

The Epistle of James

A Commentary on the Greek Text

Bryan Findlayson

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Preface

My mother instructed me that it was time to have our first daughter "done"; a very Australian term for having a child Baptized. I followed her instruction, as one does with our mothers, and booked an interview with the minister at the local Church of England Church. I didn't attend, but it was my church - an oft used phrase. That's why the church is affectionately called CofE; we attend at Christmas and Easter, if you're lucky! During the interview, he asked me whether I believed in Jesus. Well, of course, I didn't, and so he asked if I would read a book he would like to give me. I thought that was a reasonable trade for his service, and so I agreed. The book turned out to be a small pamphlet called "Becoming a Christian" by John Stott. So, I read his book and, shock horror, I gave my life to Jesus. Some time later, when I told him what had happened, he gave me another book called "The Way".

As with the first book, I devoured the second book. I still have it in tatters on my bookshelf. It suffers from the invention called *perfect binding* which is anything but perfect. The book explained how to live as a Christian, and it was helpful in the first years of my faith. Yet, at the same time, it led me down the fruitless path of pietism, of sanctification by obedience. I guess that Luther suspected the same of the book of James, that it was somehow tainted like that, a kind of *getting in with God by being good* type of book. Of course, read with Paul's epistles, James is anything but tainted.

Many years ago, a friend of mine told me that he always gave new believers a copy of the book of James. So yes! James is the Bible's version of "The Way", minus the heresy. James is the Bible book of practical advice for believers as they try to live-out their faith in a broken world.

It is my hope that these notes aid your task of knowing the mind of Christ.

Bryan Findlayson, 2021.

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Notes

Commentary Intention: This exegetical commentary aims to provide a foundation for expository preaching, assisting fellow pastors with *rusty* Greek to come to grips with the text. The Greek level is college years 2/3, with a focus on syntax to aid an understanding of the text - accents are only used where necessary. Highly technical issues are avoided, with the exposition primarily guided by the expressed views of respected published commentators. Where possible, the commentary is structured to conform with the readings of the Revised Common Lectionary.

Format: RCL study units - synopsis, context, structure, interpretation, homiletical suggestion and exegesis: the Greek word or phrase; a limited parsing; the English text (NIV and/or NIV11); a literal English translation; syntax where necessary; comment, often with a published translation.

Copyright: No copyright provision covers this commentary, nor is citing expected. Where citing is required for academic purposes; Findlayson, *The Epistle of James; A Commentary on the Greek Text, 2021*.

Abbreviations: See Series Addendum.

Print: Format; A5. For mono laser "render colour black."

Greek: Nestle-Aland / UBS 4 Greek New Testament.

Greek Glossary: See Series Addendum.

Inclusive language: Numerous older translations and paraphrases are used throughout the studies to enhance the meaning of the text. Latitude is given to sexist language, although alterations are sometimes made to the original text.

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Author: Findlayson, Bryan. Anglican Diocese of Sydney, Australia. b 1942. MTC. ThL 1970, MC Dip (Hons) 1971; P 1972 by Abp Syd; C Narrabeen 1971; C Cronulla 1972-1975; C Engadine. 1975-1978; CIC Helensburgh 1978-89; Sabbatical 1989-1990; R Cronulla 1990-1999; Retired.

Dedication: To my children, Marelle, Paul and Justyne.

Typos: Forgive me! I keep finding clangers, but at some point you have to give up.

Commentaries on James

Adam, HGT, Baylor, 2013. G
Adamson, NICNT, 1976. 3D
Blackman, Torch, 1957. 1D
Blomberg, ZECNT, 2008. 3
Brosend, NCBC, 2018. 3
Dauids, NIGTC, 1982. 5
Dauids, NIBC, 1983. 2
Dibelius, Hermeneia, 1975. *German ed., 1964.* 5
Hamann, ChiRho, 1980. 2DR
Hiebert, Moody, 1979. 3
Hort, Macmillan, 1909, *Cambridge digital, 2009.* 4GD
Johnson, Anchor, 1995. 4
Kistemaker, Bakerk, 1996. 4
Laws, Blacks, 1980. 3
Mayor, Macmillan, 1913, *reprint Zondervan, 1954.* 5D
Martin, Word, 1988. 5
McCartney, BECNT, 2009. 4
McKnight, NICNT, 2011.4
Mitton, Marshall Morgan & Scott. 1966. 3DR
Moffatt, MNTC, 1928. 2D
Moo, Tyndale, 1985. 2R
Moo, Pillar, 2000. 4R
Moo, EGGNT, 2013.G
Reicke, Anchor, 1964. 3D
Ropes, ICC, 1916. 5D
Ross, NICNT (London), 1954. 3D
Sidebottom, NCB, 1967. 2D
Tasker, Tyndale, 1956. 2D
Vlachos, EGGNT, 2013. G
Williams, CBC, 1965. 1D

Key:

Level of complexity: **1**, non-technical, to **5**, requiring a knowledge of Greek.
Deceased: **D**. For publications no longer in print, search bookfinder.com
Other identifiers: Recommended **R**; Greek Technical **G**; Theology **T**

The above is only a selection of some of the English Bible Commentaries on James

Analysis

Proposition

Genuine faith yields good fruit

Salutation

Address and greeting, 1:1

Introduction

1. The marks of a wise believer, 1:2-27

- i] Christian maturity, 1:2-18
- ii] Doers of the Word, 1:19-27

Argument Proper

2. Poverty and Generosity, 2:1-26

- i] Favouritism is destructive, 2:1-13
- ii] Faith without works is a dead thing, 2:14-26

3. Taming the tongue, 3:1-4:12

- i] The destructive power of the tongue, 3:1-12
- ii] Disputes are of worldly wisdom; peace is from above, 3:13-18
- iii] Disputes derive from worldly passions, 4:1-6
- iv] Humility and slander, 4:7-12

4. Worldliness and wealth, 4:13-5:6

- i] The danger of arrogance and self-sufficiency, 4:13-17
- ii] The danger of wealth, 5:1-6

5. General matters, 5:7-12

Patience in the face of suffering, and oaths, 5:7-12

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6. Forgiveness and restoration, 5:13-20

The prayer of faith and restoring an erring brother, 5:13-20

Introduction

The letter of James is a highly practical work, simple and imaginative in its teaching. For this reason, it is a very popular book with believers, although a book that has stirred controversy. Those who don't like the book, and Martin Luther was one of its strongest critics, argue that it promotes justification by works. Such a view, of course, is quite unfair. James simply proclaims that "faith is not true faith unless it is the motive power that produces Christian living", Mitton.

Structure

In Luther's judgment, James is a chaotic work where the author just "throws things together". Modern commentators have tended to move from this rather negative view. Some, like Dibelius, see a semblance of structure (an examination of collected sayings on particular subjects and treatises on particular issues), while others, like Davids, or McCartney argue for a highly organized thematic work. Others head for the middle ground, for example, Moo identifies some key themes (testing, suffering) supported by supplementary themes (wisdom, Godly speech, faith, humility, the law, ..), which themes are intertwined in a series of major and minor relatively independent exhortations. So, it seems best to approach James as a thematic collection of sayings / instructions on Christian living, cf., Davids:

Proposition.

Genuine faith yields good fruit

A Practical Guide for Christian Living

Salutation, 1.1

1. The marks of a wise believer, 1:2-27
2. Poverty and generosity, 2:1-26
3. Taming the tongue, 3:1-4:12
4. Worldliness and wealth, 4:13-5:6
5. General matters, 5:7-12
6. Forgiveness and restoration, 5:13-20

Author and date

Although the letter is ascribed to James, the identify of this person is unknown. Early Christian tradition has the letter written by James of Jerusalem, "the Lord's brother", but this has been questioned in recent times. It is often argued that the writer is not well acquainted with Paul's doctrine of justification and that therefore the letter must be a late composition, say 80AD (it seems likely

that Clement, writing in 95AD, has a knowledge of James). Then again, it could be early, say 40AD, written at a time when the church was primarily Jewish and as yet unaware of Paul's understanding of justification. If James of Jerusalem is the author, then the letter was composed before 62AD, the year James was martyred.

Occasion

It is generally accepted that James wrote primarily to Jewish believers who, as the NIV puts it, were "scattered among the nations", i.e., believing Jews of the diaspora aligned to Hellenistic Judaism. None-the-less, Christianity in the first century was very Jewish and so the language used by James does not necessarily exclude Gentiles. There is evidence that the recipients are facing persecution, but their difficulties are often overstated. James seems more concerned with the world getting into the church, than of the world oppressing it.

Genre

Up till recent times, James was classed as a general letter addressed to no specific church, nor addressed to a specific situation. As such, it is more an ethical treatise than a letter. James is virtually a collection of ethical exhortations (sayings and sermons) arranged in a number of literary segments with limited internal relationships and virtually no external relationship (other than a common theme). Some commentators have argued that James is a highly organized thematic work, but this seems overly optimistic. James is best classified as wisdom literature, in fact, what we have in James is the New Testament version of Old Testament Wisdom literature, a treatise in the tradition of Proverbs.

Purpose

James sets out to guide believers in the practice of their Christian profession by providing a wise and practical guide on Christian living. We live in a pagan world, such that our faith will constantly be tested by secularizing influences. So, James encourages his readers to take onboard the ethics of God's Word, to live it out rather than adapt to the ways of the world, a world inclined to show favouritism, to engage in destructive talk; to quarrel; to covet; to pursue unbridled pleasure; A faith that does not issue in deeds is dead, so James guides his readers with a practical manual for a life of faith; a how-to do it book on resisting evil, being patient in suffering, speaking the truth, prayer, James sets out to help his readers put their faith into practice and so find a path for living wisely in a world falling apart.

Wisdom in the book of James

Wisdom is a religious philosophy of practical knowledge for survival in an imperfect world. It was particularly influential in the ancient Middle East up to the first century AD. Its primary principal is *karma*, cause and effect - good follows good, evil follows evil. In the Old Testament, the best example of Wisdom is Proverbs. It provides the practical advice for a child of God to live out their faith in an imperfect, and at times, hostile environment. Its principal rule, repeated over and over again, is that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom - wisdom starts with a person's relationship with God. From that starting point, a person who acts wisely will see good follow good and evil follow evil - right (reward, blessings) follows the right acts of the righteous. Of course, life is not so simple, because evil often follows good. The book of Job wrestles with this very problem, and provides a simple solution: ultimately, good follows good because God is a good and all-powerful God, and so, when faced with evil times, the child of God must continue to trust that God will do right by the righteous person who acts rightly. Ecclesiastes adds a touch of nuance to this philosophy by reminding the child of God of the vanity of the good / reward / blessings of this age. The blessings of life in God's world are wondrous, and indeed, are to be enjoyed, but let the child of God remember, it's all dust blown on the wind - a vanity of vanities.

This then is James' perspective; James gives us a Christian version of Wisdom. It is not a book on how to become a Christian; it's not about getting to heaven by being good. Nor is it a book on how to earn holiness. Through Jesus, a believer is already holy. James is a book on how to be holy within the limitations of our imperfection; it is a book on practical advice for life in a broken world.

James' Christian version of Wisdom assumes the basic principle that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, ie., when it comes to living in God's world, the starting point is a personal relationship with the living God through faith in Jesus. Given the obvious, and within a Wisdom frame, James sets out to explain how a 1st century believer, right before God, can live wisely / rightly and so see right / reward / blessing follow, if not here, then certainly in heaven. And yes, sometimes evil follows good, but God will ultimately set all things right. And yes, in the end, the good of this age is transitory.

The issue of reward

The issue that bothers believers today, particularly for those from a reformed background, is the notion of reward. Underlining the fact that God is a just God (a right acting God who sets all things right), the Old Testament reveals the

principle of reward, of payment for good or evil, but with the qualification that good or evil is not automatically materially rewarded, cf., Deut.28. The New Testament emphasizes this qualification, particularly evident in Jesus encounters with the Pharisees. Yet, although divine mercy transcends reward in the gospel, the principle remains, and is particularly evident in James - right follows the right acts of the righteous, if not here, certainly in heaven. We know that all our right acts do not equal righteousness in the sight of God; righteousness is a gift of God through faith in the faithfulness / righteousness of Christ - we know that, and of course, James knew it. Yet, Wisdom tells us that every act has a consequence, either here or there, either for good or for evil, so let the wise person act wisely. James tells us how.

And what is the reward for the right acts of the righteous? At a day-to-day level, *karma* will often apply; good tends to follow good; evil tends to follow evil. And what about heavenly reward, that accumulated "treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys"? A Dr. Who fan may argue that the reward amounts to greater responsibilities evidenced in the power and size of their Tardis, and maybe there's a smidgin of truth in that, cf., Matt.25:14:30. Yet, in the end, there can be no greater reward than to hear the words "Well done thou good and faithful servant" - words declared by the Ancient of Days to Jesus as he leads us through the gates of the eternal city.

Faith and works

Luther was very suspicious of James, since he felt that James undermined Paul's doctrine of justification by faith apart from works of the law, Rom.3:28. When we dig into the teachings of Paul and James, we find that they are not diametrically opposed. At the centre of James' argument is his contention that genuine faith issues in godliness, "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead", 2:20. Paul would agree, cf., Gal.5:6.

Given the new perspective on Paul promoted by Sanders, Wright and Dunn, there is the suspicion that James, like so many of the Jewish teachers that Jesus had to contend with, was a nomist, ie., he teaches that a person gets into the kingdom by grace through faith, but stays there, and progresses their standing there, by obedience. In Galatians and Romans, Paul addresses the heresy of nomism, a heresy promoted by the members of the circumcision party (the judaizers). These pietistic Christians believed that although a person is justified (set right before God, judged covenant compliant) on the basis of Christ's faithfulness ("faith of Christ") appropriated through faith, law-obedience ("works of the law" - obedience to the law of Moses) is essential to restrain sin and shape holiness (sanctify) for a believer to move forward in the Christian life and so appropriate the fullness of new life in Christ (the promised Abrahamic blessings

- the gift of the Spirit, etc.). As far as Paul is concerned, "a person is not justified by observance of the law, but rather by faith in the faithfulness of Christ (the atonement). For this reason, we have put our trust in Christ Jesus so that our justification might rest on Christ's faithfulness rather than our own", Galatians 2:15.

So, is James a nomist? James is not devaluing faith to promote law-obedience for blessing, ie., he is not a nomist. If anything, he is addressing lawless believers. The problem James confronts is anti-nomism, libertarianism. Yet even so, it is not a libertarianism driven by an anti-Pauline theology, but messy ethics compromised by the pressure of a corrupt secular environment. James sets out to explain how to live wisely for Jesus in a world rampant with temptations to sin, so he puts the case that it generally goes well for a person who applies God's manual for life. Anyone who thinks it's going to go well for them because they have faith, apart from deeds, is a fool. A genuine faith issues in wise deeds; "faith without works is dead", 2:26.

In summary:

James' thesis:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = BLESSINGS = **WORKS**

Paul's thesis:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = **BLESSINGS** = WORKS

Paul addresses those who believe that

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS + **WORKS** = BLESSINGS

James addresses those inclined to believe that

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = BLESSINGS - (minus) **WORKS**

Terms defined:

These definitions are Pauline, and despite the protests of Luther and friends, it is more than likely that James would happily affirm them. None-the-less, given that the issues facing James' community are different to those of Paul's, James will often use these words with a different contextual meaning, eg., "righteousness", with its theological sense, "a justified state of being right with God", can drift toward "conduct which is pleasing to God"; so also "faith", with the sense "to believe in, rest upon", can drift toward "the Christian faith, sound doctrine", ie., what we believe in.

FAITH: **ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν**, "from the faith / faithfulness of Christ toward our faith response." Faith entails the linkage of **εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστευσαμέν**, "we have come to believe in Jesus Christ" (our

faith / reliance upon the grace of God), and this operative **δια πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ**, "through the faith of Christ" / by means of the faith / faithfulness of Christ, Gal.2:16. So, FAITH = Christ's faith / faithfulness (his atoning sacrifice on our behalf) and our faith-response.

RIGHTEOUSNESS: Right standing before God, "covenant compliance", Dumbrell, "uprightness", Fitzmyer; "(the state of) rectification", Martyn. Gaining the condition of righteousness is expressed by the verb "justified", *just-if-I'd never sinned*, which word takes one or all of the following shades of meaning:

- "confer a righteous status on", Cranfield;
- judge as covenant compliant, "judged in the right with God", Dumbrell, "count/treat as right/righteous", Barrett;
- "set right before God", Bruce, "rectify", Martyn. (NP = a divine declaration of covenant membership).

BLESSINGS: The promised blessings of the covenant / the fullness of new life in Christ.

WORKS: Paul, following Jesus' lead, uses the term to describe submission to the law of Moses, extending to God's law in general (NP = Jewish badges of covenant membership, eg. Sabbath law, circumcision), which law serves the following ends:

- to expose sin and so reinforce a reliance on divine grace expedited through faith;
- to guide the life of a child of God.

Grammatical Note:

This corrected edition uses a descriptive classification for a genitive of source, rather than an ablative classification. See *A Note on the Genitive* in the **Series Addendum**, page 69.

Commentary

1:1

1. Introduction, 1:1

Address and greeting

Argument

The address and greeting are truncated. It follows the standard Greek form for the age, identifying the sender and the addressees, concluding with a greeting. Interestingly, the greeting is secular, so unlike the normal Christian greeting found in the New Testament epistles, it lacks "grace", "mercy" / "peace". James calls himself a "servant / slave", and addresses his letter to "the twelve tribes in the Dispersion."

Issues

i] Context: In such a diverse collection of sayings and mini-sermons, it is very hard to find a contextual theme. Modern commentators tend to argue for an overall contextual theme. So, for example, Bowman argues that salvation is the unifying theme, salvation as it relates to three particular areas of the Christian walk. First, how a believer is saved through the trials and temptations of life, then the ethical implications that apply for a saved person, and finally the eternal aspects of salvation.

Salvation from life's trials and temptations, 1:2-27;

Salvation's implications for social and personal living, 2:1-5:6

Salvation in the light of eternity, 5:7-20.

Both Davids and McCartney also recognize a unifying theme controlling the structure of the letter. McCartney sees it as *genuine faith*, with chapter 1 outlining the life of faith, and then 2:1-5:16 presenting as a series of discourses serving to develop that theme:

Discourse 1: Faith, favouritism and the law, 2:1-13;

Discourse 2: Faith, wisdom and speech ethics, 3:1-18;

Discourse 3: Strife in the church and a lack of faith, 4:1-12;

Discourse 4: Looking to God, 5:7-18.

McCartney proposes an Interjection at 4:13-5:6, oracles of warning to merchants and landlords, and a concluding exhortation, 5:19-20.

At the other end of the spectrum is a commentator like Mitton. He sees the letter as a series of exhortations to true Christian holiness of life, of perfect love toward God and man. For Mitton, the contextual theme is the outworkings of

faith. A believer's standing in Christ is accepted as a given by James, and so the focus of the letter is the practical application of that standing. So, issue by issue, James sets out to show how Christian love works out in practice. For Mitton, this is the unifying theme.

The Structure followed in these notes gives a nod to Davids, rather than to commentator like Dibelius who argues that the letter is a mere list of unrelated instructions. A central theme does seem to be present, and thematic links can be observed between the individual sayings / instructions and mini sermons. These present as blocks of teaching on a particular subject, although the links are not always strongly present.

Proposition.

Genuine faith yields good fruit

A Practical Guide for Christian Living

Salutation, 1.1

1. The marks of a wise believer, 1:2-27
2. Poverty and generosity, 2:1-26
3. Taming the tongue, 3:1-4:12
4. Worldliness and wealth, 4:13-5:6
5. General matters, 5:7-12

Concluding instructions, 5:13-20

ii] Background: As already noted, Tradition has it that this letter was written by James of Jerusalem, the Lord's brother, although there is no evidence to support this claim. It is impossible to date the letter, probably sometime in the first century. It is hard to know whether James is aware of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith or not, so it could be written anywhere between AD40 and 80. It does seem intended for Jewish believers, but of course, the early church was very Jewish.

It is virtually impossible to determine the life-situation of James' audience. Have some believers misunderstood Paul's teachings and so proclaim a slogan-like "by faith alone" coupled with ethical indifference and unbridled license? The tension between the indicative and the imperative in the scriptures is easily lost. A reliance on the indicative, while ignoring the imperative, results in a form of libertarianism which discounts the need for ethical endeavour. For James, genuine faith shows itself in kindness toward the poor and afflicted. Reicke suggests that James is arguing against those Christian leaders who have adopted a Pharisaic way of dealing with new converts where "if anyone finds it difficult to accommodate himself to the practice of true Christian piety, it will suffice for him to make a confession of faith, while others assume the responsibility for deeds." Such life-situations certainly point us in the right direction, but are mostly

guesswork. The best we can say is that unlike Paul, whose focus is on faith, James' focus is on the fruit of faith.

For Luther, James is "a real strawy Epistle", because in his eyes it is light on faith and big on law. For Luther, the Pauline doctrine of justification by grace through faith apart from law, is missing. Yet, as indicated in the introductory notes, it's just a matter of perspective:

James: FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = BLESSINGS = **WORKS**

Paul: FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = **BLESSINGS** = WORKS

James' focus is on the fruit of faith, and this "fruit", these **WORKS**, are not performed for salvation (legalism), nor are they performed to progress holiness / sanctification (nomism), rather they serve a far more practical purpose. James is out to show us how to stay true to our faith in a corrupt world. What we have is a book of practical advice for Christians, ie., **WORKS** that work in a broken world. James is the New Testament version of Proverbs. In fact, other ethical guide-books existed at the time. One in particular, The Didache, is dated to late in the first century. It covered the usual ethical suspects and concluded with the line that if we find we can't be perfect, then at least we are to do the best we can. So, like Proverbs, James provides practical advice for survival in a broken world for those who fear God / believe in Jesus.

iii] Structure: *The salutation*:

from whom;
to whom;
greeting.

iv] Interpretation:

Although tradition has the author of this letter as James the Just, our author calls himself "servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ." The proximity of "God" and "Lord" is high Christology, given that "Lord", for a Jew, is "the Lord God", not "the Lord Jesus Christ." James calls himself a "slave / servant." Again, a Jew sees this in terms of a servant of God, but for believers, service is to Jesus. As Dibelius notes, the term expresses a relationship to God which for a believer is expressed in a relationship with Jesus. This relationship with Jesus, is a relationship with "Christ", the messiah, the anointed one.

The letter is addressed to the *diaspora*, a term used to refer to the scattered Israelites throughout the Middle East. This seems to indicate that the letter is addressed to believing Jews, although it is likely that the term "twelve tribes" is being used metaphorically. James is obviously a Jew, and many of the believers who will read his epistle will be Jews, but in general

terms, his letter addresses believers scattered throughout the Mediterranean, believers who struggle under the purposes of God.

Text - 1:1

The salutation.

Ἰακωβος [ος ου] "**James**" - Nominative absolute.

θεου [ος ου] gen. "[**a servant**] of God" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

Ἰησου Χριστου [ος ου] gen. "**Jesus Christ**" - [AND OF LORD] JESUS CHRIST. Genitive, standing in apposition to "Lord".

ταις ... θυλαις [η ης] dat. "**to the [twelve] tribes**" - Dative of recipient.

ταις "[**scattered among the nations**]" - THE [IN THE DISPERSION]. The article serves as an adjectivizer, turning the prepositional phrase "in the dispersion" into an attributive adjective limiting "the twelve tribes"; "the twelve tribes who are in dispersion." The preposition **εν** is local, expressing space.

χαιρειν [χαιρω] "**Greetings**" - An infinitive is not unusual for a greeting; technically it serves to introduce a dependent statement of indirect speech in an elliptical clause expressing what James says to his readers; "*I say to you, greetings.*"

1:2-18

1. The marks of a wise believer, 1:2-27

i] Christian maturity

Argument

After the greeting, v1, possibly more a title for the letter than a greeting, James details his first set of instructions, or probably better, sayings, v2-18. These sayings touch on the issue of temptations / tests / trials and the dangers and opportunities that these present to a believer who faces them head on.

Issues

i] Context: See 1:1. James immediately gets into his practical advice for living in a broken world, advice controlled by the proposition:

Genuine faith yields good fruit

James wants his readers to possess a genuine unwavering faith, a faith entailing a firm conviction in the knowledge of God, so providing the wisdom to live out a godly life in the face of trials and suffering, as against a life eroded by selfish living. In 1:2-27, James assembles a general series of sayings / instructions, many of which will be further developed in the following chapters. For James, they are the key marks of wisdom, or as we might call them, the marks of Christian maturity. Davids suggests that the key themes covered in the first chapter are testing, wisdom, wealth, speech and generosity.

James' presents his instructions as a series of stitched sayings, cf., Moo. Commentators divide on whether the book is a collection of unrelated sayings, or sayings carefully arranged within a highly developed thematic work. These notes opt for the middle ground. James, like Proverbs, is a collection of independent sayings arranged thematically. Each saying speaks for itself, but its thematic context, along with related sayings, all play a part in its instruction. Of course, when it comes to the division of the individual instructions / sayings, there is little unanimity amongst commentators.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: Instructions / sayings; *The marks of a wise believer*:

- #1. The value of testing times, v2-4;
- #2. Wisdom is gained through prayer, v5-8;
- #3. The limited value of prosperity, v9-11;
- #4. Blessed are those who persevere, v12;
- #5. The power of indwelling sin, v13-15;

#6. God only gives good gifts, v16-19a;

iv] Interpretation:

The separate instructions / sayings in this passage make the following points: endurance in the face of life's difficulties promotes Christian maturity; v2-4, wisdom aids endurance, v5-8; prosperity is of little value (in the face of life's difficulties??) due to its impermanence, v9-11; those who endure reap the reward of life, v12; testing-times may be divinely sanctioned, but the temptations they promote are not, and this because such temptations play to our own evil desires, v13-15; only good comes from God, not evil, v16-18.

v] Homiletics: *Surviving difficult times.*

Troubles lift us up where we belong. Joe Cocker sang these words back in the days when he could still hit the high notes. It's a very powerful truth and one worth taking to heart.

James is a book filled with practical advice for life's many situations - it's a kind of manual on how to live with one foot in heaven and one on earth. In our passage for study James gives us some ground-rules for surviving in testing times:

- When bad things happen, remember that testing times promote endurance; they strengthen us to meet the next hurdle.
- In the face of life's difficulties, we need to ask for divine wisdom.
- The secular world tells us that prosperity is the key to a trouble-free life, but it's good to remember that wealth is illusionary.
- The key to standing firm in the face of trouble is to stand firm in Christ.
- Difficult times provide an opportunity for temptation to sin, but a "God made me do it" excuse doesn't wash. As Shakespeare put it "*The fault dear Brutus is not in our stars, But in ourselves that we are underlings.*"
- When life is dark we can do no better than to remember the wonder of all that God has done for us.

Text - 1:2

The Marks of Christian Wisdom - Christian maturity, v2-18:

Instruction #1: The value of testing times, v2-4. James encourages believers to endure the difficulties of life, knowing that such challenges can lead to spiritual growth - maturity in the Christian life. As Mitton puts it, testing times clothe us with "the full equipment of the complete Christian."

ἤγησασθε [ἡγεομαι] aor. imp. "**consider**" - CONSIDER, COUNT, REGARD. The aorist is possibly ingressive, "begin to consider".

χαρὰν [α] "**[pure] joy**" - [ALL] JOY [BROTHERS OF ME]. Emphatic by position. The "all" functions here as an intensifying adjective for "joy", as NIV; "nothing but joy", Barclay. Being "happy" (cf., "count yourselves supremely happy", REB) in the face of trouble is somewhat difficult, and may lead to an unrealistic approach to personal hurts. Worse, being happy in suffering can be misunderstood, particularly by secularists who read *irrational* behaviour as a sign of guilt. Of course, "joy" is probably not actually "happiness", but more in line with spiritual joy as expressed in Judith 8:25, "let us give thanks to the Lord our God, who is putting us to the test as he did our forefathers." So, "consider it a sheer gift, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides", Peterson.

ὅταν + subj. "**whenever**" - Serving to introduce an indefinite temporal clause.

περιπεσητε [περιπιπτω] aor. subj. "**you face**" - YOU FALL *into*. Possibly just "encounter".

πειρασμοῖς [ος] dat. "**trials**" - AFFLICTIONS. Dative of direct object after the περι prefix verb "to fall into." The meaning can be "adversities / trials", or "temptations". Here "trials", as NIV, seems likely. Note the same problem exists with the Lord's prayer; is it "lead us not into temptation", or "let us not face the trial"?

ποικίλοις "**of many kinds**" - OF VARIOUS KINDS, VARIEGATED. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "trials".

v3

γινωσκοντες [γινωσκω] pres. part. "**because you know**" - KNOWING. The participle is adverbial, probably causal, "because you know", NIV, but possibly imperatival, attendant on the imperative verb "consider [it pure joy]", v2; "and know that" A believer is able to view trouble positively "**because** we know that God uses trials to perfect our faith and make us stronger Christians", Moo.

ὅτι "**that**" - Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what they should know.

το δοκιμιον [ον] "**the testing**" - THE TEST, THE ACT OF TESTING / PROOF, GENUINE. Nominative subject of the verb "to work out." Here the act of testing, not the result of testing, i.e., "genuine", cf., 1Pet. 1:7. So, as of the refining process of gold; "as your faith is proved (refined)", TH.

της πιστεως [ις εως] gen. "**of [your] faith**" - OF THE FAITH [OF YOU]. Adam classifies the genitive as adjectival, verbal, objective, with the genitive ἡμων, "of you", taken as subjective; "you believe." This key word has different shades of meaning in the NT. For Paul, it is dependence / reliance on the one who is

dependent / reliant on our behalf, ie., faith in the faith / faithfulness of God in Christ. This is probably how James' generally understands "faith". None-the-less, sometimes he seems to use "faith" in the sense of "the faith", as of doctrine, and "faith", in the sense of acceptance of that doctrine. It is possible that James sometimes uses "faith" in the Old Testament sense of loyalty to God, of "a personal commitment to Jesus Christ in trust [and obedience??], determined loyalty to Him through all kinds of difficulty and opposition", Mitton.

κατεργάζεται [κατεργάζομαι] pres. "**develops**" - WORKS OUT, RESULTS IN, BRINGS ABOUT, ACCOMPLISHES. The prefix **κατα** produces a perfective aspect, and along with the durative present, gives the sense "works out perseverance."

ὑπομονήν [η] "**perseverance**" - ENDURANCE, STAYING, FORTITUDE. Accusative direct object of the verb "to work out." "Steadfastness / staying-power / constancy....." "Used in this sense of unswerving constancy to faith and piety in spite of adversity and suffering", Ropes.

v4

δε "**[perseverance]**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to the conclusion of the argument; "And as for this consistency to faith and piety".

εχωτω [εχω] pres. imp. "**must**" - LET [ENDURANCE] HAVE. The endurance must promote / achieve a complete work; "it is essential that this endurance should manifest itself to ...", Cassirer.

τελειον adj. "**finish [its work]**" - COMPLETE [WORK, EFFECT]. "Complete" in what sense? Possibly in a temporal sense, as NIV; "this ability must go right on to the end", Barclay. Yet, it is more likely that James has in mind something like "the full equipment of the complete Christian", Mitton. The word commonly means "perfect", but in Jewish literature it means "mature" = "completeness of character", Martin, rather than "perfect", Ropes.

ίνα + subj. "**so that**" - THAT. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that", or a hypothetical result "so that".

τελειοι και ολοκληροι adj. "**mature and complete**" - YOU MAY BE MATURE AND COMPLETE. Predicate nominative. The second adjective, supporting the first, takes the meaning "complete in all its parts". Such completeness is, according to du Plessis, *Perfection in the New Testament*, reflected in a coherence of faith and works, although something even wider is probably in James' mind. James is referring to the "rounded out" believer, Berkeley.

λειπομενοι [λειπω] perf. mid. part. "**[not] lacking [anything]**" - LACKING [IN NOTHING]. The participle serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "mature and complete." The prepositional phrase **εν + μηδενι**, "in nothing", serves adjectivally, modifying / limiting "lacking". Of course, perfect

completeness, a completeness that lacks nothing in the qualities of discipleship, is an ideal for which we aim, not a reality we achieve.

v5

Instruction # 2: Wisdom is gained through prayer, v5-8. "After encouraging his readers to appreciate whatever adversities come their way, James now exhorts them to pray expectantly for the God-given wisdom that provides the insight necessary to see the divine purpose behind the trials", Vlachos. So, "James turns our attention to one important element in the full equipment of the complete Christian, namely, wisdom. He insists that it is a gift from God, to be received by (the prayer of) faith", Mitton, but is only received by "an asking that is sincere and uncorrupted", Moo. Wisdom is spiritual discernment; it involves having the capacity to understand the mind of Christ and to apply it within the complexities and difficulties of life. This type of knowledge / wisdom is promised a believer, but of course, it has to be requested of God, believing that God will carry through on his promise. The believer must not oscillate between doubt and belief like a cork bouncing around in the surf, "for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord", NRSV.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. James has provided a connecting particle between v2-4 and v5-8, although the connection is not easily identified. The link possibly lies in the idea that wisdom provides the ability to handle testing times. James' point is, of course, that what is needed is the correct kind of wisdom, ie., divine wisdom rather than a wisdom of human devising. We may be better served not trying to find a link and simply take the particle as a transitional connective indicating the commencement of the next saying / instruction.

