this word. If we separate the ideas that James and Paul are making, we resolve the problem.

²²⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (381). New York: United Bible Societies.

²²⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (132). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²³⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (243). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²³¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (624). New York: United Bible Societies.

²³² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

²³³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (132). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

justified δικαιώω = "...to show to be righteous, declare righteous."²³⁴

1. LN 34.46 **put right with**, justify, vindicate, declare righteous, *i.e.*, cause one to be in a right relation (Ro 3:24);
2. LN 88.16 **show to be right**, demonstrate to something is morally just (Ro 3:4)..."²³⁵

"Justify, which can be taken to mean any of:

1. Cause to become (render) just/righteous
2. Show to be just/righteous (this seems to be the standard usage by Jesus and James)
3. Declare to be just/righteous (this is almost always how Paul uses the term, most notably in Romans, a lot!; but see also Luke 7:29 where men "justified God")"²³⁶

- 1) to render righteous or such he ought to be
- 2) to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous, such as he is and wishes himself to be considered
- 3) to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be"²³⁷

Notice two of the meanings: 1) to show to be righteous and 2) to declare to be righteous. The first of these uses was at first far more common than the second. James uses the first idea in his argument, to show and thereby to demonstrate or vindicate a person's righteousness; Paul uses the second idea in his writings, to declare a condition of righteousness to exist.

The idea with James, based on the first usage of justified, is that if one can't see faith or show his faith, then there is no faith. The idea with Paul, based on the second usage, is that one second after one is saved there is nothing to show, but that person is still positionally righteous in his union with Christ; the works will soon follow. Understanding the distinct use of these two uses of this one word is the key to harmonizing James and Paul.

"...a mainly demonstrative sense lies behind δικαιούv [justify]. Such an understanding stresses that works are the only means of demonstrating one's righteous standing...."²³⁸

This verse does not address Paul's use of the term, to declare righteous, but James' use of the term, to show by works to actually be righteous.

Notice how other NT writers use "justified" in the same way that James does: "shown to be righteous".

²³⁴ Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : Updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

i.e. id est, that is

²³⁵ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²³⁶ <http://mt633.redirectme.net/wiki/%CE%94%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9%CF%8C%CF%89>

²³⁷ <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=G1344>

²³⁸ Martin, R. P. (1998). *Vol. 48: James*. Word Biblical Commentary (91). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

*Matthew 11:19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified (**shown** or **demonstrated**) by her deeds."*

*Matthew 12:37 for by your words you will be (**shown** to be) justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

*Luke 7:29 (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just (**shown** to be righteous), having been baptized with the baptism of John,*

*Luke 7:35 Yet wisdom is justified (**shown** to be right) by all her children."*

*Luke 10:29 But he, desiring to justify himself (**show** himself to be righteous), said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

*Luke 16:15 And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves (**show** yourself righteous) before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*

Like these NT writers James also uses "shown to be righteous"

*James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified (**shown** to be righteous) by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?*

*James 2:24 You see that a person is justified (**shown** to be righteous) by works and not by faith alone.*

*James 2:25 And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified (**shown** to be righteous) by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?*

But "declare to be righteous" is also found in the NT

*Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified (**declared** by God to be righteous), rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

*Acts 13:39 and by him everyone who believes is freed (**declared** to be righteous) from everything from which you could not be freed (**declared** to be righteous) by the law of Moses.*

*Romans 3:20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified (**declared** righteous) in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*

*Romans 3:24 and are justified (**declared** righteous) by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

Romans 3:26 It was to **show** his righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier (**declare** to be righteous) of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:28 For we hold that one is justified (**declared** to be righteous) by faith apart from works of the law.

Romans 3:30 since God is one—who will justify (**declare** to be righteous) the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

Romans 4:2 For if Abraham was justified (**declared** to be righteous) by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Romans 4:5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies (**declares** to be righteous) the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified (**declared** to be righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified (**declared** to be righteous) by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Romans 6:7 For one who has died has been set free (**declared** to be righteous) from sin.

Romans 8:30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified (**declared** to be righteous), and those whom he justified (**declared** to be righteous) he also glorified.

Romans 8:33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies (**declares** to be righteous).

Galatians 2:16 yet we know that a person is not justified (**declared** to be righteous) by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified (**declared** to be righteous) by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified (**declared** to be righteous).

Galatians 2:17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified (**declared** to be righteous) in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

Galatians 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify (**declare** to be righteous) the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

Galatians 3:11 Now it is evident that no one is justified (**declared** to be righteous) before God by the law, for "The righteous (δίκαιος-those declared to be righteous) shall live by faith."

*Galatians 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified (**declared** to be righteous) by faith.*

*Galatians 5:4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified (**declared** to be righteous) by the law; you have fallen away from grace.*

*Titus 3:7 so that being justified (**declared** to be righteous) by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

These next verses show that both Paul and James could and did believe the same thing about the necessity of demonstrating one's faith by works.

*Romans 2:13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified (**shown** to be righteous).*

*Romans 3:4-5 "By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified (**shown** to be righteous) in your words, and prevail when you are judged." 5. But if our unrighteousness serves to **show** the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.)"*

*1 Corinthians 4:4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted (**shown** to be righteous). It is the Lord who judges me.*

*1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified (**declared** or **shown** to be righteous) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

*1 Timothy 3:16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated (**shown** to be righteous) by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.*

James point is summed up in this verse:

"But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." (James 2:18, ESV)

Does James believe in the sovereign work of God in salvation apart from works?

"Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1:18, ESV)

"Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21, ESV)

“Paul also appeals to the Abraham incident to make a point. First, Paul appeals to Gen. 15:6 to prove that Abraham’s *faith* was “credited” to him for righteousness (Gal. 3:6; Rom. 4:1–9). Second, Paul insists that Abraham, and people generally, are justified by faith and not by works (e.g., Rom. 3:28).”²³⁹ “Specifically, Paul uses “justify” (Gk. *dikaioō*) to denote God’s initial judicial verdict of “innocence” pronounced over the sinner who trusts Jesus Christ in faith.”²⁴⁰

When you understand that Paul is making the point that Abraham and all believers are declared righteous by faith and that James is insisting that Christians are shown to be righteous by works, then there is no conflict between them. Both would and do agree with each other on these points.

- 1) “...to be called “righteous” [justified] in the Bible means that one’s behavior and life conform to the Torah, the standard of God (Gen 38:26).”²⁴¹
- 2) “To be called “righteous” [justified] in Judaism means that one’s behavior and life conform to the Torah as interpreted by one’s authorities—e.g., the Teacher of Righteousness at Qumran or Hillel or Shammai.”²⁴²
- 3) “To be called “righteous” [justified] in the messianic community of James means that one’s behavior and life conform to the Torah as interpreted by Jesus (Luke 18:14) and the leaders of that messianic community, most especially James (1:26–27; 2:8–13, etc.).”²⁴³
- 4) “To be called “righteous” [justified] in the world of Paul means to be conformed to the standard of God by union with Christ (Gal 3:11–12; Rom 2:13; 3:23–26; 4:5).”²⁴⁴

James 2:22 You see that faith was active along with [was working together with] his works, and faith was completed [reached its intended goal] by his works;

active *συνεργέω* = “...to engage in an activity together with someone else—‘to work together with, to be active together with.’”²⁴⁵ “And what should they see? Abraham’s

²³⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (133). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁴⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (133–134). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁴¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (246). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁴² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (246). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁴³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (246). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁴⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (246). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁴⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (511). New York: United Bible Societies.

faith “co-worked with his works” in the sense that they intermingled with one another....”²⁴⁶

that faith was active along with [was working together with] his works = “Abraham’s faith, James now makes clear, is presupposed throughout the argument.”²⁴⁷ It was already there “working together with” or “intermingled with”.

“Abraham’s faith was not confined to a mental reorientation at the time of his “conversion” or to an occasional verbal profession but that it was an active force, constantly at work along with his deeds.”²⁴⁸ “It was a working faith, not a faith plus works.”²⁴⁹

completed τελειόω = “...to bring an activity to a successful finish—‘to complete, to finish, to end, to accomplish.’”²⁵⁰ To make perfect. “...the idea is something being brought to its full realization, its divinely-intended design and form.”²⁵¹

“No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.” (1 John 4:12, ESV)

“Clearly our love does not “complete” God’s love in the sense that the love of God is inadequate or faulty without our response. It is rather that God’s love comes to expression, reaches its intended goal, when we respond to his grace with love toward others. So also, Abraham’s faith, James suggests, reached its intended goal when the patriarch did what God was asking him to do.”²⁵²

by his works = “Abraham’s works, especially his offering of Isaac, reveal the character of his faith...”²⁵³ His works revealed something that was already there--faith

James 2:23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

“And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6, ESV)

²⁴⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (251–252). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁴⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (136). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁴⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (136). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁴⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (252). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁵⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (657). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁵¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (252). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁵² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (137). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁵³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (139). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

This event in Genesis 15 occurred more than 30 years before the incident of Isaac in Genesis 22.

fulfilled πληρώω = "...to provide for by supplying a complete amount—to provide for completely, to supply fully."²⁵⁴ To bring to completion.

"What he is suggesting is that Abraham's faith, in its relationship to righteousness, found its ultimate significance and meaning in Abraham's life of obedience."²⁵⁵

counted λογίζομαι = "...to keep records of commercial accounts, involving both debits and credits—to put into one's account, to charge one's account, to regard as an account."²⁵⁶

righteousness δικαιοσύνη (δικαιόω) = "...the act of doing what God requires—'righteousness, doing what God requires, doing what is right.'²⁵⁷

"James probably assumes a forensic meaning for the term, indicating the status of "rightness" that Abraham attained with God."²⁵⁸ This sounds very much like Paul.

he was called a friend of God = "...the words are nowhere found in the OT. James probably derives the title "friend of God" for Abraham from Jewish tradition, where it was fairly widespread...."²⁵⁹

James 2:24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

justified δικαιόω = "...to show to be righteous, declare righteous."²⁶⁰ This word brings us back to verse 21. The issue in this word is whether it means "to show" or "to declare." James uses it "to show."

"...resolution of the tension can come only when we recognize that James and Paul use "justify" to refer to different things. Paul refers to the initial declaration of a sinner's

²⁵⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (461). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁵⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (138). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁵⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (582). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁵⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (743). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁵⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (139). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁵⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (139). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁶⁰ Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : Updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

innocence before God; James to the ultimate verdict of innocence pronounced over a person at the last judgment.”²⁶¹

“This verse is the center of James’s discussion of faith, works, and justification (vv. 21–25).”²⁶²

“If this verse represents the heart of James’s teaching about justification, it is also the lightning rod in the theological controversy between James and Paul. The tension between Paul and James is evident when we set beside each other key statements about justification from each author.”²⁶³ But, understanding the way James and Paul use justified *δικαίω* resolves the tension.

Jas. 2:24:	A person	is (shown) justified	by works	and not by faith <u>alone</u>
Rom. 3:28:	A person	is (declared) justified	by faith	and not by works <u>of the law</u>

faith alone = James is not taking exception to faith, he is taking exception to “faith alone” that is, to a faith that is alone, one with no works, works that show that a real faith is present. “Once we understand “faith alone,” then, as a neat summary of the bogus faith that James is criticizing, we can find no reason to expect that Paul would have any quarrel with the claim that “faith alone” does not justify.”²⁶⁴ This is especially true in the light of the two ways justified *δικαίω* is used in the Bible.

We should take this opportunity to note the relationship of “alone” and “of the law.” Paul and James are talking about two entirely different kinds of works. James is addressing works of charity that one does in loving his neighbor as the whole book James illustrates. Paul is addressing ritual obedience to the cultic system i.e. circumcision, sacrifice and ceremonial observances.

The addition of “alone” shows clearly that James refers to the bogus faith that he has been attacking throughout this paragraph: the faith that a person “claims” to have (v. 14); a faith that is, in fact, “dead” (vv. 17 and 26) and “useless” (v. 20).²⁶⁵

“This faith is by no means what Paul means by faith. He teaches that faith is a dynamic, powerful force, through which the believer is intimately united with Christ, his Lord. And

²⁶¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (141). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁶² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (139). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁶³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (140). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁶⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (141). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁶⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (141). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

since faith is in a *Lord*, the need for obedience to follow from faith is part of the meaning of the word for Paul.”²⁶⁶

In fact, Paul can sound very much like James when it comes to good works.

“...through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,” (Romans 1:5, ESV)

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:9–21, ESV)

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.” (Galatians 5:6, ESV)

“each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.” (1 Corinthians 3:13, ESV)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” (2 Corinthians 5:10, ESV)

Both Paul and James demand good works as true evidence of a true faith.

And we should also note that James can sound very much like Paul when it comes to salvation.

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James 1:18, ESV)

“Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen?” (James 2:5, ESV)

“*Of his own will;*” “*has not God chosen*”—there is no “works salvation” here!

²⁶⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (141). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“If a sinner can get into relationship with God only by faith (Paul), the ultimate validation of that relationship takes into account the works that true faith must inevitably produce (James).”²⁶⁷

“Justification by works, then, is not by “works of the law” so much as it is by “works of mercy” as the way to interpret genuine Torah observance.”²⁶⁸

“...for James, faith is distinguishable from works. Faith is not a work. Rather saving faith works or moves into acts of mercy.”²⁶⁹

James 2:25 And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

Rahab = “...alongside the famous and celebrated ancestor of the Jewish people, a man, “the friend of God,” he places an obscure Gentile woman of low moral character. Thus he implies that anyone is capable of acting on his or her faith — whether a patriarch or a prostitute.”²⁷⁰

“I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father’s house, and give me a sure sign” (Joshua 2:9–12, ESV)

“By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.” (Hebrews 11:31, ESV)

justified δικαιώω = “...to show to be righteous, declare righteous.”²⁷¹ Rahab the prostitute was [shown to be righteous] by works....

James 2:26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

²⁶⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (141). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁶⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (251). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁶⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (254). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁷⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (143). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁷¹ Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : Updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

“James responds with three points: faith can only be shown to be saving by works (2:18b), creedal faith is not enough because even the demons have that (2:19), and the examples of the unquestioned faith of Abraham (2:21–24) and Rahab (2:25) prove that they had the kind of faith that worked.”²⁷²

“James condemns any form of Christianity that drifts into a sterile, actionless “orthodoxy.” Faith, not what we do, is fundamental in establishing a relationship with God. But faith, James insists, must be given content. Genuine faith, he insists, always and inevitably produces evidence of its existence in a life of righteous living. *Biblical* faith cannot exist apart from acts of obedience to God.”²⁷³

“...faith is confessional and works behavioral, but for James a saving faith is one in which the confession is manifest in works of mercy toward those in need. Faith alone, by which he means a minimal creedal faith, cannot save. It is useless, ineffective, and dead.”²⁷⁴

²⁷² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (258). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁷³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (38). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁷⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (259). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

James 3

IV. THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION OF SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS: PURE SPEECH AND PEACE, PART 1 (3:1–4:3)

James has introduced the topic of speech in earlier discussions.

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19–20, ESV)

“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.” (James 1:26, ESV)

He now unpacks this topic in greater detail.

James 3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

teachers διδάσκαλος =

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,” (Ephesians 4:11, ESV)

“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.” (1 Timothy 5:17, ESV)

“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,” (2 Timothy 2:24, ESV)

“preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:2, ESV)

“Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,” (1 Timothy 3:2, ESV)

Below are two interesting quotes from the Didache, also called **the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles**, a treatise of the 1st or early 2nd century AD, on Christian morality and practices.

“Therefore appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are humble and not avaricious and true and approved, for they too carry out for you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. (2) You must not, therefore, despise them, for they are your honored men, along with the prophets and teachers.”²⁷⁵

²⁷⁵ Holmes, M. W. (1999). *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek texts and English translations* (Updated ed.) (267). *Didache* 15:1–2: Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” (James 5:14, ESV)

“But every genuine prophet who wishes to settle among you “is worthy of his food.” (2) Likewise, every genuine teacher is, like “the worker, worthy of his food.”²⁷⁶

This larger section is on speech. James starts it by warning those that would be teachers that they have special obligations when it comes to speech. Not only must those in ministry show special care in their doctrine and thereby speak accurately, they must also speak with grace and kindness.

will be judged with greater strictness

“Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.” (Luke 12:48, ESV)

“His concern is an abuse of power, but the abuse—so unlike many warnings in the rest of the New Testament—is not false teaching but bad manners leading to a fractured and fractious community.”²⁷⁷

James 3:2 For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

Stumble πρᾶίω = “...to fail to keep the law (of God)—‘to stumble, to err, to sin.’”²⁷⁸

“For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.” (James 2:10, ESV)

“Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.” (2 Peter 1:10, ESV)

says λόγος = word [teaching or speaking]

“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:36–37, ESV)

“The probable logic of the argument is: Teachers are more susceptible to judgment than others *because* they regularly engage in that activity which is hardest to keep from sin — one’s speech.”²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ Holmes, M. W. (1999). *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek texts and English translations* (Updated ed.) (267). *Didache* 13:1–2 Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

²⁷⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (271). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁷⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (773). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁷⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (150). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“A fool’s lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating. A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul.” (Proverbs 18:6–7, ESV)

he is a perfect man

“This person is a fully developed follower of Jesus’ own teachings of the Torah as the Torah of loving God and loving others. The perfect teacher is one whose love shapes how he or she teaches and speaks of others.”²⁸⁰

“James knows control of the tongue marks holiness and love.”²⁸¹

“The tongue is so much more than what we actually say out loud. In fact actual speech is probably only a small percentage of the use of the tongue. We cannot think without formulating thoughts in words; we cannot plan without describing to ourselves step by step what we intend to do; we cannot imagine without painting a word-picture before our inward eyes; we cannot write a letter or a book without ‘talking it through’ our minds on to the paper; we cannot resent without fuelling the fires of resentment in words addressed to ourselves; we cannot feel sorry for ourselves without listening to the self-pitying voice which tells us how hard done by we are. But if our tongue were so well under control that it refused to formulate the words of self-pity, the images of lustfulness, the thoughts of anger and resentment, then these things are cut down before they have a chance to live: the master-switch has deprived them of any power to ‘switch on’ that side of our lives. It is in this way that *if any one makes no mistakes in what he says he is a perfect man*. The control of the tongue is more than an evidence of spiritual maturity; it is the means to it.”²⁸²

able also to bridle his whole body

“The point is that the teacher who controls the tongue controls everything.”²⁸³

James 3:3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.

“James compares the tongue to the bit that controls the horse (v. 3), the rudder that steers the ship (v. 4), and the spark that causes a forest fire (v. 5).”²⁸⁴

“...as the bit determines the direction of the horse, so the tongue can determine the destiny of the individual. Believers who exercise careful control of the tongue are able

²⁸⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (275). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁸¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (290). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁸² Motyer, J. A. (1985). *The message of James: The tests of faith*. The Bible Speaks Today (121). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

²⁸³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (275). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁸⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (152). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

also to direct their whole life in its proper, divinely charted course: they are “perfect” (v. 2).²⁸⁵

“Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.” (Psalm 32:9, ESV)

James 3:4 Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

“James’s second illustration makes exactly the same point as the first: very small things can direct very large things.”²⁸⁶

James 3:5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

“May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts, those who say, “With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?” (Psalm 12:3–4, ESV)

“The focus, once again, is small versus large, and his intent is to press home to the teachers that their tongue is a small instrument with potentially devastating effects.”²⁸⁷

“A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.” (Proverbs 16:27, ESV)

James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

A world κόσμος

“...we find a uniform meaning of “world” in James: as in Paul, it refers to this world’s system, which is opposed to God and to God’s kingdom work in this world.”²⁸⁸

“A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.” (Proverbs 16:27–28, ESV)

staining σπιλώω = a spot, stain. To defile, spot, stain

²⁸⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (153). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁸⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (153). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁸⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (279). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁸⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (283). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.” (Jude 23, ESV)

“But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.” (Matthew 15:18, ESV)

course τροχός = “A runner, something made round for rolling or running, hence, generally a wheel (Sept.: 1Kgs. 7:32), as a potter’s wheel for molding. In the NT figuratively a course as run by a wheel, or perhaps a circular course, circuit (James 3:6, “course of life” [a.t.]).”²⁸⁹

life γένεσις = origin, source, birth, life, nature

“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.” (James 1:23, ESV)

“...literally, “the wheel of nature” or generation or birth; by which some understand the whole circle of human affairs; others, the course of man’s life; and others, the successive generations of men....”²⁹⁰

“What should be observed here is the almost apocalyptic nature of his rhetoric: the teachers are about to undo the very course of God’s design for nature, namely redemption.”²⁹¹

and set on fire by hell [γένεσσα].

“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.” (Matthew 5:22, ESV)

“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.” (Matthew 5:29, ESV)

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28, ESV)

“and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’” (Luke 16:23–24, ESV)

²⁸⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

²⁹⁰ Smith, J. H. (1992). *The new treasury of scripture knowledge: The most complete listing of cross references available anywhere- every verse, every theme, every important word* (1468). Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson.

²⁹¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (285). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“The power of Satan himself, the chief denizen of hell, gives to the tongue its great destructive potential.”²⁹²

“The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin.” (Proverbs 10:8, ESV)

“Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” (Proverbs 12:19, ESV)

“The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever utters slander is a fool.” (Proverbs 10:18, ESV)

“Hell inspires the abusive tongue, and James personifies hell as something “on the march” because he wants to drive home to the teachers that they will be held accountable to God for what they say. The punishment, then, fits the crime: if it sets things on fire, it, too, will be set on fire....”²⁹³

James 3:7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,

“Although the words are not exactly the same, this fourfold division of the animal kingdom clearly reflects the Genesis creation account....”²⁹⁴

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26, ESV)

James 3:8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” (Proverbs 12:18, ESV)

“Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.” (Proverbs 13:3, ESV)

“A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.” (Proverbs 15:4, ESV)

restless ἀκατάστατος = unstable, disorderly “...pertaining to being unable to be controlled by something or someone—‘not controlled by, not subject to, uncontrolled.’”²⁹⁵

²⁹² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (160). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁹³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (286). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

²⁹⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (160). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:8, ESV)

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.” (James 3:16, ESV)

full of deadly poison.

““Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.”” (Romans 3:13, ESV)

“They make their tongue sharp as a serpent’s, and under their lips is the venom of asps. Selah” (Psalm 140:3, ESV)

James 3:9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

“James could choose no stronger contrast to illustrate the duality of the tongue than its use in “praising” God and “cursing” human beings.”²⁹⁶

Bless εὐλογέω = “...to speak of something in favorable terms—‘to praise, to speak well of.’”²⁹⁷

“bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” (Luke 6:28, ESV)

Curse καταράομαι = “...to cause injury or harm by means of a statement regarded as having some supernatural power, often because a deity or supernatural force has been evoked—‘to curse, curse.’”²⁹⁸

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.” (Romans 12:14, ESV)

made in the likeness of God =

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”” (Genesis 1:26, ESV)

“...what James has in mind is human *God-likeness*, and hence all humans are to be treated with utter dignity and respect. The use then of this expression for humans, especially those in the messianic community, sheds light on what James means by the word “curse.” Does it not suggest that the God-likeness of some humans was being

²⁹⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (475). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁹⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (163). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

²⁹⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (428). New York: United Bible Societies.

²⁹⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (441). New York: United Bible Societies.

called into question by the language the teachers in the messianic community were using?”²⁹⁹

James 3:10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

same mouth = “...the incongruity is that words that bless and words that curse come from the same source.”³⁰⁰

blessing εὐλογία = “...to ask God to bestow divine favor on, with the implication that the verbal act itself constitutes a significant benefit—‘to bless, blessing.’”³⁰¹

“*“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”* (Matthew 5:10–12, ESV)

cursing κατάρα = “...to cause injury or harm by means of a statement regarded as having some supernatural power, often because a deity or supernatural force has been evoked—‘to curse, curse.’”³⁰²

“*Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”* (Matthew 15:17–20, ESV)

“*Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.”* (1 Peter 3:9, ESV)

“*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—”* (Galatians 3:13, ESV)

“Christians who have been transformed by the Spirit of God should manifest the wholeness and purity of the heart in consistency and purity of speech.”³⁰³

²⁹⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (294). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁰⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (294). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁰¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (441). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁰² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (441). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁰³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (164). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

James 3:11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?

“By comparing the tongue to a spring that produces bitter water, James reinforces his warning that the tongue is, indeed, “full of deadly poison” (v. 8).”³⁰⁴

James 3:12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

“You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?” (Matthew 7:16, ESV)

“James’s point is obvious: bad things don’t produce good things. And so a person who is not right with God and walking daily in his presence cannot consistently speak pure and helpful words. One who is double and inconsistent with regard to the things of God in his heart (*dipsychos*, 1:8 and 4:8) will be double and inconsistent in his speech.”³⁰⁵

B. True Wisdom Brings Peace (3:13–4:3)

James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

Who is wise and understanding among you?

It is the leaders of the church that James is addressing—the teachers, 3:1 and it is especially they that he wants to be wise.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” (James 1:5, ESV)

“James’s description will not permit the teacher to think his or her mastery of theology or exegesis is sufficient to pass muster. What passes muster for James is behavior shaped by humble wisdom.”³⁰⁶

good conduct = ““Good conduct,” James insists, is the basis on which one can demonstrate wisdom.”³⁰⁷ Fools act like fools, the wise act like the wise.

“Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:12, ESV)

³⁰⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (165). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁰⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (166). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁰⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (299). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁰⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (169). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“...it is our acts of obedience to God, performed consistently day after day, that make up the “good conduct” of the wise person.”³⁰⁸

Show δείκνυμι = To show or “to make known the character or significance of something by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means....”³⁰⁹ Or to prove or demonstrate.

“But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” (James 2:18, ESV)

show his works ἔργον

“Show” is a key word here; like faith, so also wisdom can be and must be shown by good works.

James continues to make it clear, good works show the reality of one’s faith. But notice that James no longer uses the word “justify” in his argument. This reflects his use of justify to mean “to show to be righteous” not “to declare righteous.” He never was using the word in this second sense and doesn’t need to use that word to focus on good works. The good works argument stands on its own merit.

meekness πραΰτης = “...gentleness of attitude and behavior, in contrast with harshness in one’s dealings with others—‘gentleness, meekness, mildness.’”³¹⁰

“...good works are to be done in a spirit of humility (meekness) — a humility (meekness) that itself is the product, or result, of wisdom....”³¹¹

of wisdom.

“Wisdom, then, for James has to do with both a grasp of God’s will and a life that conforms to that will....”³¹²

As we know, James got his material from the teachings of Jesus. Take note of how Jesus weaves all these ideas together—

“The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom [σοφία] is justified [δικαιώω] by her deeds [ἔργον].” (Matthew 11:19, ESV)

³⁰⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (170). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁰⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (339). New York: United Bible Societies.

³¹⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (748). New York: United Bible Societies.

³¹¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (170). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³¹² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (302). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

James 3:14 *But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.*

Bitter πικρός = “In the Sept., it was used ... to indicate the fruits of the wild vine or bitter gourd which are so excessively bitter and acrid as to be a kind of poison In the NT, used of taste, meaning bitter, acrid, brackish (James 3:11). Metaphorically it means bitter, cruel, malignant (James 3:14, indicating bitter, harsh, cruel feelings).”³¹³

“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “*root of bitterness*” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;” (Hebrews 12:15, ESV)

“Let all *bitterness* and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.” (Ephesians 4:31, ESV)

Jealousy ζήλος = zeal; “...a particularly strong feeling of resentment and jealousy against someone—‘envy, jealousy, resentment.’”³¹⁴

“That James describes “zeal” as “bitter” suggests that the teachers—at least as he portrays them—were ferocious, emotively expressive, harsh, and angry.”³¹⁵

selfish ambition ἐριθεία = “Contention, strife, rivalry. It represents a motive of self-interest, mercenary interest....”³¹⁶

bitter jealousy and selfish ambition are contrary to **meekness** (v13), the one necessary ingredient to wisdom.

in your hearts = “These two vices are rooted so deeply that James places them “in your heart.””³¹⁷

“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy (**ζήλος**), fits of anger, rivalries (**ἐριθεία ambition**), dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19–21, ESV)

boast κατακαυχάομαι = “...to boast about something by downgrading something else—‘to boast against, to degrade.’”³¹⁸

³¹³ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³¹⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (759). New York: United Bible Societies.

³¹⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (304). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³¹⁶ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³¹⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (304). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me....” (Jeremiah 9:23–24, ESV)

“To boast about wisdom when one is displaying jealousy and selfish ambition is, in effect, to give the lie to the truth about what wisdom is and does. For wisdom must always be accompanied by humility....”³¹⁹

to the truth

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James 1:18, ESV)

“My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back,” (James 5:19, ESV)

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6, ESV)

“For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,” (Hebrews 10:26, ESV)

“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,” (1 Peter 1:22, ESV)

James 3:15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

Above ἄνωθεν

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” (James 1:17, ESV)

“Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3, ESV)

“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” (John 3:7, ESV)

earthly ἐπίγειος = “...pertaining to human, earthly activity (primarily in contrast with divine activity)—‘human, of people.’”³²⁰

³¹⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (430). New York: United Bible Societies.

³¹⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (172). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³²⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (104). New York: United Bible Societies.

“If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (John 3:12, ESV)

“Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.” (Philippians 3:19, ESV)

unspiritual ψυχικός = “...soul, the part of the immaterial life held in common with the animals, as contrasted with spirit...”³²¹

“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14, ESV)

“It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.” (Jude 19, ESV)

demonic δαιμονιώδης = pertaining to a demon—‘demonic, devilish.’

“You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” (James 2:19, ESV)

“In sum, then, this false wisdom, which does not lead to good works and humility (v. 13), is characterized by “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” In each of these ways, it is the direct antithesis of “the wisdom that comes from above” — heavenly in nature, spiritual in essence, and divine in origin.”³²²

James 3:16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

Jealousy ζήλος = “...a particularly strong feeling of resentment and jealousy against someone—‘envy, jealousy, resentment.’”³²³

selfish ambition ἐριθεία = “Contention, strife, rivalry. It represents a motive of self-interest, mercenary interest....”³²⁴

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” (Philippians 2:3, ESV)

“...the two character traits displayed in the lives of those who are (wrongly) claiming to be “wise” (v. 14): *envy and selfish ambition.*”³²⁵

³²¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³²² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (173). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³²³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (759). New York: United Bible Societies.