ει + ind. "if" - IF, *as is the case*, [ANYONE OF YOU IS LACKING WISDOM, *then* LET HIM ASK FROM GOD]. Introducing a 1st class condition where the proposed condition is assumed to be true.

ὑμων gen. pro. "[any] of you" - [CERTAIN] OF YOU. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

λειπεται [λειπω] pres. pas. "lacks" - IS LACKING. Linked to the part., v4; linking words between sayings is a stylistic feature of James. "If anyone is lacking wisdom, that element of the full equipment of the complete Christian that enables them to deal with testing times, then" "And if, in the process, any of you does not know how to meet any particular problem, he has only to ask God", Phillips.

σοφιας [α] gen. "wisdom" - Genitive of direct object after the verb "to lack." Not "cleverness", which is what wisdom meant for the Greeks, but certainly "the power to discern right from wrong and good from evil", ie., "moral discernment",

Mitton, although probably more in the terms of "spiritual discernment" - knowing the mind of Christ and being able to apply it to life's situations; "the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect", Rom.12:2.

αιτειτω [αιτεω] pres. imp. "**he should ask**" - LET HIM ASK. The present tense is durative, possibly iterative, expressing repeated action, although not arm bending; "keep on asking" in the sense of "always pray and do not lose heart"; constancy in prayer, not persistence in prayer.

παρα + gen. "-" - FROM BESIDE [GOD]. Here expressing source / origin.

του διδοντος [διδωμι] gen. pres. part. "**who gives [generously]**" - THE ONE GIVING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting God, as NIV. cf. Lk.6:38.

πασιν dat. adj. "**to all**" - Dative of indirect object / interest. Probably "all believers", but certainly "all who ask".

μη ονειδιζοντος [ονειδιζω] gen. pres. part. "**without finding fault**" - [GENEROUSLY AND] NOT REPROACHING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting God. Probably in the sense of a gift generously given either without holding the recipient to account for the gift, or assessing the worth of the recipient to receive the gift.

δοθησεται [διδωμι] fut. pas. "**it will be given**" - "You can be quite sure the necessary wisdom will be given him", Phillips.

αυτω dat. pro. "**you**" - TO HIM. Dative of indirect object.

ν6

δε "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step in the argument, although often treated here as an adversative.

αιτειτω [αιτεω] pres. imp. "**when he/you asks**" - LET HIM ASK.

εν + dat. "**he/you must believe**" - IN [FAITH]. How do we read the preposition? Is it spatial "in the sphere of faith", or association, "in relationship with faith", or instrumental, "by faith"? If read with the following participle the sense is "in constancy (nothing doubting) of faith", Ropes, ie., adverbial, modal. Faith" as above, possibly loyalty to, but better confidence / dependence / reliance in God, ie., asking in the sure knowledge that God will do what he has promised; see Wallace 161. Here the knowledge that God will provide the wherewithal (wisdom) to stand the time of testing.

μηδεν διακινωμενος [διακρινω] pres. mid. part. "**[he must believe and] not doubt**" - NOTHING DOUBTING, BEING AT VARIANCE WITH ONESELF. The negated participle is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of the asking; "with no doubting." The prime meaning of the word is "differentiate / create divisions", but in the middle voice it takes a reflective sense, "dispute with oneself" = "doubt". In the sense of not doubting that God will do what he has promised, but

not in the sense that we must be free of doubt, "free from hesitation", Mitton, cf., Rom.4:20 + "double-minded, unstable", v8.

γάρ "for" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why doubt is a problem; "because"

ὁ ... διακρινόμενος "he who doubts" - THE ONE DOUBTING. The participle serves as a substantive. "One who lives in an inner conflict between trust and distrust of God", Mussner.

εοικεν [εοικα] perf. "is like" - RESEMBLES, IS SIMILAR TO, IS LIKE. Only here and in 1:23 in the NT; it takes a dative (here "waves") since it references something. The perfect takes present force. "Like a cork floating on the wave", Mayor. The illustrative simile expresses the "instability", Ropes, of a person who doubts; "always changing", Moo, "unstable", Johnson, "agitation without making any progress to any result to and froe like the doubter's mind", Adamson.

κλυδωνι [ων ωνος] dat. "waves" - A WAVE. Dative of direct object after the verb "to resemble."

θαλασσης [ης] gen. "of the sea" - OF SEA. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "waves"; "ocean waves."

ανεμιζομενω [ανιμιζω] pres. pas. part. "blown" - BEING DRIVEN BY THE WIND. This participle, as is the following participle, is adjectival, attributive, limiting "ocean waves".

ῥιπιζομενω [ριπιζω] pres. pas. part. "tossed by the wind" - [AND] BEING BLOWN AWAY, TOSSED ABOUT. "Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open", Peterson.

v7-8

"For the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord", NRSV, so also NJB. It seems best to take **ανηρ**, "man", v8, with its modifying adjectival phrase "double minded unstable in his ways", as referencing / in apposition to **ὁ ἀνθρωπος εκεινος**, "this man / person" in v7. So, "let not the / this man who is double minded and unstable be supposing that" Most translations agree with the NIV.

γάρ "-" - FOR. Introducing a causal clause explaining why a person must ask in faith without doubting. The reason being that the confidence of a double-minded person is misplaced.

μη .. οισεθω [οιομαι] pres. imp. "[that man] should not think" - LET NOT [A MAN] SUPPOSE, THINK. Mitton runs the line that James is denouncing the supposition that God's grace is freely available apart from the worth of the supplicant ("cheap grace"). In truth, the only worth deserving of God's grace resides with Christ alone, cf., God "gives generously to all without finding fault", v5. James is specifically addressing the issue of prayer. Our confidence is

misplaced if we think that God is some sort of Santa Claus. What we can be confident about, is that God will answer the prayer of faith, a prayer that rests in the knowledge that God will supply what he has promised.

ὅτι "-" - THAT. Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what he thinks.

παρά + gen. "**from [the Lord]**" - [HE WILL RECEIVE ANYTHING] FROM [THE LORD]. Here expressing source / origin.

διψυχος adj. "**double-minded**" - [*he is* A MAN] DOUBLE-SOULED = DOUBLE-MINDED. James is further developing what he means by "nothing doubting", v6. If James understands "faith" primarily as "allegiance", then it is likely that "double-souled" refers to a "divided heart", Ps.12:2, Hos.10:2, which then explains "doubting"; "The OT blesses those who pursue God with 'a whole heart', Ps.119:2", Moo. Yet, it still seems likely, given the context, that James is describing "doubting in prayer", Johnson.

ακαταστατος adj. "**unstable**" - UNSTABLE, NO STABILITY, UNSETTLED. Again, the image of a bobbing cork on a stormy sea.

εν + dat. "**in [all he does]**" - IN [ALL HIS WAYS]. Reference; "with respect to what he does." "Such a one is like a mentally ill person who tries to put (seek!!) a positive and negative answer to the same question (request!!) at the same time", Junkins.

v9

Instruction #3: The limited value of prosperity, v9-11. James now contrasts the rich with the poor, making the point that there is little value in trusting the impermanence of wealth. In the tradition of Wisdom literature, James notes that wealth can smooth the passage of life in uncertain times, but there is little value in trusting the impermanence of prosperity. Let the prosperous believer, as well as the poor believer, boast of their Christian standing, because the life of a prosperous person is but a journey to decay.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a new saying / instruction.

ὁ αδελφος "**the brother**" - Nominative subject. Obviously "believing brother", as it seems likely that "the one who is rich" = "rich man", is similarly a believer, a "rich brother".

ὁ ταπεινος adj. "**[the brother] in humble circumstances**" - [LET] THE LOWLY, HUMBLE POSITION [BROTHER]. A believer with limited opportunities due to their social status, poverty, is able to find fulfillment in the vagaries of life in the knowledge that social advantage, wealth, is transitory. "Let a brother who is in a lower socioeconomic class", Junkins.

καυχασθω [καυχασμαι] pres. imp. "**ought to take pride**" - LET BOAST: to express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone or something being

exceptionally noteworthy*. When used in a bad sense, "boast" means "self-congratulation", but here obviously not in that sense. As Johnson notes, the issue here rests with the ground of boasting. A person may boast about their achievements, etc., whereas a person with few opportunities in life is left to boast in eternal verities. "Let the one who boasts, boast in this, understanding and knowing the Lord, and doing judgment and righteousness in the midst of the earth", cf., 1Sam.2:1-10. "Be glad", CEV.

εἰ + dat. "**in [his high position]**" - IN [THE HEIGHT / EXALTATION]. Adverbial, reference / respect; "with respect to his high position." Surely referring to a believer's "present spiritual status which, by virtue of his relation to Christ, the Christian now enjoys", Adamson. "Because God has called him to the true riches", Phillips.

αὐτοῦ gen. pro. "**his / their**" - OF HIM. The genitive is adjectival, possessive; it is a position which he holds. It can also be treated as verbal, although a bit of a stretch, eg., objective, "he is the object of elevation", or subjective, "he is important", Adam.

v10

δε "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrasting position, as NIV, "but"; "the poor brother ought to take pride in their exaltation but on the other hand the rich brother ought to take pride in their humiliation, because for both rich and poor alike, wealth is transitory."

ὁ ... πλουσιος adj. "**the one who is rich / the rich should take pride**" - THE RICH *should boast*. Nominative subject of an assumed verb "to boast." As above, there is debate whether James has in mind secular "rich and powerful" persons, those who oppress, cf., 2:1-6, 5:1-6, or prosperous believers. It is likely that here he has in mind rich believers; "the wealthy member (believer)", REB.

εἰ + dat. "**in [his low position / their humiliation]**" - IN [THE HUMILIATION, LOWLY POSITION OF HIM]. Reference; "with respect to his low position." There is some debate as to what James means by the rich believer taking pride in their humiliation. Is it their "reduced circumstances", Goodspeed, or their "low social status", as NIV, now that they are believers? We are best to follow Moo when he argues that James is encouraging the rich believer to boast in their Christian standing, their spiritual humility, rather than their wealth (being nothing in themselves but everything in Christ). Both rich and poor believers alike possess the same ground for boasting, for the poor it is their exaltation, for the rich it is their humiliation.

ὅτι "**because**" - Here causal. Let both rich and poor boast in their Christian standing because "prosperity is as short-lived as a wildflower, so don't even count on it", Peterson.

ως "like" - LIKE. Comparative.

χορτου [ος] gen. "a wild flow" - [A FLOWER] OF GRASS [HE WILL PASS AWAY]. The genitive is adjectival, possibly idiomatic / source, "which is from the grass", or attributive, "a grass flower" - "a wild flower."

v11

"You know that as soon as the sun rises, pouring down its scorching heat, the flower withers. Its petals wilt and, before you know it, that beautiful face is a barren stem. Well, that's a picture of the 'prosperous life'. At the very moment everyone is looking on in admiration, it fades away to nothing", Peterson. There is another name for this in Western societies, it's called RETIREMENT, although I think I'm more like a fading thistle, than a fading flower.

γαρ "for" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why the flower withers.

συν + dat. "with [scorching heat]" - [THE SUN ROSE] WITH [THE BURNING HEAT]. Expressing association / accompaniment.

ξηρανεν [εξραινω] aor. "withers" - [AND] DRIED UP, DRIED OUT. James uses three verbs to express what happens to the "flower / grass" when confronted by the sun's "scorching / blazing / burning" heat. It withers the flower, makes it fall and destroys its beauty.

τον χορτον [ος] "the plant" - THE GRASS. Probably referring to wild flowers growing in a field.

του προσωπου [ον] gen. "-" - [AND THE FLOWER OF IT FELL, AND THE BEAUTY] OF THE FACE [OF IT]. The genitive is adjectival, attributed; "its beautiful appearance", Adam.

απωλετο [απολλυμι] aor. "destroyed" - PERISHED, WAS DESTROYED, CAME TO RUIN.

ουτως adv. "in the same way" - THUS, SO. Establishing a comparison.

μαρανθησεται [μαραινω] fut. pas. "will fade away" - [ALSO THE RICH MAN] WILL WASTE / WITHER / FADE AWAY. "The reference is to the loss of riches and earthly prosperity, not to eternal destiny", Ropes. "Fading glory" is probably in James' mind, rather than "fade and die", Goodspeed.

εν ταις πορειαις "while he goes about [his] business" - IN THE GOINGS, JOURNEY [OF HIM]. The preposition εν is adverbial, taken as introducing a temporal clause in the NIV, or attendant circumstance, "in the context of." "Figurative refers to the experiences and fortunes of the rich", Ropes. "So, the life of a rich man is a journey to decay", Barclay.

v12

Instruction #4: Blessed are those who persevere, v12. God's reward is life (eternal life / the good life??) for those who stay true to Christ in their life's

journey in the face of testing times. "The verse is primarily expository, providing the motivation to endure trials", Vlachos. As far as James is concerned, what matters in uncertain times is an ongoing reliance on the living Lord, for in Christ there is transcendent life, life that transcends the impermanence of our present existence - this *shadow-land*.

We face two problems with this verse. First, we again have to decide whether the word **πειρασμος** means "test" ("a heavy ordeal, .. distress and strain"), or "tempt" ("an enticement to do evil", Mitton). It seems likely that "test" is intended in this verse (the testing times we live in), whereas v13-18 seeks to draw a distinction between divine testing and temptations to evil. Second, there is little agreement as to the division of this saying unit, eg., Mitton, 1:12-15; Johnson, 1:9-12, 13-21; Davids, 1:12-18; Adamson, 1:12-21; Martin, 1:12-19a. Dibelius, Ropes and Moo treat v12 as an isolated saying, followed by the saying unit v13-18, probably two separate sayings. This seems the most likely intended division of the text.

μακαριος adj. "**blessed**" - BLESSED [THE MAN]. Predicate adjective. Possibly in the sense of "happy", but often with the idea of a divine endowment, so "blessed", as NIV. "God will bless you if you don't give up", CEV. Given the wisdom background of this treatise, a more general sense is probably best; "Happy are those who remain faithful under trials", TEV, ie., life goes better for us, now and always, if we maintain our reliance upon the Lord.

ὑπομενει [**ὑπομενω**] pres. "**perseveres**" - [WHO] ENDURES. The present tense is durative. "Showing constancy" under pressure, Ropes. "Blessed is the man who stands up under trial", Berkeley.

πειρασμον [ος] "**under trial**" - TRIAL / TEMPTATION. Accusative direct object of the verb "to endure." As noted above, "temptation" is possible and adopted by some translators, eg., Junkins, NCV. Better "test" in the sense of "trials"; "being tested", CEV.

ὅτι "**because**" - Here causal, as NIV.

γενομενος [**γινομαι**] aor. part. "**when he has [stood the test]**" - HAVING BECOME [APPROVED]. The participle is probably temporal, as NIV. "Approved" in the sense of having stood the test.

λημψεται [**λαμβανω**] fut. "**he will receive**" - Encapsulating the idea of reward, an idea with dubious connotations. If the reward is given for obedience to Christ in the face of testing times then it is more than dubious since "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." On the other hand, reward that rests on the perseverance of faith, an ongoing reliance (faith) in the faithful one when all about us implies that he is less than faithful, is anything but dubious; it's good news!

της ζωης [η] gen. "[the crown] of life" - [THE CROWN] OF LIFE [WHICH HE PROMISED THE ONES LOVING HIM]. The genitive is adjectival, epexegetic / of definition, limiting "crown" by specifying its nature. God's reward is life for those who are in a relationship with him in Christ. Of course, the text does not specifically say "eternal life". In a wisdom framework, life is here and now so "the crown of life" could well be "the fullness of life under God in the present".

v13

Instruction #5: The power of indwelling sin, v13-15. "God, James has said, promises a blessing to those who endure trials. Every trial, every external difficulty, carries with it a temptation, an inner enticement to sin. God may bring, or allow, trials; he is not, James insists, the author of temptation. Enticement to sin comes from our own sinful natures", Moo, v13-15. In the face of life's difficulties, we are often tempted to sin. Jesus well understands suffering and is well able to share our pain. One thing we can be sure of, God is not the source of the temptation; God tempts no one. Note James' use of **πειραζω**, "to test", to stitch this saying with the previous one.

πειραζομενος [πειραζω] pres. pas. part. "**When tempted**" - BEING TEMPTED. The participle is probably adverbial, temporal, as NIV. Although anarthrous, Adams suggests it is adjectival, attributive, "no one who is tested should say." See "test / tempt" above. Here obviously "tempt", although some translators do not agree, cf., NJB.

λεγω [λεγω] pres. imp. "**[no one] should say**" - LET [NO ONE] SAY.

οτι "-" - THAT. Introducing a dependent statement, direct speech. "I am being tempted by God", Barclay.

απο + gen. "**God is tempting me**" - [I AM BEING TEMPTED] FROM / BY [GOD]. Expressing a divine / heavenly source of temptation without actually blaming God, or suggesting he is the instrument of temptation, i.e., "a looser and more remote relation of agency", Ropes.

γαρ "**for**" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why we should not say

....

απειραστος adj. "**[God] cannot be tempted [by evil]**" - [GOD] IS UNTEMPTABLE / UNTEMPTED / HAVING NO EXPERIENCE. A hapax legomenon predicate adjective. The meaning is somewhat obscure, but generally understood as "not subject to temptation", Zerwick; "God is incapable of being tempted by evil", Moffatt. Yet, this seems a rather strange statement and so it is more likely that the clause means either i) taking an active sense, "for God is not one who tempts with evil, he doesn't tempt anyone", or ii) a passive sense, "God is unable to be tempted to do evil, and he himself tempts no one", cf., Dibelius. The passive sense is supported by the fact that the following clause is introduced by **δε**,

"but/and", which may serve here to introduce what is a correction of a previous false statement. Either way, it answers the believer who is trying to shift the blame for their sin, a kind of "God made me do it", line. Note Davids take, "God ought not to be tested by evil persons" - another possible approach.

κακων gen. adj. "**by evil**" - OF EVIL. The genitive is possibly adverbial, means, "by evil things / persons", possibly ablative, expressing separation or source, or simply adjectival, limiting that which God is untemptable of, namely, doing evil. "God cannot be tempted to do evil", Cassirer.

περαζει [περαζω] pres. ind. "[**nor**] **does he tempt [anyone]**" - [HE HIMSELF (emphatic statement)] TEMPTS [NO ONE].

v14

δε "but" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrasting point. "On the contrary".

εκαστος "each one [is tempted when]" - EACH [IS TEMPTED]. "Every person is enticed to commit evil"

υπο + gen. "**by**" - BY. Expressing agency.

επιθυμιας [α] "**evil desires**" - [THE = THEIR OWN] LUSTS, STRONG DESIRES. "Passions", Knox.

εξελκομενος [εξελκω] pres. pas. part. "**he is dragged away**" - BEING LURED, DRAWN AWAY. This, and the following participle, is adverbial, either temporal, as NIV, "when he is seduced and enticed by his own evil desire", Barclay, or instrumental, expressing means, "by means" It could also be adjectival modifying "evil desire", "by his own evil desire which lures and entices."

δελεαζομενος [δελεαζω] pres. pas. part. "**enticed**" - BEING ENTICED, ALLURED. Used of catching something by the use of a bait. "That drag us off and trap us", CEV.

v15

ειτα "then" - Temporal; "Then the next thing that happens is that", Barclay.

συλλαβουσα [συλλαμβανω] aor. part. "**after [desire] has conceived**" - HAVING SEIZED / HELPED / CONCEIVED [THE DESIRE GIVES BIRTH TO SIN] . The participle is obviously adverbial, temporal, as NIV. The meaning "conceived" seems best. The imagery of illicit sex is being employed, of desire as a seductress, of lust conceiving and giving birth to a bastard child, namely, sin. Evil desires, plus human willingness, give birth to sin and sin to death; Beware!

αποτελεσθεισα [αποτελεω] aor. pat. "**when it is full grown**" - [AND THE SIN] HAVING COME TO FULL GROWTH, MATURITY. Again, the participle is adverbial, best treated as temporal, as NIV.

αποκυει [ακοκυεω] pres. "**gives birth to [death]**" - BRINGS FORTH [DEATH]. Variant future tense, "will give birth to" is possible. "Sin in the long run means death", Phillips.

v16

Instruction #6: God only gives good gifts, v16-18. This saying serves as a counter to the previous saying. James has made the point that God is not the author of temptation, or of anything evil; now he puts the positive side of this truth. God is the "one who gives good gifts to his people - and, pre-eminently, the gift of the new birth", Moo, v16-18. Through his "word of truth", the gospel, God gave us "birth", he gave us new life, he redeemed us, and in doing so, made us a "first-fruits", a kind of down payment of his redemptive plan for all creation.

This saying is usually taken with v13-15, but it is properly a saying in its own right. James often uses the vocative **αδελφοι** "brothers" to introduce a new saying.

μη πλανασθε [πλαναω] pres. pas. imp. "**Don't be deceived**" - DO NOT BE DECEIVED [MY BELOVED BROTHERS]. Is James referring back (the deception of a "God made me do it" approach), so Martin, Mitton, Dibelius, or is he referring forward (God is the source of all that is good), or both, so Moo? Presumably the second option, but why the warning? Possibly either an eschatological, or moral warning, ie., God's gifts are good and by implication evil people will not inherit them, 1Cor.6:9, so Davids. Better, "don't be misled", Junkins / Barclay, leading to misunderstanding, ie., an intellectual failure, "Do not err", Ropes. Even better, it is possibly a rhetorical device "make no mistake about this", NJB, even possibly serving to introduce a quote, see v17a.

v17

The first part of this verse is possibly a quoted proverb: "every gift is good and every present perfect", Ropes, or as we would say "don't look a gift horse in the mouth", cf., Davids.

αγαθη τελειον "[**every**] **good [and] perfect [gift]**" - [EVERY] GOOD [ENDOWMENT AND EVERY] PERFECT, COMPLETE [GIFT]. If referencing the context, wisdom may be in James' mind, but it is more likely that good gifts in general is the intended sense. "All we are given is good and all our endowments are faultless", Moffatt.

εστιν καταβαινον [καταβαινω] pres. part. "**coming down**" - IS COMING DOWN [FROM ABOVE]. A periphrastic present construction, ie., "coming down from above = "comes from heaven", rather than "is from above, coming down from the Father ...", as NIV. The construction possibly emphasizes the durative

nature of the present tense. "Every complete gift that we have received must come [comes] from above, from the Father of lights", Phillips.

απο + gen. "**from**" - Expressing separation; "away from."

των φωτων [ως ωτος] gen. "**[the Father] of heavenly lights**" - [THE FATHER] OF LIGHTS. The genitive is adjectival, usually treated as verbal, objective, but possibly descriptive, idiomatic, limiting "the Father", eg., "the Father who created all the lights in the heavens", CEV. The image is somewhat obtuse, but it is generally held to refer to the heavenly bodies and thus of God's good and perfect creation.

παρα + dat. "**[who]**" - WITH [WHOM]. Association. The relative pronoun "whom" takes a dative of respect / reference; "with him".

ουκ ενι [ενεστιν] pres. "**does not [change]**" - there is no [variation / change]. "With God, there is no change", Barclay, but change with regard to what? Probably in his grace, his good gifts, so "there is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle", Peterson, ie., God's good grace is always constant.

η "-" - OR [OF TURNING SHADOW]. Ropes, in trying to make sense of this rather obtuse metaphor, reads this conjunction as an article. Numerous variant readings exist, the main one being **παραλλαγη η τροπης αποσκιασματος**, and so further confuse the matter. The quoted variant only makes sense when **η** is read **η** (as an article) rather than **η**, "or", "variation which is of / consist in / belongs to the truth of the shadow", Metzger. Dibelius suggests an additional **η**, "or", was intended, so: "who himself is without change and knows neither turning nor eclipse." Hort suggested that **αποσκιασματος** is actually a corruption of the original **αποσκιασμα αυτος**, with **αυτος**, "he", introducing the next verse, as NIV.

τροπης [η] gen. "**like shifting [shadows]**" - [SHADOW] OF TURNING. The genitive "of turning" is adjectival, attributive, limiting "shadow", as NIV. Note the emphatic position of the genitive noun standing in front of the predicate nominative **αποσκιασμα**, "shadows". Lenski thinks it is adverbial, expressing cause; "a shadow due to turning. "Turning" may be technical, referring to a lunar or solar eclipse, thus the moving shadow of an eclipse, but there is no evidence that the word has such a technical meaning. Somehow, for James, the metaphor illustrates change, something that God is not subject to. So, the NIV expresses the idea that God does not change as does a shifting shadow. There is the possibility that the metaphor relates to the image of God as the Father of light, such that God doesn't change and become dark like a shadow; "never makes dark shadows by changing", CEV. The NIV approach seems best; "with him there is no variation, no play of passing shadows", REB.

v18

What does James mean by "birth through the word of truth that will bring a kind of first-fruits"? A number of possibilities present themselves (see below), but we are probably best to follow Moo who feels that the "birth" is most likely redemptive, enacted through "the word of truth", namely the gospel, producing within God's creation "a kind of first-fruits", namely believers, "a foretaste, or down payment, of a redemptive plan that will eventually encompass all of creation", Moo.

γαρ "-" - FOR. Variant, probably not original, attempting to improve the grammar.

He - Variant **αυτος**, as noted above; "he, having willed."

βουληθεις [βουλομαι] aor. pas. part. "**chose**" - HAVING WILLED, DELIBERATELY WILLED, DECIDED AFTER COUNSEL. As it stands, the participle is adverbial, modal, and emphatic by position. The stress is not on God being willing, but on what he willed. If **αυτος**, "he" is original, then it is emphatic, and the participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "he / God"; "he, in the exercise of his will (NASB) / in fulfillment of his purpose (NRSV) / of his set purpose (NEB) / of his own choice (REB) / by his decision (Johnson) / in accordance of his will (Dibelius), gave us birth."

απεκυησεν [αποκυευω] aor. "**to give [us] birth**" - HE GAVE BIRTH *to* [US]. The difficulty here centres on whether James has in mind a cosmological birth, i.e., we were created by God, or a soteriological birth, i.e., we were saved by God. Bede argued for regeneration by baptism, but this is unlikely. Moo, following Donald Verseput, argues that "the Father of lights" phrase echoes the Jewish morning prayer which moves from acknowledging God as creator to acknowledging him as redeemer. So, it is likely that James has in mind spiritual birth. None-the-less, it is possible that James is saying little more than God created us by his word; "he brought us forth".

λογω [ος] dat. "**through the word**" - BY WORD. Instrumental dative, expressing means. "Word" in the sense of "message", CEV. What word? The saving word = "word of truth" = "the gospel", is the most popular understanding. None-the-less, we do have to accept the possibility that "the word" here is "God's creative word" = "word of truth", with "first-fruit of his creatures" referring to "the honour and dominion which was given to human beings", Dionysius, cf., Dibelius. This Edenic image well illustrates James' proposition that God gives good gifts to his people. By accepting this argument, we are not devaluing James' faith. There is little doubt that James understands the gospel, but as a piece of wisdom literature in the tradition of Proverbs, he is concerned with practical advice for the business of living with one foot in heaven and the other on earth.

We don't need to continually spiritualize what is a very practical *how to* book. The meaning of "word" / "law" constantly crops up in James and commentators generally understand it to mean the "gospel", but it seems more often to refer to the ethical guidelines for Christian living revealed in both the Old and New Testaments, summarized in the law of love. In simple terms, the "word" entails the totality of God's instructions to believers; his manual for life. As for "works", the word will tend to refer to the doing of this ethic.

αληθειας [α] "of truth" - The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "word"; "by a divine word which encompasses truth." As noted above, the "word of truth" is often understood to mean "the gospel of truth" = "the gospel", a message that gives life / new birth, but it is more likely the totality of God's "truthful word."

εις το ειναι "that [we] might be" - FOR [US] TO BE. This preposition, with the articular infinitive (of the verb to-be), forms a purpose clause, "in order that"

τινα "a kind of" - As of an approximate representation of, "a figurative expression of", Ropes.

απαρχην [η] "first-fruits" - [A CERTAIN] FIRST-FRUIT. Predicate adjective. The word refers to that portion of the harvest which belongs to God, the first and best part of the harvest. So, James is most likely using the image of the "first-fruits" to refer to humans as the best part of God's creation. As noted above, the idea is usually spiritualized to mean those born by means of the message of truth, ie., those set-right before God by means of the gospel of truth, cf. Rev.14:4.

των ... κτισματων [α ατος] gen. "of [all he] created" - OF THE CREATURES [OF HIM]. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. Also often spiritualized to mean "the first pioneers of a much larger company who will follow their lead", Mitton; "a foretaste, or down payment ('first-fruits'), of a redemptive plan that will eventually encompass all of creation", Moo. Probably the old Adam is in mind, as created by the hand of God, not the new Adam in Christ; see above.

1:19-27

1. The Marks of a Wise Believer, 1:2-27

ii] Doers of the Word

Argument

James' second set of instructions / sayings is built around an introductory three part saying in 1:19: "be quick to listen (hear), slow to speak and slow to become angry (to anger)." Each of these three parts is developed in the passage, with particular focus on "quick to hear": i] quick to hear, v22-25; ii] slow to speak, v26 -27; iii] slow to anger, v20. The central thematic idea seems to be covered by the saying in v22, "be doers of the word, and not merely hearers", NRSV. James will later deal in more detail with the tongue in 3:1-12 and anger in 3:13-18.

Issues

i] Context: See 1:2-18.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: The second set of instructions; *The marks of a wise believers*:
Being both hearers and doers of God's Word, v19-27.

#7. Hasty speech does not please God, v19;

#8. Justice is never promoted by anger, v20;

#9. All that defiles is cast away, v21;

#10. Genuine Christianity is neither sentimental nor unpractical,
v22-25;

#11. Scrupulous religious practice is no substitute for a pure life,
v26-27.

iv] Interpretation:

Ecclesiastes reminds us that words are many and can weary the mind, so we need to focus on God's "truthful words", words that encourage the fear of God and the keeping of his commandments, cf., Ecc.12:12-14. For James, these "truthful words", v18, are God's creative words for human redemption. At the eternal level they are the words that produce faith in Christ (= fear of God, cf., Jn.6:29) for the blessing of eternal life, while at the everyday level they are words of guidance (= commandments), God's manual for living in a broken world. The one compels the other; faith in Christ compels deeds of love, 1Jn.3:23, 4:20.

For the practical business of love lived out in a corrupt environment, James has encouraged us to listen carefully to God's "truthful words", and now he has something to say about human words. In chapter 3 James will explain how wisdom is closely related to how people speak, but here he just makes the point that rather than arguing and debating, believers are better off learning to listen, because anger (righteous indignation??) never made anything better, v19-20, particularly listen, and be cleansed, but God's word, v21. In v22-25, James touches on the link between a faith that listens and its deeds, how a person who has taken God's word (spiritually) to heart (they have found freedom in Christ) is inclined to live God's word out in their daily life and find blessing in the doing of it. In v26-27, James summarizes the business of saying and doing, describing the saying in negative terms (being a pietistic blabbermouth), and the doing in positive terms (humanity and purity), behaviour that is a down payment of God's redemptive plan for all creation, cf., Moo, p.79-80. "James calls believers to recognise in God's word the demand of obedience that comes to all who claim the blessings of the new birth", Moo.

v] Homiletics: *Be doers of the Word.*

"Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." Ecclesiastes 12:12-14.

For those of us who love the cut and thrust of theological debate, James has a word of advice:

- *"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger"*. James' words are to the point and we do well to apply them to ourselves. If we are constantly verbalizing our piety, we need to take note: "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless."

- *"Do not merely listen to the word."* For James, the perfect law (the law of love which gives freedom) is something, not so much to be studied, but done. It is something to be lived out in our lives. Living the truth is what is important.

Text - 1:19a

The first half of this verse may conclude v18, cf., Moffatt, or serve to introduce the next batch of instructions / sayings.

αδελφοί μου αγαπητοί "my dear brothers" - MY BELOVED BROTHERS. Often used to introduce a new unit of teaching.