³²⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

disorder ἀκαταστασία = "...to rise up in open defiance of authority, with the presumed intention to overthrow it or to act in complete opposition to its demands—to rebel against, to revolt, to engage in insurrection, rebellion."³²⁶

"For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder." (2 Corinthians 12:20, ESV)

"The Greek word translated "disorder" (*akatastasia*) is another form of a word that James has used in 1:8 and 3:8 to describe the "double-minded" person and the "double-speaking" tongue."³²⁷ ἀκατάστατος 1:8 unstable, 3:8 restless

"While what James says here applies to any Christian who prides himself or herself on being "wise and understanding," he may especially have in mind the leaders of the community.³² For envy and selfish ambition among the leaders have tremendous potential to damage the unity and order of the church as a whole. When those who are being looked to for direction and wise counsel act on the basis of a personal agenda or in a spirit of "one-upmanship" toward one another, great damage to the church ensues."³²⁸

vile φαῦλος = "...pertaining to being evil in the sense of moral baseness—'mean, bad, evil.'"³²⁹

"and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us." (Titus 2:8, ESV)

"and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:29, ESV)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." (2 Corinthians 5:10, ESV)

"Zeal and ambition break loose moral anchors, on the part of teachers, their followers, and their opponents, so that **control** and **dominance** become the guiding lights."³³⁰

³²⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (174). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³²⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (495). New York: United Bible Societies.

³²⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (174). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³² Martin, 132.

³²⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (174). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³²⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (754). New York: United Bible Societies.

James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

“James now offers a positive sketch of wisdom or its manifestations. This is the kind of wisdom the teachers need to possess or be characterized by.”³³¹

Similar list are found in Luke 6:20-26, Galatians 5:19-23 and Romans 14:17.

wisdom from above

“Wisdom transcends cognitive mastery of facts and information. It is ***skill in living*** according to God’s moral order, and the wise learn that skill through special scriptural revelation, personal experience of God, natural revelation, the traditions of their ancestors, and observation of both humans and nature. ... The wise person lives in God’s world in God’s way with God’s people and so enjoys the blessing of the only wise God.”³³²

“James now offers a positive sketch of wisdom or its manifestations. This is the kind of wisdom the teachers need to possess or be characterized by.”³³³

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. James 3:13

This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. James 3:15

“...true wisdom is identified by the quality of life that it produces.”³³⁴

first πρῶτος = “...pertaining to exceeding everything else in importance—‘most important.’”³³⁵

pure, ἄγνός = “...pertaining to being without moral defect or blemish and hence pure—‘pure, without defect.’”³³⁶ It has no defects. Its root is the word ἅγιος or holy.

³³⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (309). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³³¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (309). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³³² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (310). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³³³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (309). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³³⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (174). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³³⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (625). New York: United Bible Societies.

“The first, and preeminent, attribute that wisdom produces is purity.”³³⁷

“*“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”*” (Mark 1:24, ESV)

“*“Blessed are the pure (καθαρός) in heart, for they shall see God.”*” (Matthew 5:8, ESV)

“*And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”*” (1 John 3:3, ESV)

“*The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but gracious words are pure.”*” (Proverbs 15:26, ESV)

“The seven qualities that follow in the list are specific dimensions of this overall purity.”³³⁸

then peaceable, εἰρηνικός = “...pertaining to freedom from anxiety and inner turmoil—‘peaceful, free from worry.’”³³⁹ Also, “peace loving”.

“*“Blessed are the peacemakers, (εἰρηνοποιός) for they shall be called sons of God.”*” (Matthew 5:9, ESV)

“*For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”*” (Hebrews 12:11, ESV)

“*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”*” (Proverbs 3:17, ESV)

“The “peaceable” person, then, is not simply the tranquil person at rest with himself or herself, but the person who, unlike the zealous and ambitious teachers who create chaos and every kind of wickedness and who foment wars within the community, uses the tongue and gifts and behaviors to foster peace with God, self, others, and the world.”³⁴⁰

³³⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (745). New York: United Bible Societies.

³³⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (175). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³³⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (175). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³³⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (314). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁴⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (313). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

gentle, ἐπιεικῆς = "...pertaining to being gracious and forbearing—'gentle, gracious, forbearing.'"³⁴¹ "...the sense of the word in the New Testament moves through these ideas: goodness, courtesy, mildness, benevolence, generosity, and each in view of the need to render judgment with equity."³⁴²

"to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people." (Titus 3:2, ESV)

"I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!—" (2 Corinthians 10:1, ESV)

"Let your reasonableness [gentleness] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;" (Philippians 4:5, ESV)

open to reason, εύπειθής = "...pertaining to being easily persuaded, with the implication of being open to reason or willing to listen—'one who is easily persuaded, open to reason.'"³⁴³ "Easily persuaded, compliant...."³⁴⁴ "...'compliant,' 'persuadable,' 'conciliatory,' or even 'obedient' and 'willingly conforming.'"³⁴⁵

"What is meant is not a weak, credulous gullibility, but a willing deference to others when unalterable theological or moral principles are not involved."³⁴⁶

"James still has the teachers in mind: they must be teachable and persuadable and capable of letting evidence and arguments carry the day; they must know when to hold firm and when to adjust. One gains the impression from 3:1–4:12 that teachers in the messianic community were hotheads who generated more heat than light, more partisanship than harmony, more debate than conversation."³⁴⁷

full μεστός = "...a degree of completeness, with the implication of abundance—'full of, completely, very, totally.'"³⁴⁸

³⁴¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (748). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁴² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (313). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁴³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (422). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁴⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³⁴⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (314). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁴⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (176). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁴⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (314). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁴⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (690). New York: United Bible Societies.

of mercy ἔλεος = “...to show kindness or concern for someone in serious need—to show mercy, to be merciful toward, to have mercy on, mercy.”³⁴⁹ Ant.: hardness; callousness.

“*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*” (Matthew 5:7, ESV)

“*Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.*” (Luke 6:36, ESV)

“*He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”*” (Luke 10:37, ESV)

and good ἀγαθός = “...positive moral qualities of the most general nature—‘good, goodness, good act.’”³⁵⁰ Ant.: malevolent; not a lover or a friend of good.

fruits, καρπός = “...the natural result of what has been done—‘deed, activity, result of deeds.’”³⁵¹ Ant.: despoliation; destruction; barren, sterile.

“*so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*” (Colossians 1:10, ESV)

It is not surprising, then, that James couples *mercy* so closely with *good fruit* — acts of mercy are those “fruits” that genuine wisdom, like genuine faith, must produce.³⁵²

“Both “mercy” and “good fruits” are shaped by the Jesus Creed’s “love your neighbor as yourself” (2:8–13).”³⁵³

impartial ἀδιάκριτος = “...pertaining to not being prejudiced—‘impartial, free from prejudice.’”³⁵⁴ The root of this word is “to judge”, nonjudgmental, nonpartisan.

“*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting [make distinctions, διακρίνω], for the one who doubts [διακρίνω] is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.*” (James 1:6, ESV)

“*have you not then made distinctions [διακρίνω] among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*” (James 2:4, ESV)

³⁴⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (750). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁵⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (741). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁵¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (511). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁵² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (176). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁵³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (315). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁵⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (767). New York: United Bible Societies.

“In 3:1–4:12 partisanship appears as that which the zeal and ambition of loose-tongued teachers have generated. Furthermore, partiality toward the rich and against the poor and marginalized has evidently given some shape to the messianic community....”³⁵⁵

and sincere ἀνυπόκριτος = “...pertaining to being genuine and sincere, and hence lacking in pretense or show—‘genuine, sincere.’”³⁵⁶ Without hypocrisy.

“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,” (1 Peter 1:22, ESV)

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.” (Romans 12:9, ESV)

“This word has the literal sense “not playing a part.” The person characterized by wisdom from heaven will be stable, trustworthy, transparent — the kind of person consistently displaying the virtues of wisdom and on whom one can rely for advice and counsel.”³⁵⁷

“We conclude that with the term “without hypocrisy” James may have in mind more than conscious pretense; instead, he may see in this term a charge of a zeal and ambition that lead to false teaching, inappropriate behaviors, and partisanship.”³⁵⁸

Paul has a similar list of virtuous behaviors:

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”
(Philippians 4:8, ESV)

James 3:18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Harvest καρπός = fruit

“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.” (James 3:17, ESV)

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.”
(Proverbs 11:30, ESV)

³⁵⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (315). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁵⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (674). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁵⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (177). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁵⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (315–316). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“...his key concern in all this: the peace that genuine (as opposed to fraudulent) wisdom can bring to the community.”³⁵⁹

A literal rendering is “fruit of righteousness,” and this can mean either (1) “the fruit that righteousness produces” (*dikaïosynēs* as a genitive of source), or (2) “the fruit that is righteousness” (*dikaïosynēs* as an epexegetic genitive). The phrase is quite common in the LXX, where it almost always means the latter.³⁶⁰

righteousness δικαιοσύνη = “In both the OT and NT righteousness is the state commanded by God and standing the test of His judgment (2 Cor. 3:9; 6:14; Eph. 4:24). It is conformity to all that He commands or appoints.”³⁶¹

“For James and his Jewish world of thought, “righteous” described the person whose behaviors and life were in conformity with Torah. What James has in mind in this metaphorical expression is the yield of acting rightly, namely, concrete acts of justice.”³⁶²

sown σπείρω = “To sow, scatter seed.”³⁶³

“Those who “make peace” “sow in peace”; that is, they do everything in a way that is peaceable (3:17) and that creates peace in the community.”³⁶⁴

“This righteousness cannot be produced in the context of human anger (1:20); but it *can* grow and flourish in the atmosphere of peace. Those who create such an atmosphere are assured by their Lord of their reward: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:9).”³⁶⁵

“...the language James uses suggests that the teachers are *not* seeking peace: they are creating “conflicts and disputes” (4:1). ... James’s primary focus is on relationships among members of the messianic community, relationships now in jeopardy because of the zeal and ambition of its teachers and the unjust practices of the community (2:2–4; 5:1–6).”³⁶⁶

³⁵⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (177). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁶⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (178). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁶¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³⁶² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (318). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁶³ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³⁶⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (317). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁶⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (178). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁶⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (316–317). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

those who make peace

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9, ESV)

James 4

“James has not changed the focus of his attention since 3:1; he is concerned with teachers, their tongues, and the communal destructiveness they are generating.”³⁶⁷

As we ended the last chapter James said:

James 3:18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

He begins the next section saying:

V. A SUMMONS TO SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS (4:1-10)

James 4:1 *What causes quarrels [wars] and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?*

quarrels (wars) **πόλεμος** = “...‘to wage war,’ to engage in serious and protracted conflict, often involving a series of attacks—‘to fight, to war against.’”³⁶⁸ This is the only place in the NT where this word is used in a symbolic sense, the other uses are of actual war. This fact is very disturbing.

fights (quarrels) **μάχη** = “...serious conflict, either physical or non-physical, but clearly intensive and bitter—‘to clash severely, struggle, fight.’”³⁶⁹

This word is used three other times in the NT.

“For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting (μάχη) without and fear within.” (2 Corinthians 7:5, ESV)

“Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels (μάχη).” (2 Timothy 2:23, ESV)

“But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels (μάχη) about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.” (Titus 3:9, ESV)

passions **ἡδονή** = “...desire for physical pleasure, often sexual—‘desire, passion, desire for pleasure.’”³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (320). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁶⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (495). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁶⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (494). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁷⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (291). New York: United Bible Societies.

“The teachers’ “cravings” uppermost in his mind are for power, control, and partisanship.... there is little reason to expand the desires in random directions. James has the teachers in mind, and their problem was loose tongues used to abuse individuals and divide the community.”³⁷¹

This word is used five times by James in verses 4:1 and 4:3, translated passions, and three other times in the NT, translated pleasures.

“And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.” (Luke 8:14, ESV)

“For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.” (Titus 3:3, ESV)

“suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you.” (2 Peter 2:13, ESV)

war στρατεύω = “...to engage in war or battle as a soldier—‘to battle, to fight, to engage in war, warfare.”³⁷²

“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.” (1 Peter 2:11, ESV)

“When we look at human society we so often see a seething mass of hatred and strife. Philo writes, “Consider the continual war which prevails among men even in times of peace, and which exists not only between nations and countries and cities, but also between private houses, or, I might rather say, is present with every individual man; observe the unspeakable raging storm in men’s souls that is excited by the violent rush of the affairs of life; and you may well wonder whether anyone can enjoy tranquility in such a storm, and maintain calm amidst the surge of this billowing sea.”³⁷³

“Philo points out that the Ten Commandments culminate in the forbidding of covetousness or desire, for desire is the worst of all the passions of the soul. “Is it not because of this passion that relations are broken, and this natural goodwill changed into desperate enmity? that great and populous countries are desolated by domestic dissensions? and land and sea filled with ever new disasters by naval battles and land campaigns? For the wars famous in tragedy ... have all flowed from one source—desire either for money or glory or pleasure. Over these things the human race goes mad.”³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (323). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁷² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (548). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁷³ *The letters of James and Peter*. 1976 (W. Barclay, Ed.). The Daily Study Bible Series (98). Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press.

³⁷⁴ *The letters of James and Peter*. 1976 (W. Barclay, Ed.). The Daily Study Bible Series (98–99). Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press.

The seventeenth-century Jewish philosopher Spinoza observed: “I have often wondered that persons who make boast of professing the Christian religion — namely love, joy, peace, temperance, and charity to all men — should quarrel with such rancorous animosity and display daily towards one another such bitter hatred, that this, rather than the virtues which they profess, is the readiest criteria of their faith.”³⁷⁵

James 4:2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

desire ἐπιθυμέω = “...to strongly desire to have what belongs to someone else and/or to engage in an activity which is morally wrong—‘to covet, to lust, evil desires, lust, desire.’”³⁷⁶

“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28, ESV)

“Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.” (1 Corinthians 10:6, ESV)

“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.” (Galatians 5:17, ESV)

murder φονεύω = “...to deprive a person of life by illegal, intentional killing—‘to murder, to commit murder.’”³⁷⁷

It is possible to understand this of literal murder. Then, as well as now, murder for religious purposes was not uncommon.

“When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who made this conspiracy.” (Acts 23:12–13, ESV)

And to make that an increasing possibility we can look here at how James addresses murder in this book.

“For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.” (James 2:11, ESV)

“You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.” (James 5:6, ESV)

³⁷⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (181). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁷⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (290). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁷⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (237). New York: United Bible Societies.

I find these comments by James disturbing if not strange. However, it appears to me that James is following the teachings of Jesus and speaking metaphorically.

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.” (Matthew 5:21–26, ESV)

“Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” (1 John 3:15, ESV)

“However, the balance of the evidence, even if one lacks utter certitude in such matters, favors a physical reading of “commit murder.”³⁷⁸ Yet if this were the case, I would have expected a far more hostile response by James to such people. I would also expect that the “State” would be involved and James would have something to say about that.

covet ζηλώω = “...set one’s heart on something that belongs to someone else—‘to covet.’”³⁷⁹ Jealous, desire, envy

““Zeal,” ... connotes not simply personal envy (desire for what others have) or jealousy (seeking to maintain what is one’s own) but also the zeal connected to obedience of the God of the Torah, for whom nothing can be too extreme.”³⁸⁰ This understanding brings us back to the possibility of a literal murder.

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant” (1 Corinthians 13:4, ESV)

obtain ἐπιτυγχάνω = “...to acquire or gain what is sought after—‘to acquire, to obtain, to attain.’”³⁸¹

fight μάχομαι = “...serious conflict, either physical or non-physical, but clearly intensive and bitter—‘to clash severely, struggle, fight.’”³⁸²

³⁷⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (327). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁷⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (290). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁸⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (328). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁸¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (564). New York: United Bible Societies.

quarrel πολεμέω = “‘to wage war,’ to engage in serious and protracted conflict, often involving a series of attacks—‘to fight, to war against.’”³⁸³

“The struggles that are wracking the community, James would be suggesting, are the product of their envious desire to get what they don’t have.”³⁸⁴

“Frustrated desire, James makes clear, is what is breeding the intense strife that is convulsing the community.”³⁸⁵

We have a chiasm in vv. 1–2a; chiasm is one of many literary tools ancients used to make points that we would commonly make with bold, underline or other means today. The main point James is making is “C”.

A your quarrels [πόλεμος] and fights (μάχη)] (v. 1a) come from
B passions [ήδονή] (v. 1b) and war [στρατεύω] (v. 1b), you
C desire [covet ἐπιθυμέω] and murder [φονεύω] (v. 2a), and
B’ covet [ζηλώω] and cannot obtain [ἐπιτυγχάνω] (v. 2b) so
A’ you fight [μάχομαι] and quarrel [πολεμέω] (v. 2b)

“James pushes them to consider the origins of their behaviors in their own craving desires for power and control. He pushes further and says, evidently, that their craving desires lead to murder and to the disputes and conflicts in the messianic community.”³⁸⁶

“What is it that James’s readers want to have? He nowhere says in these verses, but the context suggests an answer: the kind of wisdom that will enable them to gain recognition as leaders in the community. James has rebuked his readers for wanting to become teachers (3:1) and for priding themselves on being “wise and understanding” (3:13). They apparently want to lead the church, but don’t have the right kind of wisdom to do so.”³⁸⁷

“Zeal, ambition, cravings, and desires ruled their hearts and prevented them from having the very thing required of the one who grows into godly wisdom: humility.”³⁸⁸

³⁸² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (494). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁸³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (495). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁸⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (182). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁸⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (183). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁸⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (328). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁸⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (184). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁸⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (329). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Ask αἰτέω

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” (Matthew 7:7, ESV)

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting (discrimination), for the one who doubts (discriminates) is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:5–6, ESV)

spend δαπανᾶω = “...to spend completely, with the implication of uselessly, and therefore, to waste—‘to spend completely, to waste.’”³⁸⁹

“And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need.” (Luke 15:14, ESV)

Passions ἡδονή = “Pleasure, gratification, enjoyment. In the NT, used only of physical pleasure (Luke 8:14; Titus 3:3; James 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:13). Figuratively used as desire, appetite, lust (James 4:1).”³⁹⁰

“...the problem at work in the teachers: their zeal, ambition, cravings, and desires shaped everything they taught and did. They wanted self-glory and power, not wisdom.”³⁹¹

“Jesus had promised, “Ask, and it will be given you” (Matt. 7:7). But clearly Jesus had in mind that asking which has as its focus and motive God’s name, God’s kingdom, and God’s will (Matt. 6:9–10) — not an asking that had the purpose of the indulgence of those “pleasures” (*hēdonai*) that are at war with our souls (cf. v. 1).”³⁹²

“The craving for pleasure in the end shuts the door of prayer. If a man’s prayers are simply for the things which will gratify his desires, they are essentially selfish and, therefore, it is not possible for God to answer them. The true end of prayer is to say to God, “Thy will be done.” The prayer of the man who is pleasure-dominated is: “My desires be satisfied.” It is one of the grim facts of life that a selfish man can hardly ever pray aright; no one can ever pray aright until he removes self from the centre of his life and puts God there.”³⁹³

³⁸⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (574). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁹⁰ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³⁹¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (330). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁹² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (185). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁹³ *The letters of James and Peter*. 1976 (W. Barclay, Ed.). The Daily Study Bible Series (100–101). Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press.

James 4:4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

“The abrupt and harsh *you adulterous people* marks the beginning of one of the most strongly worded calls to repent that we find anywhere in the NT.”³⁹⁴

“Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband, so have you been treacherous to me, O house of Israel, declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 3:20, ESV)

“Rejoice not, O Israel! Exult not like the peoples; for you have played the whore, forsaking your God. You have loved a prostitute’s wages on all threshing floors.” (Hosea 9:1, ESV)

“James ... uses “adulteresses” to label his readers as unfaithful people of God. By seeking *friendship with the world*, they are, in effect, committing spiritual adultery.”³⁹⁵

“If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:19, ESV)

friendship with the world is enmity with God

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” (James 1:27, ESV)

“Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?” (James 2:5, ESV)

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6, ESV)

““No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (Matthew 6:24, ESV)

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is

³⁹⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (186). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁹⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (187). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15–17, ESV)

makes himself καθίστημι = “...to cause a state to be—‘to cause to be, to make to be, to make, to result in, to bring upon, to bring about.’”³⁹⁶

an enemy of God.

“We have no evidence that James’s readers were overtly disclaiming God and consciously deciding to follow the world instead. But their tendency to imitate the world by discriminating against people (2:1–13), by speaking negatively of others (3:1–12), by exhibiting “bitter envy” and “selfish ambition” (3:13–18), and by pursuing their own destructive pleasures (4:1–3) amounted to just that.”³⁹⁷

“James has interpreted the actions of the teachers as infidelity (4:4a: “Adulteresses!”) and has expounded the theme of the intimate relationship with God through the idea of choosing friendship or enmity.”³⁹⁸

James 4:5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?

“James’s striking application of the OT imagery of God as the spouse of his people in v. 4 is the key to understanding this verse. Verse 5 explains why flirtation with the world is so serious a matter by bringing to mind the jealousy of the Lord, which demands total, unreserved, unwavering allegiance from the people with whom he has joined himself.”³⁹⁹

Scripture γραφή = “...a particular passage of the OT—‘Scripture, Scripture passage.’”⁴⁰⁰

“...scripture (*graphē*) is limited to references to the canonical OT in the NT.”⁴⁰¹

“The difficulty is that the words that James “quotes” do not reproduce any OT text....”⁴⁰²

³⁹⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (149). New York: United Bible Societies.

³⁹⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (187). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³⁹⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (335). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

³⁹⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (188). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁰⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (394). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁰¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (190). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁰² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (190). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

But "...we interpret the verse ... as a reference to the jealousy of God, OT support is, of course, abundant (e.g., Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Zech. 8:2)."⁴⁰³

"You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me," (Exodus 20:5, ESV)

"(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)," (Exodus 34:14, ESV)

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath." (Zechariah 8:2, ESV)

yearns ἐπιποθέω = "To desire earnestly, long for...."⁴⁰⁴

jealously φθόνος = "...a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage experienced by such a person—'envy, jealousy.'"⁴⁰⁵

...the spirit that he has made to dwell in us: "...the phrase reminds us that God has a claim on us by virtue of his work in our lives."⁴⁰⁶ Yet, it might refer to the spirit he placed in us at creation—man's spirit not God's Spirit. It is not clear which is the better choice.

"then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." (Genesis 2:7, ESV)

"Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation" (Numbers 27:16, ESV)

James 4:6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Opposes = "...to oppose someone, involving not only a psychological attitude but also a corresponding behavior—to oppose, to be hostile toward, to show hostility."⁴⁰⁷

proud ὑπερήφανος = "...pertaining to being ostentatiously proud—'arrogant, haughty, contemptuous.'"⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (190). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁰⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁴⁰⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (759). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁰⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (190). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁰⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (491). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁰⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (764). New York: United Bible Societies.

humble ταπεινός = “Low, not high, particularly of attitude and social positions.”⁴⁰⁹

“...James here is reminding us that God’s grace is completely adequate to meet the requirements imposed on us by that jealousy. Our God is “a consuming fire,” and his demand for our exclusive allegiance may seem terrifying. But our God is also merciful, gracious, all loving, and willingly supplies all that we need to meet his all-encompassing demands.”⁴¹⁰

“Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.” (Proverbs 3:34, ESV)

“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:5, ESV)

“...the teachers have within them a divinely-planted spirit that (un)naturally craves for envy and that the good news is that God is there to supplant those cravings with his grace.”⁴¹¹

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

“If God gives the grace to meet his claim on our lives to those who are humble, then we must become humble if we expect to enjoy that grace.”⁴¹²

Submit ὑποτάσσω = “To *submit* to God means to place ourselves under his lordship, and therefore to commit ourselves to obey him in all things.”⁴¹³ “The essence of unbelief is failure to “submit” to God’s law (Rom. 8:7) and his righteousness (Rom. 10:3).”⁴¹⁴ The tense of this verb is “middle” which means submitting is something the person does to himself. “Active” would mean he does this to another. “Passive” would mean it is done to him by another.

“For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.” (Romans 10:3, ESV)

“submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21, ESV)

⁴⁰⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁴¹⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (191). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴¹¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (340). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴¹² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (192). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴¹³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (192). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴¹⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (192). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.” (Romans 8:7, ESV)

Resist (oppose) ἀντίστημι = “To stand against, resist, whether in deed or word.”⁴¹⁵
The tense of this verb is “active” which means the person here is called to (actively) do this to another. But before you can resist, you must first submit.

“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject [submit ὑποτάσσω] to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility [ταπεινός] toward one another, for “God opposes the proud [ὑπερήφανος] but gives grace to the humble [ταπεινός].” Humble [ταπεινός] yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist [ἀντίστημι] him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.” (1 Peter 5:5–9, ESV)

devil διάβολος = “The word “devil” translates Gk. *diabolos*, which is used in the Septuagint to translate *śtn*, the Hebrew root that gives us the title “Satan.” The two titles are thus identical in meaning....”⁴¹⁶

“This submission is accomplished first by resisting (i.e. *not* submitting to) the devil, which is precisely what God does to the proud....”⁴¹⁷

Therefore it says, “God opposes [ἀντίστημι] (resist) the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6, ESV)

“The means of resistance is either good works ... or total commitment to God. For James there would be little difference between these two, although his emphasis here is on total commitment.”⁴¹⁸ I would think we would oppose the devil in our 1) thinking and 2) acting. Verse 8 fleshes this out some.

he will flee from you = “Whatever power Satan may have, the Christian can be absolutely certain that he has been given the ability to overcome that power.”⁴¹⁹

James 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

⁴¹⁵ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁴¹⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (193). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴¹⁷ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (166). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁴¹⁸ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (166). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁴¹⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (193). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

Draw near ἐγγίζω = “to move nearer to a reference point—‘to draw near, to come near, to approach.’”⁴²⁰

Spiritual growth calls for actions. Doing nothing is not drawing near to God.

“The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.” (2 Chronicles 15:2, ESV)

“And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20, ESV)

Cleanse your hands ... purify your hearts

“The imagery of both “washing” and “purifying” stems from the OT provisions for priestly purity in ministering the things of the Lord.... But both verbs had come to be applied more broadly to ethical purity as well.”⁴²¹

“Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.” (Psalm 24:3–4, ESV)

Hands and **hearts** refer to doing and thinking. This is how one submits and resists.

double-minded δίψυχος = “James used this word ... to depict the person whose faith wavers and vacillates. Its repetition here underscores especially James’s accusation that his readers are attempting to be “friends” with both God and the world at the same time (v. 4): a conflict of basic allegiance that our jealous God will simply not tolerate (v. 5).”⁴²²

“he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:8, ESV)

“To allow “the world” to entice us away from total, single-minded allegiance to God is to become people who are divided in loyalties, “double-minded” and spiritually unstable. James’s readers, by exhibiting a jealousy and selfishness typical of this world (cf. 3:15), by failing to act on what they hear and say (1:19–2:26), in their “double” use of the tongue (3:9–10), and in their violent disputes with one another (4:1–2), are guilty of this “double-minded” attitude.”⁴²³

James 4:9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

⁴²⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (191). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴²¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (194). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴²² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (194). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴²³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (194). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“Grieve, mourn and wail are all used by the prophets to denote reactions of those who suffer God’s judgment....”⁴²⁴

““Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning,” (Joel 2:12, ESV)

“James, like Joel, is convinced that the eschatological judgment is “imminent” (5:8); therefore, like Joel, he calls on God’s people to exhibit a heartfelt sorrow for sin that is the mark of true repentance....”⁴²⁵

“And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?” (1 Corinthians 5:2, ESV)

“The biblical writers therefore suggest that all persons will inevitably “mourn” for their spiritual state.”⁴²⁶

““Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4, ESV)

Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

“A carefree, “devil-may-care” attitude is typical of those who are “friends with the world.””⁴²⁷

James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

“When we try to “exalt ourselves” by relying on our own abilities, status, or money, we meet with inevitable failure and even condemnation — God humbles us. James makes this same basic point earlier in his letter when he encourages the “humble” brother to boast in his “exaltation” and the rich brother to boast in his “humiliation” (1:9–10).”⁴²⁸

““Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5, ESV)

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Matthew 23:12, ESV)

“For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isaiah 57:15, ESV)

⁴²⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (195). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴²⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (195). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴²⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (195). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴²⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (195). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴²⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (196). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

A Passage Summary:

God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 4:6

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 4:7

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. 4:8

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 4:8

Be wretched and mourn and weep. 4:9

Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 4:9

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. 4:10

This message by James was an old one from Proverbs and the teachings of Jesus:

“One’s pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.”
(Proverbs 29:23, ESV)

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Matthew 23:12, ESV)

VI. THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION OF SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS: PURE SPEECH AND PEACE, PART 2 (4:11–12)

A. Critical Speech Is a Presumptuous Violation of the Law (4:11–12)

James 4:11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

speak evil καταλαλέω = “...to speak against, often involving speaking evil of—‘to speak evil of, to slander, slander.’”⁴²⁹

“So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.” (1 Peter 2:1, ESV)

“For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.” (2 Corinthians 12:20, ESV)

⁴²⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (432). New York: United Bible Societies.

“Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:12, ESV)

“having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.” (1 Peter 3:16, ESV)

“Quarrels over most issues usually end up including personal attacks and judgmental attitudes.”⁴³⁰

the law =

“But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.” (James 1:25, ESV)

“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.” (James 2:8–12, ESV)

““Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” (Matthew 7:1–5, ESV)

“When James speaks of the law here, then, we are probably justified in thinking that he refers to the OT law insofar as it has been taken up into the “law of the kingdom” that Jesus laid upon his followers.”⁴³¹

a judge κρίνω = “To separate, distinguish, discriminate between good and evil, select, choose out the good. In the NT, it means to judge, to form or give an opinion after separating and considering the particulars of a case.”⁴³²

⁴³⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (198). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴³¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (198). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴³² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting (διακρίνω-judging), for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:6, ESV)

“have you not then made distinctions (διακρίνω-judging) among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” (James 2:4, ESV)

But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

“James assumes that criticism of a fellow believer contradicts the demand that we love our neighbors. Therefore, we fail to keep the law when we slander and stand in judgment over one another. And in failing to keep the law, James says, we also “judge” it.”⁴³³

“Since James contrasts “judging” the law with “keeping” it, he apparently thinks that failure to do the law implies a denial of the law’s authority.”⁴³⁴

“However high and orthodox our view of God’s law might be, a failure actually to do it says to the world that we do not *in fact* put much store by it. Again we see coming to the surface James’s understanding of Christianity as something whose reality is to be tested by the measure of obedience.”⁴³⁵

“...failure to do the law implies a denial of the law’s authority. However high and orthodox our view of God’s law might be, a failure actually to do it says to the world that we do not *in fact* put much store by it.”⁴³⁶

“...James’s understanding of Christianity [is] something whose reality is to be tested by the measure of obedience.”⁴³⁷

James 4:12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

There is only one lawgiver

“The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.”” (Exodus 24:12, ESV)

he who is able to save and to destroy

⁴³³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (198). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴³⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (199). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴³⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (199). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴³⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (199). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴³⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (199). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28, ESV)

““ See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.” (Deuteronomy 32:39, ESV)

“Whether it comes from Jesus or from Moses the rhetorical function is the same: James hereby threatens the teachers with final judgment at the hand of the one God, who determines life and death.”⁴³⁸

But who are you to judge your neighbor?