ἴστε [οἶδα] perf. ind./imp. "take note of this" - KNOW *this*. Possibly read as indicative, so Mayor, RV. The variant ὥστε, "therefore", is sometimes followed, eg. AV, REB, NASB. "You must understand *this my beloved*", *NRSV*.

v19b

Being both hearers and doers of God's Word, v19-27:

Instruction #7: Hasty speech does not please God, v19b. "Be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger." This opening instruction sets the direction of the rest of the sayings in the passage by encouraging the reader who is born of the word, v18, to take careful note of what they read / hear and then do it. A child of God, with one foot in heaven and one foot on earth, living as we do in *interesting times*, should be a ready listener. As we are reminded in Proverbs, "Even fools seem clever when they are quiet", Prov.17:28. As well as being a good listener, we do well to be slow to speak and slow to anger. A chattering mouth and a bad temper do not lead to a quiet life; "It makes a lot of sense to be a person of few words and to stay calm", Prov.17:27.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, which may serve to support the argument that v19a is attached to v18, but then it may just serve to introduce the saying v19b. Variant και before the verb to-be is not read. Possibly "now let every person", Johnson.

πας ανθρωπος "everyone" - [LET] ALL MEN [BE]. Nominative subject of the verb to-be εστω. An instruction for all believers.

ταχως adj. "quick" - SWIFT, QUICK. Predicate adjective. Describing "ready listening", Laws.

εις το ακουσαι [ακουω] aor. inf. "be [quick] to listen" - TO HEED, LISTEN, OBEY. Ropes suggests that the preposition εις with the articular infinitive is adverbial, expressing "with reference to hearing", a form not attested in secular Greek. Certainly, the normal translation of this construction as a purpose / result clause does not work. Wallace suggests the infinitive is epexegetic, ie., explaining "quick". It does seem likely that the construction simply limits the adjective "quick", so Turner (cf. Phil.1:23). Listen to what? Commentators tend to agree that the injunction is that we listen to, take on board, God's word, "the word of truth", v18, so Martin, Adamson, Mitton. Some extend this to all truth, particularly wisdom, cf., Dibelius. General listening may be in mind, given that James is simply giving practical advice that enables a believer to survive through the vagaries of life with one foot in heaven and one on earth, ie., wisdom, cf., Proverbs 17:28, "Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent and discerning if he holds his tongue". Moo, Johnson, Davids, Laws, ... all take this line. Moo

argues for a similar approach to the other qualities; so "A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even tempered", Prov.17:27.

βραδύς adj. "**slow**" - SLOW [TO SPEAK]. Predicate adjective. "Think before you speak and count to ten before you react in anger."

εις + acc. "**to [become angry]**" - [SLOW] TO [ANGER]. As above, reference / respect

v20

Instruction #8: Justice is never promoted by anger, v20. "What is right in God's eyes, what is fair and just to our fellowman, is never likely to be achieved by anger", Mitton. A bad temper does not match God's measure of righteousness.

γάρ "**for**" - Possibly expressing cause / reason, but more likely transitional, serving as a connective link to the third part of the first saying, "slow to anger". James often uses this conjunction to stitch separate independent sayings.

άνδρος [ηρ δρος] "**man's**" - [ANGER] OF MAN. The genitive is adjectival, possibly possessive, but better attributive, "human wrath." The "man" is again a believer, but taken generally, so "human anger", Cassirer, or better, "your anger", TH.

οργη [η] "**anger**" - "Petty passion", Adamson; "a bad temper does not"

ουκ εργαζεται [εργαζομαι] pres. "**does not bring about**" - DOES NOT WORK, ACHIEVE. Usually taken to mean "produce / accomplish / achieve / bring about / ...", even though not the usual use of the word. Probably better understood in the sense of "do / work / practise", so Ropes.

δικαιοσυνην [η] "**the righteous life**" - RIGHTEOUSNESS. Probably in a moral sense; "justice", "uprightness", Cassirer.

θεου [ος] "**that God desires**" - OF GOD. The genitive here causes its usual problems and promotes numerous interpretations. i] As a subjective genitive where the genitive substantive, "God", produces the action of the verbal noun "righteousness"; "for men's temper is never the means of achieving God's true goodness (justice)", Phillips. ii] As an objective genitive where the genitive substantive, "God", receives the action of the verbal noun "righteousness", so NIV and most translations, cf., Dibelius. iii] As a genitive, source; "the righteousness *that comes from* God", ie., his vindication, or his verdict of acquittal (justification). This option is very unlikely. iv] As an adjectival genitive, limiting "righteousness", either possessive or partitive; "human anger does not match God's measure of righteousness", cf., Johnson. This last option seems best and certainly aligns with the OT understanding of a key phrase which serves as a definitive description of God's person. He is a morally pure being, reliable and faithful to his covenant promises and this is exhibited in his righteous reign, in his setting all things right, cf., Moo. Thus, the

being / character of God rightly serves as a gauge for human behaviour and so James can confidently say that "human anger does not match God's measure of righteousness."

v21

Instruction #9: All that defiles is cast away. Believers must "put away, as one would take off clothing, all filthiness, all that defiles, all sin", Hamann. "So, clear away all foul rank growth of malice and make a soil of humble modesty for the Word which roots itself inwardly with power to save your souls", Moffatt.

Again, it is likely that we have an independent saying which James has tied into the present context. Some commentators tie it with "anger" in v20, so "get rid of all moral filth" = "get rid of all nasty rancorous argumentation." This is probably pushing the contextual influence too far since the only obvious link is a grammatical γαρ, "therefore, ...", with the mention of humility / meekness serving as a contrast to anger. Others link it with v22 since it deals with hearing "the word" and doing it. Translations, therefore, have the paragraph division either before or after v21. James is probably using v21 as an independent saying which serves to introduce his instruction on hearing and doing, v22-25.

διο "therefore" - Inferential; establishing a logical connection, probably best not translated.

αποθεμενοι [αποτιθημι] aor. mid. part. "get rid of" - HAVING PUT AWAY, PUT OFF, STRIPPED OFF. The participle is adverbial, most likely imperatival, as NIV. Technically, participles that are obviously imperatival are usually attendant on an imperative verb, here possibly the imperative verb to-be, ἔστω, "let [every man] be [quick ...], v19. Often of putting off clothing, but here metaphorically of casting off sin. "You must strip off everything that would soil life", Barclay.

ῥυπαριαν [α] "impurity" - DIRTINESS, FILTHINESS. Here "impurity", Ropes.

και "and" - The function of the particle here is unclear. Does it connect two distinctive ideas, or does it form a single compound idea, or does it introduce an explanation of the first idea. The first option is the one followed by most translations, but the point is simple enough; "you must stop doing anything immoral or evil", CEV.

κακιας [α] gen. "the evil" - OF EVIL, WICKEDNESS. The genitive is adjectival, probably exegetical / appositional, specifying the abundance; "the abundance which consists of wickedness."

περισσειαν [α] "that is so prevalent" - ABUNDANCE, PROFUSION, OVERFLOWING / EXCESS. The function of this noun is unclear. James may be referring to the remaining wickedness in a person's life, the "remnants of evil",

NJB, although he is more likely referring to an abundance of wickedness, "wicked excess", REB.

εν + dat. "[**humbly**]" - IN [GENTLENESS, GENTLENESS, MILDNESS, MEEKNESS]. The preposition is adverbial, expressing manner; "with humility / humbly". Possibly the antecedent is "get rid of"; "put away with humility", but usually taken with "accept"; "receive with humility." The sense is not obvious, but probably "in a teachable spirit you must receive", Barclay.

δεξασθε [**δεχομαι**] aor. imp. "**accept**" - RECEIVE, ACCEPT. Possibly "obey", but better "accept".

τον εμφυτον λογον "**the word planted in you**" - THE IMPLANTED WORD. "Implanted" in the sense of "sown", "ingrafted", AV, although a more technical sense would be "inborn", RV margin. James is now adopting an agricultural metaphor, but what is "the word"? Often interpreted as "the preached word of the gospel", Laws. Yet, if we allow the context to dictate, it is likely that the word, as defined in v18, is intended, therefore, "the word of truth", "the message of God", Junkins. In simple terms the "word" entails the totality of God's instructions to believers; his manual for life: "And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us", 1Jn.3:23. The content of "love" is filled out in the ethical instructions throughout the Scriptures. Without the guidance of the context, we could argue that James is speaking about an implanted moral dimension that is unique to a created human in God's image, although how this could "save" us is unclear (possibly "seen to be saved"). So, "the implanted word of God", not "the innate divine ethic".

τον δυναμενον [**δυναμι**] pres. pas. part. "**which can**" - BEING ABLE. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "word"; "the word which is able."

σωσαι [**σοζω**] aor. inf. "**save**" - TO SAVE. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of "is able". "Save" in what sense. Many commentators see "save" in the terms of "eternal salvation", but the wisdom sense of "set free to live a full life" seems more likely. Such an interpretation does not imply that James is unaware of the gospel and of its promise of eternal life, just that James is addressing the practical business of living as a believer in a world now limited by sin.

υμων gen. pro. "**you**" - [THE SOULS] OF YOU. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. Again, James may have in mind "the sowing of the seed, that is, the gospel message, [which] will yield as its fruit salvation", TH. Yet, the more common sense for the word, "life / being / existence / inner self", linked with "save", probably means little more than living a full and happy life.

v22

Instruction #10: Genuine Christianity is neither sentimental nor unpractical, v22-25. James now warns his readers "against sentimental and unpractical religion. There is a kind of religious person who can enjoy listening to a preacher, and being present at a public act of prayer, but who fails to translate their faith into effective action in daily life", Mitton. "Only faith which will serve (make a person blessed) is that which results in obedience to Christ's directives", Davids, so "embrace and practise the word", Vlachos. Unlike the NIV which reverses the wording, we are better served with the Gk. order; "*be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves*", NRSV. The wording and order of the NRSV is followed in this verse.

δε "but" - BUT/AND. Here transitional and so best untranslated as NIV. James sometimes uses a transitional **δε** to introduce an imperative, as here.

γινεσθε [γινομαι] pres. imp. "**be**" - BECOME. Here used instead of **ειμι**, "be", and therefore properly used to commence the sentence. The present tense is durative expressing ongoing action, "make sure that you continue to be", TH.

ποιηται [ης ου] "**doers**" - DOERS, MAKERS. Predicate nominative. The issue here for James concerns the living out of faith, of practising our profession. "Who live by the word [of God]", Knox.

λογου [ος] gen. "**of the word**" - OF WORD. This genitive is usually classified as verbal, objective. In Hebrew circles, it would be "makers of the Law" = "obedient to the Law", but James has a wider view of "the word" than just the law of Moses. "The gospel" is a possibility, but it seems more likely that James has in mind the totality of God's guidelines that properly apply to disciples of Christ. See below, "the perfect law that gives freedom."

μη μονον ακροαται "**not merely hearers**" - NOT ONLY HEARERS. "Act on what you hear rather than letting it go in one ear and out the other", cf., Peterson.

παραλογιζομενοι [παραλογιζομαι] pres. mid. part. "**who deceive [themselves]**" - DECEIVING / MISJUDGING, MISCALCULATING [YOURSELVES]. Here "deceiving", of fooling ourselves that profession is enough, cf., Johnson. The participle may be adverbial, consecutive, expressing result, as NIV, "with the result that you deceive yourselves", or adjectival modifying "hearers", "hearers who deceive [delude] themselves", NRSV, although "themselves" is actually "yourselves", indicating that it modifies the subject "you" of "you be doers ...", so "you who deceive yourselves", Dibelius.

v23

The illustration (simile = "like a ..") in v23b-24 lends itself to a deeper spiritual meaning (so Adamson, Mitton, as against Blackman, Dibelius). James

is saying that a person who hears the word, but fails to follow it through (in one ear and out the other), is like a person who views his face in a mirror, but then forgets what it looks like, eg., they see they are a mess, but then wonder off forgetting that they look like a mess. "He is like a man who looks in a mirror and who sees the smuts which disfigure his face, the dishevelment of his hair, and who goes away and forgets what he looks like, and so omits to do anything about it", Barclay, *James*.

ὅτι "- " - FOR. More reason than cause, in the terms of introducing a supportive argument - missing in some manuscripts; "for whoever listens and does nothing ...", Moffatt.

εἰ + ind. "- " - IF, *as is the case*, [A CERTAIN ONE IS A HEARER OF WORD AND NOT A DOER, *then* THIS ONE IS LIKE A MAN]. Introducing a 1st class conditional clause where the proposed condition is assumed to be true. "If anyone is simply a hearer of the word of God and not a doer", Johnson.

εοικεν [**εοικα**] perf. "**is like**" - IS LIKE, RESEMBLES. "Then they (he) are like a person (man)"

κατανοουντι [**κατανοεω**] dat. pres. part. "**who looks at**" - [A MAN] OBSERVING. Dative agreeing with "man", dative of reference / respect. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "man". Nicely expressed as a glancing look, "like a person catching the reflection of their face in a mirror", cf., Phillips, although the present tense would imply "looking" rather than "glancing" (the aorist verbs in v24 would then be gnomic); "he is not unlike a man who examines" his own face in a mirror", Cassirer.

της γενεσεως [**ις εως**] gen. "**[his face]**" - THE NATURAL [FACE OF HIM]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "face", "his natural face", cf., Ropes. As of a family likeness, the visage that a person takes with them throughout life, so "natural face" = "face". "The face that nature gave him", Ropes; "his natural appearance", Dibelius.

εν + dat. "**in [a mirror]**" - Local, expressing space. The mirror referred would be one of polished metal.

v24

γαρ "**and**" - FOR. More reason than cause.

κατενοησεν [**κατανοεω**] aor. "**after looking [at himself]**" - HE OBSERVED [HIMSELF]. The aorist is best treated as gnomic; "he looks at himself", Barclay.

απεληλυθεν [**απερχομαι**] perf. "**goes away**" - [AND] HAS GONE AWAY.

επελαθετο [**επιλανθανομαι**] aor. "**[immediately] forgets**" - [AND IMMEDIATELY] FORGOT [WHAT HE WAS LIKE]. The aorist is gnomic, as above. "We touch here on a pervasive and important biblical theme. The Lord constantly

warned the people of Israel not to 'forget' his mighty acts on their behalf but to 'remember' his mercies and his law", Moo.

v25

James now describes the believer who takes in God's word and applies it. Such a person "is no distracted scatterbrain, but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action", Peterson.

δε **"but"** - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrast; James contrasts the forgetful hearer with the work doer.

ὁ ... παρακυψας [παρακυπτω] aor. part. **"the man who looks intently"** - THE ONE HAVING LOOKED, LOOKED CLOSELY, EXAMINED, PEERED. The participle serves as a substantive. The word is used of careful examination, eg., of the disciples bending over and looking intently into Jesus' tomb, Jn.20:5, 11.

εις **"into"** - to, into. Spatial.

νομον τελειον **"the perfect law"** - *the* COMPLETE, PERFECT LAW. What is this complete / whole / all-encompassing law? Some commentators argue that James still has in mind law in the terms of divine truth, that complete / perfect revelation that is ours in Christ and which sets us free, ie., "the word of truth" = the gospel. If, as seems likely, James is working in the wisdom tradition, the law is God's ground-rules for a successful life, the operating manual, the guidelines for discipleship. Such includes the Mosaic ethic, along with the whole of NT ethics, particularly the law of Christ - the law of love. The lack of an article doesn't prove much, although if it were present it would support the argument that "the law" = "Torah".

τον **"that"** - THE ONE. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the adjectival genitive "of freedom" into an attributive construction limiting "the perfect law", "which is freedom" = "that *perfect law* which is *characterized by* freedom."

της ελευθεριας [α] gen. **"gives freedom"** - OF FREEDOM, LIBERTY. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting / describing "that *perfect law*", "a law of liberty", a "law characterized by freedom", Ropes. So, not any old law, but the law which produces freedom, it releases rather than enslaves, it makes for a happy life, a constructive life. Of course, again, if this "law" is the gospel, then "free" = spiritually free, but James' is writing within a Wisdom tradition, and not in the terms of a gospel tract.

παραμεινας [παραμεινω] aor. part. **"continues to do this"** - [AND] HAVING REMAINED, ABIDED, CONTINUED. The participle serves as a substantive; "the one looking intently and continuing". Describing a person who perseveres in his attention to God's instructions. The following participial clause defines "the one having continued." "Keep on paying attention to it", TEV.

ουκ ... γενομενος aor. mid. part. "**not**" - NOT HAVING BECOME. The participle forms a noun clause standing in apposition to "the one having continued", "namely, the one not having become a forgetful hearer but an active doer."

επιλησιμονης [η] gen. "**forgetting [what he has heard]**" - [A HEARER] OF FORGETFUL. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "hearer", the "forgetful" type of hearer, as described in the illustration, v23-24. "Forgetful listener", Moffatt, NET.

αλλα "**but**" - but/and. Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction; "not, but".

εργου [ου] gen. "**[doing] it**" - [A DOER] OF WORK. Again, the genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting by describing the believer who, having examined closely the ethics of the Scriptures, sets out to apply it in their life rather than put it aside for some more opportune time in the never-never. None-the-less, usually taken as verbal, objective, cf., Mayor; "one who does work". "An active agent", Moffatt.

μακαριος adj. "**[he will be] blessed**" - [THIS ONE/MAN WILL BE] BLESSED, HAPPY. Predicate adjective. As with the use of this word in 1:12, we are unsure whether it is just "happy / contented", or whether James is referring to a "spiritual blessing / true happiness / God blessed", with the stress on a future divine blessing, eg., eternal life. There is certainly going to be a spiritual element to the blessing and such derives from God, but James is still working in the wisdom tradition and simply makes the point that on the whole, life will go well for us if we apply God's ground-rules for successful living.

εν + dat. "**in [what he does]**" - IN [THE DOING OF HIM]. Expressing sphere / context - he is blessed within the sphere / context of his behaviour. The believer is blessed, not because he does the law / word, so Moo, but in the actual doing of it; "will be blessed in every undertaking", NJB. Other possibilities are instrumental, expressing means, "by so acting", REB, or less likely, causal, "for doing it", NLT.

v26

Instruction #11: Scrupulous religious practice is no substitute for a pure life, v26-27, cf., Mitton. The ethical failure identified by James picks up on "be slow to speak", v19, ie., an unwillingness to bridle the tongue. So, James' point is simple, a person may value their Christian walk ("religion"), but if all it produces is a nasty mouth and a self-indulgent life, then it is next to useless. The walk ("religion") that God values considers others and is not self-indulgent.

ει + ind. "**if**" - if. Introducing a conditional clause, 1st class, where the condition is assumed to be true; "if, *as is the case*, *then* ..."

δοκει [δοκεω] pres. "[**anyone**] **considers**" - [A CERTAIN MAN] THINKS, SUPPOSES HIMSELF. "Seemeth to himself", Ropes. It could read "if anyone seems religious", i.e., in the eyes of others; "if anyone appears to be religious", Phillips.

ειναι [ειμι] inf. "-" - TO BE. The infinitive of the verb to-be introduces an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what he considers; "considers [himself] to be religious."

θρησκευος adj. "**religious**" - Predicate adjective. Not just the scrupulous attention to religious observance in public worship, so Dibelius, but piety in general, so Mayor. The adj. appears only here in the NT (a hapax legomenon). Probably covering the totality of a person's "relationship with the divine", Johnson.

μη χαλιναγωγων [χαλιναγωγεω] pres. part. "**does not keep a tight rein on**" - NOT BRIDLING [TONGUE OF HIM]. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying "considers", or adverbial, concessive, "although", even possibly adjectival, attributive, limiting **τις**. As of leading with a bridle. Sometimes interpreted in terms of restricting intemperate preaching, but this is far too limiting. "Controls what he says", TH.

αλλα "-" - BUT. Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction. We might have expected **και**, "and", or no linking particle, such that the clause serves to introduce the apodosis of the conditional sentence, "if he does not control the tongue, then he deceives himself and his religion is vain", cf., Mayor. Johnson solves the problem in his translation of "deceives", such that "his religion is worthless" becomes the apodosis. See below.

απατων [απαταω] pres. part. "**he deceives**" - DECEIVING. The participle is adverbial, possibly temporal, or concessive, or as above, adjectival, attributive. Johnson notes that the word can also mean "give pleasure to", so his translation is: "if anyone considers himself religious without bridling his tongue and while indulging his heart [then] this person's religion is worthless." "If doesn't bridle the tongue, but rather is self-indulgent, then"

καρδιαν [α] "**himself**" - HEART [OF HIM]. Accusative direct object of the participle "deceiving". The "heart" being the seat of personality, rationality, being, so "himself", as NIV.

η θρησκευια [α] "**[his] religion**" - [THIS ONES] RELIGION, PIETY, RELIGIOUS WORSHIP. Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. In the sense of "piety", which word expresses the practice of a person's religion, but the word "religion" to the modern ear probably means just that.

ματαιος adj. "**[is] worthless**" - WORTHLESS. Predicate adjective. In a wisdom context, foolish as opposed to wise, therefore of no practical value in the

business of living with one foot in heaven and one on earth; "Futile", Barclay; "useless", Phillips.

v27

τω θεω και πατρι **"God our Father"** - [RELIGION PURE AND UNDEFILED WITH] GOD AND = EVEN FATHER. Another example of a hendiadys, i.e., a single idea expressed by two separate ideas joined by "and". So, not "God and Father", but "God the Father", Cassirer, etc., or "God our Father", NJB, etc.

παρα + dat. **"accepts as"** - WITH [GOD]. Spatial, sphere, "beside God", "with God" = "in the judgment of God", Moffatt; "what God the Father considers (judges) to be pure and genuine religion", TEV.

καθαρα και αμικαντος adj. **"pure and faultless"** - PURE AND UNDEFILED. Predicate adjectives. These descriptors often stand together, "pure", positive, "undefiled", negative. They virtually mean the same, and together probably serve to define the genuine article (mark the true and wise believer), rather than the "completely pure" (Phillips) article. "Real religion", Peterson.

επισκεπτεσθαι [επισκεπτομαι] pres. inf. **"to look after"** - [IS THIS] TO VISIT, PROVIDE FOR, HELP. The infinitive, which introduces an infinitival clause, as with "to keep", is exegetical, explaining / clarifying / specifying the substantive "religion", which noun is qualified by the adjectival clause "which is pure and undefiled with God and Father." "To provide for", TH.

εν + dat. **"in [their distress]"** - [ORPHANS AND WIDOWS] IN [THE DISTRESS, TROUBLE, AFFLICTION OF THEM]. Local, expressing sphere / context. In the ancient world widows and orphans faced extreme hardships, although in Western societies, certainly widows are usually very well off, so better "the homeless and loveless", Peterson. "In their hardships", NJB.

τηρειν [τηρω] pres. inf. **"to keep"** - TO KEEP, GUARD [ONESELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD]. The infinitive, as επισκεπτεσθαι above; "in keeping oneself from being contaminated by the world", Barclay.

2:1-13

3. A sermon on partiality, 2:1-13

i] Favouritism forbidden

Argument

Moving from his introductory sayings / instructions, James now presents a mini sermon. He confronts a particular problem within the Christian fellowship, the problem is "status serving" - favouritism. We are easily attracted toward the successful, wealthy and beautiful people of this world. Yet for James, such partiality is something quite evil. James' message is simple: "the profession of Christian faith is inconsistent, indeed incompatible, with an attitude toward other people that discriminates against some and in favour of others", Laws.

Issues

i] Context: See 1:1. We now move from the introductory instructions, *The Marks of a Wise Believer*, chapter 1, where James develops his theme, **Genuine faith yields good fruit**. In the Introduction James broached many of the subjects that he intends to examine in detail, and now in the argument proper, 2:1-5:12, he gathers together sermons, and sets of sayings / instructions, that address the ethical issues he wants to raise with his readers.

First, we have two sermons:

Poverty and generosity:

Discrimination against the poor violates kingdom law, 2:1-13;

Faith without works is a dead thing, 2:14-26.

Then follows three sets of subject-related stitched sayings / instructions: the tongue, wealth, and general instructions. These sayings / instructions don't always flow logically, indicating that many are probably independent, either from James own hand, or other sources, but are assembled by James to address the particular ethical issue at hand. The subjects addressed are as follows:

The use of the tongue:

A loose tongue is driven by anger, 3:1-12;

A loose tongue is driven by worldly wisdom, 3:13-18;

A loose tongue is driven by worldly passions, 4:1-6;

A loose tongue calls for humble repentance, 4:7-12;

Worldliness and wealth:

The test of wealth, 4:13-17;

The danger of wealth, 5:1-6;

General instructions, 5:7-12.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: *Discrimination against the poor violates kingdom law:*

Topic, v1;

Favouritism.

Illustration, v2-4

Explanation, v5-11:

It is inconsistent with God's choice of the poor, v5-6a;

It is consistent with the conduct of the rich, v6b-7;

It is inconsistent with the law of love, v8-11.

Exhortation, v12-13:

believers must act in ways which are consistent with God's coming judgment.

iv] Interpretation:

This passage, as with the one that follows, is in the form of a rhetorical speech / sermon. Each is headed with a leading admonition which serves to identify the topic of the speech / sermon. Here it is favouritism. The sermon / speech opens with the topic revealed in a question or exhortation (see below), v1. The issue is then illustrated, v2-4, with the explanation as to why favouritism is wrong provided in v5-11. The sermon concludes with an exhortation and warning, v12-13.

In the opening verse we strike a problem with translation. The generally accepted approach is to translate the verse as an exhortation - "Don't show favouritism", as NIV. Such a translation sets the tone of the passage and certainly is in line with the point James is making. Yet, it is possible to take another tack. The RV margin translates the verse as a question expecting a negative answer; "do you, in accepting persons, hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory?" The thrust of the verse is still the same, although now the implication is that to show favouritism in relationships because of status, wealth, etc... is to express non standing with Christ. A person who shows partiality in relationships, on the ground of status (ie., being a respecter of persons), is by definition not a follower of Christ.

So, taking the line of the second possible translation, we would end up with a much stronger statement. It is not just an exhortation to show no partiality, but a question asking whether the showing of partiality in itself, implies that one does not "hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ." This possible interpretation fits well with v12-13. Of course, if a question, the

point is not to definitively deny a person's faith, but rather to prod them to recognize that faith and favouritism are inconsistent.

Although the sermon functions as a whole, v13 looks very much like an attached saying with the usual tenuous links, here *γαρ*, "for", and the word "judge". None-the-less, as Dibelius notes, it is quite "appropriate".

In what sense is the "law of liberty" a vehicle of liberation? It is difficult to describe the totality of God's law, in particular neighbour law, as if it is liberating. Yet, it is possible to describe the consequences of compliance as liberating, but then, compliance itself is not always liberating.

Clearly, compliance as a means of escaping judgment cannot be intended, unless James is speaking of compliance in and through Christ. Given the context of this phrase in 1:25, it is possible that James is saying nothing more than that compliance with God's ethical guidelines is a very liberating experience and thus it is possible to describe the law as God's "perfect / flawless and liberating law." On the other hand, it can be argued that the descriptive "of freedom / liberty" for the law is prompted by the link between justice and mercy, an idea drawn out in v13. Divine judgment under the law is not without mercy and thus it is possible to describe the law as a "liberating law." Does James mean "the law that treats men as free", Goodspeed, Williams? Certainly, an interesting translation, but it doesn't work in 1:25. "The law of liberty" may well mean "the law of Christ", in the sense of "the law of love", but in application this is little different to neighbourly law. It may well mean "the law of the gospel", in the sense of "the law of grace", the new covenant law realized / fulfilled in Christ, but isn't this just spiritualizing a simple concept? Moo thinks not. With this interpretation James is addressing two laws in v8-13, the Torah and the liberating-law. See Adamson for his take on the law / grace argument - "the law of ordinances / the law of liberty." Yet, it is a rather left-of-field argument to propose that James is into Pauline theology at this point.

Given James' Wisdom perspective that right / blessing / reward follows the right acts of the righteous, then it is very likely that he is making the point that the law (the totality of God's ethical / moral instructions) is liberating.

v] Homiletics: *Favouritism*.

James raises a tricky pastoral issue for those of us who struggle to manage a congregation in the face of declining membership. James comes

down hard on favouritism, but as we know, pragmatics and purity often dance together.

Institutional churches, by their very nature, are driven to promote a worldly image of success as a means of marketing the gospel to the world. Youthfulness, vigour, bright services, etc. are all promoted. The electronic church oozes success. So, when we are selecting this person or that person for positions of responsibility in our church, we do often favour the *beautiful* people.

James also reminds us that the Christian gospel is attractive to non-achievers rather than those who have made it. This is not because God actually predetermines that only the poor will respond to the gospel, but rather that his called-out people tend to be a foolish and weak people, cf., Matt.11:25. Our heritage comes from a despised Jewish Nation, while our leader is an executed common criminal. Given this, we may well wonder why Christianity in the West tends to be upper middle-class. In fact, survey results show us that the Christian gospel is widely accepted by this group of people. It is for this reason that Church Growth strategies are aimed at young professionals, the well-educated middle-class marrieds. Is this not favouritism?

The danger we face is that favouritism may end up filling our church with socialized *Christians*, rather than believers.

Text - 2:1

Favouritism condemned, v1-13. i] The warning: If a person shows favouritism, can they really call themselves a believer? v1. As noted above, the verse is best read as a question; "My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favouritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ?", NRSV.

μη εχετε [εχω] pres. imp. "-" - [BROTHERS OF ME] NOT [IN = WITH PARTIALITY] HAVE [THE FAITH OF THE LORD OF US]. If a command, this negation may imply an instruction to cease an ongoing action - habitual partiality. If a statement, "brothers, you cannot at one time believe (have the faith) in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ and be a snob", Barclay. Best taken as a question; see above.

του κυριου [ος] gen. "[faith / believers in our glorious] Lord" - [THE FAITH] OF THE LORD [OF US JESUS CHRIST OF GLORY]. As is usual, and particularly with the phrase "faith of Lord / Christ / Jesus", there is ongoing debate as to the function of the genitive. It is usually understood as an objective genitive, our faith / belief / trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, there is much to support a subjective or possessive understanding of the genitive, the faith / faithfulness of Christ (his faithful submission to the Father, expedited on the

cross, on our behalf). This "faith" we "have" for ourselves / "take" to ourselves. James' point would then be that we can't take to ourselves Christ's work on our behalf and "connect that with", **εν**, "partiality". Of course, it is unclear whether Paul intends a subjective / possessive genitive, let alone James, so the issue must remain unresolved. The best work on this subject is Richard Hays' doctoral dissertation "The Faith of Jesus Christ" now published in The Biblical Resource Series.

Ιησου Χριστου gen. "**Jesus Christ**" - Genitive is apposition to "Lord".

της δοξης gen. "**glorious**" - OF GLORY. The genitive is probably adjectival, attributive, limiting the title, "Lord Jesus Christ", as NIV. There are other possibilities: i] it modifies "faith" = "the glorious faith of our Lord Jesus Christ"; ii] it modifies "our" = "our glory"; iii] it modifies "Lord" = "faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord", NJB, cf., TEV. iv] in apposition to "Lord Jesus Christ" = "our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory (who is the glory)", Moffatt, and less likely, "who reigns in glory", REB. "Our glorious Lord Jesus Christ", Barclay, etc.

μη εν προσωπολημψιαις εχετε "**must not show favouritism**" - NOT IN PARTIALITY HAVE. The preposition **εν**, "in", is probably intended to express association, "with", so "do not (**εχετε**) hold with (have a connection with) partiality, discrimination, the making of unjust distinctions between people by treating one person better than another*." "Treat some people better than others", CEV.

v2

ii] James now illustrates the issue - the rich favoured over the poor, v2-4. Partiality, within the Christian fellowship, is described in the terms of discriminating in favour of someone on the basis of their wealth and status. To do this is to "become judges of evil thoughts", that is, rationalize in an evil way. By showing favouritism toward the wealthy, we imply that they are more desirable than the poor person, when in fact, in God's eyes, both rich and poor are precious. Doing such breaks the law of God, ie., is evil, Deut.1:17.

γαρ "-" - for. In combination with "if", gives the sense "for instance", REB.

εαν + subj. "**suppose**" - IF [ENTERS]. Introducing a conditional clause, 3rd class, where the condition stated in the protasis has the possibility of coming true; "if, as may be the case, then" The apodosis, the "then" clause, is v4. "For If a man with gold rings and in fine clothing comes into your assembly [then] v4, have you not made distinctions", NRSV.

ανηρ [ηρ δρος] "**a man**" - A MAN [WITH GOLD RINGS ON FINGERS IN SPLENDID CLOTHING]. It is reasonable to drop the sex, "a person", NRSV, and it is reasonable to emphasize the contrast established by James with the "poor man", so "a rich person", CEV.

εις + acc. **"into"** - Spatial, as NIV.

συναγωγή [η] **"meeting"** - SYNAGOGUE [OF YOU]. Best to use the term for a Christian meeting place, so "church", "worship service", "meeting", Barclay, "assembly", NAB. It is interesting that "synagogue" is, at this time, used for a Christian place of meeting. For James, Christianity is still a Jewish sect.

εν + dat. **"wearing"** - IN. Locative, expressing space.

λαμπρά adj. **"fine [clothing]"** - SHINING, BRIGHT, SPLENDID [CLOTHING AND ENTERS ALSO A POOR MAN IN SHABBY CLOTHS]. Possibly in the sense of "clean", but also in the sense of "bright", as of cloth woven with gold thread.

v3

There are textual variants regarding the instructions to the poor man. UBS^s opts for "sit or stand there [under my footstool]."

δε **"if"** - BUT/AND. Transitional; used here to extend the protasis of the conditional clause begun in v2.

επιβλεψατε [επιβλεπω] aor. subj. **"you show special attention"** - YOU LOOK ATTENTIVELY AT, DIRECT YOU ATTENTION TO. "Show more respect to", TEV.

επ [επι] + acc. **"to"** - UPON [THE ONE WEARING THE SPLENDID CLOTHING AND SAY]. Spatial.

καλως adv. **"[here's a] good [seat for you]"** - [YOU SIT HERE] GOOD, WELL. Adverb of manner. Possibly meaning "please sit here", but more likely modifying seat, it's a "good" seat, as NIV. "Sit here, this is a good place", Goodspeed, "best seat", CEV.

τω πτωχω [ος] dat. "poor man" - [AND] TO THE POOR [YOU SAY]. Dative of indirect object.

υπο + acc. **"by [my feet]"** - [YOU STAND THERE OR SIT] UNDER [THE FOOTSTOOL OF ME]. Spatial; use of hyperbole to stress humiliation. The sense is probably just "sit on the floor", CEV.

v4

We finally come to the apodosis of the conditional clause commenced in v2, the "then" clause.

ου **"[have you] not"** - [THEN DID YOU] NOT. This negation is used in his questions expecting an affirmative answer.

διεκριθητε [διακρινω] aor. pas/mid. **"have you [not] discriminated"** - JUDGE, MAKE DISTINCTIONS, EVALUATE. Usually taken as middle voice, "judge between", "make distinctions", in the sense of discriminating in a negative way, so NIV. If a passive voice, then the sense is "having doubts", meaning torn between different actions; "do you not see that you are inconsistent and judge by false standards", NEB.

εν + dat. "**among [yourselves]**" - IN = AMONG [YOURSELVES]. Expressing sphere, or association; "among yourselves", "among your members", REB, which fits with "discriminated", but more naturally "in yourself", "in your own minds", Moffatt.

πονηρων adj. gen. "**with evil [thoughts]**" - [AND BECOME JUDGES] OF EVIL [THOUGHTS]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "thoughts". Not that they judge the evil in others, but that they are "evilly motivated / evil-minded judges", Davids.

v5

iii] The reason why favouritism is wrong, v5-11. Blomberg offers the following three reasons: a) It is inconsistent with God's choice of the poor, v5-6a; b) It is consistent with the conduct of the rich, v6b-7; c) It is inconsistent with the law of love, v8-11. James makes an observation about life. Those without status and wealth seem to be the very ones who respond readily in faith toward the Christian gospel. Therefore, showing favouritism to the rich is a bit of an insult toward a group that represents the majority of church members. Also, those with wealth and status have been the very ones to oppose the Christian faith and to slander the name of Christ.

ακουσατε [**ακουω**] aor. imp. "**listen**" - HEAR, LISTEN [MY BELOVED BROTHERS]. The "listen my dear brothers" signals that the illustration is over and James now moves into an examination and application of the issue of partiality; "For do notice my brethren", Phillips.

ουχ "**[has] not [God]**" - *did* NOT [GOD]. In a question, this negation expects an affirmative answer.

εξελεξατο [**εκλεγομαι**] aor. "**chosen**" - CHOOSE [THE POOR ONES]. This phrase seems to imply that God actually calls out the poor of this world to be his children. If we hold that God chooses (selects, prefers) those whom he will save, then this is how we should interpret the verse. Yet, it's probably better to regard that God has chosen the weak and ineffective family of Abraham to be the channel of his blessings to all mankind. The foolishness and weakness of this people has tended to attract a response from those who are the dispossessed of our world. It is they who tend to respond to the gospel and become members of God's called out, chosen people. That is, individuals, of their own volition, choose to be members of God's set-apart down-trodden people, and those who so choose tend to be poor (working class).

τω κοσμω [**ος**] dat. "**in the eyes of the world**" - IN/BY/FOR THE WORLD. Variant readings exist trying to make sense of this phrase, eg. the preposition **εν**, "in", is added to give the phrase a local (spatial) sense, "in the world", NRSV. A variant reading has a genitive instead of a dative, "of the world" = origin or

possession; "the poor of the world." As a dative, it may be a dative of interest, advantage,, ie., "for the benefit of the world." It may be a dative of reference, "with reference / respect to this world's resources." It may possibly be a rare dative of feeling (ethical), "the poor to this world" = "the poor as far as this world is concerned." Most commentators and translations opt for this sense, although define it as either a dative of interest (Adamson, Davids) or reference/respect (Johnson,). Like beauty, Greek grammar can sometimes be in the eyes of the beholder! "Poor in the view of the world", Davids.

πλουσιους adj. "**to be rich**" - *to be RICH*. This accusative adjective introduces an object clause ("rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to the ones loving him") serving as the accusative complement of the object ("the poor ones in the world") of the verb "to choose", standing in a double accusative construction.

εν πιστει [ις εως] "**in faith**" - The preposition **εν** may indicate a dative of interest / advantage implying that the poor possess an abundance of faith, but this is unlikely; "God has given a lot of faith to the poor", CEV. A dative of reference /respect may be indicated; although they are poor, in / with regard to their faith, they are rich, "rich in the sphere of faith", Davids. Possibly we again have a dative of feeling (ethical); they are rich as far as faith is concerned, ie., in the judgment of the divine realm of faith, as compared to the judgment of the world. "Rich in the realm of faith", TH.

της βασιλειας [α] gen. "**[inherit] the kingdom**" - [AND HEIRS] OF THE KINGDOM. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "heirs", or it may be taken as verbal, objective, "they inherit the kingdom", Adam. Israel's inheritance was the Abrahamic promise = a kingdom. "He also promised them a share in his kingdom", CEV.

επηγγειλατο [επαγγελομαι] aor. "**he promised**" - [WHICH] HE PROMISED. The NIV treats the aorist literally, but an English perfect seems appropriate, "he has promised", NRSV.

τοις αγαπωσιν [αγαπω] pres. part. dat. "**those who love**" - TO THE ONES LOVING [HIM]. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of indirect object / interest, advantage.

v6

δε "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrast, "and yet".

υμεις "**you**" - Nominative subject of the verb "to dishonour"; emphatic by use and position; "You, on the other hand", NJB.

ητιμασατε [ατιμαζω] aor. "**have insulted**" - DISHONOURED, HUMILIATED, DESPISED, SHOWN CONTEMPT TOWARD [THE POOR MAN]. Assuming that James has in mind no specific act of discrimination toward a particular poor person or

group, the aorist is best translated as an English present tense and "the poor" as a general group. "But you humiliate the poor", Goodspeed.

ουχ "is it not" - *do* NOT. The negation introduces a question expecting an affirmative answer. Although a single sentence in Greek, the NIV breaks the sentence up into two questions. "Is it not the rich who lord it over you and drag you into court?", Moffatt.

καταδυναστεουσιν [**καταδυναστεω**] pres. "**who are exploiting**" - [THE RICH ONES] OPPRESS, EXERCISE POWER OVER. "Treat you as tyrants treat their slaves", Barclay.

ὑμων gen. pro. "**you**" - Genitive of direct object after the **κατα** prefix verb "to oppress."

κριτηρια [**ον**] "**court**" - [AND THEY DRAG YOU INTO] JUDGMENT-SEAT. Secular civil or criminal courts are intended, probably civil courts within a local jurisdiction. Those on the fringe of society, Jews and Christians, were vulnerable, in the first centuries, to civil action on trumped up charges for commercial advantage.

v7

αυτοι "**are they**" - *do* THEY [NOT]. Nominative subject of the verb "to slander." Emphatic by use and position. The negation **ουκ**, when used in a question, expects an affirmative answer.

βλασθημουσιν [**βλασθημew**] pres. "**slandering / blaspheming**" - BLASPHEME, SLANDER, ABUSE, SPEAK EVIL OF. James identifies this behaviour as typical of the rich and powerful.

καλον adj. "**[the] noble [name of him]**" - [THE] GOOD [NAME]. Modifying "name", the direct object of "blaspheme". "The excellent name", NRSV.

το επικληθεν [**επικαλεω**] aor. pas. part. "**[to] whom [you] belong**" - HAVING BEEN NAMED [OVER / UPON YOU]. The participle is adjectival, attributive; "the good name which has been named over you". In the sense of give a name to someone and therefore identify possession of. The name "invoked over you", NRSV, is obviously "the glorious Lord Jesus Christ", 2:1. It is this name under which we are claimed by God and which is blasphemed by the rich and powerful; "the honourable name by which God has claimed you", REB.

v8

To show favouritism is to break the divine law of God's kingdom, namely, the law of love, v8-9.

ει + ind. "**if**" - IF INDEED, *as is the case*, [YOU PERFORM THE ROYAL LAW, *then*]. Conditional clause, 1st class, where the proposed condition stated in the protasis is assumed to be true.

μεντοι "really" - This conjunction is either affirmative, "indeed / really / verily", as NIV, or adversative (probably more concessive), "however", cf., NAB. It is likely that v8 is being contrasted with v9 so an affirmative sense seems best; "if you really fulfill if however, you practise favouritism.....", Johnson. "

βασιλικον adj. "royal [law]" - Possibly "royal" in that this law derives from God (from a king, so "the Law of the Great [Heavenly] King", Wesley), or "sovereign" in that it is authoritative, REB, or the first and most important law, "supreme", NJB. Some commentators suggest *lex regina*, "the Law of the kingdom", ie., the law that governs the kingdom. It would seem that the law is as quoted, Lev.19:18, although some argue that "the royal law" is the Ten Commandments, of which duty to neighbour is summarized in the quote "love your neighbour". The fact that "law" is anarthrous (without an article) supports the argument that "the royal law" is the whole law. "You will be doing the right thing if you obey the law of the Kingdom", TEV.

κατα + acc. "found in" - ACCORDING TO [THE SCRIPTURE YOU SHALL LOVE]. Here expressing a standard.

τον πλησιον "neighbour" - THE NEAR ONE, NEIGHBOUR. An adverb used as a substantive. For a Jew, "the neighbour" is a fellow Jew, including Jews of the dispersion, even a syncretized Jew - a Samaritan (so Jesus). The proper Christian equivalent is "brother", a fellow believer.

ως "as [yourself]" - LIKE, AS [YOURSELF]. Comparative.

καλως adv. "[you are doing] right" - [YOU DO] WELL. Adverb of manner. The phrase makes up the apodosis of the conditional clause; "you are doing well", ESV.

v9

δε "but" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrasting point; "however", Johnson.

ει + ind. "if" - IF, *as is the case*, [YOU SHOW PARTIALITY, *then* YOU COMMIT SIN]. Introducing a 1st. class conditional clause where the proposed condition is assumed to be true for argument's sake. It serves to contrast the first in v8.

προσωπολημπτετε [προσωπολημπτω] pres. ind. "you show favouritism" - SHOW PARTIALITY, DISCRIMINATE. Hapax legomenon - once only use in NT. "If you treat some people better than others", CEV.

ελεγχομενοι [ελεγχω] pres. mid./pas. part. "and are convicted" - BEING EXPOSED. The participle is adverbial, best taken as consecutive, expressing result; "as a result you are exposed by the law as transgressors."

του νομου [ος] gen. "[by] the law" - [BY] THE LAW. Genitive after the instrumental **υπο**, "by". Which law? Is James referring to "the law of love", or

God's law in general, or the Torah? The kingdom's call for love, for compassion, summarizes all neighbourly law, but probably James has in mind the whole law of God, the totality God's ethical directions in both the Old and New Testaments.

ὡς "as" - Not a comparative here, as if they are like lawbreakers, but expressing a characteristic quality which they possess by showing favouritism.

παραβαται [ης ου] "lawbreakers" - TRANSGRESSORS, OFFENDERS. Referring to rebellion against God's law, literally: "breaking the fence of the Torah."

v10

In v10-11 James goes on to reinforce the point by noting that his comments may seem to be making a mountain out of a mole hill, but when we break the law, even in just one respect, for example by showing partiality, we have broken God's law as a whole and are liable to God's condemnation. Disobedience at only one point makes us a lawbreaker.

γάρ "for" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why a person who shows partiality is a transgressor.

ὅστις + subj. "whoever" - WHOEVER [KEEPS]. Nominative subject of the verbs "to keep" and "to stumble." The particle **αυ** is missing and would normally stand in front of the subjunctive to properly form this indefinite relative conditional clause. The clause will express "a possible or supposed fact in future time, or a generality in present time", Smyth. "Whoever obeys the whole law", Moffatt.

ὅλον τον νομον "the whole law" - ALL THE LAW. Again, we are unsure what law James is referring to. Certainly, the law of love, summarizing the law toward neighbour, remains a possibility, but the totality of God's ethical instruction is probably best.

πταιση [πταιω] aor. subj. "stumbles" - [BUT/AND] TRIPS, SLIPS, FALLS. "But fails to keep it in one particular part", Barclay.

εν + dat. "at just" - IN. Here adverbial, reference / respect; "with respect to just one point."

ἐνι "one point" - ONE *matter*. Presumably in the sense of breaking one element of the law, eg. discrimination.

παντων gen. adj. "all of it" - [HAS BECOME SUBJECT, LIABLE, GUILTY] OF ALL. Genitive with the predicate adjective **ενοχος**, here with the sense "answerable, accountable", indicates against whom the subject has acted; "has become answerable for the whole." The sense is possibly that a person who has broken one element of the law is liable to the penalty for breaking the law as a whole, but then the sense may also be that "as people try to direct their lives by the law, they find themselves bound to keep all", Blomberg. "Remember that a

man who keeps the whole law, but for a single exception, is none the less a lawbreaker", Phillips.

v11

γαρ "for" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why it is that a person who breaks just one of God's commandments is guilty of breaking the law as a whole.

ὁ ... ειπων [λεγω] aor. part. "**he who said**" - THE ONE HAVING SAID. The participle serves as a substantive.

μη μοιχευσης [μοιχευω] aor. subj. "**do not commit adultery / you shall not commit adultery**" - Hortatory subjunctive, as with "do not murder."

κια "also [said]" - [SAID] AND = ALSO [DO NOT MURDER]. Adjunctive, as NIV.

ει + ind. "if" - [BUT/AND] IF, *as is the case for argument's sake*, [YOU DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, BUT YOU MURDER, *then*]. Possibly concessive, "although", but more likely introducing a conditional clause 1st class where the stated condition is assumed to be true, for argument's sake. "Even if", TEV. If we don't break one command, but break another, we "have become a lawbreaker." This fact is emphasized by Jesus.

νομου [ος] gen. "**a lawbreaker**" - [YOU HAVE BECOME A TRANSGRESSOR] OF LAW. The genitive is adjectival, usually taken as verbal, objective, but it could be classified as attributive, limiting "transgressor"; "a law-transgressor." "You have become a breaker of God's whole law", Phillips.

v12

iv] Conclusion, v12-13. A concluding exhortation which sums up James' instruction on this matter. "Christians must act in ways which are consistent with God's coming judgment", Blomberg. God's perfect liberating law is administered under His gracious mercy, a mercy that should motivate us to show mercy. If we show favouritism within the Christian fellowship, does this not imply that we have yet to experience God's favour? So, let us overcome favouritism with triumphant compassion.

οὕτως "-" - THUS [SPEAK AND] THUS [DO]. Possibly drawing a logical conclusion, referring to what precedes, but better emphasizing what follows; "speak in this way and act in this way, that is, as those who"; "in such a way / with this in mind", Davids.

ὡς "as" - Comparative.

μελλοντες [μελλω] pres. part. "**those who are going**" - BEING ABOUT. The NIV takes the participle as a substantive, as do most translators, "those destined to be judged", Cassirer. The "being about" is not taken in the sense of "near", but

rather of "will definitely come." "Act as men who are going to be judged", Barclay - non-sexist, "those who are going to be judged."

κρινεσθαι [κρινω] pres. inf. "**to be judged**" - The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of "being about".

δια + gen. "**by**" - THROUGH, BY MEANS OF. Instrumental, means; "you are being judged by means of the law of liberty."

ελευθεριας [α] gen. "**[the law] that gives freedom**" - [THE LAW] OF FREEDOM. The genitive is obviously adjectival, attributive, limiting "law"; "the liberating law", or idiomatic / of product, "the law *which produces* liberty", or description, "which *is characterized by* liberty." "The law that sets us free", TEV.

v13

γαρ "**because**" - FOR. More reason than cause, possibly serving to draw a conclusion from the argument so far, although as already noted, James has possibly just used this conjunction to stitch an independent saying to his sermon. "This is why one should speak and act as one about to be judged", Adam.

τω μη ποιησαντι [ποιεω] dat. aor. part. "**to anyone who has not been [merciful]**" - [THE JUDGMENT *will be* MERCILESS] TO THE ONE NOT HAVING SHOWN [MERCY]. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of interest. If mercy is the guiding feature of the law of liberty, then to claim mercy for ourselves while living without mercy, serves only to deny our claim. It is hard to claim we live under grace while constantly being anything but gracious. In the context, discriminating against the poor illustrates a life that is not merciful, gracious.

αλλα "-" - *but*. Not found in the text although the adversative is rightly assumed, i.e., an asyndeton; "judgment will be merciless for the man who acted mercilessly. But mercy can laugh at judgment", Barclay.

κατακαυχεται [κατακαυχομαι] pres. "**triumphs over**" - [MERCY] BOASTS AGAINST, EXALTS OVER WINS OUT OVER. A positive declaration concludes the argument, although the existence of numerous variant readings indicates that the sense is anything but clear. The "judgment" possibly represents the critical, unaccepting, discrimination against the poor practised by some in the congregation, which practice should be smothered by the showing of "mercy", compassion, acceptance, so "boast of triumphant compassion with others", Bultman. Yet, it is more likely that the mercy in view here is both human and divine; "true believers (the ones showing mercy to others) will find God's mercy in Christ annuls the condemnation they otherwise would have received", Blomberg.

κρισεως [ις εως] gen. "**judgment**" - Genitive of direct object after the **κατα** prefix verb "to boast against."

2:14-26

2. Poverty and Generosity, 2:1-26

ii] Faith without works is a dead thing

Argument

James now gives us his second sermon, again establishing the content of his subject in the first verse; "what good is it for a person to claim to have faith when their actions do nothing to show it", REB. James asks, "can such faith save?" He goes on to answer the question, arguing that such faith cannot save because it is not authentic.

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-13.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: James' second sermon, *faith without works is a dead thing*:

Topic, v14;

A faith devoid of works cannot save.

Illustration, v2-4

Explanation, v15-16:

Restatement of the topic / proposition, v17;

Argument proper, v18-25;

refuting the claim that faith and works are independent.

Conclusion:

Faith without action is as dead as a body without a soul (breath).

iv] Interpretation:

The passage before us serves as James' second rhetorical speech / sermon in the context of poverty and generosity. This discourse, on the issue of true faith, is unified and devoid of the usual lightly attached sayings. As with the first speech / sermon, 2:1-13, James heads it with a *partitio*, proof / thesis, namely, **a faith devoid of works cannot save**, v14. The passage presents with the following structure: The opening proposition, v14; an illustration describing the withholding of generosity toward the poor, v15-16; a restatement of the proposition, v17; the argument proper, v18-25; and a conclusion, v26.

The faith / works debate comes to the fore in this passage; see "Introduction, faith and works". The nub of the problem seems to be that James and Paul are wrestling with two different problems within the

church. Paul is dealing with believers who think that the promised blessings of the covenant are appropriated by works of the law. He therefore makes the point that a believer's full appropriation of the blessing of new life in Christ is a matter of grace through faith and not of works. James, on the other hand, is dealing with those who sit lightly with God's law while at the same time affirming their religious faith, a faith that may be little more than a belief that God exists. James therefore makes the point that a faith which does not issue in love is a pretence; it is not genuine faith. Paul and James are addressing different pastoral issues.

When dealing with James, commentators work overtime trying to rationalize what, on the surface at least, looks like a direct contradiction to Pauline theology, cf., Rom.3:20. We have to marvel at Luther's honesty in facing the issue square on by simply downgrading the worth of James - it doesn't fit, so that's it! Some try to preserve the integrity of James by developing specific meanings for the words "works", "justified" and "faith". "Works" become "good deeds / deeds of charity" rather than "works of the law"; "justified" becomes "considered righteous", or "vindicated", or "God's final declaration of a person's innocence", Moo, rather than "judged / set in the right with God / made covenant compliant"; "faith" becomes "intellectual ascent" rather than "reliance / dependence on God". This seems a rather perverse exercise, given that the difference between James and Paul comes down to little more than expression and purpose. The pastoral issue faced by James is the notion that faith can be exercised without regard to works, and so he contends that "works are inseparable from faith", Laws. The pastoral issue faced by Paul is the notion that works are a necessary partner with faith for the full appropriation of God's promised blessings, and so he contends that we are "justified by faith apart from works of the law." The Paul / James dichotomy can be illustrated as follows:

James:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = BLESSINGS = **WORKS**

Paul:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = **BLESSINGS** = WORKS

The pastoral problem addressed by Paul is the notion that:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS + **WORKS** = BLESSINGS

The pastoral problem addressed by James is the notion that:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = BLESSINGS -(minus) **WORKS**

What does James mean when he says that Abraham was justified by works, v21-25? It seems more than likely that the quotes "justified from / out of works", v21 and 25, are but a technical (rhetorical) ploy on the part of James to force a recognition that works evidence true faith. The quotes, v21 and 25, prove the integral link of works to justification, which justification is out of faith, v23, so establishing the truth that "faith without works is a dead thing", v22 and 26.

Other aspect of this exegetical issue worth considering:

- It is possible to argue that James is not up on Paul's use of the word. Martin has a short excursus on the subject which is worth studying, but he is honest enough to admit that "no final resolution of some exegetical matters appears in sight";
- James may well be speaking of a justification in the sight of man rather than God. That is, Abraham's contemporaries saw the outworkings of his faith in his deeds, and thus, he was seen by them as a man justified in the sight of God;
- Although justification here refers to a righteousness in the sight of God, it is likely that James has in mind a righteousness that will be ours in the day of judgement. Sanctification is included in this righteousness, and thus James is not just speaking of a right-standing possessed at the time of our conversion (a limited atonement).

Note that this passage is not the RCL reading for Sunday 24B, although in the history of the three-year series of readings, some lectionaries have used James 2:14-26 as the epistle of the day. It is a controversial passage and extremely difficult and for this reason it has been bypassed in more recent lectionaries.

v] Homiletics: *The fruit of faith.*

James is not so much encouraging us toward deeds of love, as to genuine faith. He makes the point that if we are unwilling to walk before the Lord in deeds of love, then we really have no claim on him; Jesus is obviously not our friend. There is no value in trying to find security in religious faith while our lives are lived out in rebellion, for a genuine faith will show itself in good deeds. So, James removes the false security of an intellectual faith, and forces us to see our rebellion for what it is. If we are unwilling to listen to exhortations to do good, then such unwillingness only shows we have not come to a saving faith in Christ. By his prodding, James drives us back to the cross to seek forgiveness.

Just as there is no security in law-obedience, so there is no security in an intellectualized religious faith. Our only security lies in the mercy of a

loving God whose grace makes us graceful. Where does our security lie if we are not merciful, if we show partiality 2:1-13, if we use our tongue as a "restless evil, full of deadly poison" 3:1-12?

Text: 2:14

Faith without works is a useless thing, v14-26: i] The proposition - a faith devoid of works cannot save, v14. "*Friends, do you really think you will get anywhere in life, claiming that you rest on the faithfulness of God, but not in any way applying his guidelines for a fulfilled life. I hope you don't think that a reliance on God that is devoid of deeds of love can achieve for you wellbeing and happiness here and into eternity.*"

τι **"What"** - Interrogative pronoun. "What"?

το **αφελος** **"good is it"** - THE GAIN, VALUE, ADVANTAGE, PROFIT. Nominative subject. "What use is it", Phillips.

αδελφοι μου **"my brothers"** - BROTHERS OF ME. In James, often used to start a new unit of teaching. "Brothers and sisters", NRSV.

εαν + subj. **"if"** - IF, *as the case may be*, [ANYONE SAYS TO HAVE FAITH, BUT DOES NOT HAVE WORKS, *then*]. Introducing a conditional clause, 3rd class, hypothetical, where the condition has only the possibility of coming true.

τις **"a man"** - A CERTAIN, ANYONE. Interrogative. An imaginary someone, stylistic; "If someone".

λεγει [**λεγω**] pres. subj. **"claims"** - SAYS. The present tense is durative so possibly "keeps on claiming."

εχειν [**εχω**] pres. inf. **"to have"** - TO HAVE. The infinitive introduces an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what a person may claim; "says that he has faith"

πιστιν [**ις εως**] **"faith"** - FAITH. The options:

- The most likely option is "faith" as in 2:1, dependence on / reliance on / faith in the faithfulness of God realized in Christ;
- Even though anarthrous, possibly "the Christian faith to which every Christian convert belongs", a sense "indicated" by "claims to have faith", Dibelius (although "claims / says" probably only indicates that "James questions the reality of the faith", Moo);
- Possibly the OT sense of "loyalty to God";
- Finally, the outside possibility is that it means "piety".

δε **"but/and"** - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step in the argument to a contrasting point - have faith yet lack works.

εργα [**οι**] **"works"** - WORKS [DOES NOT HAVE]. For Paul "works" is usually understood to mean "works of the law / Torah", although Paul may have in mind NT ethics as well, i.e., "the whole law of God". The "works" James has in mind

may just be "deeds / actions / conduct", "acts of mercy and kindness", Martin, but it is likely that they are deeds done in line with God's will. This is certainly how a 1st century Jewish believer would tend to understand the word, ie., "works" = "deeds done in compliance to the Torah", but as a Christian it is now not just the law of Moses, but rather the totality of NT ethics summarized in the law of love; "works of love".

μη "-" - [*surely* THE FAITH IS] NOT [ABLE TO SAVE HIM]? Introducing a question expecting a negative answer; "Faith can't save that person, can it?" Adam.

δυναται [δυναμαι] pres. pas. "can" - IS ABLE. The negation expects the answer "no" to the question; "Is it to be supposed that such faith is able? (Certainly not)"

ἡ πιστις [ις εως] "such faith" - THE FAITH. The article is particularizing the faith, namely, the aforementioned faith (anaphoric - referring back), the faith that has no works, as NIV. Note how the AV / Barclay misses this; "Can faith save him?" Better, "could that sort of faith save ...", Phillips. The answer being "no". James may have already explained "what is able to save their souls", namely "the word of truth" implanted by God, so Johnson, but in 1:18 it is likely that James is not speaking of our eternal salvation.

σωσαι [σωζω] aor. inf. "save" - TO SAVE [HIM]. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of "is able", while the aorist, being punctiliar, may express the idea "achieve for him", Adamson. Save in what sense? A faith without deeds is likely to be a spurious faith and certainly will not save a person on the day of judgment, but is James using "save" in this sense? James may be thinking more in OT terms of "rescue, deliver" = "achieve wellbeing and safety", cf., 5:15, certainly not just in a physical sense, but also a spiritual sense (as of a relationship with God), and this along with an eschatological fulfillment. "Saved" in the synoptic gospels will often carry this sense and if James is pre-Pauline then such a meaning would be expected. Most commentators do take "is able to save" in the sense, "has the power to bring him to salvation", Cassirer, particularly in eschatological terms, so Dibelius, Moo, Davids, Adamson, Martin. These notes adopt the wider sense "achieve wellbeing and safety under God here and in eternity", since it best suits a Wisdom approach to the treatise, ie., as a work which serves to instruct believers on how to live in a corrupted environment. "Can a reliance on the faithfulness of God, apart from deeds of love, achieve wellbeing and safety (make for happiness) now and forever?"

v15

ii] James uses an analogy to illustrate his point - believers who fail to act generously toward a poor brother or sister, v15-16.

εαν + subj. "**suppose**" - IF. A conditional clause, 3rd. class, hypothetical, where the proposed condition has only the possibility of coming true; "if, *as may be the case ... then ...*". The apodosis is formed in v16, "*then what good is it?*"

ὑπαρχωσιν [ὑπαρχω] pres. subj. "**is**" - [A BROTHER OR SISTER] EXISTS, IS LIVING [UNCLOTHED].

λειπομενοι [λειπω] pres. pas. part. "**without**" - LACKING. The participle may be treated as a substantive in its own right, or adjectival, predicative, asserting a fact about the noun **γυμνοι**, "naked". "Short of daily food", Moffatt.

της τροφης [η] gen. "**[daily] food**" - OF THE FOOD [DAILY]. Genitive of direct object after the verb **λειπω**, here as a participle, when it takes the sense "to be without, lack, be in need or want."

v16

ειπη [ειπον] aor. subj. "**if [.... says]**" - [BUT/AND *if* ANYONE FROM YOU] SAYS [TO THEM]. Continuing the protasis of the conditional clause from v15.

εξ [εκ] "**of [you]**" - FROM [YOU]. Here the preposition is being used instead of a partitive genitive, as NIV.

ὑπαγετε [ὑπαγω] pres. imp. "**go**" - The present tense = "departure in a state of peace", Moule IB. "Go in peace" is a formalized farewell where the person is wished the best; "I hope all goes well with you", while the "warmed and fed" gives substance to the hope, which for us is a kind of "be happy".

εν dat. "**in [peace]**" - IN [PEACE BE WARMED AND FED]. Adverbial use of the preposition, expressing manner, "peacefully".

δε "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrasting point.

αυτοις dat. pro. "- " - [YOU DO NOT GIVE] TO THEM. Dative of indirect object.

τα επιτηδεια adj. "- " - THE USEFUL, NEEDFUL THINGS. The adjective serves as a substantive. James is drawing out the incongruity of wishing a person the best, but then walking off and leaving them in a mess.

του σωματος [α ατος] gen. "**their physical needs**" - OF THE BODY. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, subjective, "for the body"; "what the body needs", Adam

τι το οφελος "**what good is that?**" - *then* WHAT THE PROFIT. Serving as the apodosis of the conditional clause; "What on earth is the good of that?", Phillips, i.e., it is pointless, even stupid, so "what good is it to say this unless you do something to help", CEV.

v17

iii] James again restates his proposition: "without works faith is no faith at all, any more than a corpse is a man", Adamson, v17.

οὕτως adv. "**in the same way**" - SO. Demonstrative adverb, here comparative, referring back.

καὶ "-" - AND = ALSO [FAITH]. Here adjunctive; "also".

καθ' [κατα] + acc. "[**faith**] **by itself**" - ACCORDING TO ITSELF. The NIV opts for an instrumental sense, expressing means; so Davids. Given the position in the Gk. sentence "by itself" could qualify "dead", as AV, but more likely "faith", as NIV. "Faith alone / left to itself", Cassirer.

εἰ + subj. "**if**" - IF, *as the case may be*, [IT DOES NOT HAVE WORKS, *then* IT IS DEAD]. Another conditional clause, 3rd class, hypothetical. "So also faith, if it does not have works, then it is dead." A faith that does not bear fruit is essentially dead, cf., Mayor.

v18

iv] A debating point, v18-25; a) Faith and works are independent of each other, v18. James continues to develop his argument by addressing a proposition put forward by an imaginary interlocutor, namely, that faith and deeds are unrelated, that one person may express their piety in a religious faith and another in religious deeds. That is, the objector holds the view that both pathways are a valid expression of discipleship, or certainly at least, that faith of itself saves. Not so, says James. Faith without mercy, forgiveness, love.... is worthless; for true faith will always show itself in the fruit of good deeds. Therefore, a life lived without deeds demonstrates a life without true faith. So, Mitton, Ropes, Dibelius, Davids, Moo, ... This interpretation of the verse assumes that the **συ καγωω**, "you ... and I", clause represents the words of an interlocutor / opponent which are then answered by James, although as Moule notes **αλλος αλλος** would have been a better way to express a "one believes this another that" statement.