“...the introduction of *neighbor* here reveals that an implicit anchor for James’s rebuke is the love command, with its demand that we love “the neighbor” (Lev. 19:18; cf. Jas. 2:8).”⁴³⁹

“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.” (James 2:8, ESV)

“And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him.” (Mark 12:28–32, ESV)

“A bitter, selfish spirit (3:13–18) had given rise to quarrels and disputes about certain matters in the church (4:1–2). These disputes were apparently conducted, as they usually are, with a notable absence of restraint in the use of the tongue (3:1–12), including perhaps cursing (3:10) and denunciations (4:11–12) of one another. Such behavior is nothing more than a manifestation of a worldly spirit (3:15; 4:1, 4). It must be replaced by “the wisdom from above,” with its meekness, reasonableness, and peaceableness (3:17). This flirtation with the world must be seen to be incompatible with God’s jealous desire to have his people’s wholehearted allegiance (4:4–5).”⁴⁴⁰

“Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.” (Romans 14:4, ESV)

⁴³⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (365). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴³⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (199). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁴⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (199–200). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

VII. THE WORLDVIEW OF SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS: UNDERSTANDING TIME AND ETERNITY (4:13–5:11)

A. Arrogant Planning Ignores God’s Providence (4:13–17)

James 4:13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—

“Underlying the boastful arrogance of the people both in this paragraph and in the next one is wealth.... the extensive travel plans and desire to “make money” suggest that they belong to the relatively well to-do merchant class.”⁴⁴¹

“and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.” (James 1:10–11, ESV)

you who say

“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.” (James 1:13, ESV)

“and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,”” (James 2:3, ESV)

“For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.” (James 3:2, ESV)

“...James sees them as within the community rather than as outsiders....”⁴⁴²

Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town

“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.” (Proverbs 27:1, ESV)

“And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” ’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’” (Luke 12:18–20, ESV)

“The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.” (Proverbs 16:9, ESV)

⁴⁴¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (201). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁴² Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (171). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

“James is not rebuking these merchants for their plans or even for their desire to make a profit. He rebukes them rather for the this-worldly self-confidence that they exhibit in pursuing these goals....”⁴⁴³

“What James rebukes here, as v. 16 will make clear, is any kind of planning for the future that stems from human arrogance in our ability to determine the course of future events.”⁴⁴⁴

and make a profit κερδαίνω

“He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.” (Matthew 25:16, ESV)

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26, ESV)

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:8, ESV)

“There is nothing unusual about the situation, for merchants did this daily all over the Greco-Roman world, nor is anything apparently unethical. What bothers James is simply the presumption that one could so determine his future and the fact that these plans move on an entirely worldly plane in which the chief value is financial profit.”⁴⁴⁵

James 4:14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

“The fragility of human life and the consequent uncertainty of all human plans is the main point of the verse.”⁴⁴⁶

yet you do not know

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” (Hebrews 11:8, ESV)

“Abraham trusted God “not knowing where he was going” (Heb 11:8), but the presumptuous merchants were not trusting God and still thought they knew where they were going, what they would do, and that they would profit.”⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (202). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁴⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (203). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁴⁵ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (172). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁴⁴⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (203). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.”
(Proverbs 27:1, ESV)

“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Matthew 6:34, ESV)

For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

“...the point is clear enough: human life is insubstantial and transitory, here one minute and gone the next. Illness, accidental death, or the return of Christ could cut short our lives just as quickly as the morning sun dissipates the mist or as a shift in wind direction blows away smoke.”⁴⁴⁸

“Therefore they shall be like the morning mist or like the dew that goes early away, like the chaff that swirls from the threshing floor or like smoke from a window. But I am the LORD your God from the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no savior.” (Hosea 13:3–4, ESV)

“Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before you. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! Selah Surely a man goes about as a shadow! Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!” (Psalm 39:5–6, ESV)

“And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” (Luke 12:15, ESV)

James 4:15 Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

If the Lord wills

“Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” (Matthew 26:42, ESV)

“For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.” (1 Peter 3:17, ESV)

“This world is not a closed system; what appears to our senses to be the totality of existence is in fact only part of the whole. This life cannot properly be understood without considering the spiritual realm, a realm that impinges on and ultimately determines the material realm in which we live day to day.”⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (372). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁴⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (204). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁴⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (204–205). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus.” (Acts 18:21, ESV)

“always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.” (Romans 1:10, ESV)

“James attributes no magical significance to the words themselves. “If the Lord wills” can become nothing more than a glib formula without any real meaning. James, rather, wants us to adopt the attitude expressed by the words as a fixed perspective from which to view all of life.”⁴⁵⁰

“The merchants were presumptuous when they should have been more reverential and humble about their plans.”⁴⁵¹

“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.” (Proverbs 19:21, ESV)

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10, ESV)

“Thus the proper attitude does not exclude plans: “we will live and do this or that” assumes planning is proper. But this attitude conditions plans by the will of God, recognizing both human finiteness and divine sovereignty. This naturally means that divine moral guidelines will be followed and divine goals sought as one plans conscious of the divine will.”⁴⁵²

James 4:16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

boast καυχᾶμαι = “...to express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone or something being exceptionally noteworthy—“to boast.”⁴⁵³ This can be either good or bad.

“Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation,” (James 1:9, ESV)

“But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14, ESV)

⁴⁵⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (206). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁵¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (375). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁵² Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (173). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁴⁵³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (430). New York: United Bible Societies.

arrogance ἀλαζονεία = "...a state of pride or arrogance, but with the implication of complete lack of basis for such an attitude—'false arrogance, pretentious pride, boastful haughtiness.'"⁴⁵⁴

"For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world." (1 John 2:16, ESV)

"It is this "pride of life," this arrogant sense of self-sufficiency so characteristic of the world, that James condemns in this passage. *All such boasting is evil*, James concludes."⁴⁵⁵

evil πονηρός

"have you not then made distinctions (διακρίνω) among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:4, ESV)

James 4:17 *So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

"...the οὗν [So] indicates that the author understands it as a summary of the preceding section. Yet if this is so, in what way is it a summary?"⁴⁵⁶

right thing καλος = "...pertaining to a positive moral quality, with the implication of being favorably valued—'good, fine, praiseworthy.'"⁴⁵⁷

to do ποιέω = "...a marker of an agent relation with a numerable event—'to do, to perform, to practice, to make.'"⁴⁵⁸

"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing (ποιέω) well (καλος)." (James 2:8, ESV)

"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good (καλος) conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom." (James 3:13, ESV)

"So speak and so act (ποιέω) as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty." (James 2:12, ESV)

"For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown (ποιέω) no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." (James 2:13, ESV)

⁴⁵⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (764). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁵⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (207). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁵⁶ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (174). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁴⁵⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (741). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁵⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (803). New York: United Bible Societies.

“And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make (ποιέω) peace.” (James 3:18, ESV)

and fails to do it = Do what? – be humble, love your neighbor, show mercy, make peace.

James “...has urged us to take the Lord into consideration in all our planning. We therefore have no excuse in this matter: we know what we are to do. To fail now to do it, James wants to make clear, is sin. We cannot take refuge in the plea that we have done nothing positively wrong. As Scripture makes abundantly clear, sins of *omission* are as real and serious as sins of *commission*.”⁴⁵⁹

““When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:31–46, ESV)

⁴⁵⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (208). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

James 5

B. Misusing Wealth and Power Brings God's Judgment (5:1–6)

“James’s style in 5:1-6 “is that of the prophets pronouncing doom on pagan nations. He unrelievedly attacks these people, with no hint of exhortation.”⁴⁶⁰

“...why these rich people are destined for condemnation: (1) they have selfishly hoarded wealth (vv. 2–3); (2) they have defrauded their workers (v. 4); (3) they follow a self-indulgent lifestyle (v. 5); and (4) they oppress “the righteous” (v. 6).”⁴⁶¹

“Why does James preach this message of denunciation of non-Christians in a letter addressed to the church? Calvin appropriately isolates two main purposes: James “has a regard to the faithful, that they, hearing of the miserable end of the rich, might not envy their fortune, and also that knowing that God would be the avenger of the wrongs they suffered, they might with a calm and resigned mind bear them.”⁴⁶²

James 5:1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.

There appear to be two groups of rich that James is addressing. In James 4:13-17 he addresses the rich traveling merchants. In James 5:1-6, he addresses rich farmers.

“...the tone of these verses, and this also speaks to the tone of 4:13–17. ... is *relentless accusation and warning*, and reminds one not only of the prophets’ warnings against powerful, abusive Israelites as well as against the nations....”⁴⁶³

Come now

“*Come now*, you who say, “*Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit*”—” (James 4:13, ESV)

you rich

“*Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.*” (James 1:9–11, ESV)

⁴⁶⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (210). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁶¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (210). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁶² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (210–211). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁶³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (381). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?” (James 2:6–7, ESV)

“James uses the language “rich people” very much the way Jesus did: it is “code” for the oppressors of the messianic community, and the letter speaks not only to the messianists but also to those who oppress them.”⁴⁶⁴

weep (κλαίω) and howl (ὀλολύζω-scream, wail)⁴⁶⁵

“Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.” (James 4:9, ESV)

Earlier in chapter 4 James called the rich in the church to mourn and weep as a part of repentance. But in chapter 5 there is no call to repentance.

“Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!” (Isaiah 13:6, ESV)

“The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day,” declares the Lord GOD. “So many dead bodies!” “They are thrown everywhere!” “Silence!”” (Amos 8:3, ESV)

““But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.” (Luke 6:24–25, ESV)

“Before James even uses the word “day,” as he will in 5:3, his readers recognize that he is warning of the Day of the Lord.”⁴⁶⁶

“And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.” (Revelation 18:9, ESV)

miserias ταλαιπωρία = “...hardship resulting in wretchedness—‘hardship, wretchedness.’”⁴⁶⁷

“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” “Their mouth is full of curses and

⁴⁶⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (383). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁶⁵ (Isa. 10:10; 13:6; 14:31; 15:2–3; 16:7; 23:1, 6, 14; 24:11; 52:5; 65:14; Jer. 2:23; 31:20, 31; Ezek. 21:17; Hos. 7:14; Amos 8:3; Zech. 11:2)⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (384–385). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁶⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (243). New York: United Bible Societies.

bitterness.” “*Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.*” “*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*” (Romans 3:10–18, ESV)

“*And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matthew 19:23, ESV)

“...the language is designed to mark the rich farmers off as oppressors and under the imminent judgment of God, at which time they will “weep and wail.””⁴⁶⁸

“Coming as he does out of a Jewish prophetic world, now with “miseries” James would have in mind at least something on the order of the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus, associations with passages like Joel 1:5–11 would come to mind for those who knew the history of Jewish prophecy.”⁴⁶⁹

James 5:2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten.

riches πλοῦτος

“As in 5:1, “riches” signifies not simply possessions but also how one has acquired them, what one does with them, and what one does to those in need (2:1–4, 5–7, 14–17; 5:4–6).”⁴⁷⁰

“...it is clear enough that these verses together provide the first reason for the condemnation that the “rich” of v. 1 stand under: they have used their wealth for their own selfish purposes.”⁴⁷¹

Garments ἱμάτιον

Quality garments were objects of great wealth.

“*And Samson said to them, “Let me now put a riddle to you. If you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes, but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes.” And they said to him, “Put your riddle, that we may hear it.”*” (Judges 14:12–13, ESV)

They were quick, visual indicators of wealth.

⁴⁶⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (384). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁶⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (385). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁷⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (386). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁷¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (212). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in,” (James 2:2, ESV)

Because of their association with wealth and oppression, they are often objects of judgment.

“For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.” (Isaiah 51:8, ESV)

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19–21, ESV)

rotted σήπω ... moth-eaten σητόβρωτος

“Moth-eaten clothing is an image of impermanence and, in this context, of the impermanence of the focused investment of the rich and their attention to their appearance. Extravagant, status-expressing dress marked the rich (Jas 2:2–3).”⁴⁷² It still does.

James 5:3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days.

gold and silver

“For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in,” (James 2:2, ESV)

evidence μαρτύριον = “...to provide information about a person or an event concerning which the speaker has direct knowledge—to witness.”⁴⁷³

“And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” (Mark 6:11, ESV)

eat your flesh like fire

“The very thing they focused on, riches like clothing and gold and silver, will turn against the rich in a final act of cosmic betrayal. The rust on them will become a witness to the idolatrous commitment to mammon on the part of the rich.”⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (386–387). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁷³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (417). New York: United Bible Societies.

“And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’” (Mark 9:47–48, ESV)

“and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13:42, ESV)

“he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” (Revelation 14:10, ESV)

“And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:15, ESV)

You have laid up treasure

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” (Matthew 6:19–20, ESV)

“...instead of doing what Jesus commanded, the rich are doing what Jesus prohibited.”⁴⁷⁵

“And he said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’ And he told them a parable, saying, ‘The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’”’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.’” (Luke 12:15–21, ESV)

“James’s language is ironic if not sarcastic: what is being treasured up is not a treasure that will survive divine scrutiny in the judgment; instead it is a treasure that will, like Satan, be their accusers.”⁴⁷⁶

“But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.” (Romans 2:5, ESV)

⁴⁷⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (387). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁷⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (389). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁷⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (389). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

in the last days

“The phrase “last days” refers to the NT conviction that the end times, the age of the consummation, had already broken in upon the world in Jesus....”⁴⁷⁷

“**EUSEBIUS** (Gk. *Eusébios*)

Bishop of Caesarea and “Father of Church History” (ca. 260–ca. 339 C.E.). Eusebius was born in Palestine and spent the majority of his life there. ... Eusebius himself was imprisoned in Egypt during the final years of persecution. Shortly after the Great Persecution ended (313) he was elected bishop of Caesarea, where he served until his death.”⁴⁷⁸

12 The aforesaid Scribes and Pharisees therefore placed James upon the pinnacle of the temple, and cried out to him and said: ‘Thou just one, in whom we ought all to have: confidence, forasmuch as the people are led, astray after Jesus, the crucified one, declare to us, what is the gate of Jesus.’

13 And he answered with a loud voice, ‘Why do ye ask me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man? **He himself sitteth in heaven at the right hand of the great Power, and is about to come upon the clouds of heaven.**’

14 And when many were fully convinced and gloried in the testimony of James, and said, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ these same Scribes and Pharisees said again to one another, ‘We have done badly in supplying such testimony to Jesus. But let us go up and throw him down, in order that they may be afraid to believe him.’

15 And they cried out, saying, ‘Oh! oh! the just man is also in error.’ And they fulfilled the Scripture written in Isaiah, ‘Let us take away the just man, because he is troublesome to us: therefore they shall eat the fruit of their doings.’

16 So they went up and threw down the just man, and said to each other, ‘Let us stone James the Just.’ And they began to stone him, for he was not killed by the fall; but he turned and knelt down and said, ‘I entreat thee, Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’

17 And while they were thus stoning him one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, the son of the Rechabites, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out, saying, ‘Cease, what do ye? The just one prayeth for you.’