αλλα "**but**" - Adversative. Adamson and Mayor think that in v18 James expands on v17 and that therefore the conjunction here serves as an emphatic particle. Most commentators disagree (as NIV), but Adamson's take on the verse should be noted: "You claim to have faith and I claim to have works (behaviour, actions). I can prove the existence and quality of my faith by my works, but I defy you to prove (to me or any of the rest of mankind) the existence and / or quality of your faith. For I do not believe that without works you can possibly have any genuine faith."

τις "**someone**" - Ref. an imaginary interlocutor, ie., an objector.

επει [ειπον] "**will say**" - WILL SAY [YOU HAVE FAITH AND I HAVE WORKS].
"The future here Denotes a merely supposable case", Ropes, re. Winer.

δειξον [δεικνυμι] aor. imp. "**show**" - SHOW. "Show", in the sense of reveal, make visible, and often translated this way, as NIV, but the word can mean "prove / demonstrate", such that James is "challenging the objector to prove that he has faith by what he does", Moo. "I challenge you to prove to me that you have faith in any other way than by actions", Barclay.

μοι dat. pro. "**me**" - TO ME. Dative of indirect object.

σου gen. pro. "**your**" - [THE FAITH] OF YOU. The genitive may be treated as adjectival, possessive, or verbal, subjective.

χωρις + gen. "**without**" - APART FROM, WITHOUT [THE WORKS]. Expressing separation, "away from".

σοι gen. pro. "**[I will show] you**" - [AND I WILL SHOW] TO YOU. Dative of indirect object.

εκ + gen. "**by [what I do]**" - FROM [THE WORKS OF ME THE = MY FAITH].
The NIV opts for means; "I am perfectly willing to prove to you my faith by my actions", Barclay.

v19

b) James now answers the challenge he gave in v18 with an argument which is profusely illustrated, v19-25. First, a "faith" which is little more than a verbal profession is next to useless. Even the demons know that God exists and shudder at the thought of their coming judgement. So, faith by itself evidences nothing.

πιστευεις [πιστευω] pres. "**believe**" - [YOU] BELIEVE. As already noted, Dibelius argues that James' concept of faith is primarily the acceptance of Christian doctrine, and certainly this is the way he is using "believe" here. Yet, this is the objector's faith, not necessarily James' faith.

οτι "**that**" - THAT. Introducing a dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what they believe.

εις εστιν ο θεος "**there is one God**" - GOD IS ONE. Either expressing monotheism, as NIV, or God's unity, "God is one", NRSV. Either way, orthodoxy cannot protect us from the coming judgment, nor is it evidence for a person's standing with God.

καλως "**Good!**" - [YOU DO] WELL. "This is good as far as it goes", Ropes.

και "**even**" - AND. Here ascensive, as NIV, "even".

φρισουσιν [φρισσω] pres. "**shudder**" - [THE DEMONS BELIEVE AND] BRISTLE UP / TREMBLE, SHUDDER. "Shudder in fear of judgment", Moo.

v20

Although orthodoxy evidences nothing, works evidences a faith that saves, which evidence supports the proposition that "faith without deeds is a dead thing." This evidence is drawn from the life of Abraham in v21-24, and in the life of Rahab, v25.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional connective, marking the next step in the argument.

κενε adj. "**foolish [man]**" - [O] EMPTY, HOLLOW, DEFECTIVE [MAN].

γινωαι [γινωσκω] aor. inf. "**[do you want] evidence**" - [ARE YOU WILLING] TO KNOW. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "willing". "Do you desire a proof", Ropes.

ὅτι "that" - THAT [FAITH]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what they should know.

χωρις + gen. "**without**" - Expressing separation.

αργη adj. "**useless**" - [WORKS IS] UNPRODUCTIVE, IDLE, UNPROFITABLE. Variant **νεκρα**, "dead", probably imported from v17 or v26, cf., Metzger. Note the play on words: "deeds / works" as opposed to "idle / inactive"; "a work-less faith is a use-less faith", cf., Davids.

v21

In an examination of the life of Abraham, James now supports his proposition that "faith without deeds is a dead thing", v21-24. Abraham's work-full faith evidences that a work-less faith is a use-less faith. He begins in v21 by summarizing 1 Maccabees 2:51-52 which states in full: "was not Abraham our father found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?" cf., Gen.22. In v22 James explains the essential role of faith in Abraham's "works" (his obedience to God's command to offer up his son), and then in v23 he points out that these "works" are a consequential realization ("fulfillment") of Abraham's justification on the basis of faith (Gen.15:6), and then in v24 he summarizes his argument, an argument which has sought to establish that both faith and works are integrally linked through justification. The implication of the argument is, of course, that "faith without works is a dead thing".

ουκ "was not?" - [WAS] NOT [ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF US JUSTIFIED FROM WORKS]. Taken as introducing an interrogative clause expecting an affirmative answer "yes". A negated statement is possible, although unlikely, eg., "although Father Abraham prepared to offer his son, Isaac, up as an offering to God when God chose to test him, he was not justified by works", Junkins. Junkins certainly solves our theological problem, but he doesn't do justice to the text. None-the-less, he is right in trying to rework the passage because as it stands it

is very deceptive. It seems very likely that the question here is actually a quote from Maccabees, see above. So, we would be better served with something like, "Consider the case of Abraham found in a question posed by the writer of first Maccabees, namely, 'was not our father Abraham justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac upon the altar?'"

ἡμῶν gen. pro. "**our**" - OF US. The genitive is relational.

ὁ πατήρ "**ancestor [Abraham]**" - [ABRAHAM] THE FATHER [OF US]. Standing in apposition to "Abraham".

ἐδικαιώθη [δικαιοῶ] aor. pas. "**considered righteous**" - JUSTIFIED, VINDICATED. The word means "covenant-acceptance / a recognition of covenant inclusion - judged in the right with God", Dumbrell. "Count / treat as right / righteous" Barrett, "judged right / set right / covenant compliant", so "set / judged right with God". A theological / divine passive, ie., God does the justifying. As already noted, it is often argued that Paul and James differ in their understanding of justification, but it seems unnecessary to promote this argument, eg. "God's final declaration of a person's *innocence* before him at the time of the judgment", Moo. Note how the NIV is trying to differentiate between James' use of "justify" and Paul's use of the word. Yet, NIV didn't need to cover itself this way since James goes on to explain himself adequately.

ἐξ + gen. "**for [what he did]**" - FROM, OUT OF, [WORKS]. Sometimes treated as instrumental, expressing means, "by", or basis, "on the basis of"; "On the strength of his deeds", Cassirer.

ἀνενεγκας [ἀναφέρω] aor. part. "**when he offered**" - HAVING OFFERED UP (as sacrifice) [ISAAC THE SON OF HIM]. The participle is adverbial, probably temporal, as NIV, although that Abraham was justified "having offered his son" does not necessarily mean "when he offered his son".

ἐπι + acc. "**on [the altar]**" - UPON [THE ALTER]. Spatial; "upon".

v22

Note the chiasmic structure of the verse: ".. faith works ... , works faith ..."; "faith helped works, and works completed (proved) faith", Ropes. Note also that Dibelius argues that faith "assisted" works and works "perfected" faith toward a common goal, namely "the righteousness of Abraham", but surely the formula is that faith produces righteousness, and it is this faith which assists works and which in-turn, proves faith.

βλεπεις [βλεπω] pres. "**you see**" - YOU SEE. From this quote "it must be obvious to you that ..", Barclay; "isn't it obvious that ...", Peterson.

ὅτι "**that**" - Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what should be obvious in the quote from 1st Maccabees.

αυτου gen. pro. **"his"** - [THE = THE AFOREMENTIONED FAITH WAS WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE WORKS] OF HIM. The genitive may be treated as adjectival, possessive, or verbal, subjective.

τοις εργασις [ον] dat. **"actions"** - WORKS. Dative of direct object after the συν prefix verb "to work together with."

συνηργει [συνεργεω] imperf. **"were working together"** - WAS WORKING, ASSISTING, COOPERATING. The imperfect is durative, expressing ongoing activity, i.e., Abraham's faith was constant. Literally, "faith was working with the work". For a person to be willing, even able, to offer their son as a sacrifice, it should be obvious that something was "working" behind the scenes to prompt such an extreme "work". For James, the conclusion is obvious, "faith was active along with the works", TEV.

ετελειωθη [τελειωω] aor. pas. **"was made complete"** - [AND FROM THE WORKS THE FAITH] WAS MADE COMPLETE, PERFECT. "Complete" in what sense? Suggestions abound. Surely not that "by works was faith made perfect", AV, so also "complete / mature". so Ropes ("supplemented - so, enabled to do its proper work" - ouch!) Davids, Johnson, Martin, Laws, Mitton. Possibly, but unlikely, "by these actions the integrity of his faith was fully proved", NEB, following Calvin. Maybe the sense is "brought to its intended goal", TH, i.e., "it reached its intended goal when the patriarch did what God was asking him to do", Moo, such that in the works "faith was consummated / expressed itself", Adamson.

εκ + gen. **"by [what he did]"** - OUT OF, FROM / ON THE BASIS OF [THE WORKS]. Again, probably instrumental, means, but possibly basis.

v23

και **"and"** - Possibly "as a result", as a result of faith assisting works and works proving faith, the scripture, as quoted, is fulfilled, so Ropes, Moo, .. ; "thus the scripture was fulfilled", NRSV, in that Abraham was judged covenant compliant and regarded as God's friend. Yet, surely James is referring to v21. "It was in this act of obedience, recorded in Gen.22, that James claims 'the scripture (Gen.15:6) was fulfilled, which says", Mitton. This interpretation fits with James' overall argument; Abraham rests in faith on God's promises, which faith justifies him, and which faith is later realized / fulfilled in his act of obedience in the offering of his son, i.e., faith produces works / faith without works is a dead thing.

επληρωθη [πληρωω] aor. pas. **"was fulfilled"** - [THE SCRIPTURE] WAS FULFILLED. The fulfillment of scripture is not Abraham's justification (Ropes), but rather Abraham's act of obedience.

η λεγουσα [λεγω] pres. part. **"that says"** - SAYING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "scripture"; "which says".

δε "-" - BUT/AND. James seems to be signalling a logical step in his argument at this point.

τω θεω [ος] dat. "[believed] God" - [ABRAHAM BELIEVED] GOD. Dative of direct object after the verb "to believe in."

ελογισθη [λογιζομαι] aor. pas. "it was credited" - [AND] IT WAS RECKONED, CALCULATED. The aorist is punctiliar. "Reckon" serves "to express one thing as being equivalent to or having the same force of another", Adamson. So "the object in question [here Abraham's faith] supplies the place of that for which it answers [ie., righteousness]; it is substituted for it", Cremer's Gk. Lexicon. This does not mean that "faith equates with righteousness", Hunter, "faith itself is not righteousness", Kasemann. Faith is but the means by which God freely sets to our account, as a gift of grace, the righteousness necessary for salvation, cf., Rom.10:10. Dibelius argues that "reckoned" is understood differently by Paul, James, and Judaism in general, cf., p168, although a distinctive difference between James and Paul is unlikely. "It was put to his account for righteousness", Wuest.

αυτω dat. pro. "to him" - Dative of indirect object / interest.

εις "as [righteousness]" - TO, INTO [RIGHTEOUSNESS]. Here adverbial, expressing advantage, "for righteousness." Turner notes this as an example of the use of εις + acc. "in place of the predicate nominative owing to the Hellenistic tendency towards greater expressiveness", MHT III p.253.

εκληθη [καλεω] aor. pas. "he was called" - [AND] HE WAS SUMMONED, CALLED. An active translation is clearer; "God called him his friend", TH.

φθεου [ος] gen. "God's [friend]" - [a friend] of god. The genitive is adjectival, relational. Meaning "beloved of God", a description commonly ascribed to Abraham and probably derived from Isaiah 41:8, cf., Ch.20:7, where God says "Abraham my friend". It is likely that the recognition of Abraham as "beloved of God" is not part of what is "fulfilled", but is a consequence of the fulfillment; "and so God regarded him as his friend". "It was that mesh of believing and acting that got Abraham named 'God's friend'", Peterson.

v24

James now directly addresses his readers and summarizes his argument so far, namely, that "works", as an integral element of a person's justification, serves to evidence genuine faith. The summary identifies the key statements of the two quoted passages, namely, justified by works, v21, and justified by faith, v23, thus establishing that faith and works are integrally linked to justification. This argument serves to support James' contention that faith, where genuine, produces works and that therefore "faith without works is a dead thing". The integral links

between faith, works and justification (declared / made right, set right = righteousness) present as:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = BLESSINGS = WORKS.

ὄρατε [ὄρω] pres. "**you see**" - As a direct appeal; "you will thus perceive", Cassirer.

ὅτι "**that**" - THAT. Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what should be seen.

ανθρωπος [ος] "**a person**" - A MAN. A general reference, so "person" as NIV, identifying the following statement as a general proposition which applies to everyone.

δικαιουται [δικαιω] pres. "**is justified / considered righteous**" - "Is set right / judged right". The present tense is possibly gnomic, although not just to give justification the unlikely meaning "future vindication".

ἐξ [εκ] + gen. "**by [what they do]**" - FROM [WORKS]. The preposition again expresses means or basis; "by means of works of the law", or "on the basis of works of the law" / obedience to the law. When used with "faith", "by faith", Adam suggests it could also be causal, "because of faith."

μονον adv. "**[not by faith] alone**" - [AND NOT FROM / OUT OF FAITH] ALONE, ONLY. Emphatic, qualifying "faith", so "faith alone" not "faith by itself", RV.

v25

This second illustration, v25, again serves to demonstrate that works and faith are integrally linked through justification. As a justified person, Rahab's faith is evidenced in her deeds. Her faith is implied in Josh.2:11 and often referenced in Jewish midrash, cf., Ropes. As with v21 and v24, James' stark statement "justified by works" has the potential to mislead a Bible student. Although James is wanting to establish the integral link between "works" and "justification" in order to prove that "genuine faith" produces "works", he does leave the modern reader open to the error of nomism / legalism. We may have to compromise and accept translations like: "*In the same way, too, was not even Rahab, the prostitute, shown to be righteous by what she did, when she cared for the messengers and sent them forth by a different route?*" Adamson.

ὁμοιως "**in the same way**" - LIKEWISE. Modal / comparative adverb, strengthened by the addition of **δε και**; "Likewise, so also", Adam

και "**even**" - AND = ALSO [RAHAB THE PROSTITUTE]. Probably adjunctive, "Likewise also Rahab."

ουκ "**[was] not**" - This negation, used in a question, expects the answer "yes".

ἐξ εργαων εδικαιωθη "**was considered righteous for what she did**" - WAS JUSTIFIED OUT OF WORKS. As already noted, the prime motivator "faith" is

not denied just because it is not mentioned, ie., Rahab's "works", "friendly reception", Ropes ("neighbourly love at the risk of her own life"), was prompted by her faith, a faith evidenced by her statement "I know that the Lord has given the land to you", Josh.2:8-12? In passing, it is often argued that James could not have used these words if he were aware of Paul's justification language. This argument then suggests a late date for James, although an early date would be more likely, even before Paul's letters. Yet, the stark contrast with Paul's words may well be intended - an overly stark statement designed to prompt reaction.

ὑποδεξαμενη [ὑποδεχομαι] aor. mid. part. "**when she gave lodging to**" - HAVING RECEIVED, WELCOMED, ENTERTAINED. The participle is adverbial, best treated as temporal, as NIV, but causal would also work.

τους αγγελους [ος] "**the spies**" - THE MESSENGERS. Accusative direct object of the verb "to receive".

εκβαλουσα [εκβαλλω] "**sent them off**" - [AND] HAVING SENT OUT *them*. Sometimes meaning "cast out", but obviously not with that sense here. The participle, as above.

ἕτερα dat. pro. "**in a different [direction]**" - BY A DIFFERENT [WAY]. Instrumental dative; "by means of a different way."

v26

v] Conclusion. This verse is usually taken as James' concluding argument, a restating of his proposition, although some argue that it rounds off v25. "*Faith without action is as dead as a body without a soul (breath)*", Phillips.

γαρ "-" - FOR [JUST AS THE BODY]. Missing in some manuscripts, and certainly treated by many translations as redundant on the ground that this verse restates v17, Martin, Adamson (v20 Moo). It can serve to introduce the next step in a logical argument, here the conclusion, but of course, an expression of cause / reason may also be intended if the verse is explaining the role of faith in Rahab's "works", so Davids.

χωρις + gen. "**without**" - Expressing separation.

πνευματος [α ατος] "**the spirit**" - SPIRIT. Without the article spirit means "life-principle", Johnson.

νεκρον adj. "**[is] dead**" - Predicate adjective.

οὕτως adv. "**so**" - Here as a comparative; "so in like manner ..."

και "-" - AND [FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD / A DEAD THING]. Adjunctive; "also".

3:1-12

3. Taming the tongue, 3:1-4:12

i] The destructive power of the tongue

Argument

James now speaks on the taming of the tongue. In a series of pictures, he describes the effects and influence of the tongue and "the evil that can be caused by an ill-controlled tongue", Mitton.

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-13. We now move again to a section in James' letter which is constructed of linked sayings / instructions, 3:1-5:12. The first of three parts, 3:1-4:12, deals with wisdom and obedience, particularly as it relates to speech. It "describes the qualities of true Christian wisdom as distinguished from the wisdom of this world", Mitton. The point being made is that "by their conduct, Christians should demonstrate heavenly, rather than worldly wisdom. Specifically, they will exhibit purity and peacefulness rather than jealousy and strife", Blomberg.

This unit on *the tongue* is made up of 11 sayings / instructions formed into 4 sections:

A loose tongue possesses destructive power, 3:1-12;

A loose tongue is driven by worldly wisdom, 3:13-18;

A loose tongue is driven by worldly passions, 4:1-6;

A loose tongue calls for humble repentance, 4:7-12.

ii] Background: 1:1.

ii] Structure: The first set of sayings / instructions; *Taming the tongue*:

Topic

The danger of committing verbal offense.

Instructions:

#1. Don't be in a rush to become a preacher, v1;

#2. All people stumble, and of all faults, those of the tongue are the hardest to avoid, v2;

#3. The tongue has influence out of all proportion to its size, v3-5a;

#4. The tongue has destructive powers, v5b-6;

#5. The tongue possesses a treacherous inconsistency, v7-8b;

#6. The tongue is duplicitous, v8c-12.

Dibelius classifies this passage as the third in a series of three sermons, but it is not as unified as the sermon on partiality, nor the sermon on faith and works, and does not begin with a general proposition as do the two sermons. So, it is likely that we have a collection of independent sayings, here six sayings stitched together under a unifying theme, namely, the "danger of committing verbal offense", Dibelius.

iv] Interpretation:

Through the viewpoint of Wisdom, James now examines the tongue and its negative potential. It well may be that this first collection of sayings is particularly intended for preachers. Certainly, the first saying is directed to teachers. We note that James does often set the theme for a collection of sayings with the first saying, eg., the sayings on favouritism in chapter 2. Watson in *Novum Testamentum* 35, proposes that the passage is rhetorical with the first verse serving as the proposition, followed by a reason, confirmation and ending up with a conclusion in v10b-12. Yet, the general nature of the sayings in 3:2-12 do not present a clear connection with v1, nor is a clear structure evident. What we have is a general collection of sayings on the tongue and its negative potential, applicable to all, but with particular relevance for Christian leaders. Martin proposes that a specific life-situation lies behind the instructions, but such is unnecessary speculation. Tasker has suggested that the passage is linked to the previous section on faith and works ("words are also works"), but no clear connection is evident. James has moved on to his next subject, and this time it is about the tongue, a little muscle with the potential to do great harm. So, what we have is a collection of sayings on uncontrolled speech with particular relevance for teachers. "Teachers are engaged in a dangerous enterprise, and only the mature person of humility, purity, gentleness and sincerity (3:17) should engage in it", McCartney.

Greek: Note how the sayings / instructions from v3 onward use highly descriptive metaphors.

v] Homiletics: *Motor mouth*.

Unless we are severely handicapped, we have most likely inherited the "motor mouth" gene. It's actually a freak of nature, defying the evolutionary process. One finds it hard to imagine why it wasn't surgically removed from the gene pool millions of years ago.

In my family we have a dominant *poke the cocky gene*. *Poking the cocky* is an Australian term derived from the propensity of children to poke caged parrots with a stick - a child usually only does it once with their

finger! To try and control the gene I would remind my children that their great grandfather was thrown out of the Sussex Inlet Progress Association for *poking the cocky*, or in simple terms, for being a verbal pest. Thankfully, I didn't inherit the gene, and I have continued to maintain this assessment against overwhelming evidence to contrary.

So, what's the lesson? James has told us that the tongue is extremely powerful, for both good or ill; that it is destructive beyond measure; that it evidences a treacherous inconsistency and is too often duplicitous. Given that sin is a constant in our lives, and of all sins the wagging tongue is the hardest sin to avoid, then we will do well to apply ourselves to the art of listening. As Winston Churchill said of much of the oratory delivered in the House of Commons, "Before they get up, they do not know what they are going to say; when they are speaking, they do not know what they are saying; and when they have sat down, they do not know what they have said."

We do well to remember, that *syllables govern the world*.

Text - 3:1

Instruction #1, v1. "Don't be in any rush to become a teacher", Peterson. Believers are encouraged to consider the responsibilities that are associated with a ministry of the Word before rushing to the pulpit. Christian ministry provides abundant opportunities for teaching the Word of God, but it does come with its responsibilities. As Jesus reminds his disciples, "from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded."

μη "not" - This negation takes an emphatic position in the Gk.

γινεσθε [γινομαι] pres. imp. "**should presume to be**" - BE [NOT]. Often used instead of the verb to-be. "You ought not try to become teachers", Barclay, carries the sense, although the actual sense is "not many of you are to be teachers", Dibelius.

διδασκαλοι [ος] "**teachers**" - [MANY] TEACHERS. Predicate nominative. Surely "Christian teachers", teachers of the Word.

αδελφοι μου "my brothers" - BROTHERS OF ME. In James, often used to introduce a new section.

ειδοτες [οιδα] perf. part. "**because you know**" - KNOWING. The participle is adverbial, probably causal, as NIV, although possibly imperatival, "remember, we teachers will be judged with special strictness", Moffatt.

οτι "that" - Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what we should know.

ληψομεθα [λαμβανω] fut. "**we who teach will be**" - WE WILL RECEIVE. The teaching office brings with it responsibilities and accountability.

κριμα [α ατος] "**judged**" - [GREATER] JUDGMENT. "Those who teach come under greater scrutiny and are liable to greater judgment", Martin, presumably in the day of judgment. Possibly "we will receive the greater condemnation", AV, ie., the judicial verdict rather than the process of judging, although "it seems unlikely that James would hold out to all teachers, and indeed himself, only the prospect of greater or lesser punishment", Laws. The context certainly supports the case that the tongue can get us into no amount of trouble, whether it be just a foolish word, or a major heresy, and therefore opens the teacher to greater scrutiny, so Moo. "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded", Lk.12:48.

v2

Instruction #2, v2. "All men stumble, and of all faults, those of the tongue are the hardest to avoid", Ropes. We will make mistakes, particularly when it comes to the things we say; "who is he who has never sinned with his tongue?", Ecc.19:16. To never put our foot wrong implies perfection. James clearly stitches this saying to v1, but it may just serve as a transitional saying leading to the more general issue of Christian conversation. Peterson puts it nicely, "We get it wrong nearly every time we open our mouths. If you could find someone whose speech was perfectly true, you'd have a perfect person, in perfect control of life."

γαρ "-" - FOR. Possibly introducing a causal clause explaining why we should think twice before embarking on a teaching ministry, "because we all make many a slip", Berkeley, yet possibly just as a stitching device for the next saying and so left untranslated.

πταιομεν [πταιω] pres. "**we [all] stumble**" - WE [ALL] STUMBLE, TRIP, FALL / OFFEND. The present tense may be iterative, expressing repeated action.

πολλα acc. adj. "**in many ways**" - *on* MANY *occasions*. Possibly accusative of reference, "with reference to many things." Either "many" in the sense of "often", "many" in the sense of "all kinds of ways", Phillips.

ει + ind. "**if**" - IF, *as is the case*, [ANYONE IN SPEECH DOES NOT STUMBLE, *then* ...]. Introducing a conditional clause 1st. class, where the proposed condition is assumed true, here for argument's sake. Surely hypothetical, given that James has already stated that "we all make mistakes." Yet, is James setting an ideal, or is he being facetious?

ου πταιει [πταιω] pres. "**is never at fault**" - DOES NOT STUMBLE, TRIP, FALL.

εν + dat. "**in [what he says / they say]**" - IN [WORD, SPEECH]. Adverbial, reference; "with respect to what they say."

τελειος [ος] "**perfect**" - [*then this one is*] A PERFECT, COMPLETE, MATURE [MAN]. Predicate nominative. "Blameless", Ropes.

χαλιναγωγῆσαι [χαλιναγωγεῖω] aor. inf. "[able] to keep" - [ABLE] TO BRIDLE, RESTRAIN. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of "is able". "Hold in check", Ropes.

ὅλον adj. "[his] whole [body]" - [ALSO THE] WHOLE [BODY]. Accusative direct object of the infinitive "to restrain." "The man who is master of his speech is *ipso facto* in total control of himself", Laws.

v3

Instruction #3, v3-5a. "The tongue has influence out of all proportion to its size", Moo. James now sets out to establish the power of the tongue, "a small part ... but it makes great claims", v5a. This fact is illustrated in two metaphors / similes ("so also" = like? v5): of the bit that controls the horse, v3; of the rudder that steers the ship. There is no agreement as to the extent of this unit, eg. Davids has v2b-5a, Moo includes the spark that ignites a forest fire, v5b.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a new saying.

ει + ind. "when" - 1F. Introducing a conditional clause, 1st class, where the condition is assumed to be true; "if, *as is the case*, *then*". Note that there are numerous variant readings, eg. ιδε, "behold", Ropes.

των ἰττων [ος] gen. "of horses" - [WE PUT BITS INTO THE MOUTHS] OF HORSES. The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

εις το πειθεσθαι [πειθω] pres. inf. + dat. "to make [them] obey" - TO MAKE [THEM] OBEY. This preposition with the articular infinitive usually forms a purpose clause, "in order to persuade them".

ἡμιν dat. pro. "us" - Dative of direct object after the verb "to make obey, persuade."

μεταγομεν [μεταγω] "we can turn [the whole animal]" - *then* WE DIRECT, GUIDE, CHANGE DIRECTION OF [THE WHOLE BODY OF THEM]. "We are in a position to turn their entire body this way or that", Cassirer.

v4

This second illustration makes the same point as the first, "very small things can direct very large things", Moo.

και "or" - AND. Adjunctive, "and also", ie., like horses, cf. Ropes.

ιδου "take [ships] as an example" - BEHOLD. Serving to direct attention.

οντα [ειμι] pres. part. "although they are" - [THE SHIPS] BEING [SO GREAT]. The participle is probably adverbial, concessive, as NIV, "behold the ships, although they are so great." Yet, note the variant τα πλοια τα τηλικουτα οντα which would make the participle adjectival, "behold the ships which are so great."

ελαυνομενα [ελαυνω] pres. pas. part. "**are driven**" - BEING DRIVEN. The participle is similarly concessive as above.

ὑπο + gen. "**by [strong winds]**" - BY [HARD WINDS]. Instrumental, expressing means.

ελαχιστου adj. "**a very small [rudder]**" - [IS GUIDED BY] A LITTLEST [RUDDER WHEREVER THE IMPULSE/DESIRE]. Superlative adjective, referring to the rudder as the smallest of mechanisms. "The tiniest rudder", Johnson.

του ευθυνοντος [ευθυνω] "**the pilot**" - OF THE ONE MAKING STRAIGHT, DIRECTING, STEERING [DECIDES]. The participle serves as a substantive; "the man at the helm", Zerwick.

v5a

"So also the tongue; although a small part of the body it has great power [for good or evil]." Davids observes a shift in thought from the power of the tongue to the tongue being an implement out of control, ie., the helmsman is often not in control. It is more likely that James remains on message, but does go on to develop this idea in the next saying. Note alliteration μικρον μελος ... μεγαλα, see Laws.

ούτως adv. "**likewise**" - THUS, SO, IN THE SAME WAY [THE TONGUE IS A SMALL MEMBER / PART]. Comparative adverb, forward pointing.

μεγαλα αυχει [αυχωω] pres. "**[but] it makes great boasts**" - [AND] GREAT THINGS BOASTS. Ropes notes that the two words are used for balance and that together are equivalent to μεγαλαυχει "be haughty", not in the sense of an "empty boast", but a "haughty sense of importance", so "it can make huge claims", NEB; "its pretensions are great", REB. This is certainly the sense in 4:16-17, but here a neutral sense, rather than negative, seems more likely. James is referring to the power of the tongue, a power which, like the bit and the rudder, can change things (for good or evil). "The human tongue is physically small, but what tremendous effects it can boast of!" Phillips.

v5b

Instruction #4, v5b-6. The tongue has "destructive power", Laws. More often than not the tongue functions like fire in the hands of an arsonist; it is destructive beyond all measure. As Moo puts it, the tongue is too often the "conduit by which all the evil of the world around us comes to expression in us." So, a loose tongue not only damages the business of life for ourselves and others, it pushes us toward the very fires of hell.

ιδου "**Consider**" - BEHOLD. "Take the case of a forest fire", Barclay.

αναπτει [αναπτω] pres. "**is set on fire**" - SETS FIRE TO, LIGHTS UP, BURNS [HOW GREAT / LARGE A FOREST]. "A tiny match can start a raging forest fire."

v6

In a complicated metaphor, James describes the tongue as a fire. The first clause is made up of one verb and five words in the nominative case and is therefore difficult to punctuate, and this made even more difficult by numerous variants, see Martin. The whole verse is best treated as one sentence with two main clauses supported by appositional clauses and followed up by two adjectival participial clauses:

"And the tongue [is] a fire;
the world / sum-total of wickedness,
it (ἡ γλῶσσα, "the tongue", emphatic) is set among (????) our members;
corrupting the whole body,
and setting on fire the course of life,
and being set on fire by Gehenna".

καὶ "also" - AND. Adjunctive, "also". "And yes, the tongue really is a fire", Moo.

ὁ κόσμος "a world" - [THE TONGUE IS A FIRE,] THE WORLD = SUM TOTAL. Standing in apposition to "tongue" / nominative complement. Here in a figurative sense, the tongue as the "universe / sum-total of wickedness", possibly "the adornment of wickedness", possibly even the "power / authority of wickedness", although most translations opt for something like "a world of iniquity", NRSV, as NIV. So, probably something like "the representation of all that is wicked in this world", cf., Barclay.

της αδικιας [α] gen. "[a world] of evil" - OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, WICKEDNESS, INJUSTICE. The genitive is probably adjectival, attributive, limiting "world"; "an unrighteous world." Possibly partitive, "a world of malice", NLT.

καθισταται [καθιστημι] pres. pas/mid. "-" - [THE TONGUE] BECOMES. The meaning of this verb in the context, and whether it is middle or passive, is open to some debate. Possibly something like "placed among our members", NRSV, giving a passive sense, but then God would be the agent. In 4:4 καθισταται is obviously middle, and if middle the tongue is the agent. So, the tongue places itself in our members, setting itself up, placing itself in charge, making itself the "conduit by which all the evil of the world around us comes to expression in us", Moo.

εν + dat. "among" - IN = AMONG. Expressing, space, as NIV.

μελεσιν [ος] dat. "the parts of the body" - THE PARTS, MEMBERS [OF US].

ἡ σπιλουσα [σπιλωω] pres. part. "it corrupts [the whole body]" - STAINING. The articular participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting ἡ γλῶσσα, "tongue", and translated as a relative clause, "which defileth", Ropes.

το σωμα [α ατος] "**the [whole] person**" - THE [WHOLE] BODY. "It pollutes our whole being", REB.

φλογιζουσα [φλογιζω] pres. act. part. "**sets on fire**" - [AND] SETTING ON FIRE. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "tongue"; "and which sets on fire the entire course of life." "It causes the greatest damage to ourselves and to others", Junkins.

τον τροχον της γενεσεως "**the whole course of his life**" - THE TURNING = COURSE OF EXISTENCE, LIFE. Most likely a technical phrase describing the cycle of life in the image of a wheel ("what goes around comes around", or is it "what comes around goes around"? = a stoic view of life), "the ups and downs of life", see Dibelius.

φλογιζομενη [φλογιζω] pres. pas. part. "**is itself set on fire**" - AND BEING SET ON FIRE. The third in this series of adjectival participles. The destructive power of the tongue is such that it brings upon itself, and its owner, ultimate destruction - the fires of hell.

υπο "**by**" - Instrumental, expressing agency.

της γεεννης [α ης] "**[by] hell**" - GEHENNA. The name for the ever-burning rubbish tip outside Jerusalem = "Hell", the place of punishment for the dead.

v7

Instruction #5, v7-8b. The tongue possesses a "treacherous inconsistency - an evil irreducible to order, to a consistent character of disciplined obedience and to righteousness", Adamson. James makes the point that humans have been quite successful in taming animals, but that we fail miserably when it comes to the tongue.

γαρ "-" - FOR. Again, used to link saying units, and so lacking any explanatory function and therefore best left untranslated as NIV.

φυσις [ις εως] "**kinds**" - [EVERY] NATURE = SPECIES [OF BEASTS AND BIRDS, OF REPTILES BOTH AND SEA CREATURES]. The noun is followed by a series of partitive genitives.

δαμαζεται και δεδαμασται [δαμαζω] pres./perf. pas. "**are being tamed and have been tamed**" - IS SUBDUED, TAMED AND HAS BEEN SUBDUED, TAMED. In the sense of "domesticated".

τη ανθρωπινη [ος] dat. "**by mankind**" - BY HUMAN [SPECIES]. The dative expresses agency.

v8a/b

δε "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrasting point. "But no human being is able to tame the tongue", Berkeley.

ανθρωπων [ος] gen. "**human**" - [NO ONE] OF MEN. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

δαμασαι [δαμαζω] aor. inf. "**tame**" - [IS ABLE] TO TAME [THE TONGUE]. The infinitive is complementary, completing the verb "is able."

ακαταστατον adj. "**it is a restless [evil]**" - AN UNCONTROLLABLE, RESTLESS [EVIL]. Nominative absolute, although most agree we have a solecism here, i.e., irregular grammar, so possibly functioning in apposition to "tongue", "..... tongue - a restless evil", NRSV. The NIV assumes that it is a predicate nominative, the subject of a new sentence with the verb to-be assumed. Note the variant *ακατασχετον*, "an uncontrollable evil." The adjective *κακον*, "evil", serves as a substantive while the adjective *ακαταστατον*, "restless, unstable", serves as a attributive adjective. Probably "restless" in the sense of "always liable to break out", Phillips. "But no human being is capable of subduing the tongue, never-resting evil that it is", Cassirer.

v8c

Instruction #6, v8c-12. For a believer, the tongue can be duplicitous, "on the one hand, it is very religious, but, on the other, it can be most profane in daily life", Davids. On the one hand, our pious words wouldn't melt chocolate, but then comes Monday and our mouth turns into a sewer. Rightly James asks whether we can live such a double life.

Grammatically, the nominative absolute in v8c seems to stand with "restless evil" in apposition to "tongue" in the first part of v8, "..... tongue - a restless evil, full of deadly poison", NRSV. Yet, in subject matter it seems to introduce James' saying on taming the tongue. As such it would function as a predicate nominative, "tongue" understood; "*The tongue is full of death-bringing poison.*"

θανατηφορου adj. "**deadly**" - [*the tongue is* FULL] OF DEATH-BEARING. "Death-dealing", Johnson.

ιου [ος] gen. "**poison**" - POISON / RUST. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / of content. Obviously here "poison", esp. of seductiveness, so "full of a poison on the lips which is death-dealing".

v9

"*The tongue is full of deadly poison* (v8c). With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men made in the likeness of God", Barclay.

εν + dat. "**with**" - IN. Here instrumental, as NIV; "by means of".

αυτη "**the tongue**" - IT [WE BLESS THE LORD AND FATHER AND WITH IT WE CURSE THE MEN]. "With the tongue"

τους γεγονотας [γίνομαι] perf. part. "**who have been made**" - HAVING BEEN MADE. The articular participle is adjectival, introducing an attributive relative clause limiting τους ανθρώους, "human beings", as NIV.

καθ [κατα] + acc. "**in [God's likeness]**" - ACCORDING TO [LIKENESS OF GOD]. Expressing a standard; "in accordance with."

v10

"Out of the same mouth we curse some and speak of others with praise", Junkins.

εκ + gen. "**out of**" - FROM [THE SAME MOUTH COMES FORTH BLESSING AND CURSING]. Expressing source / origin.

ου χρη pres. + inf. "**[my brothers, this] should not**" - IT IS NOT NECESSARY [BROTHERS OF ME THESE THINGS]. Hapax legomenon, from χραν "to give what is needful", BDF, here negated.

γινεσθαι [γίνομαι] pres. inf. "**be**" - TO BE. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of "ought". "This is just not right, brothers and sisters".

αυτως adv. "-" - SO, THUS. Comparative adverb, backward pointing.

v11

"A spring doesn't gush fresh water one day and brackish the next, does it?" Peterson.

μητι "-" - NOT [THE FOUNTAIN]. A softened negation, prompting a question expecting a negative answer.

εκ + gen. "**from**" - OUT OF, FROM [THE SAME OPENING]. Expressing source / origin.

βρυει [βρωω] pres. "**can flow ...?**" - BURSTS FORTH = POURS FORTH, POURS OUT, GUSHES FORTH [THE SWEET AND THE BITTER]. Hapax legomenon.

v12

μη δυναται [δυναμαι] pres. pas. "**can**" - IS NOT ABLE [BROTHERS OF ME]. If a question, this negation would imply a negative answer; see ουτε below.

ποιησαι [ποιω] "**bear [olives]**" - [A FIG TREE] TO DO = PRODUCE [OLIVES]. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of "is able".

η̄ "**or**" - OR [A VINE to produce FIGS]. Disjunctive.

ουτε "**neither**" - NEITHER [SALT WATER TO DO = MAKE SWEET water]. With the initial μη this conjunction forms a negative correlative construction, "neither nor [does a salty spring]". "In the same way, no salt (salty) spring has the power to bring forth fresh water", Cassirer.

3:13-18

3. Taming the tongue, 3:1-4:12

ii] Disputes are of worldly wisdom; peace is of the wisdom from above

Argument

In this passage, James offers a contrast between two types of wisdom. There is the wisdom of this age and the wisdom of the age to come. The earthly wisdom comes out of selfish ambition and is no better than lies. The heavenly wisdom comes out of a personal relationship with God and issues in practical social concern for the needy and distressed. When we promote earthly wisdom, we deny Christ.

Issues

i] Context: See 3:1-12.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: The second set of sayings / instructions; *Taming the tongue*:

Topic:

Disputes are a product of worldly wisdom.

Instruction:

#7. Whoever wishes to be wise cannot be contentious, v13-17;

#8. True wisdom is marked by peace, v18.

iv] Interpretation:

In examining the subject of wisdom, James compares two types of wisdom, one that leads to humility, good works, and peace, and another that is contentious and leads to envy, selfishness and disorder. This discussion on wisdom sits well in its context with the harm caused by the tongue covered in 3:1-12 and quarrelling the subject of 4:1-3. It is possible that James' focus remains the teachers / leaders of the church. Are we not all about wisdom, speaking and quarrelling? Moo takes the view that although this is *kind-of* true, the instruction is aimed at the "ordinary members of the congregation."

James' examination of wisdom has an Old Testament ring about it. There are two types of wisdom, one gained from revelation, one from experience. The wisdom from above is exemplified by a fear of God, Prov.1:7. It is the wisdom that guides a person's walk with God, a wisdom in the eyes of secular man that is foolishness. This wisdom from above "proceeds from genuine faith", McCartney, and bears as its fruit "the

harvest of righteousness .. sown in peace by those who make peace", v18, cf., Matt.5:9-10. The earthlier wisdom is not evil by nature, in that it is the wisdom that guides a person's walk through life. The problem with earthly wisdom is that it is constantly manipulated by demonic forces, v15; it caters to our selfish needs, what we can get out of life, often at the expense of others.

v] Homiletics: *Worldly wisdom*.

James writes to a church fractured by argumentative members who are determined to push their own barrow. So, he sets out to denounce those who proclaim a self-styled wisdom, while affirming those who proclaim a wisdom that comes from God. In so doing, he gives us some clues to shape of a genuine Spirit filled ministry of the Word.

1. False wisdom (false ministry)

- Counterfeit ministry is harsh and self-centred. Such teachers may be enthusiastic, but they disturb the unity of the church.
- A false ministry adopts and applies secular ideas and systems which are "of the devil".
- Such ministry results in "disorder" and is therefore worthless.

2. True wisdom (Spirit-filled ministry)

- Genuine Spirit filled ministry is humble and sincere.
- The character of the genuine teacher is marked by seven (wise / spiritual) qualities.
- The product of a Spirit-gifted ministry is "peace".

For Jesus, the political and religious options of first century Judaism were polarized between the passivity of the Essenes and the activism of the Zealots. The middle ground consisted of a socially conformed and conservative hierarchy of Sadducees and Pharisees. In the face of this fraudulent worldly wisdom, Christ brought the wise rule of God. Rather than a rule of power, Christ brought a rule of purity and goodness; he offered the reign of peace.

Text - 3:13

Instruction #7: Whoever wishes to be wise cannot be contentious, v13-17. "Whoever wishes to be wise cannot be contentious, for if he is contentious, his is an earthly and not a heavenly wisdom, since heavenly wisdom is peace-loving", Dibelius. James' words apply to all believers, but he may well have in mind the worldly-wise teachers of the church. He calls on them to set aside words and replace them with deeds. True wisdom will issue in deeds of humility, and it is true wisdom that should be exhibited in the fellowship of believers, rather than the power of secular oratory. The humility that James speaks of may be that of

brokenness in the sight of God, but given the context, it is more likely gentleness, as opposed to pride and boastfulness.

"Who among you is wise and understanding? Let them show their works through good conduct with gentleness that springs from wisdom", Adam.

τις **"who"** - WHO *is*. Interrogative pronoun.

σοφως [ος] **"wise"** - WISE. Predicate adjective. Obviously here the Jewish / Christian technical sense of "a knowledge of practical moral wisdom, resting on a knowledge of God", Ropes. Again, some commentators try to identify the "wise" as Christian teachers, such that James is addressing a particular situation, but although his words can apply to Christian teachers, his exhortation is general, applying to all believers who live by the principles of "wisdom" (as defined above) in their life.

επιστημων adj. **"understanding"** - [AND] UNDERSTANDING. Probably to be taken synonymously with "wise", cf. Deut.1:13,15, ...

εν + dat. **"among"** - IN = AMONG [YOU]. Expressing association, as NIV.

δειξατω [δεικνυμι] aor. imp. **"let him show"** - LET HIM DEMONSTRATE, PROVE / EXPLAIN, MAKE CLEAR. The sense is probably more like "reveal the character of", rather than "demonstrate / give proof of / evidence of" it, ie., "reveal" rather than "prove". "Then your lives will be an example of ...", Phillips.

"it" - This addition to the text is somewhat misleading. Is the wise man supposed to show "it", namely, that he is wise? The idea that the wise man should prove his wisdom by his good life and / or reveal it in humility, may be present, so Dibelius, but it is not actually what James says. Rather, the wise man should show [out of good lifestyle] "his works". Something like "let him evidence, in the good of his life, works", ie., rather than sprouting wisdom, how about doing it!!! The idea is probably parallel to James' claim that "faith without works is a dead thing".

εκ + gen. **"by"** - OUT OF, FROM. Sometimes with an instrumental sense, expressing means, so **"by** good conduct", but source / origin is the more likely sense, "from a good life ...", NJB.

της ανατροφης [η] **"[his good] life"** - THE = HIS [GOOD] LIFESTYLE, WAY OF LIFE, CONDUCT.

τα εργα [ον] **"by the deeds done"** - THE WORKS [OF HIM]. As already noted in James, "works" is generally understood as "works of the law", with, of course, the law now inclusive of NT ethics encapsulated in the law of love; "deeds done in accordance with the will of God".

εν + dat. **"in"** - IN [GENTLENESS, MEEKNESS, MILDNESS]. "Gentleness", as opposed to arrogance. The intended sense is somewhat unclear, but probably the

preposition is adverbial, modal, expressing manner, modifying the verbal noun "works": "let him reveal, by the good of his life, works *done with gentleness*."

σοφιας [α] "**that comes from wisdom**" - OF WISDOM. The genitive is probably adjectival, idiomatic / source, as NIV; "a humility that itself is the product, or result, of wisdom", Moo. Attributive, is possible, "wise gentleness."

v14

"True wisdom simply does not exist along with jealousy and selfish ambition. Something else is present, not wisdom", Hamann. "Don't be arrogant and so promote the lie that selfish party-spirit is a product of God's wisdom."

δε "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrasting point, as NIV.

ει + ind. "**if**" - if. Introducing a conditional clause, 1st class, where the condition is assumed to be true for argument's sake; "if, *as is the case* *then* ..."

ζηλον πικρον "**bitter envy**" - [YOU HAVE] BITTER JEALOUSY. Accusative direct object of the verb "to have." These two words, along with "strife", "paraphrase a contentious attitude", so Dibelius, as opposed to "humility / gentleness". "Bitter" is possibly "contentious", Adamson, and "envy" may well be "zeal", Ropes, giving us the sense "fanatical ardour".

επιθειαν [α] "**selfish ambition**" -[AND] SELFISHNESS, HOSTILITY, RIVALRY. Hort goes too far when he defines the word as "the vice of a leader of a party created for his own pride; it is partly ambition, partly rivalry", although he is supported somewhat by BAGD "a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means". Calvin suggests "quarrels" (taken from ερις, "strife / discord"), and a "quarrelsome spirit" may well be in James' mind.

εν + dat. "**in [your hearts]**" - IN [THE HEART OF YOU]. Local, expressing space, metaphorical; the place where the action occurs.

μη κατακαυχασθε [κατακαυχασμαι] pres. imp. "**do not boast about it**" - DO NOT BOAST, BE BOASTFUL. Probably, "do not be arrogant", cf., Barclay.

ψευδεσθε [ψευδομαι] pres. imp. "**[or] deny**" - [AND] LIE, BE FALSE [AGAINST (κατα, here expressing opposition) THE TRUTH]. The sense of "lie against the truth" is unclear. Most commentators, eg., Ropes, Mayor, Laws, Davids ... understand the statement as a claim to be wise when in fact one is foolish. A rewrite is possible, although always dangerous, "do not boast in defiance of the truth", Dibelius. James is critical of those who claim "wisdom" of the divine kind, but who are quarrelsome and arrogant. As far as James is concerned, their "boast" is a lie, it is against the truth (ie., the prepositional phrase

stands in apposition to "lie"), it is against the wisdom that expresses itself in gentleness.

v15

Wisdom exercised independently of God's authority "is characterized by the world, the flesh, and the devil", Moo. Such wisdom is "earthly", i.e., not from above, but rather earthbound, inferior, it "bears the stamp of the world", Adamson. It is "unspiritual", i.e., sensual, devoid of the Spirit. It is "of the devil", demonic, instigated by Satan.

αὐτή "Such" - THIS [IS NOT]. Either attributive, "this wisdom is not", as NIV, or a predicative, "this is not the wisdom".

ἡ σοφία "wisdom" - THE WISDOM. Predicate nominative. The NIV's quotation-marks identifies the wisdom that shows itself in envy and selfish ambition, as against the wisdom that is from above.

οὐκ ἐστὶν κατερχομένη [κατερχομαι] pres. part. "**does not come down [from heaven]**" - COMING DOWN [FROM ABOVE]. The participle, with the verb to-be, may form a present paraphrastic, as NIV, but it could also be adjectival, "this is not the wisdom which comes down from above", Moffatt. The sense is that this wisdom is not approved by God, or possibly not from God, given that true wisdom is a gift of God.

ἀλλὰ "but" - BUT. Strong adversative in a counterpoint construction; "not, but.....".

ἐπιγίως adj. "**earthly**" - *it is the wisdom that is EARTHLY*. James uses three adjectives to describe the wisdom which is not from above. The adjectives are compounding, each describing an increasingly negative aspect of this wisdom. "Earthbound", Johnson.

ψυχικὴ adj. "**unspiritual**" - NATURAL, UNSPIRITUAL. Predicate adjective. "Used in the sense of one who has not been awakened to the truth of God in Christ, who does not know the renewing power of God's Spirit", Mitton.

δαίμονιωδης adj. "**of the devil**" - DEMONIC. Predicate adjective. "Is demon-inspired", Barclay, or "demon-like", Martin.

v16

Worldly wisdom, expressed in fanaticism and a quarrelsome spirit, produces "disharmony and all other kinds of evil", Phillips. Such wisdom does not build up the body of believers, rather it results in "disorder" (anarchy) and "evil practice", i.e., promotes everything that is worthless rather than good.

γὰρ "for" - FOR. Introducing a causal clause explaining why such wisdom is not of God, namely, because of the consequential evidence, namely, disorder and evil practice.

ὅπου "where" - WHERE [*there is* JEALOUSY AND SELFISHNESS]. Locative conjunction.

ακαταστασία [α] "disorder" - [THERE *is*] CONFUSION. "Disorder / disturbance / trouble", Ropes.

παν φαυλον πραγμα "every evil practice" - [AND] ALL EVIL DEEDS. "All manner of evil practice", Martin, is a catch-all. "Evil practice", possibly "wickedness", NRSV, "cruel things", CEV.

v17

James now tells us about the wisdom that is divine in origin, in contrast to earthly wisdom. He doesn't actually say what heavenly wisdom is, but rather he describes its results. These results are very similar to Paul's fruit of the Spirit, Gal.5:22-23. In fact, it is quite possible that James' "wisdom" is actually akin to the "Spirit" - a very Jewish idea. A believer needs to submit to the wise rule of God through the Spirit of God for the renewal of the mind. The practical consequences are easily observed: peaceable; considerate; gentle; non-combative - able to yield to persuasion; merciful; loving; impartial - "not given to party spirit" NASB; sincere - "without show or pretence", Mayor.

δε "but" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrast, to the other type of wisdom; "but on the other hand ..." "In contrast, the wisdom that does come down from heaven", Martin.

πρωτον adv. "first of all" - [THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS] FIRST. Serving to introduce a series; "Divinely inspired wisdom in the first place is a virtue marked by ..."

μεν "-" - The adversative comparative μεν ... δε construction is missing the δε which should properly follow αγνη, "pure"; "..... marked by, but on the one hand purity and on the other peace" Here δε is replaced by επειτα, "then", indicating a series where the elements are not adversative. This reflects classical usage, cf., Mayor. The presence of this construction indicates that "pure" is the primary characteristic, an inward spiritual quality, which shows itself in a series of outward qualities, "peace-loving", etc.

αγνη adj. "pure" - Predicate adjective. Here in the sense of partaking the divine quality of purity, "partakes of a characteristic of God", Davids.

επειτα adv. "then" - Setting up the series of outward qualities that flow from "peace".

ειρηνικη adj. "peace-loving" - PEACEABLE. Predicate adjective. That quality which is "incompatible with jealousy and selfish ambition", Laws.

επιεικης adj. "considerate" - FORBEARING. Predicate adjective. "Reasonable / considerate / moderate / gentle", Ropes; "humane", Adamson.

ευπειθης adj. "**submissive**" - OPEN TO REASON. Predicate adjective which is a hapax legomenon, once only use in the NT. "Tractable", Dibelius, "he who heads one who is giving proper advice and follows willingly."

ελεους [ος] gen. "**[full of] mercy**" - The genitive "of mercy", as with "good fruit" (although "good fruits" may serve to explain "mercy", or may even be the product of "mercy", so Dibelius, Davids, eg., alms), functions adjectivally, idiomatic / of content, after the adjective **μεστη**, "full of."

καρπων αγαθων gen. "**good fruit**" - [AND] GOOD-FRUITS. This agricultural image most likely refers to moral behaviour - loving kindness. "It produces a rich crop of kindly acts", Barclay.

αδιακριτος adj. "**impartial**" - WITHOUT PARTIALITY. Predicate adjective. Being a hapax legomenon, the meaning is unclear, but something like "not being prejudicial". Possibly "straightforward", NEB, or better "making no distinctions", RV; "without partiality", Mitton; "with no breath of favouritism", Phillips.

ανυποκριτος adj. "**sincere**" - SINCERE, UNHYPOCRITICAL. Predicate adjective. "Untainted by hypocrisy", Adamson.

v18

Instruction #8: True wisdom is marked by peace, v18. Those whose goodness is marked by peace, work for peace. Peacemakers will receive a harvest of righteousness. Here we have another example of an independent saying stitched to a thematic unit, this time with the particle **δε**. This is most likely James' work, so Dibelius, rather than a later add-on, so Blackman. As with these stitched sayings, there is not much flow in the argument, but the thematic link is obvious (note the usual link word, here "peace"). As Adamson notes, "the exact meaning is difficult". The NRSV probably best captures the sense: "*And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for (by) those who make peace.*"

τοις ποιουσιν [ποιεω] pres. part. dat. "**peacemakers**" - [BUT/AND *the* FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN PEACE IS SOWN BY] THE ONES MAKING [PEACE]. The participle serves as a substantive, dative of advantage, "for", Martin, Moo, Mayor, Laws, "for peaceable people", Dibelius, or agency, "by", Davids, Adamson, Mitton, Adam. Agency does produce a tautology, but James is probably using this for effect. "Who are those who in fact are doing justly? Those who make for peace, who do their just acts in a peaceful way", Davids.

σπειρεται [σπειρω] pres. pas. "**who sow**" - IS SOWN. "Peace" could go with "righteousness" giving the sense "the fruit of righteousness in / which consists of peace", but it is best taken with the verb "is sown", "is sown in peace". "Plant seeds of peace", CEV.

εν + dat. "**in [peace]**" - The dative is adverbial, expressing manner, "with peace / peacefully", but possibly instrumental, expressing means.

δικαιοσυνης [η] gen. "**[the harvest] of righteousness**" - [FRUIT] OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. "Righteousness" here with the more general sense of "conduct which is pleasing to God", Martin, Moo. As usual, the genitive "of righteousness" prompts numerous translations: adjectival, epexegetic, explaining the nature of the fruit, so Hort, Mayor, Johnson, Davids ..., "the fruit which is (which consists of) righteousness"; appositional, "the fruit, consisting of / namely righteousness" = "the fruit is wisdom itself", Laws; attributive, limiting "fruit", "righteous fruit"; verbal, objective, "the seeds that produce the fruit of godliness", Junkins; or possibly idiomatic / source, so Ropes, "the harvest which righteousness yields", Cassirer.

4:1-6

3. Taming the tongue, 3:1-4:12

iii] Disputes derive from worldly passions

Argument

James now makes the case that devotion to the world by some members of the church has prompted covetousness (**των ἡδονων**, "pleasures" = insatiable bodily desires = violent covetousness) leading to conflicts and quarrelling. The solution to such a problem lies in a humble acceptance of divine grace.

Issues

i] Context: See 3:1-12.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: The third instruction on *Taming the tongue*:

Topic:

Disputes and quarrelling derive from worldly passions.

Instruction:

#9 (v1-6 presents as an integrated whole):

Ungratified selfish desires are the cause of conflict, v1-2a;

God does not gratify selfish desires, v2b-3;

Selfish desires stem from a flirtation with the world, v4-5a;

God provides the grace to curb our selfish desires, v5b-6.

iv] Interpretation:

James is tackling the theme of wisdom and speech, 3:1-4:12. Having just warned against the evils that stem from jealousy leading to rivalry, 3:13-18, James now addresses the issue of coveting, leading to quarrelling. He presents his argument as a moral challenge; the choice of being a friend of the world, or a friend of God. The next passage, v7-12, *a call to repentance*, although self-contained, is none-the-less integrally linked to v1-6. Note the link between v6b, "God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble", and v10, "humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you." Both passages are linked in tackling the issue of "the misuse of speech in quarrels and slander", Blomberg.

v] Homiletics: *Selfish desire*.

The Western world is suffocating under a mountain of debt as governments are driven to expand services to the wider population without raising taxes - *bread and circus* for free. The problem is recognized by the

electorate, but the solution tends to be that other people should pay more taxes, rather than me, and services should be cut, but not services that I enjoy.

James offers a solution to the problem of selfish desire:

- Selfish desires recede in the face of God's sustaining grace. If we are willing to recognize our need and accept the gift of His grace, then the renewing work of the Spirit of Christ will slowly shape us into the person God would have us be.

- Selfish desires recede when we pray according to God's will. It's not helpful if we have picked up the *abundant life* virus, the idea that God gives us health, wealth and happiness when we ask in faith. Those type of prayers focus on selfish desires and lead to frustration. We need to remind ourselves of what is promised in the scriptures: forgiveness, the renewing presence of the Spirit, life eternal, Our prayers are answered in the affirmative when we ask for God's promised blessings.

Only the gospel can solve the problem of a secular society facing decline, fretting under the weight of selfish desire, but for ourselves, selfish desire retreats when we remember that God gives grace to those who admit their need and who seek his promised blessings.

Text - 4:1

Instruction # 9, The necessary control of selfish desires, v1-6: i] Ungratified selfish desires are the cause of conflict, v1-2a. James asks his readers what causes the fights and quarrels that are disturbing their congregation. He makes the observation that this strife is caused by uncontrolled selfish desires permeating the personality of those causing the trouble. "You long for health, wealth and happiness, but can't get what you want, and so you quarrel and fight." Obviously the troublemakers in the congregation aren't actually killing each other, but their continued resentment is akin to incipient murder.

ποθεν adv. "**what**" - FROM WHERE [*do these wars come from* AND] FROM WHERE [FIGHTS, QUARRELS, STRIFE]. Interrogative adverb serving to introduce a rhetorical question. Here expressing cause / reason, as NIV; where do they come from? = what is the cause?

πολοι [ος] "**causes fights**" - WARS. Nominative subject of an assumed verb. This noun refers to a military campaign, the next to a more localized conflict. It seems unlikely that James is referring to physical violence in the congregation so a metaphorical sense is probably intended, as NIV. "What *causes* quarrels and arguments among you?"

εν + dat. "**among [you]**" - IN [YOU]. Local tending toward association; "among".

ουκ "**don't they come**" - *is it* NOT. This negation in a question expects a positive answer; "is not the cause from your possessions warring in your members?" = *Yes*.

εντευθεν adv. "-" - FROM HERE, WHERE. As **ποθεν** above; where do they come from? = what is the cause?

εκ + gen. "**from**" - *ie.*, FROM. Expressing source / origin.

των ηδονων [η] gen. "**[your] desires**" - THE PLEASURES, DELIGHTS / LUSTS [OF YOU]. The more negative sense is probably intended, in the sense of personal gratification: "passions", ESV; "cravings", NRSV; "ungodly lusts", Junkins; "selfish desires", CEV.

των στρατευομενων [στρατευω] gen. pres. mid. part. "**that battle**" - SOLDIERING, WARING. The participle, introducing a relative clause, is adjectival, attributive, limiting "desires"; "which war among your members" = "that fight to control your body", CEV.

εν + dat. "**within [you]**" - IN [THE MEMBERS OF YOU]. Local, expressing space / sphere; "your passions are at war within you", ESV. Again, this "fight" is internal, within the members of the human body / within, but some commentators think the reference is to the church body, of the fight being between members of the congregation, so Hamann, Martin, Wall (*Community of the wise*). "The fight is within the body of the individual Christian", Davids. "James traces all sin neither to pleasure nor desire, but ultimately to the core of disordered personality", Adamson.

v2a

This verse is difficult to punctuate and so has produced numerous translations. Davids observes a chiasmic structure, but his translation disturbs the logic somewhat. We are best to follow the NIV11 which improves on the NIV and seems best to express James' point; "You desire but do not have, *so* you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, *so* you quarrel and fight." These parallel statements are tightly linked to v1.

φονευετε [φονευω] pres. "***so* you kill**" - [YOU DESIRE AND YOU DO NOT HAVE] YOU KILL. The word is used of "murder". Assuming that actual "murder / killing" is not intended, the NEB has "bent on murder." "Frustrated desire, James make clear, is what is breeding the intense strife that is convulsing the community", Moo. So, "frustrated desire" is driving this *bent*, namely, a continuing resentment which is akin to "incipient murder", Mitton, cf., Matt.5:21. Possibly were the "frustrated desire" will ultimately lead if not corrected, so Moo.

και "-" - AND. Coordinative; here best left untranslated.

ΕΠΙΤΥΧΕΙΝ [ΕΠΙΤΥΧΑΝΩ] aor. inf. "**[you cannot get] what you want**" - [YOU ARE JEALOUS AND YOU ARE NOT ABLE] TO OBTAIN, ATTAIN, GET [YOU FIGHT AND YOU WAR]. Complementary infinitive completing the sense of the negated verb "you are not able." "You are murderously jealous of what others have got and which you can't possess yourselves *and so you quarrel with each other*", Phillips.

v2b

ii] Selfish desires will remain ungratified, v2b-3. The statement "you do not have because you do not ask" introduces a new thought which is tightly linked to v3. The link is somewhat chiasmic; "you do not have, you do ask - you ask, you do not have." James notes that his readers are affected by the problem of unanswered prayer. "You ask and do not receive", presumably because you do not ask *correctly*." Many translations have "because you do not ask *God*", but the Greek text states "because you do not ask." Verse 3 identifies what they do not ask; they do not ask for the correct things, or as the Greek has it, "you ask badly", "wrongly". James could be referring to their motives, but it is more likely that the problem lies with what they are asking for. They are asking for all the gear that makes for a happy life; health, wealth and happiness - they need a dose of Ecclesiastes.

ΔΙΑ ΤΟ + inf. "**because [you do not ask God]**" - [YOU DO NOT HAVE] BECAUSE [YOU DO NOT ASK]. This construction introduces a causal clause, as NIV. The NIV supplies the object "God"; "James writes that the way for a Christian to get what his heart is set upon is to ask God for it, not pursue it ruthlessly and without regard for others", Mitton, so Moo, Davids. Given v3 ("your praying is corrupt"), "God" seems an unlikely object. It's not so much that they don't get what they desire because they don't ask God, but rather that their asking is flawed - they don't ask for God's promised blessings, rather they ask God to fulfill their own selfish desires; "you ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly", Hamann.

v3

James now explains the problem that exists with their desire / asking - they ask wrongly.

ΑΙΤΕΙΤΕ [ΑΙΤΕΩ] pres. "**when you ask**" - YOU ASK. The NIV employs a temporal clause to overcome James' *short-talk*. The REB opts for a conditional clause, "if you do *ask*", even concessive is suggested by Laws, "even if you do ask."

ΔΙΟΤΙ "**because**" - [AND YOU DO NOT RECEIVE] BECAUSE. Causal conjunction introducing a causal clause, as NIV, but it could also be inferential here, "therefore".

καθως adv. "[you ask] with wrong motives" - [YOU ASK] BADLY, WRONGLY. Modal adverb; emphatic by position. The NIV's stab in the dark is joined by many others: "for the wrong reasons", Barclay; "your request is improper", Junkins; "with the wicked intent of spending it on your pleasures", Moffatt; "in quite the wrong spirit", Phillips; "from what is in fact an evil motive", Cassirer; "for selfish reasons", CEV. It is widely held that God will hear and answer our prayers if we ask with unflinching faith, or with pure heart and motives, but in truth, the prayer that is answered is the prayer that is according to God's will, irrespective of our little faith or corrupted motives. Our God does what he promises; he does what he wills, rather than what we will. So, the problem of unanswered prayer lies with a request for the wrong things, what is not promised - requests that fall under the heading *health, wealth and happiness*. It is likely, therefore, that "wrongly" here means "asking for what you have no right to", Peterson.

ινα + subj. "**that**" - Here introducing a purpose clause; "in order that."

δαπανησητε [**δαπαναω**] aor. subj. "**you may spend what you get**" - SPEND *it* (money on something). It is somewhat of a stretch to argue that their prayers were for money so that they could "spend" it on their "passions". A more general prayer for health, wealth and happiness is likely, so that they could "expend = use, employ, consume" "*these*" (object unidentified) for "personal gratification"; "to use it for their own personal ends, and the satisfaction of their own desires", Mitton. "That you should be provided with the means of satisfying your appetites", Cassirer.

εν + dat. "**on**" - Local; expressing space / sphere, as NIV, although Adam argues that in this context **εις** would be expected, so he suggests reference / respect.

ηδοναις [**η**] dat. "**pleasures**" - PLEASURES, DELIGHTS, PASSIONS. Certainly "appetites", but not necessarily "illicit pleasures / lusts." "God bestows not gifts only, but the enjoyment of them: but the enjoyment which contributes to nothing beyond itself is not what He gives in answer to prayer; and petitions to Him which have no better end in view are not prayers", Hort via Moo.

v4

iv] Selfish desires stem from flirtation with the world, v4-5a. James puts a two-pronged question to the untrustworthy church members who love to flirt with the fading glamor of this world; "Don't you realize that you can't have an intimate personal relationship with the living God and at the same time be a lover of the things of this world, or do you think that what the Bible says about mammon is just empty words?" Just as in human relationships, we can't take two lovers to ourselves.