18 And one of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat out clothes and struck the just man on the head. And thus he suffered martyrdom. And they buried him on the spot, by the temple, and his monument still remains by the temple. He became a true witness, both to Jews and Greeks, that Jesus is the Christ. **And immediately Vespasian besieged them.**”⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (177). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁴⁷⁸ Guth, C. (2000). Eusebius. In D. N. Freedman, A. C. Myers & A. B. Beck (Eds.), *Eerdmans dictionary of the Bible* (D. N. Freedman, A. C. Myers & A. B. Beck, Ed.) (435). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

⁴⁷⁹ Eusebius of Caesaria. (1890). *The Church History of Eusebius* A. C. McGiffert, Trans.). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Volume I: Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine* (P. Schaff & H. Wace, Ed.) (126–127). New York: Christian Literature Company.

CHAPTER VII
The Predictions of Christ

1 IT is fitting to add to these accounts the true prediction of our Saviour *in which he foretold these very events.*

2 His words are as follows: “Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day. For there shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” [Matt 24:19-21]

3 The historian [Josephus], reckoning the whole number of the slain, says that eleven hundred thousand persons perished by famine and sword, and that the rest of the rioters and robbers, being betrayed by each other after the taking of the city, were slain. But the tallest of the youths and those that were distinguished for beauty were preserved for the triumph. Of the rest of the multitude, those that were over seventeen years of age were sent as prisoners to labor in the works of Egypt, while still more were scattered through the provinces to meet their death in the theaters by the sword and by beasts. Those under seventeen years of age were carried away to be sold as slaves, and of these alone the number reached ninety thousand.

4 These things took place in this manner in the second year of the reign of **Vespasian, in accordance with the prophecies of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**, who by divine power saw them beforehand as if they were already present, and wept and mourned according to the statement of the holy evangelists, who give the very words which he uttered, when, as if addressing Jerusalem herself, he said:

5 “If thou hadst known, even thou, in this day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a rampart about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee and thy children even with the ground.” [Luke 19:42-44]

6 And then, as if speaking concerning the people, he says, “For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” [Luke 21:23-24] And again: “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” [Luke 21:20]

7 If any one compares the words of our Saviour with the other accounts of the historian [Josephus] concerning the whole war, how can one fail to wonder, and to admit that the foreknowledge and the prophecy of our Saviour were truly divine and marvellously strange.

8 Concerning those calamities, then, that befell the whole Jewish nation after the Saviour’s passion and after the words which the multitude of the Jews uttered, when they begged the release of the robber and murderer, but besought that the Prince of Life should be taken from their midst, it is not necessary to add anything to the account of the historian.

9 But it may be proper to mention also those events which exhibited the graciousness of that all-good Providence which held back their destruction full forty years after their crime against Christ,—during which time many of the apostles and disciples, and **James** himself the first bishop there, the one who is called the brother of the Lord, were still alive, and dwelling in Jerusalem itself, remained the surest bulwark of the place. Divine Providence thus still proved itself long-suffering toward them in order to see whether by repentance for what they had done they might obtain pardon and salvation; and in addition to such long-suffering, Providence also

furnished wonderful signs of the things which were about to happen to them if they did not repent.

10 Since these matters have been thought worthy of mention by the historian [Josephus] already cited, we cannot do better than to recount them for the benefit of the readers of this work.⁴⁸⁰

“...it appears that James reflects the belief that the last days have already begun to dawn upon the world (Acts 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; 2 Pet 3:3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18). Thus, the rich are laying up treasure in the last days, which are imminent to the point of arrival.”⁴⁸¹

“You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.” (James 5:8–9, ESV)

James 5:4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

“...James now informs the rich, even if they are not listening, that their oppressive behaviors against the poor have now entered the ears of the God of hosts.”⁴⁸²

the wages of the laborers

“Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 3:5, ESV)

“You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning.” (Leviticus 19:13, ESV)

“You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the LORD, and you be guilty of sin.” (Deuteronomy 24:15, ESV)

“Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages,” (Jeremiah 22:13, ESV)

and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

⁴⁸⁰ Eusebius of Caesaria. (1890). The Church History of Eusebius A. C. McGiffert, Trans.). In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Eds.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Volume I: Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine* (P. Schaff & H. Wace, Ed.) (141–142). New York: Christian Literature Company.

⁴⁸¹ Martin, R. P. (1998). *Vol. 48: James*. Word Biblical Commentary (178). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

⁴⁸² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (390). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.” (Exodus 2:23, ESV)

“What the rich think they do in secret, and without danger of prosecution, is not hidden from *the Lord Almighty*.”⁴⁸³

the Lord of hosts Σαβαώθ = “...(a Greek transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning ‘armies’”⁴⁸⁴

“God had heard, that is, he knew all of this tragic situation, both the suffering and who had caused it. God, the Lord “Sabaoth”—a title most reminiscent of Old Testament devotion, is best translated “Lord of the Armies.” In the life of Israel, this address characterized God as the one who moves to deliver his people. Now this Lord and his forces will come to defend the oppressed among his people on the last day.”⁴⁸⁵

“The language evokes the Warrior God tradition of ancient Israel....”⁴⁸⁶

“Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom go up like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 5:24, ESV)

“...James uses “Lord of hosts” because he has in mind an imminent act of judgment against the oppressors.”⁴⁸⁷

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.” (Revelation 19:11–14, ESV)

James 5:5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

You have lived on the earth

⁴⁸³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (216). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁸⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (138). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁸⁵ Richardson, K. A. (1997). *Vol. 36: James*. The New American Commentary (211). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁴⁸⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (392). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁸⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (393). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“...on earth contributes to these negative connotations, suggesting a contrast between the pleasures the rich have enjoyed in this world and the torment that awaits them in eternity.”⁴⁸⁸

“But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.” (Luke 16:25, ESV)

luxury τρυφάω = “...to live a life of luxury, usually associated with intemperate feasting and drinking—‘to revel, to carouse, to live a life of luxury.’”⁴⁸⁹

self-indulgence σπαταλάω = “...to indulge oneself excessively in satisfying one’s own appetites and desires—‘to live indulgently.’”⁴⁹⁰

fattened your hearts

“Bounty is not necessarily bad; the deuteronomic theology of blessing finds itself in words like these (cf. Neh 9:25; Isa 66:11). But in this context the words, because the actions occur on the backs of the defrauded poor, denote the accumulation of good and pleasures as a result of unloving, sinful pursuits....”⁴⁹¹

““There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the

⁴⁸⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (217). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁸⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (768). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁹⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (768). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁴⁹¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (394). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’ ”
(Luke 16:19–31, ESV)

a day of slaughter

“Reflecting a growing tendency in eschatological interpretation, A. Feuillet has argued that the reference may be to the judgment that fell on Jerusalem and the Jews in the Roman conquest of A.D. 70.”⁴⁹²

“...*the day of slaughter* is a vivid description of the day of judgment.”⁴⁹³

“And on every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.” (Isaiah 30:25, ESV)

“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.” (Revelation 19:17–21, ESV)

“James’s point then, as in v. 3, is that the rich are selfishly and ignorantly going about accumulating wealth for themselves and wastefully spending it on their own pleasures in the very day when God’s judgment is imminently threatened. The “last days” have already begun; the judgment *could* break in at any time — yet the rich, instead of acting to avoid that judgment, are, by their selfish indulgence, incurring greater guilt. They are like cattle being fattened for the kill.”⁴⁹⁴

“Both judgment and especially the Day of the Lord are sometimes called a “slaughter” by the prophets (Obad 10; Zech 11:4, 7; Isa 30:25; 34:2, 6; 53:7; 65:12; Jer 12:3; 15:3; 19:6; 25:34; 48:15; 50:27; 51:40; Ezek 7:14–23; 21:15; cf. Rev 19:17–21).”⁴⁹⁵

“In light of what will be said below, it is more likely that James is referring here to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD than to the final assize, though the former is a

⁴⁹² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (218). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁹³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (218). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁹⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (218). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁹⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (395). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

foretaste of the latter. His language traffics in the all-too-typical warnings to Israel and her corrupt leaders that Jerusalem will be sacked if they do not turn from corruption. James warns the rich and opulent, and violent in the next verse, that they will experience the rough side of God’s tongue on the Day of the Lord.”⁴⁹⁶

“Here, then, is a combination of the teaching of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus with that of the rich fool. The wealthy live luxuriously, heedless of the poor, as if this is what life were for; indeed, they live as in a day of slaughter (there is perhaps some irony intended as they slaughter animals for their feasts). But the day of slaughter has arrived — their slaughter, for they are the “fatted calves,” the enemies of God whom he will slaughter when he appears. The eschatological day which arrived in Jesus is moving toward its conclusion so surely that it is already here. Yet they live as if it did not exist!”⁴⁹⁷

James 5:6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

“James has accused the “rich” of hoarding wealth (vv. 2–3), cheating workers (v. 4), and living self-indulgently. Now, in the climax of his denunciation, he accuses them of condemning and murdering *innocent men*.”⁴⁹⁸

condemned καταδικάζω = “...to judge someone as definitely guilty and thus subject to punishment—to condemn, to render a verdict of guilt, condemnation.”⁴⁹⁹

“James’s use of the word “condemn” (Gk. *katadikaō*) points to some kind of judicial verdict — and this reflects OT and intertestamental teaching directed to situations in which rich people use their wealth and influence to deprive the righteous poor of their rights and of their living.”⁵⁰⁰

“This first (*katadikazō*) describes justice deconstructed, such as corrupt policemen and conniving lawyers.”⁵⁰¹

“*And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.*” (Matthew 12:7, ESV)

murdered φονεύω = “...to deprive a person of life by illegal, intentional killing—to murder, to commit murder.”⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (395–396). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁴⁹⁷ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (179). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁴⁹⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (218). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁹⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (555). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁰⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (219). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁰¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (397). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.” (James 4:2, ESV)

“He probably has in mind the practical outcome of the actions that the rich take against the poor to cheat them of their land and take away their gainful employment: the poor starve to death.”⁵⁰³

“He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless; he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.” (Psalm 10:8–9, ESV)

“Sirach⁵⁰⁴, for instance, makes just this connection: “to take away a neighbor’s living is to murder him; to deprive an employee of his wages is to shed blood” (Sir. 34:22).⁵⁰⁵

“Three times James brings up murder (2:11; 4:2 and here), and in each instance the tendency has been for interpreters to minimize its meaning. These texts, combined as they need to be with 1:20 and 2:1–7, lead me to think that actual murders were occurring among those to whom James wrote.”⁵⁰⁶

righteous δίκαιος (δικαίω) = “...pertaining to being in accordance with what God requires—‘righteous, just.’”⁵⁰⁷

Who is the righteous one that is murdered? One possibility is: “‘The righteous one’ is the typical follower of God, experiencing persecution at the hands of the wicked rich.”⁵⁰⁸

Another possibility: “Jesus Christ, who is on three occasions in the New Testament called “the Righteous One” (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14). In addition, other texts describe Jesus as righteous (Matt 27:24; Luke 23:47; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:1, 29; 3:7). *1 Enoch* 38:2 (see also 53:6) calls the Messiah “the Righteous One”:⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (237). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁰³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (219). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁰⁴ The preeminent wisdom book of the APOCRYPHA, also known as Ecclesiasticus (i.e., “the church book”) in the Western Christian tradition.

⁵⁰⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (219). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁰⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (397). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵⁰⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (743). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁰⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (219). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁰⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (219). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

... and when the Righteous One shall appear before the face of the righteous, those elect ones, ... he shall reveal light to the righteous and the elect who dwell upon the earth, where will the dwelling of the sinners be, and where the resting place of those who denied the name of the Lord of the Spirits?”⁵¹⁰

He does not resist [ἀντιάσσω] you.

“The focus would then be on the nonresistance of the poor, afflicted righteous (cf. Matt. 5:39; Rom. 12:14), who refuse, or are unable, to oppose the power and influence of the rich.”⁵¹¹

“But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes [ἀντιάσσω] the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”” (James 4:6, ESV)

“James, “on a note of majestic pathos,” concludes the paragraph by reminding us that the righteous are helpless victims of the stratagems of the rich and powerful.”⁵¹²

C. Patiently Enduring Trials Earns God’s Reward (5:7–11)

James 5:7 Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

“...5:7–11 explains how James thinks the messianic community should respond to the oppressing rich, essentially that they should wait for the coming of the Lord, that is, for the Day of the Lord when God judges the oppressors and sets the world to rights.”⁵¹³

patient μακροθυμέω = “(derivative of μακροθυμία ‘patience,’ ...) to demonstrate patience despite difficulties—“to be patient, to remain patient, to wait patiently.”⁵¹⁴

“...the long-suffering attitude we are to adopt toward other people....”⁵¹⁵ “...the strong, determined fortitude with which we need to face difficult circumstances....”⁵¹⁶

“Or, to put it simply, we are patient with other people and endure difficulties.”⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (398). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵¹¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (219). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵¹² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (220). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵¹³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (402). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵¹⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (306). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵¹⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (222). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵¹⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (222). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“What is clear is that the author is calling on Christians not to take the judgment of the wicked into their own hands, but to wait for God to avenge them....”⁵¹⁸

until ἕως = “...the continuous extent of time up to a point—‘until, to, at last, at length.’”⁵¹⁹ “...suggesting the idea of a goal as well as a time period....”⁵²⁰

coming παρουσία = “...to come to be present at a ... particular place—‘to come, to arrive, to come to be present.’”⁵²¹ Jesus “coming” is often “...the coming of Christ in judgement against Israel....”⁵²²

“In the Olivet Discourse (Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 21) only Matthew uses *parousia*, in vv. 3, 27, 37, and 39. All but the first of those speak of the *parousia* of “the Son of Man.” In the Olivet Discourse the event looming on the horizon, the answer to the questions Jesus was asked about “When?” and “What will be the sign?” (v. 3), is the destruction of Jerusalem in 66–73 AD. The clinching evidence that these texts speak of something that occurred within one generation of their prediction by Jesus is Matthew 24:29: “Immediately after” can only mean very soon after, and “the suffering of *those* days” refers to the things Jesus has just described. Furthermore, 24:33–34 does not speak of just “some” things but “*all* these things” as what will occur *within one generation*. Therefore, Jesus taught that the *parousia* would occur within a generation of the moment he spoke and that it had to do with the sacking of Jerusalem as an act of God against the Jewish leaders for their complicity in violence and their rejection of Jesus as God’s Son and message for the nation (cf. Matthew 21–23). The *parousia* also meant hope and deliverance for Jesus’ followers. So, *parousia* here refers to the presence of God/Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem and the deliverance of the church from that destruction.”⁵²³

“If we take James at his word and add nothing to his words, we discover that he is like Jesus, 2 Peter, and John: the *parousia* is the act of God on earth in judgment against the disobedient (oppressors) that entails, probably, vindication for the righteous, poor, and obedient. I infer this from the cries of the poor heard by the Lord of hosts (v. 4) who then acts in judgment to establish justice. In 5:8–9 we learn that the *parousia* of the Lord is “near” and that it is an act of judgment. James here stands closer to Jesus than to Paul on what *parousia* means. In other words, it most likely refers here to an imminent

⁵¹⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (222). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵¹⁸ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (182). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁵¹⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (644). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵²⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (222). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵²¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (192–193). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵²² Bass, R. E. (2004). *Back to the Future: A study in the book of Revelation* (34). Greenville, SC: Living Hope Press.