μοιχαλιδες [ις ιδος] "**adulterous**" - ADULTERESSES. Vocative. Used here in the sense of those unfaithful to God. "You are not to be trusted", TNT.

ουκ "don't" - [DO YOU] NOT [KNOW]. Used in a question expecting a positive answer. James is reminding his readers that they indeed do know that flirting with the glamor of this world, corrupted as it is, undermines their relationship with God.

οτι "that" - introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what they know.

η φιλια [α] "**friendship**" - THE FRIENDSHIP, LOVE. Indicating "identification to and (intimate) relationship with something or someone", Blomberg. "You are like unfaithful wives flirting with the glamor of this world", Phillips. Note that Phillips' use of "wives" follows the feminine noun "adulteress", but the use of the feminine simply follows OT metaphorical usage - Israel, the bride of YHWH, flaunts herself with pagan deities. Given that adultery is usually a male problem, specifying "wives" is somewhat unjustified!

του κοσμου [ος] gen. "**with the world**" - OF THE WORLD [IS ENMITY *with* GOD]. The word can be used in a positive, neutral, or negative sense. Here, as with John in his letters, and Paul, it is used in a negative sense. The world is the environment of human affairs and associations apart from God, possibly "in alienation and estrangement from God, in rebellion against him", Hamann. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, objective; "love for the world", NJB, "loving the world", Weymouth. Yet, it seems more likely adjectival, possessive, as also **του θεου**, "of God"; "the world's friendship", Moffatt, as opposed to "God's enmity." We can't be the world's lover, possessed by the world, and at the same time God's lover, possessed by God, cf., 1Jn.2:15. James is reflecting the dichotomy of Jesus' teaching on mammon; that loving one entails hating the other. Of course, our association with one does not deny an association with the other, since Jesus is speaking about matters of the heart, the core focus of our psyche; "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also", Matt.6:21, cf., Rom.8:7.

ουν "therefore" - Inferential / drawing a logical conclusion.

δς εαν "anyone" - WHOEVER. Introducing a 3rd. class relative conditional clause where the condition has the possibility of coming true; "whoever, *as the case may be, then*" if anyone chooses / wills to become the world's lover then an enemy of God they become / are made.

ειναι pres. inf. "**to be [a friend]**" - [CHOOSES] TO BE [A FRIEND OF THE WORLD]. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "chooses, wills." It may also be classified as introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what is chosen / willed.

εχθρος adj. "**an enemy**" - [IS MADE] AN ENEMY. The adjective serves as a substantive, limited by the possessive genitive "of God." Most translations opt for "enemy", although hostility is not necessarily the point being made. The word is chosen as the opposite of a lover, but an ex-lover is not necessarily a hater. It is usually an issue of indifference, sometimes with hurt, and possibly anger. It is hard to express the state of a non-lover, but the point is this, if our *raison d'etre* is mammon, then we undermine the bond of love we have with God in Christ. We should not think that "we can live in intimate fellowship with God when the set of our hearts is towards the world", Motyer.

θεου (ος) gen. "**of God**" - Usually treated as an objective genitive, but it could be treated as adjectival, possessive / relational, even adverbial, reference, "an enemy with respect to God."

v5a

Verse 5 is recognized as one of the most difficult verses in James to exegete. It begins with what seems like a formula introduction to a citation from scripture, the source of which citation is illusive. Yet, 5a is probably not a formula introduction, but simply a counter to the rhetorical question in v4; "don't you know that (5a) or do you think that scripture speaks with empty words?" "Do you think what the scriptures have to say about this is a mere formality?" Phillips. The following statement, v5b, relates to v6 rather than v5a. So, v5a is a statement of fact, or possibly a question, rather than a quote from scripture.

ἢ "**or**" - Here disjunctive; introducing a mutually exclusive opposite.

ὅτι "-" - [DO YOU THINK / SUPPOSE] THAT [THE SCRIPTURE SAYS IN VAIN]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing that they might suppose.

κενωσ adv. "**without reason**" - IN VAIN, WITH EMPTY WORDS. Modal adverb, expressing manner; hapax legomenon / once only use in the NT.

v5b

v] God provides the grace to curb our selfish desires, v5b-6. "God's gift of sustaining grace is enjoyed only by those willing to admit their need and accept the gift", Moo.

The complexity of this verse continues. One of the better detailed presentations of the problems posed by this verse is outlined by Dan McCartney in his Baker Academic commentary, 2009, p209-217. Simplified, the problems can be summarized as follows:

- Is **το πνευμα**, "the spirit", the Holy Spirit, the God-breathed human spirit, or an evil spirit within humanity?
- Is **το πνευμα** the subject or the object of the verb "longs", or the subject of the verb "dwells"?

• Is the word **φθονον**, "envy, jealousy", to be taken negatively, or positively?

Numerous computations and permutations have been offered, but we are best to follow the approach of NIV11; "God yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us", NRSV. Our God desires that love should flourish within us, as intended, rather than selfishness, and he has provided to the humble the grace to be that loving person. "God yearns jealously for the loving devotion of the spirit he implanted in us", Barclay - loving devotion rather than selfishness.

επιποθει [επιποθεω] pres. "**he [jealously] longs for**" - HE [TOWARD ENVY] DESIRES, CRAVES FOR. Taking the positive sense "to greatly desire, long, yearn for"; the assumed subject being "God".

προς φθονον [ος] "**jealously**" - TOWARD ENVY. The prepositional phrase is adverbial, modal, expressing manner. The noun "envy" usually takes a negative sense, but here a positive sense is surely intended. Something stronger than "truly cares", CEV, so "jealously yearns for."

το πνευμα [α ατος] "**the spirit**" - "The spirit that God breathed into man to make him a living creature", Moo; "the human spirit", Davids, Blomberg, McCartney suggests that James is referring to the spirit of wisdom, "the presence of God in divinely given wisdom and understanding, ... *that spirit* with which the Messiah was to be anointed, cf., Isa. 11:2." "In order to keep the S/spirit one must remain in submission to God (James 4:7)."

ὃ pro. "-" - WHICH. Introducing a relative clause limiting "the spirit"; "the spirit that he has made to dwell in us", ESV.

εν + dat. "**in**" - [HE HAS CAUSED TO DWELL] IN [US]. Local; space / sphere - here expressing incorporative union.

v6

δε "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional. Usually treated as an adversative / contrastive, as NIV, TNIV, NRSV, ... but then logically "the spirit" in v5b would be a corrupted human spirit driving human envy; "the *evil* spirit that dwells in us fills us with envious longings, but the grace God gives is stronger." If we follow the interpretation of v5b given above, **δε** must be a connective, coordinative, or possibly even inferential, "therefore." God greatly desires the loving spirit abiding in us to flourish and therefore he pours out his exceeding grace *upon us*.

μειζονα comp. adj. "**more [grace]**" - [HE GIVES] GREATER [GRACE]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to give." Emphatic by position. God desires, with a deep longing, that love should flourish in our psyche. We struggle to be what God would have us be, too often driven by selfish motives. So, he gifts us, graces us, with the wherewithal to be the person we are in Christ. "The more God

demands the more he gives by way of grace to meet what he desires of us", Hamann / "God gives what he demands", Augustine, cf., 2Cor.12:9.

διο "this is why [Scripture says]" - THEREFORE [IT SAYS]. Inferential, establishing a logical connection to set up a citation introduction. As such, it serves as part of a formula introduction for a quotation from Proverbs 3:34 used to support v5b-6a, even explain further; "It's common knowledge that", Peterson / "as scripture says ..."NJB.

ὑπερηφανοις dat. adj. "**the proud**" - [GOD OPPOSES] PROUD, HAUGHTY, ARROGANT *people*. The adjective serves as a noun, dative of direct object after the **αντι** prefix verb "to oppose."

ταπεινοις dat. adj. "**the humble**" - [BUT HE GIVES GRACE] TO HUMBLE *people*. The adjective serves as a noun, dative of indirect object after the verb "to give." The quotation serves to take the issue of divine grace further by making the point that the grace given to support what God greatly desires from us, is given to those who approach God with humility. "God's gift of sustaining grace is enjoyed only by those willing to admit their need and accept the gift. The proud, on the other hand, meet only resistance from God", Moo.

4:7-12

3. Taming the tongue, 3:1-4:12

iv] Humility and slander

Argument

With a further two instructions related to the tongue, James first encourages his readers to foster a humble approach to God, and then goes on to warn against slandering and judging others.

Issues

i] Context: See 3:1-12. Cargal, *Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James*, suggests that the instruction not to slander a brother, v11, and the instruction to restore a sinner, 5:19, forms an *inclusio*. These notes follow Davids and Moo who think that this passage rounds up the major section dealing with community conflict, particularly with respect to speech, 3:1-4:12.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: The final set of sayings / instructions; *Taming the tongue*:

Topic

Repentance is the way to cleanse an evil tongue.

Instructions:

#10: "humble yourselves before the Lord", v7-10;

#11: the evil of defamation, v11-12

iv] Interpretation:

In dealing with the problem of selfish desires, v1-6, James has quoted Proverbs 3:34, "God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble." There is a sense where James now applies the quote with a series of imperatives: submit to God; resist the devil; draw near to God; address attitudes and actions; be sorrowful for sin, v7-10. The next instruction, v11-12, seems unrelated to the preceding verses, although Mitton suggests that the defamation and censure of others implies pride in oneself, and it is this idea which links the instruction to humble oneself before God to the instruction not to slander another.

Vlachos views the series of imperatives under the head of submission to God. He views this submission in three parts:

- resisting temptation and cultivating a relationship with God, 7b-8a;
- changing action and attitudes, v8b-c;

- heartfelt sorrow and repentance, v9."

Greek: The inferential **οὖν**, "therefore", in v7 indicates that we are moving from exposition to exhortation. The exhortation is shaped by 10 imperatives.

v] Homiletics: *Humility*

It's hard not to cringe when someone tells us that they are a humble person - "I'm only an umble man." At this point, humility is the least applicable description. It just seems illogical for a humble person to claim humility. So, what do we mean by humility? Jesus describes his disciples as humble ones; they are the poor in spirit and so theirs is the kingdom of heaven. What does James tell us about humility?

- Humility involves a willing submission to God.
- Humility involves a willing struggle against temptation, against dark powers; we wrestle "against authorities, against the powers of this dark world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms", Eph.6:12.
- Humility entails the cultivation of a relationship with God in Christ, a kind of "what a friend we have in Jesus."
- Humility is expressed in changed actions and attitudes.
- Humility expresses itself in heartfelt sorrow, or as we might commonly call it, unhappy memories, a repentant heart - "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us."

Text - 4:7

Instruction #10: "Humble yourselves before the Lord" - submission to God, v7-10. In verse six, quoting from Proverbs 3:34, James underlines the point that God "gives grace to the humble." In the following verses James exposes the substance of humility in a series of imperatives, instructions that lead to divine grace and favour. In the verse before us, James calls on his readers to submit themselves to God and to resist the devil. Rather than submitting to the authority of a world corrupted by sin, James calls on his readers to submit to the authority of God; to stand firm against temptations and allow God to work his will through the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

James, from his Wisdom perspective, indicates that the reward due submission to these moral imperatives is "more grace" - an overflowing of God's kindness, cf., v6. The issue of reward always raises a red flag, given that being eternally right before God is a gift of divine grace appropriated through faith in the faithfulness of Jesus, and this not of works lest anyone should boast. Yet, James is simply applying the principle of Wisdom, namely that right follows the

right acts of the righteous, if not here, certainly there, cf., Introduction, The Issue of Reward.

οὖν "then" - THEREFORE - drawing a logical conclusion from Proverbs 3:34 quoted in v6. "So then, accept the authority of God", Barclay.

τῷ θεῷ [ος] dat. "**God**" - [BE SUBJECT TO] GOD. Dative of direct object after the **ὑπο** prefix verb "to be subject to." "Let God work his will in you", Peterson.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional. Usually treated as an untranslated connective, although Vlachos suggests that it heads the series of imperatives connected by **καί**, "and". This can be expressed with a colon, *that is to say*; "Submit therefore to God: resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God," Weymouth. This probably places too much weight on a simple connective conjunction. The person who is humble and thus is the recipient of divine grace, v6, must necessarily submit to God, resist the devil, etc.

τῷ διαβόλῳ [ος] dat. "**the devil**" - [OPPOSE, RESIST] THE DEVIL. Dative of direct object after the **ἀντι** prefix verb "to resist." The devil, the one to be resisted, is "the quintessential architect and archetype of pride. It is the devil who fosters jealousy and ambition, offers a false wisdom and a false faith, and brews a broth of discord and contention and murderous envy to sap the church's vitality and undermine its integrity", McCartney. "Stand firm against temptation."

ἀφ [απο] + gen. "**from**" - [AND HE WILL FLEE] FROM [YOU]. Expressing separation; "away from."

v8

Another aspect of humility is found in the way we relate to God in Christ. "The Christian is invited, as a child in God's family, to draw near to God, to draw strength and comfort from the sense of his nearness. And if we come to God, we shall never be turned away (cf. John 6:37). Rather, God will draw near to us", Mitton. James notes a further aspect of humility, namely, a willingness to purify our actions and attitudes; he is calling for purity in both outward deeds and inward disposition.

τῷ θεῷ [ος] dat. "**[come near to] God**" - [DRAW NEAR TO] GOD. Dative of direct object after the verb "to draw near to" which takes a dative of persons. It does seem that drawing near to God is relational; "The Christian is invited, as a child in God's family, to draw near to God, to draw strength and comfort from the sense of his nearness. And if we come to God, we shall never be turned away (cf. John 6:37). Rather God will draw near to us", Mitton. Some commentators think that worship / adoration may be in James' mind, so Davids, or a repentant approach to God, so Moo, or an expression of practical ethics, so Blomberg.

και "and" - The construction here, imp. + **και** + fut. = a conditional clause (reflecting Semitic influence); "if you come close to God he will come close to you", so Davids.

ὑμιν dat. pro. "**you**" - [HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO] YOU. Dative of direct object, as above. James is expressing typical rabbinic teaching; God goes out to those who approach him. Of course, the other side of the coin is that "God loves both more than you love, and before you love at all", St. Bernard.

ἁμαρτωλοι voc. adj. "**you sinners**" - [CLEANSE *your* HANDS] SINNERS [AND SANCTIFY *your* HEARTS, DUPLICITOUS ONES]. Both "sinners" and "double-minded, duplicitous, waverers" are vocative, as NIV. A call for changed actions and attitudes seems likely, "external change ... and internal clean up", Baker - a call for spiritual and moral cleansing, so Adamson; of outward deeds and inward disposition. So, we have here a call to purity, "for right deed and right commitment: pure hands would do good works and pure hearts would be totally committed", Davids.

v9

A final aspect of humility, noted by James, is that of heartfelt sorrow, a repentant heart. James is speaking of a deep awareness of sinfulness. This attitude should be added to the other imperative James has outlined: submitting to God, standing against temptation, enhancing one's relationship with God in Christ, and striving to act morally both in action and thought. A believer is broken before God, and can only be otherwise in Christ.

Some commentators argue that all five qualities listed above are but aspects of repentance, and that repentance is the substance of humility, a humility which leads to grace. The language employed here reflects OT use, of a call to people suffering judgment, and thus serves "to call God's people to repentance from sin", Moo, cf., Isa.15:2, Jer.4:13, Hos.10:5, Joel 1:9-10, Mic.2:4.

ταλαιπωρησατε [ταλαιπωρεω] aor. imp. "**Grieve, [mourn and wail]**" - LAMENT [AND MOURN AND WEEP]. These three words reflect "a heartfelt sorrow for sin that is the mark of true repentance", Moo; "godly sorrow", 2Cor.7:10. "Go ahead and be miserable! Go into mourning! Cry your eyes out! Turn your laughter into mourning and your happiness into a burden of sadness, as evidence that you, at least, have come to terms with your wretched spiritual condition!", Junkins.

μετατραπητω [μετατρεπω] aor. pas. imp. "**change**" - LET BE CHANGED. Rather than *kill-joy*-Christianity, James continues to reflect the need for a repentant attitude toward God, rather than self-sufficient complacency. His words reflect Jesus' beatitudes, cf., Lk.6:20-26. A sense of self-sufficient complacency, of eat drink and be merry in a world facing judgment, is to find

oneself in a state of "woe". To be "blessed are you" is to be broken before the Lord, humbled, repentant.

ὑμῶν gen. "**your [laughter]**" - [THE LAUGHTER] OF YOU [INTO MORNING]. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, subjective, "you laugh", Adam, but adjectival, possessive, is also appropriate.

εἰς + acc. "**into [gloom]**" - [AND THE JOY OF YOU] INTO [GLOOM]. Here the preposition serves to indicated a change in state, BDAG 290.4b.

v10

In verse 6 James states that God "gives grace to the humble." Having defined the substance of humility, namely submission to God, resisting temptation, intimacy with God, changed actions and attitudes, and heartfelt sorrow / repentance, James now calls on his readers to humble themselves before God.

ταπεινωθητε [ταπεινω] aor. pas. imp. "**humble yourselves**" - BECOME HUMBLE. Best expressed as a reflective in English, as NIV. As above the imp. + **και** + fut. can be read as a conditional clause (Semitic); "if you humble yourselves before the Lord he will exalt you." Self-humbling / repentance will eventuate in God's lifting up / exalting of the sinner.

ενωπιον + gen. "**before**" - Spatial, in a metaphorical sense; "in the presence of the Lord", NASB.

κυριου [ος] "**the Lord**" - THE LORD [AND HE WILL EXALT YOU]. The definite article **του** should be read.

v11

Instruction #11: The evil of defamation and censure, v11-12. Moving from the subject of humility, James has something to say on defamation and censure. Speaking evil against someone, in the sense of slandering them, or judging them, in the sense of expressing a judgement about them, maligning them, shows a total disregard for God's revealed word, particularly the royal law of love. When we express a judgment about another person we usurp the role of God; he is the ultimate lawgiver and judge, both with the power to save and to destroy. It is not our place to meddle in the destiny of others.

αλληλων gen. "**[do not slander] one another**" - [BROTHERS, DO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF] ONE ANOTHER. Genitive of direct object after the **κατα** prefix verb "to speak evil of, speak against." The word can cover all forms of harmful speech: questioning legitimate authority, slander, unfair accusations, "Do not slander one another."

ὁ καταλαλων [καταλαλεω] pres. part. "**anyone who speaks against**" - THE ONE SPEAKING EVIL OF [A BROTHER]. The participle serves as a substantive.

Again, "speaks against" in the terms of "slander"; "the one who slanders their brother or sister."

κρινων [κρινω] pres. part. "**[or] judges [them]**" - [OR] *the one* JUDGING [THE BROTHER OF HIM]. The participle serves as a substantive. The word "judge" here is probably being used in the sense of "express a judgment about", so "malign", Berkeley, "disparage", Barclay; "anyone who slanders their brother or sister, or maligns them."

νομου [ος] gen. "**[speaks against] the law**" - [SPEAKS EVIL OF] LAW [AND JUDGES THE LAW]. Genitive of direct object after the **κατα** prefix verb "to speak evil of, against." To "speak evil of" the law and "judge" the law is going to carry a different sense to when we act this way toward a person. If we malign a brother or sister it's as if we are doing it to the law, counting it of no value, disregarding it, denying its authority, so Moo. "When we violate the royal law, the law of love, the law is in effect being judged, it is being disparaged", Hamann. As to what "law" James has in mind, he is probably thinking of the Torah, so Vlachos, but with particular reference the "law of love", "Christ's law of love", Barclay. Possibly the law in its essence, Blomberg.

ει + ind. "**when [you judge the law]**" - [BUT/AND] IF, *as is the case*, [YOU JUDGE LAW, *then*]. Conditional clause 1st. class where the condition is assumed to be true for argument's sake.

νομου [ος] gen. "**[you are not keeping] it**" - [YOU ARE NOT A DOER] OF LAW. The genitive is adjectival, usually classified as verbal, objective, but descriptive, idiomatic may be more appropriate; "you are not a law-keeper", a person who does not carry out the law.

αλλα "**but**" - BUT [A JUDGE]. Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction; "not, but".

v12

James provides another reason why we shouldn't slander and malign a brother or sister, because there is only one person who has the right as "lawgiver and judge", the one who is able to both "save" and "to destroy both the soul and body in hell", Matt.10:28. "In setting oneself up as judge, one has usurped the role of God", Davids.

εις adj. "**[there is] one**" - ONE [IS THE LAWGIVER AND JUDGE]. Predicated nominative.

ο δυναμενος [δυναμαι] pres. pas./mid. part. "**the one who is able**" - THE ONE BEING ABLE. The participle serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "one lawgiver and judge"; "he who is able to save and to destroy", ESV.

σωσαι [σωζω] aor. inf. "**to save**" - TO SAVE [AND DESTROY]. As with "to destroy", the infinitive is complementary, completing the verbal sense of the participle "being able."

δε "**but**" - BUT [WHO ARE YOU]. Here adversative, as NIV.

ὁ κρινων [κρινω] pres. pas. part. "**to judge**" - THE ONE JUDGING [THE = YOUR NEIGHBOUR]. The participle serves as a substantive standing in apposition to "you". "Who do you think you are meddling in the destiny of others", Peterson.

4:13-17

4. Worldliness and wealth, 4:13-5:6

i] The danger of arrogance and self-sufficiency

Argument

James warns his readers against an over-confident planning for the future. Given the precarious nature of existence, "Christian life must always be shaped as God's plan, and providence make his will and purpose clear", Williams.

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-13. We have here a self-contained set of sayings / instructions related to the wider context of worldly wealth, with a particular focus on the rich and their reliance on wealth for security, 4:13-5:6. For James, humble dependence on God is the right response for a believer, rather than trusting the fleeting security of worldly wealth.

The test of wealth, 4:13-17;

The danger of wealth, 5:1-6.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: Two sayings / instructions; *Worldliness and wealth*:

Topic:

The test of wealth - it can lead to arrogance and self-sufficiency.

Instructions:

#1: Make plans with a mind to the will of God, v13-16;

#2: The sin of omission, v17.

iv] Interpretation:

In v13 James begins with the illustration of a self-sufficient businessman who presumes he is in charge of life: when he will go, where he will go, how long he will go for, what he will do and what he will achieve, namely, make money. In the next verse James exposes the stupidity of such an attitude, and then in v15 outlines a more appropriate way to view the future. In v16 James states categorically that the attitude exhibited by the self-sufficient businessman is sinful. In what is probably an independent saying, James goes on to outline the sin of omission, v17.

The illustration James develops in this passage is that of a self-sufficient businessman who thinks he has the power to plan the future without reference to God. Such is the danger of wealth. James is suspicious of wealth, aware of its capacity to erode faith, cf., 1:10-11. Human life is

like a morning mist - seen for a moment and then vanishes forever. The independence created by wealth easily leads a person to ignore this reality and to live as if they can control their own destiny. As in the parable of *The Rich Fool*, such a person may well discover that "this night your soul will be demanded of you." So, the schemes of we mere mortals need to sit within a more substantial reality, namely, the will of God.

Deo volente: The phrase in v15, "if it is the Lord's will", was commonly used in Christendom when outlining a future plan. Even today people will conclude a plan with the statement, "God willing." Originally this statement would have been full of meaning, but then drifted into a kind of protective amulet. As with statements like "good morning" = "God be with you this morning", "God willing" is now little more than a recognition that *the plans of mice and men* often go astray.

v] Homiletics: *Life Insurance*.

I would like to say at the outset that I don't have any shares in life insurance companies and I suggest that attempting to preach a sermon on this subject could easily be misunderstood, particularly if you have an insurance salesperson in your congregation. None-the-less, given James' instructions, it's an interesting topic to tackle.

Is it wise for a Christian to insure their life, home, car, etc? Over the years, I have had a number of people tell me that insurance policies demonstrate a lack of faith. What we should do is trust Jesus to care for all our needs - he will "give us this day our daily bread."

Life insurance reflects a particular view of life; that human life is finite and that it comes with no guarantee of success. As James explains, we think we are in charge of when we will go, where we will go, how long we will go for, what we will do and what we will achieve, but the problem is, our destiny is not always in our own hands.

So then, a wise person makes plans for the future in line with God's will, namely, that our being is finite and that health, wealth and happiness is not promised for this age. The wise person is not like the *Rich Fool* who thought that his tomorrow would be eat, drink and be merry, but is like someone who knows that they are but a morning mist that appears for a moment, but then, having felt the dawning sun, disappears forever.

Text - 4:13

Instruction #1 - Make plans with a mind to the will of God, v13-16: i] Illustration - the self-sufficient businessman, v13. James now addresses well-to-do believers, those with the freedom to finance their dreams.

νυν adv. "**now**" - NOW. Possibly temporal, particularly referencing present time, "as things stand at the moment / as far as the present situation is concerned", or introducing a factual statement, "as a matter of fact." In rhetoric it can just be a tactical word, at times satirical, "prefacing harsh words of satire", Keener, much in the way "now" is often expressed in English; "come on now." Sometimes this adverb is used simply to reinforce / strengthen another word. So, Cassirer suggests "furthermore" for **αγω νυν**, expressing another issue to be considered; "moving on," "Stop and think a minute", Barclay.

αγω imp. "**listen**" - COME. A redundant / frozen imperative serving as an interjection; "Now listen here."

οι λεγοντες [λεγω] pres. part. "**you who say**" - THE ONE SAYING. The participle serves as a substantive. This independent nominative is usually classified as a vocative, following Semitic form, as NIV; "now listen here, you lot who say" James is not mincing his words here; they are to the point. It seems more than likely that the words are addressed to believers, the well-to-do in the congregation. "What is one to make of you who use words such as these", Cassirer.

η "[**today**] or [**tomorrow**]" - Disjunctive; linking mutually exclusive opposites.

τηνδε pro. "**this or that [city]**" - [WE WILL GO INTO] THIS [CITY]. Here with an indefinite sense; "we shall set out for such and such a place." "Some city or other."

και "- " - AND [WE WILL DO = WORK THERE A YEAR] AND [WILL DO BUSINESS, TRADE] AND [WE WILL GAIN, MAKE A PROFIT]. Vlachos suggests that the repetition of the three connectives "emphasizes the assumption that the events would inevitably follow on the heels of each other." Clearly this businessman has failed "to remember the tenuousness of life and the uncertainty of all plans, and (the need) to acknowledge God as the ultimate source of any good that one might receive", McCartney.

v14

ii] The stupidity of strategic planning undertaken without reference to God, v14. This verse is usually treated as three sentences, the second being a question answered by the third sentence, as NIV, ESV, NRSV, ... Yet, the so-called answer to the question doesn't answer it. Our life is not like the morning mist, rather, we are like the morning mist. So, it is likely that there are only two sentences, the first being "you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow", NASB, ie., you can't go making future plans without reference to God. And why? Because you could be dead tomorrow. Don't be like the rich fool! "You do not know what

life will be like for you tomorrow", Barclay. "How can you, being the creatures that you are, presume to dictate the course of future events?" Moo.

οἵτινες pro. "**why you**" - WHOEVER = SUCH A ONE AS YOU [DO NOT KNOW]. The pronoun stands in apposition to "the ones saying", "you who say." As a question; "How can you, being the creatures that you are, presume to dictate the course of future events?" Moo.

το neut. art. "**what will happen**" - THE *thing* = WHAT *shall be*.

της gen. art. "-" - THE THING OF [TOMORROW *or* WHAT THE LIFE OF YOU *will be*]. The genitive article serves as an adjectivizer turning the adverb "tomorrow" into a possessive adjective introducing the relative clause, "which belongs to tomorrow." "You don't know the first thing about tomorrow", Peterson.

γαρ "-" - FOR. Introducing a causal clause explaining why they don't know the first thing about tomorrow; "because".

ατμς [ις ιδος] "**a mist**" - [YOU ARE] A MIST, VAPOR, STEAM, A PUFF OF SMOKE. Predicate nominative.

ἡ ... φαινομενη [φαινω] pres. past./mid. part. "**that appears**" - THE ONE APPEARING, SHINING, BEING REVEALED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "mist"; "a mist which appears."

προς + acc. "**appears for [a little while]**" - TOWARD [A LITTLE]. The prepositional construction is adverbial, temporal, modifying the verbal aspect of the participle "appearing"; "for a little time", ESV.

και "**and**" - Probably coordinative, as NIV, but possibly adjunctive, "and so also then vanishes away", so Vlachos.

επειτα adv. "**then**" - THEN [DISAPPEARING]. Sequential adverb. "You are nothing but an early morning mist that appears for a moment and then, having felt the dawning sun, disappears forever."

v15

iii] A more enlightened way to address the future, v15. A proper attitude to the future does not exclude plans, but "conditions plans by the will of God, recognizing both human finiteness and divine sovereignty", Davids.

αντι + gen. "**instead**" - INSTEAD OF *this*. Expressing substitution; "instead of, in place of." "Instead of *saying today or tomorrow we will go to this city* you should say"

του gen. art. "-" - The article picks up on **οἱ λεγοντες**, the articular participle "the one saying = you who say", v13. Davids argues that this is an anacoluthon (faulty grammar) as "it presumes that **οἱ λεγοντες** is a conjugated verb, but the syntax is correct if it is classified as a Semitic vocative; "[Instead], you who say '*today or tomorrow*', [you ought to say]"

λεγειν [λεγω] pres. inf. "[you] *ought to say*" - [YOU] TO SAY. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the assumed verb δεῖ, "is necessary."

εαν + subj. "if" - IF [THE LORD WILL]. Introducing a 3rd. class conditional clause where the condition has the possibility of coming true; "if, *as may be the case*, *then*"

και και "and" - AND [WE WILL LIVE] AND [WE WILL DO THIS OR THAT]. The function of both conjunctions is disputed. The first may serve as a translation of the Semitic *waw*, serving to introduce the apodosis of the conditional clause. The second may be adjunctive, "also". Vlachos suggests that they are correlative; "both we will live and do this or that." The Byzantine text omits the second και giving the sense "if it is the Lord's will and we live, *then* we will do this or that"; "If the Master wills it and we are still alive, we will do this or that", Peterson / "do so-and-so", Phillips.

v16

iv] A self-sufficient attitude is not only stupid, it is sinful, v16. The secular world of human affairs subtly shapes our perception of reality such that we can begin to assume "that we control the duration and direction of our lives. Such an attitude is simply inconsistent with a Christian worldview in which there is a God who sovereignly directs the course of human affairs", Moo.

νυν δε "As it is" - BUT/AND NOW. Another idiomatic use of νυν, doing little more than strengthening the adversative use of δε. So, an adversative statement of fact; "But now in fact." So, in contrast to v15 "you who say" (v13) boast in your arrogance, your reliance on the world / wealth. All such boasting in evil. "In point of fact", Barclay.

εν + dat. "[boast] in [your arrogant schemes]" - [YOU BOAST] IN [THE PRETENSIONS OF YOU]. It seems likely that the preposition here is adverbial such that with the noun "boastful haughtiness, pretentious pride, false arrogance, hubris" produces the modal adverb "haughtily, arrogantly"; "In point of fact, you are arrogantly boastful." "You resort to boasting and conduct yourselves as braggarts", Cassirer.

τοιουτη pro. "[All] such" - [ALL] SUCH, OF A KIND OF [BOASTING, VAUNTING IS EVIL, WICKED, CORRUPT, WRONG]. "That kind of bragging is sinful", Junkins.

v17

Instruction #2. The sin of omission. It is possible to make tenuous links with the previous passage, eg., James is answering the charge that to live life without recognizing God's sovereign will in the circumstances of daily living is different from opposing that will. Defiance of God's will is sin, but surely not omission. James makes the point that "we cannot take refuge in the plea that we have done

nothing positively wrong", Moo. The tenuous nature of the link may lie in the fact that the verse is an independent saying / maxim that is relevant, but not totally applicable, cf., Martin, and note the similar sayings which conclude a teaching section, 1:18, 2:13, 3:18. Dibelius argues that this verse, like so much of James, serves as an unrelated piece of traditional teaching.

ειδοτι [οιδα] dat. perf. part. "**if anyone, [then,] knows**" - TO *the* KNOWING ONE. Although missing the article, the participle may be treated as a substantive, dative of interest, disadvantage, or reference / respect; "to / for the one knowing", or better adjectival, attributive, limiting an assumed **παντι** "for *anyone / everyone who knows.*" The NIV draws out the conditional nature of the clause even though it is not specifically reflected in the syntax; "*if one knows the right thing to do and does not do it, then it is sin for him.*" "If a man (someone) knows what is right and fails to do it, his (their) failure is a real sin", Phillips.

ουν "**then**" - THEREFORE. Probably not causal here, rather transitional / resumptive, ie., a stitching device, so not translated.