⁵²³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (406). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

act of judgment, fulfilled to some degree (I assume) in the destruction of Jerusalem as the act of God (in part) to vindicate the poor messianic community and to judge the rich oppressors of that messianic community.”⁵²⁴

the farmer

“The farmer who prepares a field, sows seed, and then waits for a crop is a very natural illustration of patience (see also 1 Cor. 9:7, 10; 2 Tim. 2:6). He can do little to effect the outcome but must wait and pray for the right rain at the right time.”⁵²⁵

the early and the late rains

“Every reference to “early and later rains” in the OT occurs in a context affirming the faithfulness of the Lord...”⁵²⁶

Jews were “scattered” all over the Mediterranean world, however, “...the phenomenon of early rain (October-November or December-January) and latter rain (March-April), both of which are utterly necessary for proper growth, is limited to the east end of the Mediterranean... [James 5:7].”⁵²⁷ This would suggest that the first recipients of James letter were those in the broader area of “the east end of the Mediterranean”. It is this very area where the “coming of the Lord” is to take place. Jesus’ prophecies in the Gospels [Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21] and James prophecy here are racially and geographic focused—Jews in Palestine.

James 5:8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

patient μακροθυμέω = “(derivative of μακροθυμία ‘patience,’ ...) to demonstrate patience despite difficulties—‘to be patient, to remain patient, to wait patiently.’”⁵²⁸

“In v. 7, James urged believers to *be patient* in view of the *fact* of the Lord’s coming. Now he bases his exhortation to patience and spiritual firmness on the *nearness* of the Lord’s coming.”⁵²⁹

Establish στηρίζω = “...to cause someone to become stronger in the sense of more firm and unchanging in attitude or belief—‘to strengthen, to make more firm.’”⁵³⁰

⁵²⁴ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (407). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵²⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (222). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵²⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (223). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵²⁷ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (183). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁵²⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (306). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵²⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (223). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.” (1 Thessalonians 3:13, ESV)

“When James says he wants the messianists to be strengthened “in your hearts,” he is thinking from the inside out, from the core of their being, both in resolution and confident faith (James 1:26; 3:14; 4:8; 5:5).”⁵³¹

“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” (1 Peter 5:10, ESV)

coming παρουσία = “...to come to be present at a ... particular place—‘to come, to arrive, to come to be present.’”⁵³²

is at hand ἐγγίζω = “...the occurrence of a point of time close to a subsequent point of time—‘to approach, to come near, to approximate.’”⁵³³

“That James does not expect the period to be long is clear when he says the *parousia* of the Lord (cf. 5:7) is near (ἤγγικεν).”⁵³⁴

“The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.” (1 Peter 4:7, ESV)

““But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.” (Luke 21:20, ESV)

“Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28, ESV)

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.” (Revelation 1:3, ESV)

“And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.” (Revelation 22:10, ESV)

⁵³⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (677). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵³¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (410). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵³² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (192–193). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵³³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (631). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵³⁴ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (184). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

“...one can read this text in light of the teachings of Jesus about the *parousia* in a Jewish context and see it as a prediction of the imminent judgment of God, and in this case one would have to think of the sacking of Jerusalem in 70 AD as told of so graphically by Josephus in his *Jewish War*.”⁵³⁵

“This theme, which, of course, is enunciated in many other places in the NT with different words and images, is one of the most controversial in the NT. Many scholars are convinced that Jesus himself predicted that he would return within the lifetime of the disciples, and that the earliest Christians shared this expectation of an immediate *parousia*. Gradually, however, as time went by and the *parousia* did not occur, Christians began to “postpone” the *parousia* to an indefinite time in the future. James, of course, would seem to share the earlier perspective. But this scenario raises an insistent issue for those, like me, who credit the NT with complete truthfulness: Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, and others were wrong about the timing of the *parousia*.”⁵³⁶

James 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

grumble στενάζω = “to groan, to sigh,’ ... to complain in an intensive and excessive manner—‘to complain strongly.’”⁵³⁷

The word means to sigh or groan but when used with “against one another” it takes on the additional idea of grumble or complain.

“We vent the pressure from a stressful work environment or from ill health on our close friends and family. So it would be quite natural if James’s readers, under the pressure of poverty and persecution (cf. 5:1–6), would turn their frustrations on one another.”⁵³⁸

“James clearly uses the verb to describe groaning or complaining against (*kata*) fellow community members. But the broader biblical use of the word again adds a nuance to the word, implying that the groans are the result of oppression.”⁵³⁹

“The grumbling he focused on may well have been the temptation of the hotheaded leaders or persons in the messianic community who thought the way to resolve the oppressions of the rich was to pick up a sword and deal with them directly. James warned them that such action would lead to judgment and that the Judge was at the very door.”⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (412). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵³⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (223–224). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵³⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (432). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵³⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (224). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵³⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (225). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁴⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (416). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

so that you may not be judged

“Judge not, that you be not judged.” (Matthew 7:1, ESV)

the Judge is standing at the door

door θύρα = “...a point of time subsequent to another point of time and indicating imminence, that is to say, the subsequent event is regarded as almost begun—‘soon, very soon.’”⁵⁴¹

“So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates (θύρα).” (Matthew 24:33, ESV)

Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. (Matthew 16:28, NASB95)

Jesus said to him, “You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matthew 26:64, NASB95)

Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:11, NASB95)

For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. (Hebrews 10:37, NASB95)

The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgement and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. (1 Peter 4:7, NASB95)

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. (1 John 2:18, NASB95)

“These and other verses drive home the point with force. Matthew, Paul, James, Peter and John all made the same point—the Lord was coming very soon, indeed in their very generation.”⁵⁴²

These and other verses drive home the point with force. Matthew, Paul, James, Peter and John all made the same point—the Lord was coming very soon, indeed in their very generation. That generation ended in A.D. 70, exactly 40 years from the death of Jesus.

⁵⁴¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (636). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁴² Bass, R. E. (2004). *Back to the Future: A study in the book of Revelation* (28). Greenville, SC: Living Hope Press.

“The Lord “came” to Jerusalem in judgment in the Roman army. James had in mind the sort of thing the prophets had in mind when the Assyrians and Babylonians entered the city and took it captive (2 Kings 17).”⁵⁴³

James 5:10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

example ὑπόδειγμα = “An example or pattern to be imitated in action (John 13:15); in suffering (James 5:10); for warning (Heb. 4:11). A representation or type (Heb. 8:5; 9:23 [cf. 4:11]; 2 Pet. 2:6).”⁵⁴⁴

suffering κακοπάθεια = “...to suffer physical pain, hardship and distress—to suffer distress, to suffer pain, suffering hardship.”⁵⁴⁵

patience μακροθυμία = “a state of emotional calm in the face of provocation or misfortune and without complaint or irritation—‘patience.’”⁵⁴⁶

prophets προφήτης = “...one who proclaims inspired utterances on behalf of God—‘prophet, inspired preacher.’”⁵⁴⁷

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
(Matthew 5:11–12, ESV)

“They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” (Hebrews 11:37–38, ESV)

“James defines the prophets as those “who spoke in the name of the Lord. Their message brought them suffering, and in that suffering they patiently awaited God’s vindication. Hence, prophets, who are everywhere esteemed and held out as God’s special instruments, are examples for the oppressed poor of the messianic community because, though much esteemed, they, too, suffered.”⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (416). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵⁴⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁵⁴⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (286). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁴⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (306). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁴⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (542). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁴⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (417–418). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

James 5:11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Blessed μακαρίζω = “Blessed, possessing the favor of God, that state of being marked by fullness from God.”⁵⁴⁹

“...to be “blessed” is not the same as to be “happy.” The latter speaks to the state of our emotions; the former to the objective state of our relationship with God.”⁵⁵⁰

“*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*” (James 1:12, ESV)

steadfast and **steadfastness ὑπομονή** = “...capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances—‘endurance, being able to endure.’”⁵⁵¹

Job Ἰώβ = Job

“In the midst of his incomprehension, he clung to God and continued to hope in him”⁵⁵²

James’s “has in mind the poor oppressed who cry out to God (like Job), who are not to resort to violence, and who will retain their faith and integrity without always falling from their commitments. It is then the combination of Job’s (impatient!) protests along with his steady resolve to stick to what he believes to be true, even if God does not (!), that makes Job the most suitable character in the Bible for what James has to say.”⁵⁵³

purpose τέλος = end, “...the purpose of an event or state, viewed in terms of its result—‘purpose, intent, goal.’”⁵⁵⁴

“Job confesses that he has finally learned his lesson about the majesty and sovereign goodness of God; and a reference to the “purpose” that God has in suffering would certainly be an important source of comfort for James’s readers. On the other hand, the restorative “end” of Job’s story is of course prominent in the canonical book and would be of equal comfort to James’s readers. Your present suffering, James would be saying,

⁵⁴⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁵⁵⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (227). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁵¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (307). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁵² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (229). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁵³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (421). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵⁵⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (783). New York: United Bible Societies.

is not the “end” of the story; God will transform your situation for good when Christ is revealed in glory.”⁵⁵⁵

how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

“As Job lost it all at the hands of the Enemy, and God restored it all in duplicate, so the oppressed poor can count on God’s mercy and God’s goodness that maybe they, too, will find “the Lord’s end” better than the beginning.”⁵⁵⁶

“Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. The LORD answered and said to his people, “Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations. “I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things. “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and vine give their full yield. “Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. “The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. “You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.” (Joel 2:18–27, ESV)

VIII. CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS (5:12–20)

A. Avoid Oaths (5:12)

James 5:12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

But above all -- Πρὸ πάντων δέ = finally

This phrase can be used in two ways, 1) as the most important thing he has discussed; or 2) “...the phrase may function similarly to the common [to] *loipon* (“as to the rest,” “finally”)....”⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (230). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁵⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (423). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵⁵⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (232). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“It is an “epistolary cliché,” perhaps synonymous with Paul’s “finally” (2 Cor 13:11). It strains logic to see it any other way.”⁵⁵⁸

swear ὀμνύω = “...to affirm the truth of a statement by calling on a divine being to execute sanctions against a person if the statement in question is not true (in the case of a deity taking an oath, his divine being is regarded as validating the statement)—“to swear, to make an oath, oath.”⁵⁵⁹

“When James says *Do not swear*, it is not coarse or vulgar speech he prohibits but invoking God’s name to guarantee the reliability of what a person says.”⁵⁶⁰

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.” (Matthew 5:33–37, ESV)

“Oaths, as we may also call them, are by no means consistently forbidden in Scripture. God himself takes oaths to guarantee the fulfillment of what he has promised (see, e.g., Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:3; 6:13, 16; 7:21). The OT law did not prohibit oaths but demanded that a person be true to the oath he had taken.”⁵⁶¹

“the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us” (Luke 1:73, ESV)

“Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,” (Acts 2:30, ESV)

“So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath,” (Hebrews 6:17, ESV)

“but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.’ ”” (Hebrews 7:21, ESV)

“and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay,” (Revelation 10:6, ESV)

⁵⁵⁸ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (425). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵⁵⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (440). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁶⁰ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (232). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁶¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (232). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure (ἐξορκίζω) you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”” (Matthew 26:63, ESV)

“Adjure ἐξορκίζω = to demand that a person take an oath as to the truth of what is said or as to the certainty that one will carry out the request or command—to put under oath, to insist that one take an oath, to require that one swear.”⁵⁶²

Examples from the OT

“Though they say, “As the LORD lives,” yet they swear falsely.” (Jeremiah 5:2, ESV)

“Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known,” (Jeremiah 7:9, ESV)

“there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.” (Hosea 4:2, ESV)

““Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 3:5, ESV)

Examples from the NT

“For God is my witness (μάρτυς), whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you” (Romans 1:9, ESV)

“But I call God to witness (μάρτυς) against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth.” (2 Corinthians 1:23, ESV)

“For God is my witness (μάρτυς), how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:8, ESV)

“(In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)” (Galatians 1:20, ESV)

“Jeremias may be accurate, though, when he observes that these words are not legal oaths but everyday slogans: “the oaths with which the oriental constantly underlines the truthfulness of his remarks in everyday speech.” Which would then mean that Jesus (and James following in his wake) is advocating truthfulness more than prohibiting legal oath-taking: “Each word is to be unconditionally reliable, without needing any confirmation through an appeal to God.”⁵⁶³

⁵⁶² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (440). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁶³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (428). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“James, then, prohibits not official oaths, such as in courts (for none of the sayings in Jewish or Christian sources touches on these; cf. Windisch, 32–33), but the use of oaths in everyday discourse to prove integrity. The community member ought not to use oaths, for his yes or no should be totally honest, making oaths unnecessary; truthfulness is the issue. Since God holds one to this standard, oaths are dangerous, for they make some speech more honest than other speech. Thus they must be avoided to keep this deceptive idea from bringing God’s judgment (in the final judgment, as the context shows) upon one when he is less than truthful. The demand of the church was for absolute truthfulness in all speech, nothing more and nothing less (cf. 2 Cor. 1:15–2:4, where Paul defends himself against the charge of being less than truthful).”⁵⁶⁴

“...people can be condemned for not showing mercy (2:13), for grumbling (5:9), and for the inappropriate use of oaths (5:12). Each of these, on closer inspection, emerges from the depth of his theology: from a loving life, from a nonviolent approach to resolving one’s economic situation, and from a heart that tells true words. These are not the concerns of austere severity but of one who thinks messianists ought to follow Jesus and be transformed in the community.”⁵⁶⁵

B. Prayer and Healing (5:13–18)

“Prayer is clearly the topic of this paragraph, being mentioned in every verse.”⁵⁶⁶

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

“James thus brings us full circle at the end of his letter, back to the “trials of many kinds” that he introduced as a basic community problem in 1:2.”⁵⁶⁷

suffering κακοπαθέω = “...to suffer physical pain, hardship and distress—‘to suffer distress, to suffer pain, suffering hardship.”⁵⁶⁸

“As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.” (James 5:10, ESV)

“The verb *kakopatheō* appears ... in 2 Timothy (2:9; 4:5), where it appears to describe physical persecution.”⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁴ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (190–191). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

⁵⁶⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (429). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵⁶⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (234). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁶⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (234). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁶⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (286). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁶⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (432). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound!” (2 Timothy 2:9, ESV)

“As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:5, ESV)

“As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.” (James 5:10, ESV)

“If one looks into James for concrete evidence for suffering, one would have to think of the various trials of 1:2–4, the implication of oppression in 1:9–11, the need for perseverance in 1:12–14, and the suffering of the marginalized in 1:26–27; 2:1–4, 14–17; and 5:1–6. And the appearance of the cognate noun in 5:10 (“suffering and patience”) suggests a connection with the marginalized who were enduring oppression at the hands of the rich farmers. Thus, “suffering” in 5:13a most likely refers to the suffering of the poor at the hand of the abusively powerful, and it would also describe the suffering inherent to persevering patience.⁵⁷⁰

pray προσεύχομαι = “...to speak to or to make requests of God—‘to pray, to speak to God, to ask God for, prayer.’”⁵⁷¹ James 5:13, 14, 17, 18.

“I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling,” (1 Timothy 2:8, ESV)

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” (Romans 8:26, ESV)

cheerful εύθυμέω = “...to be or to become encouraged and hence cheerful—‘to be encouraged, to take courage, to become encouraged.’”⁵⁷² “(euthymeō) connotes a state of the emotions rather than an outward circumstance.”⁵⁷³

“The verb occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Acts 27:22 and 25, where it denotes the “peace of mind” that Paul encourages his fellow passengers to have despite the raging storm that was tearing apart their ship....”⁵⁷⁴

“Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.” (Acts 27:22, ESV)

⁵⁷⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (432–433). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵⁷¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (408). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁷² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (304). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁷³ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (235). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁷⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (235–236). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.” (Acts 27:25, ESV)

Let him sing praise ψάλλω = “...to sing songs of praise, with the possible implication of instrumental accompaniment (in the NT often related to the singing of OT psalms)—‘to sing, to sing a psalm, to sing a song of praise, to sing praises.’”⁵⁷⁵

“addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,” (Ephesians 5:19, ESV)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16, ESV)

James 5:14 *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

sick ἀσθενέω = “...to be sick and, as a result, in a state of weakness and incapacity—‘to be sick, to be ill, to be disabled.’”⁵⁷⁶

elders πρεσβύτερος = “...a person of responsibility and authority in matters of socio-religious concerns, both in Jewish and Christian societies—‘elder.’”⁵⁷⁷ “...an old man, an ambassador. Older, aged; as a subst. an elder, a senior.”⁵⁷⁸

“Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders (πρεσβύτερος) of the church to come to him.” (Acts 20:17, ESV) “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (ἐπίσκοπος-bishops), to care (ποιμαίνω-pastor/shepherd) for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28, ESV)

“Elders were those spiritual leaders who were recognized for their maturity in the faith. Therefore, it is natural that they, with their deep and rich experience, should be called on to pray for healing.”⁵⁷⁹

“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” (James 3:1, ESV)

Church ἐκκλησία

⁵⁷⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (401). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁷⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (269). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁷⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (541). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁷⁸ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁵⁷⁹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (238). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.” (James 1:1, ESV)

“For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly [συναγωγή], and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in,” (James 2:2, ESV)

anointing ἀλείφω = “To rub, to cover over, besmear....”⁵⁸⁰

“And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.” (Mark 6:13, ESV)

oil ἔλαιον = “...oil extracted from the fruit of olive trees—‘olive oil’ (used as food, medicine, for burning in lamps, and as perfume when mixed with sweet-smelling substances).”⁵⁸¹

“He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.” (Luke 10:34, ESV)

“Considering this background, we might suppose that James is urging the elders to come to the bedside of the sick armed with both spiritual and natural resources — with prayer and with medicine. Both are administered with the Lord’s authority, and both together can be used by him in healing the sick.”⁵⁸²

“By the twelfth century, the terms ‘extreme unction’ and ‘sacrament of the dying’ are found and the anointing is restricted to those whose imminent death seems certain. In the thirteenth century, the ceremony of anointing was declared to be one of the ‘seven sacraments’ instituted by Christ himself, so that the Council of Trent (1545 onwards) can pronounce an anathema on anyone who denies that extreme unction is ‘properly a sacrament, instituted by Christ ... promulgated by the blessed apostle James’, or who denies that the ‘sacred unction’ confers grace and remits sin, or who thinks that the ceremony is ‘repugnant to the sentiment of the blessed apostle James’, or that the elders to whom James refers ‘are not priests who have been ordained by a bishop’. The Jerusalem Bible may be exercising a diplomatic caution when it goes no further than to say (on the present passage) that ‘the tradition that these prayers and this anointing ... are the origin of the Church’s “Sacrament of the Sick” (or Holy Unction) was endorsed by the council of Trent’. The second Vatican Council, however, continues to treat ‘Extreme Unction’ as one of the ‘other sacraments’ and, while urging that it is not ‘for those only who are at the point of death’, says that ‘as soon as any one of the faithful

⁵⁸⁰ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁵⁸¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (77). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁸² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (239). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the appropriate time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived’.”⁵⁸³

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

“It is prayer—not the anointing—which leads to the healing of the sick person.”⁵⁸⁴

prayer εὐχή = “The basic meaning of the word *euché* is wish or vow.”⁵⁸⁵ “When we pray to God, we wish that He would intervene to permit something in our lives that we feel is proper and right.”⁵⁸⁶

“After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow.” (Acts 18:18, ESV)

“Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow,” (Acts 21:23, ESV)

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:5–6, ESV)

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” (James 4:3, ESV)

faith πίστις = “...to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance—‘to believe in, to have confidence in, to have faith in, to trust, faith, trust.’”⁵⁸⁷

Faith is used 16 times in James, almost always associated with works. Perhaps we could translate this as “the prayer of a faith that works.” The prayers of others that do not have a faith that works would be of no value.

“The faith is that of the one who prays, i.e. of the elders who have *ex officio* healing power, not that of the sick person (who may or may not be in a condition to exercise much of anything).”⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸³ Motyer, J. A. (1985). *The message of James: The tests of faith*. The Bible Speaks Today (191). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

⁵⁸⁴ Martin, R. P. (1998). *Vol. 48: James*. Word Biblical Commentary (209). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

⁵⁸⁵ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁵⁸⁶ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁵⁸⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (375). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁸⁸ Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (194). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

“And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2:5, ESV)

“And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.” (Mark 5:34, ESV)

“And Jesus said to him, “ ‘If you can!’ All things are possible for one who believes.” (Mark 9:23, ESV)

“And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.” (Mark 10:52, ESV)

“He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well,” (Acts 14:9, ESV)

save σώζω = “To save, deliver, make whole, preserve safe from danger, loss, destruction.”⁵⁸⁹ “The basic meaning of the verb *sōzō* is to rescue from peril, to protect, keep alive. *Sōzō* involves the preservation of life, either physical or spiritual.”⁵⁹⁰

“The word for *make ... well* in Greek is *sōzō*, which is usually translated “save” and often refers to spiritual salvation in the NT....”⁵⁹¹ “Thus, even if the prayer of faith does not bring healing, it may bring salvation from sin.”⁵⁹²

sick κάμνω = “...to be ill, with a possible implication of being worn-out or wasting away—“to be sick, to be very sick.”⁵⁹³

raise up ἐγείρω = “To rise, to have risen.”⁵⁹⁴

“so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them.” (Acts 5:15, ESV)

“And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.” (1 Corinthians 12:28, ESV)

⁵⁸⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁵⁹⁰ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁵⁹¹ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (242). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁹² Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (243). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁹³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (269). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁵⁹⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

“Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus.” (2 Timothy 4:20, ESV)

if he has committed sins

“That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.” (1 Corinthians 11:30, ESV)

“...sin and sickness were often closely associated in the ancient world.”⁵⁹⁵ But the use of “if” shows that there is no necessary connection between sickness and sin.

“And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.” (John 9:2–3, ESV)

“...the principle was in place: sickness correlates with sin, health with faithfulness. *But not always.*”⁵⁹⁶

““You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (John 14:14). To ask “in Jesus’ name” means not simply to utter his name, but to take into account his will. Only those requests offered “in that will” are granted. Prayer for healing offered in the confidence that God will answer that prayer *does* bring healing; but only when it is God’s will to heal will that faith, itself a gift of God, be present.”⁵⁹⁷

he will be forgiven

“And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”” (Mark 2:5, ESV)

There seems to be no question as to whether the sin will be forgiven or not; it is assumed it will be.

James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

“Both confession of sins — precisely because sin can sometimes be responsible for illness — and prayer are necessary so that the healing of physical illnesses in the community can take place.”⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁵ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (243). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁹⁶ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (444). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁵⁹⁷ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (245). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁵⁹⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (246). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

confess *ἔξομολογέω* = "...to assent. To confess, admit, profess or express agreement with. Confession to God involves concurring with Him in His verdict."⁵⁹⁹

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel, When a man or woman commits any of the sins that people commit by breaking faith with the LORD, and that person realizes his guilt, he shall confess his sin that he has committed. And he shall make full restitution for his wrong, adding a fifth to it and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong." (Numbers 5:5–7, ESV)

to one another

"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." (1 Peter 4:9, ESV)

"See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone." (1 Thessalonians 5:15, ESV)

"Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices" (Colossians 3:9, ESV)

"submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Ephesians 5:21, ESV)

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32, ESV)

The command is to confess to "one another" presumably to the person you have sinned against and need to make restitution to. It is not a command to confess to a stranger or a priest.

James's words then are not a new instruction; they speak of an old practice of admitting one's guilt before God and others and now urge the same on the messianic community. This confession of sins to one another was not a substitute for confession to God. What sins James had in mind might be discerned from the letter. Surely it would involve mistreatment of the poor (2:1–17), verbal sins prompted by ambition (3:1–4:12), violence against one another (1:19–21; 4:1–4; 5:7–11), judgmentalism (4:11–12), and sins prompted by greed (4:13–5:6). No doubt one could multiply the sorts of things the messianists did, but at least these were in mind.⁶⁰⁰

pray *εὔχομαι* = "The verb originally and literally means to speak out, utter aloud, and thus to express a wish."⁶⁰¹

one another

⁵⁹⁹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁶⁰⁰ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (446). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁶⁰¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

“Just as the messianists confess sins to one another, so also they practice intercession for one another’s needs.”⁶⁰²

prayer δέησις = “...to make known one’s particular need. Want, need. In the NT, supplication or prayer for particular benefits, petition....”⁶⁰³

righteous person

“The *righteous man*, or “person” (the Greek masculine form *dikaïou* is clearly generic), is simply the believer, the person who is “righteous” by virtue of receiving forgiveness through Jesus and is therefore part of the people of God.”⁶⁰⁴

healed ἰάομαι = “...to cause someone to become well again after having been sick—to heal, to cure, to make well, healing.”⁶⁰⁵

“That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”” (Matthew 8:16–17, ESV)

James 5:17 *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.*
James 5:18 *Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.*

Elijah

“James caps off his encouragement to pray (vv. 13–16) with an example of a “righteous man” whose prayer was “powerful and effective”: Elijah.”⁶⁰⁶

a man with a nature like ours

“It may be tempting to etymologize this term into “humans with similar *passions*,” but the meaning is closer to “mortals like you.”⁶⁰⁷

“James emphasizes that every believer has access to the kind of effectiveness in prayer that he is illustrating here.”⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (447). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁶⁰³ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

⁶⁰⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (247). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁶⁰⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (268). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁶⁰⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (247). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁶⁰⁷ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (450). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

and he prayed fervently

He “prayed and prayed....”

for three years and six months

“...the same number is used elsewhere for a period of judgment (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 11:2–3; 12:14)....”⁶⁰⁹

“And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.” (Daniel 12:7, ESV)

James 5:19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, James 5:20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

wanders *πλανάω* = “...to no longer believe what is true, but to start believing what is false—to stray from the truth, to wander from the truth, to go astray from.”⁶¹⁰

“Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” (James 1:16–17, ESV)

“It is possible that James has in mind the sorts of sins one finds throughout the letter, including lack of trust, temptations to violence, lack of compassion on the poor and marginalized, speech sins, and temptations to avarice....”⁶¹¹

from the truth

“For James and his Jewish world, “the truth” is both *what* one knows and *how* one lives; truth is the wedding of theology/gospel and praxis.”⁶¹²

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James 1:18, ESV)

⁶⁰⁸ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (247). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁶⁰⁹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (451). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁶¹⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (373). New York: United Bible Societies.

⁶¹¹ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (454). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁶¹² McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (454). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.” (James 3:14, ESV)

“By speaking of someone who “wanders from the truth,” then, James refers to one who has veered away from the truth of the gospel found in Jesus Christ, the way of life rooted in Jesus Christ, and the community that embodies that way of life.”⁶¹³

save his soul from death

““Death” here, as commonly in James and almost always in the NT where sin is the issue, is ultimate “spiritual” death — the condemnation to eternal damnation that results from unforgiven sin....”⁶¹⁴

“Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21, ESV)

“There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?” (James 4:12, ESV)

“The restorer’s pastoral actions lead toward two results: he saves a wanderer from death and leads the wanderer toward forgiveness of sins.”⁶¹⁵

cover a multitude of sins.

“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.” (Proverbs 10:12, ESV)

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8, ESV)

“Probably, then, James refers to the spiritual benefits enjoyed by the sinner who is turned from his sin in both descriptions at the end of v. 20.”⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (455). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁶¹⁴ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (250). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁶¹⁵ McKnight, S. (2011). *The Letter of James*. The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (459). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

⁶¹⁶ Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (251). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

The Coming of the Lord in the Book of Revelation

The theme of the Book of Revelation is *the coming of Christ*. But that does not necessarily clear everything up, as there are at least six types of *comings* of God mentioned in the Bible. It is essential that we properly understand and, most importantly, distinguish each of them.

THE COMING IN THEOPHANIES

The *first* type of coming of Christ is His coming in Theophanies in the Old Testament.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8, NASB95)

Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. (Genesis 17:1, NASB95)

THE COMING AT BETHLEHEM

The *second* type of coming of Christ is His incarnation coming at Bethlehem. The Gospels tell the story.

'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.' (Matthew 2:6, NASB95)

In addition, John mentions it in his first epistle using a different but related word.

You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:5–8, NASB95)

Since the point is obvious and not under doubt by Christians we will not belabor the point. Yet it was a coming by Christ.

THE FINAL COMING AT THE END OF TIME

The *third* type of coming is His Final Coming at the end of time and the only one many Christians consider when discussing this topic and this book of the Bible. We find it mentioned in several verses in the New Testament.

They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11, NASB95)

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:13–17, NASB95)

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (1 Corinthians 15:20–26, NASB95)

This coming is yet in our future for it is the coming at the end of time. More need not be said on this topic at this point, since it is the most familiar of the comings of God.

THE COMING TO THE FATHER - THE ASCENSION

The *fourth* type of coming is Jesus coming to God the Father in heaven. From our point of view we see it as a going from earth to heaven, but the Scripture pictures it as a coming of the Son to the Father after His resurrection and at His ascension.

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. (Daniel 7:13, NASB95)

This occurred after the resurrection and at His ascension.

A SPIRIT COMING

The *fifth* type of coming is a Spirit coming.

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:16–18, NASB95)

This occurred at Pentecost with the descent of the Holy Spirit.

THE COMING IN JUDGEMENT

The *sixth* type of coming is a coming of God in judgement. Many examples of this type of coming are found in Scripture.

Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent. (Revelation 2:5, NASB95)

The Book of Revelation is about a judgement *coming* of Christ; as simple as that may seem, in fact, it is not simple because this *coming* of Christ is not His Second Coming. It is, instead, a judgement coming against Jerusalem, Israel and as seen in the above verse, His Church. It is typical of many such sign-comings found in the Old Testament. They may be typical and common to Scripture but most Christians have never heard of them. “Cloud-comings are frequent prophetic emblems in the Old Testament. They serve as indicators of divine visitations of judgement upon ancient, historical nations. God ‘comes’ in judicial judgement upon Israel’s enemies in general (Psa. 18:7–15; 104:3), upon Egypt (Isa. 19:1), upon disobedient Israel in the Old Testament (Joel 2:1, 2), and so forth.”³⁷

A COMING JUDGEMENT AGAINST ISRAEL

Jesus Himself made this very point that He was coming in judgement against Israel in His earthly ministry.

“Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?” They said to Him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.” “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. (Matthew 21:40–41, 43–45, NASB95)

Here Jesus clearly promises He will *come*, but it will be a coming unto judgement. “Our Lord here causes them to pass that sentence of destruction upon themselves which was literally executed about forty years afterwards by the Roman armies.”³⁸ Consider also these passages.

...and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire. (Matthew 22:6–7, NASB95)

Which is exactly what He did in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. Our point in this section is that there is a coming judgement against Israel, which is what Jesus predicted here.

“You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?” Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some

of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth [land], from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' " (Matthew 23:33–39, NASB95)

How could He have made it clearer? He was coming in judgment upon the very generation that He was speaking to.

In summary, Revelation is about the coming of Christ in judgement against Israel, which will be discussed, in great detail later in this commentary.

Bass, R. E. (2004). *Back to the Future: A study in the book of Revelation* (34). Greenville, SC: Living Hope Press.