καλον adj. "**the good**" - [TO DO] GOOD. Although anarthrous (without an article), this adjective serves as a substantive, "the good" = "what is good" = "the right thing", ESV.

ποιειν [ποιεω] pres. inf. "**they ought to do**" - TO DO. The NIV has treated the infinitive as complementary, as **λεγειν** in v15, but it is best treated as expegetic, specifying "the good"; "the right thing to do", ESV.

και "**and**" - AND. Somewhat adversative here; "and yet does not do *it.*"

μη ποιουντι [ποιεω] dat. pres. part. "**doesn't do it**" - NOT DOING *it*. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting an assumed **παντι**, "anyone / everyone", dative in agreement with **ειδοτι**, "for *the one / everyone* knowing"; "for *everyone* who knows and who does not do it."

αυτω dat. pro. "**for them**" - TO = FOR HIM [IT IS SIN]. Emphatic by position and use, dative in agreement with **ειδοτι**, "for *the one / everyone* knowing." "If you don't do what you know is right, you have sinned", CEV.

5:1-6

4. Worldliness and wealth, 4:13-5:6

ii] The danger of wealth

Argument

"James returns to a pet theme of his: the danger of riches. On two occasions already, he has spoken in a condemnatory way of the rich and of riches, at 1:10-12 and 2:2-20 (especially v6, 7). But his words in this new section are absolutely devastating", Hamann. With an eschatological flare, James condemns the rich, warning that their end is near. In fact, judgment is so imminent that the rich will not have the time to enjoy their ill-gotten gains.

Issues

i] Context: See 4:13-17. The independent saying contained in the passage before us stands in parallel with the saying in 4:13-16, separated by the short independent saying / instruction #2 in v17, such that both are tied together by the common theme, "the accusation of the rich", Dibelius.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: Saying / instruction; *Worldliness and wealth*:

Topic:

The danger of wealth.

Instructions:

#3: those who live for wealth are doomed, v1-5:

Warning, v1:

woe to the unrighteous rich.

Declaration, v2-3:

your wealth will be as dust.

Illustration - the basis for judgment, v4-6:

the oppression of the poor - ill-gotten gain.

iv] Interpretation:

It is possible that James is directing his words toward wealthy Jews in general, particularly the Jews of Jerusalem. Even though James is a member of the Jewish sect of the "Way" (Christianity), he is none the less a Jew and as a member of God's historic people he has every right to speak to his fellow Jews. In a sense, his words would then take on the nature of prophecy. The rich and powerful in Jerusalem, those who persecute the

church and exploit the poor, have little time left. The hand of judgment hangs over them and soon their wealth will be as dust.

Of course, James may be using the terms "rich" and "poor" in a metaphorical sense. The "poor", for instance, may be the poor in spirit, the humble, those broken before God. When it comes to *mammon* they may actually be poor, but what matters is their piety, their poverty before God, and thus their possession of the kingdom of heaven - their possession of true riches. So with the "rich", they may well be wealthy, but what matters is their piety. The implication is that "the rich" are anything but pious, and such is often the case. They are the selfish, self-serving, self-asserting, self-possessed; they will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Yet, a more natural reading of the passage reveals that the rich James has in mind is that class of people who have gained their wealth by unjust means, both believers and non-believers. These wealthy landowners have failed to pay their workers and live in self-indulgent luxury, presumably while others around them suffer. They happily use the courts to oppress the poor to enhance their own wealth. James, at times, has used fairly strong language in confronting evil, and at this point he is scathing in his attack on the rich who use their wealth and power to oppress the poor. Land ownership, wealth, is not evil in itself; evil lies in the multiplying and hoarding of wealth by oppressive means. In the day of judgment, their ill-gotten gains will turn to dust before them.

v] Homiletics: *Greed*

The first decade of the 21st. century will go down in history for spawning the fruits of a *greed is good* philosophy. The Global Financial Crisis, generated by corrupt merchant bankers, many of whom still ply their trade, virtually brought the world's banking system to its knees. Then, as a consequence, Western governments, weakened by unsustainable debt, and now further weakened by taking over the debts of their banks, were paralysed in the face of a world-wide recession. And all this down to greed.

James has some strong words to say on ill-gotten wealth.

- The stupidity of hoarding, v1-3. The things of this world are subject to decay, so it is best to wisely use what we have before we have nothing to use. cf., Matt.25:25-30, Luke.19:20-27.
- The sin of legal theft, v4. There are those who proclaim their religion, but who fleece their staff and customers. Such behaviour does not go unnoticed by the Judge of the universe.
- The trap of pleasure, v5. As Richard Holloway puts it, "The pursuit of pleasure for its own sake is always ultimately unsatisfying

... and becomes addictive." The reason for this is that if we "pursue pleasure we fail to get it", and this because you cannot "separate pleasure from the act that gives it."

- Exploitation is as good as murder, v6. To game the system from a position of power so as to deprive the poor of the little they have, is as good as murder. In God's eyes, it is that serious.

It is not easy for a believer to function untainted from the materialism of this world. If we do find ourselves in the greed-trap, willing to exploit for self-pleasure, then we best humble ourselves before the Lord. "Come near to God and he will come near to you" and "he will lift you up."

Text - 5:1

Instruction #3: The arrogant self-indulgent rich stand condemned because they put their "trust in things that are doomed to decay and destruction" and because of their "unconcern for the needs and rights of others poorer than themselves", Mitton, v1-6. i] James first declares "woe" on the unrighteous rich, v1. He tells the unrighteous who, through their exploitation of the poor, have grown fat on the suffering of others, that they might as well start lamenting now because what goes around, comes around.

αγε νυν "**now listen**" - COME NOW. This exclamation, "see here!", Ropes, sets up a "proclamation", Dibelius - the rich face disaster; See 4:13. "You who are rich must stop and think", Barclay.

οἱ πλουσιοι adj. "**you rich people**" - THE RICH. Vocative. The adjective here functions as a substantive. Is wealth itself being criticized, or is it just "the arrogance and selfishness of the rich, the transitoriness of their prosperity and their treatment of the righteous"? Ropes. It is possible that "the rich" are synonymous with "the unrighteous", just as the "poor" are sometimes synonymous with the "righteous / pious", but as Moo notes, it is more likely that "the rich" are the "wealthy, powerful officeholders and landholders" who "oppress the poor."

κλαυσατε [**κλαιω**] aor. imp. "**weep**" - CRY, WEEP. "Lament", Ropes, a proper "response to the disasters visited on the people by Yahweh for their apostasy", Johnson.

ολολυζοντες [**ολολυζω**] pres. part. "**and wail**" - WAILING, MOANING, HOWLING. Attendant circumstance participle, expressing action accompanying the main verb "weep", therefore imperatival.

επι + dat. "**because of**" - AT, ON, UPON. Here causal; "on the basis of." "Weep and shriek over your impending miseries", Moffatt, referencing the occasion, ie., "your impending miseries". Possibly causal, as NIV, since this preposition, when following a verb of feeling, can be translated "because".

ταις ταλαιπωριας [α] "**the misery**" - THE MISERY. "The sufferings of the damned", cf. Rev.18:7. Ropes.

ταις επερχομεναις [ερχομαι] pres. part. "**that is coming upon**" - COMING UPON *you*. The articular participle, introducing a relative clause, is adjectival, attributive, limiting misery; "which is coming upon you". Why a present tense? Is the misery progressively coming upon the rich? James certainly likes to emphasize the uncertainty of riches. "Weep and wail over the miserable fate overtaking you", REB.

v2

ii] The wealth of the rich is transitory and is already fretting before their eyes and they will inevitably face the horror of judgment, v2-3. James has a word of judgment for the unrighteous rich, a judgment that is even now beginning to bite. For a first century person, the symbols of wealth were fine clothing and a bulging purse. Yet, wealth is transitory, it dissipates before our very eyes. Even worse, wealth stolen from the poor will condemn the rich in the coming day of judgment. Why hoard wealth for a coming day when it will only serve as evidence for the prosecution?

οσειπεν [σηπω] perf. "**has rotted**" - [THE WEALTH OF YOU] HAS ROTTED, DECAYED. In v2-3a James uses three perfect tenses to describe "the misery that is coming upon" the rich, v1. How should we understand the action implied by the perfect tense here, particularly noting the use of the future tense in v3b, "their corrosion will testify against you"? Commentators divide between either i] an aoristic perfect where the idea of result is not present, best translated as a present tense, eg., Ropes, "a picturesque, figurative statement of the real worthlessness of this wealth to the view of one who knows how to estimate permanent, eternal values", a "historical record" as it were, Tasker; "your wealth is rotting", NJB, or ii] a prophetic perfect where a future anticipation is expressed as a present reality, eg., Mayor, Adamson, "your treasures have already rotted", CEV. Option [i] seems best; "your wealth is spoiling".

γεγονα [γινομαι] perf. "**have [eaten]**" - [AND THE CLOTHS OF YOU] HAVE BECOME [MOTH EATEN]. "Your designer gowns are getting chewed up by moths."

v3

ὁ χρυσοσ ὑμων και ὁ αργυροσ "**your gold and silver**" - THE GOLD OF YOU AND THE SILVER. Nominative subject of the verb "to rust." Again, impermanence is in mind. The image is problematic since gold and silver doesn't really rust, although silver does tarnish. See below.

κατιωται [κατιω] perf. pas. "**has rotted**" - HAS BEEN RUSTED, CORRODED, TARNISHED. Hapax legomenon, once only use in the NT. The word

is often used in the LXX to mean "transitory", eg., Ezk.17:9, and that is surely the sense here - wealth is transitory, it passes through our finger at the blink of an eye. "And your money is frittering away." None-the-less, the literal sense is to the fore - "moth and rust doth corrupt".

καί "-" - AND. Probably here with a consecutive sense, expressing result; "and as a result"

ὁ ἰός [ος] "**corrosion**" - THE POISON, RUST [OF THEM]. Nominative subject of the verb to-be. "Poison" is a common sense, cf., Rom.3:13, but with a leaning toward an acidic reaction, so "rust", Mayor, NIV "corrosion". The reference is to all three perfect verbs in v2-3a describing "dissipation" and thus the transitory nature of mammon. "A pile of dust proves the real value of this worlds things."

ἔσται [εἶμι] fut. "**will**" - WILL BE. Verb to-be. Note the change in tense. "Your luxuries will eat into your gut like a cancer", cf., Peterson.

εἰς "-" - TO, INTO / FOR [A WITNESS, TESTIMONY]. This preposition would literally mean "to / into a testimony/witness to you", but the phrase **εἰς μαρτυριον ὑμῶν [αὐτοῖς]** is a fixed expression used in both the NT and LXX, with **εἰς** used to express "as evidence of", Adam. So, "for a testimony against you".

ὑμῶν dat. "**against you**" - TO YOU. Not "on your behalf", but given the drift of the argument the sense is surely "against you", ie., a dative of interest, disadvantage.

φαγεῖται [εσθίω] fut. "**eat**" - [AND] WILL EAT [THE FLESH OF YOU].

ὡς "**like**" - LIKE, AS [FIRE]. Comparative. Ropes reads this particle as causal, serving to introduce the last clause of the sentence; "since you have stored up fire which shall be in the last days." As Adamson notes, it is more likely that the "hoarded wealth" is the avenger "in the last days".

εθησαυρισατε [θησαυρίζω] aor. "**you have hoarded wealth**" - YOU STORED UP TREASURE. A nice image; "You thought you were piling up wealth. What you've piled up is judgment", Peterson.

ἐν + dat. "**in [the last day]**" - IN [LAST DAYS]. Temporal. Obviously referring to the great assize.

v4

iii] James now illustrates the ground of the judgment of the rich, namely, injustice - the oppression of the poor, v4-6. Not only have the unrighteous rich failed to show compassion toward the poor, they have actually exploited them. They have used the sweat of the poor to gain wealth for themselves, and have not paid just wages. The law of God demands a just recompense for a worker's expended effort. To do otherwise is to cause a hurt which, in the end, reaches the ear of God. The Scriptures are clear on this issue and thus the wealthy have no

excuse. "He murders his neighbour who deprives him of his living, and he who defrauds a hireling of his wages is a shedder of blood", cf., Lev.12:13, Deut.24:15, Jer.22:13, Mal.3:5.

ιδου imp. "**look**" - BEHOLD. "Mark my words", Cassirer.

ὁ απεστερημενος [αποστερω] perf. part. "**[the wages you] failed to pay**" - [THE PAY OF THE WORKMEN HAVING MOWED THE FIELDS OF YOU, WHICH *pay*] HAVING DEFRAUDED [BY YOU]. Variant **αφυστερημενος**, "holding back", a NT hapax legomenon. The articular participle is adjectival, introducing a relative clause limiting "wages"; "wages which you defrauded / withheld / failed to pay." "The laborer deserves his pay" identifies a matter of justice, not grace.

των εργατων [ης ου] gen. "**the workers**" - OF THE WORKERS. The genitive is adjectival, possibly verbal, objective, "the pay for the workers", or idiomatic / source, "the earnings from the workers" "who mowed your fields, the *pay* which has been withheld (*απο* + gen., agency) by you."

των αμησαντων [αμαω] aor. part. "**who mowed [your fields]**" - HAVING REAPED, MOWED, CUT DOWN. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the workman", as NIV. The aorist indicates that the harvest is complete and thus the labourer should be paid. Note the allusion to Lev.19:13, so Dibelius, Ropes, Mitton, Johnson, ...

κραζει [κραζω] pres. "**are crying out against you**" - CRIES *out*. Of the crying out of Israel to the Lord, eg. Ex.5:8.

των θερισαντων [θεριζω] gen. aor. part. "**of the harvesters**" - [AND THE CRIES] OF THE ONES HAVING REAPED. The participle serves as a substantive, with the genitive usually taken as verbal, subjective.

εισεληλυθασιν [εισερχομαι] perf. "**have reached**" - HAVE ENTERED [INTO THE EARS OF THE LORD OF SABAOTH, HOSTS / ALMIGHTY]. The perfect tense expressing past action with ongoing consequences. So, the Lord has heard, and continues to hear.

v5

The unrighteous (self-indulgent) rich have set themselves up in extravagant luxury while others have nothing. And worse still, it is a luxury gained by the exploitation and suffering of others. Again, such behaviour is stupid, because all they are doing is reinforcing their condemnation on the day of judgment.

ετρυφησατε [τρυφωω] aor. "**you have lived [on the earth] in luxury**" - YOU LIVED IN LUXURY, DELICATELY, INDULGENCE [UPON THE EARTH, LAND]. The aorist is probably constative where the action is viewed in its entirety. "Luxury" denotes soft living, "not necessarily wanton vice", Ropes. "You have lived here in indulgence", Davids.

εσπαταλησατε [σπαταλω] aor. "**self-indulgence**" - [AND] LIVED IN LUXURY, PLEASURE. "In dedication to wanton pleasure", Barclay.

εφρεψατε [τρεφω] aor. "**you have fattened [yourselves]**" - YOU HAVE FED, NOURISHED [THE HEARTS OF YOU]. Variant "flesh" for "heart", but not well attested. The image is of an animal being fattened for slaughter. The heart being the seat of a person's being, the rich have fed their heart in the sense of "indulging one's passions or inclinations", Davids.

εν + dat. "in" - IN. The prepositional construction formed by **εν** is adverbial, temporal. Another expression from the LXX, although not in this exact form, eg., the prepositions often vary: **εις**, Jer12:3, **απο**, Enoch 15:1. Ropes argues that **εν**, "in /on", takes the sense "for" here. "You have become ready for the day of judgment", Ropes. Martin notes that although there is little doubt that "the day of slaughter" refers to "the eschatological day of judgment" (as opposed to a more immediate circumstance, eg., "fattening themselves for plunder"), he takes the view that for James the day of judgment has already begun. So, "fattened in the day of slaughter" expresses James' intention, as NIV, although a future edge is more reader-friendly. "You have gorged yourselves full to your heart's content at the very time when the great slaughter is to come", Cassirer.

σφαγης [η] gen. "**of slaughter**" - [A DAY] OF SLAUGHTER, BUTCHERY. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / poss. of time; "on the day when slaughter will be the order of things."

v6

κατεδικασατε [καταδικαζω] aor. "**you have condemned**" - YOU CONDEMNED. Probably referring to the propensity of the unrighteous rich to use the courts to oppress the poor; "you condemned the innocent man", Barclay.

εφονευσατε [φονευω] aor. "**murdered [innocent men]**" - YOU MURDERED [THE RIGHTEOUS]. As Ropes notes, the "murder" is probably "every kind of cruel conduct leading to the death of the poor and righteous (righteous poor)."

τον δικαιοον adj. "**innocent men**" - THE RIGHTEOUS MAN. The adjective serves as a substantive, accusative direct object of the verb "to condemn." Singular person is best read as a collective singular, representative. It has been argued that "the righteous man" is Christ, but this is unlikely. Rather, "a generic term describing the kind of person killed by the rich", Martin, so "innocent men", as NIV.

ουκ αντιτασσειται [αντιτασσω] pres. mid. "**who were not opposing**" - HE DOES NOT RESIST. The sense of this clause is unclear.

- Possibly treated as a question; "does not he (the innocent man) resist you?" Ropes. ie., "will he not bear witness against you (the unrighteous rich) at the day of judgment?"

- As a statement with the subject "he" being "the righteous one / the innocent man". Note the variant **καί**, "and", placed before the clause producing "you have murdered the righteous one and he does not oppose you" (ie., "the poor do not resist because they cannot; they are helpless", Martin), so Martin, Laws, Adamson, Mayor, Dibelius, Reicke. Most translations follow this interpretation; "you have condemned and murdered innocent people, who couldn't even fight back", CEV.

- Since the subject of this verb is unstated, Johnson and others suggest that the subject is not "the innocent man" but the implied subject **ὁ θεός**, "God"; "does [God] not oppose you?", ie., "does not God hold you to account for what you have done?"

ὑμῖν dat. pro. "**you**" - Dative of direct object after the **ἀντι** prefix verb "to resist."

5:7-12

5. General matters, 5:7-12

Patience in the face of suffering and oaths

Argument

Having addressed the heartless conduct of the rich, James now sets out to encourage those struggling through the difficulties of life by calling for patience and forbearance.

Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-13. In chapters 4:13-5:6, James examines different responses to worldly wealth. The rich can end up trusting the security of their worldly wealth, while the poor person can end up being consumed with envy. Humble dependence upon God is the right response for a believer. James now drives this point home in his call for patience and forbearance. "His words are intended to bring them comfort and encouragement in the humiliations they are suffering and the exasperation and resentment which they cannot but feel", Mitton.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: A collection of sayings; *General matters*:

Topic:

Patience in the face of suffering.

Instructions:

- #1. Encouragement to patience and constancy in view of the coming day of the Lord, v7-8;
- #2. Encouragement to mutual forbearance, v9;
- #3. Encouragement to patience and constancy in view of the example of the great ones of faith, v10-11;
- #4. Avoid the giving of oaths, v12.

iv] Interpretation:

As noted in the previous passage directed against selfish landowners, James' focus is not primarily on the exploiting behaviour of the unrighteous rich, but rather on those who suffer from their exploitation. It is for this reason that we now have a word of encouragement for the oppressed. Although the sayings are somewhat diverse, they seek to encourage patience, forbearance, fortitude, as the day of the Lord's coming draws near. We could call them an eschatological motivation for

endurance; "when one has grounds for hope one can more readily endure", McCartney.

v] Homiletics: *Success*.

Benjamin Disraeli, on becoming the Prime Minister of England, said "I have climbed to the top of the greasy pole." Success is one of those illusive ideals that we often pursue, but rarely achieve. Our normal experience is to fall short of our goals, sometimes way short of them.

James has had a few words to the less successful, the not-so-well-off. From what we can discern from the letter, the congregation he addresses is anything but rich, anything but successful. In fact, the powerful rich are most likely persecuting the members of the Christian fellowship, cf., 5:1-6. His word to the strugglers of this world is "be patient", patient in the sense of a humble dependence on God's mercy; a dependence on the one who will sort the mess out for us. So, James is calling on us to patiently rely on the Lord's promised mercy. We are to be like the farmer who lives his life reliant on regular weather patterns; the wet season will come. We are to be like the prophets who, without seeing the fulfillment of the Lord's promises, relied on them none the less. We are to be like Job who persevered through his suffering and lived to see his faith realized.

Much of our striving produces mediocre results, but God's ultimate intentions for us in Christ are anything but mediocre.

5:7

Patience, v7-12: i] Instruction #1, v7-8. "Encouragement to patience and constancy in view of the certainty and nearness of the coming of the Lord", Ropes. The rich and powerful may seem to be on top at the moment, often oppressing the faithful poor, but believers must not think that this will always be so. James therefore calls on the faithful poor to wait patiently for the Lord to vindicate their plight, for the day is coming when the Lord God will set all things right. So, be patient and confident in the Lord in the face of hardship, for his coming vindication is close at hand. James encourages his readers to be like the farmer who waits patiently for the seasonal rains. The rains can't be hurried, but they will come and so the farmer must be prepared. James is not calling for stoicism in the face of hardship, but rather a positive reliance on God's promise to ultimately set all things right.

μακροθυμησατε [μακροθυμew] aor. imp. "**be patient**" - Lit. "be long tempered", possibly meaning "endure", but also "patient" in the sense of waiting patiently on the Lord in humble dependence. The sense James intends is unclear, so possibly a combination of "long-tempered", Mayor, of putting up with a brother or sister, ie., "forbearance", and patiently waiting for something, ie.,

"endurance". So, an endurance that consists of both "patience and long-suffering", Johnson.

οὐν **"then"** - THEREFORE. This conjunction is often inferential, "therefore", which would imply that what follows is a deduction based on James' warning to the rich in v1-6, namely, that the rich will be judged, so therefore, the faithful poor should wait patiently for the Lord's vindication of their cause. Yet, as is so often the case in James, such conjunctions are often just used to ease the movement from one saying to another. "Arm yourselves with patience, my brothers", Cassirer.

αδελφοι [ος] **"brothers"** - "Brothers and sisters in the Lord."

ἕως + gen. **"until"** - A final sense expressing purpose is possible, but temporal seems best, as NIV.

του κυριου [ος] gen. **"[the] Lord's"** - OF THE LORD. The genitive may be taken as adjectival, possessive, or verbal, subjective.

της παρουσιας [α] gen. **"the [Lord's] coming"** - THE APPEARING, COMING [OF THE LORD]. The word is being used of the arrival, revelation, appearing ... of an important person. The use of "coming" here is most likely of a coming in judgment (either of God or Jesus - "Lord" can mean either in James). Is this the coming of the Son of Man to the Ancient of Days in the heavenly realm? Such a coming inevitably involves the vindication of the faithful poor. Those who have argued that James is not a Christian book have noted that the language of the "Lord's coming" is simply Jewish and refers to coming judgment.

εκδεχεται [εκδεχομαι] pres. **"waits"** - [BEHOLD THE FARMER] AWAITS. The farmer waits patiently for the harvest. The present tense is used to express a generalization (gnomic), i.e., all farmers do this.

τιμιον adj. **"valuable"** - [THE] CHOICE, PRECIOUS.

καπον [ος] **"crop"** - FRUIT. Crop, harvest, produce.

της γης [η] gen. **"-"** - OF THE EARTH. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / source, "*from* the land", or / production, "produce *produced by*"

μακροθυμων [μακροθυμω] pres. part. **"how patient he is / patiently waiting"** - BEING PATIENT. The participle is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of his waiting, "waiting patiently; "look at the farmer quietly awaiting his precious harvest", Phillips.

επ [επι] dat. **"for"** - UPON [IT]. Best taken as expressing purpose / goal / incentive, "with a view to" = "for it",

ἕως + subj. **"-"** - UNTIL. Forming an indefinite temporal clause; "until it gets the early and late rains", Berkeley.

λαβη [λαμβάνω] subj. "-" - IT MAY RECEIVE. The subject being the "land" rather than "crop" or "farmer".

προιον και οψιμον "the autumn and spring rains" - *the* EARLY AND LATTER *rain*. "The seasonal rains to fall", TH. A Mediterranean climate receives most of its rain through winter into early Spring. The important rains are those that fall in late Spring as the crop is in full growth, a rainfall that is precarious.

v8

και "[you] too" - AND [YOU, BE PATIENT]. Adjunctive, "you also / too" = "as the farmer is patient, so must you also be patient."

στηριξατε [στηριζω] aor. imp. "stand firm" - ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, MAKE STABLE [THE HEARTS OF YOU]. In a figurative sense, "strengthen the heart." You too must "have an unwavering confidence", TH; be "stout-hearted", NEB.

οτι "because" - Possibly introducing a causal clause explaining why the readers should stand firm, as NIV, but it may serve to introduce an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing the thought that should be strengthened in the heart of the readers; "be certain in your hearts that the Lord's coming is near", Johnson.

του κυριου [ος] gen. "the Lord's [coming]" - [THE COMING] OF THE LORD. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, subjective; "the Lord appears", Adam.

γγικεν [γγιζω] perf. "is near" - HAS DRAWN NEAR. "Is at hand", RSV, the Lord's coming will be soon. The same word is used in the gospel statement "the kingdom of God is at hand (near)."

v9

ii] Instruction #2, v9. "Encouragement to mutual forbearance", Ropes. When hardship comes our way, it is very easy to turn on each other, and so James takes a moment to warn the Christian fellowship of this danger and of the reality that we too must face the coming Judge.

Of this verse, which warns against grumbling, Dibelius notes that "this warning noticeably disrupts the continuity, since it has scarcely any material connection with the admonition to patience." This is somewhat harsh since a saying against grumbling fits a situation where patience is called for. In difficult times it is easy to turn on each other, so Moo.

μη στεναζετε [στεναζω] pres. imp. "don't grumble" - [BROTHERS] DO NOT GROAN / MURMUR. Having the object "each other" gives a sense of "murmur", "complain", "blame", rather than the primary sense of "groan", as in the groaning of creation under the weight of sin. The negation of a present tense may indicate a call to cease doing something habitually.

κατ [κατα] + gen. "against [one another]" - Expressing opposition; "against".

ἵνα μη + subj. "so that [you may] not"- IN ORDER THAT NOT = LEST [YOU BE JUDGED]. Introducing a negated purpose clause, "so that you will not be judged."

ἴδου "-" - BEHOLD. "See", NRSV; "watch out".

ὁ κριτής "the Judge" - Possibly still speaking in general terms of God, rather than Christ, particularly when James makes the point in 4:12 that there is only one Judge.

ἔστηκεν [ίστημι] perf. "is standing" - HAS STOOD. The perfect is used of a past action with ongoing consequences, so the point being made is that the judge is already standing at the door.

προ + gen. "at" - BEFORE [THE DOORS]. Spatial; "in front of." The Judge has already arrived at the city gate, that's how close he is, ie., it's five minutes to midnight.

v10

iii] Instruction #3, v10-11. "Encouragement to patience and constancy in view of the great examples of the prophets and Job, and of their reward", Ropes. James has called for a humble dependence upon God in the face of hardship, using as an example, the farmer. He now uses the example of the prophets who serve as models for the Christian life. The prophets very rarely saw the fulfillment of the Lord's word and often faced suffering because of that word, yet they faced their situation with a confidence that we would do well to emulate. As the writer to the Hebrews puts it, we should be "imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises", 6:12.

λαβετε [λαμβάνω] imp. "-" - TAKE, RECEIVE. Lit. "take / receive an example" = "consider, emulate, imitate"; "remember the prophets", TEV.

ὑποδειγμα [α] "as an example" - as AN EXAMPLE. Serving as a predicate object, complement of the object "the prophets" of the verb λαβετε, "receive", standing in a double accusative construction. "Example", in the sense of a pattern or model to follow. "If you want a pattern", NEB.

και "[of patience in the face of suffering]" - [OF MISERY, HARDSHIP] AND [OF PATIENCE, ENDURANCE]. It is likely that the conjunction here is epexegetic, where "patience" explains something of the "hardship", ie., "suffering in / with patience", which idea is reversed in the NIV. The phrase "of the suffering and of the patience" can also be treated as a hendiadys, so "patient suffering."

της κακοπαθιας [α] "of suffering" - OF HARDSHIP, ADVERSITY, ILL-TREATMENT. As with της μακροθυμιας, "of patience, endurance", the genitive

is probably adjectival, idiomatic / source; "brothers *and sisters*, receive from the suffering and patience *of* the prophets, an example."

τους προφητας [ης] "**prophets**" - THE PROPHETS. Accusative object of the verb λαβετε, "receive". Again, calling for patience, James draws on the example of the prophets who rested on the Lord's words through their suffering and did so patiently and expectantly.

εν + dat. "**in [the name of the Lord]**" - Instrumental. The prophets spoke on behalf of the Lord and did so "in" his name, ie., by means of / with his authority.

v11

Those who face hardship with a firm reliance upon the Lord will be blessed. "Take note", James says, "pay attention to this fact." To illustrate the point, he reminds his readers of Job. Of course, Job was not very patient with his friends, nor was he restrained in his complaining to the Lord, but his faith was firm to the end, and thus through his hardship he came to a deeper understanding of the Lord. This, of course, was the Lord's intention ("the purpose of the Lord", RSV, better than the NIV "what the Lord finally brought about"). This should remind us that "the Lord is merciful and full of understanding-pity for us men (and women)", Phillips.

ιδου "**as you know**" - LOOK, PAY ATTENTION. The strength of the interjection is somewhat lost in most translations. James is making a point that carries an obvious conclusion, which point should be acted upon. "And remind yourselves, too, that ...", Cassirer.

μακαριζομεν [μακαριζω] pres. "**we consider blessed**" - WE CALL / RECKON / COUNT BLESSED / HAPPY. "Remember, it is usually those who have patiently endured to whom we accord the word 'blessed'", Phillips.

τους υπομειναντας [υπομενω] aor. part. "**those who have persevered**" - THE ONES HAVING ENDURED, REMAINED PATIENT IN ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES. The participle serves as a substantive; "we consider happy the ones who stand steadfast, stand firm."

την υπομονην [η] "**[Job's] perseverance**" - THE ENDURANCE [OF JOB YOU HEARD OF]. Accusative object of the verb "to hear." "Job", an indeclinable genitive, is usually classified as subjective, but adjectival, possessive / characteristic is also valid. "The patience of Job", AV; "Job's patient endurance", Phillips. In his suffering, Job did not lose faith. Obviously, James is aware of Job's complaining, so his "endurance" here is not related to his complaining.

κυριου [ος] gen. "**what the Lord [finally brought about]**" - [AND THE END] OF LORD. Either:

- A subjective genitive, taking "end" in the sense of "purpose", "the purpose of the Lord", NRSV. Job's suffering carried in it an intended divine purpose, namely, a deeper realization of God's person.

- An objective genitive, taking "end" in the sense of "result," "outcome". The "outcome" was the restoration of Job's family and property, "how the Lord treated him in the end", NEB, ie., it all turned out for good.

- Idiomatic / source.

See Johnson for the range of possible meanings, p320, particularly the long-held view that "the end of the Lord" is a reference to Christ's death.

ὅτι "-" - [YOU SAW] THAT [THE LORD]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what they saw.

πολυσπλαγγνος adj. "**full of compassion**" - [IS] FULL OF TENDER COMPASSION, KINDNESS, PITY, SYMPATHY [AND MERCIFUL]. Lit. "many inward parts / entrails", the stomach being the centre of one's emotions.

v12

iv] Instruction #4, v12. Avoid giving oaths, rather, let your yes be yes and your no be no. This saying stands on its own with only a limited thematic link with the previous verses. Possibly "James begins this final section of the letter with exhortations centring on the positive function of speech (plain talk, prayer, confessing, correction)", Johnson. James, as usual, stitches it to the preceding saying, again with **δε**, but the link is superficial and simply provides a smooth entrance into the saying. There is, of course, a strong literary relationship between this saying and Matthew 5:34-37. Some argue that "above all" and the final warning of "condemnation" indicates that James knew he was quoting Jesus' words, but the issue is inconclusive, see Dibelius. The prohibition on taking oaths has legal implications and has prompted some believers to refuse to take an oath in a court of law. In many countries an affirmation of truth is allowed, but this option does not always exist. As to whether James is prohibiting all oaths remains an issue of contention.

προ + gen. "**[above] all**" - [BUT/AND BEFORE] ALL [BROTHERS OF ME]. Here expressing rank / priority, "before" in preferential terms; "but above all", ESV.

μη ομνυετε [ομνω] pres. imp. "**do not swear**" - DO NOT SWEAR. Possibly "stop taking oaths", but better "do not take an oath". Mitton suggests that the issue here is honesty in speech. Lying was so prevalent that oath taking was necessary to gain the truth, but then it had itself become a means of supporting the lie. Such, of course, profanes the name of God. "When you make a promise, you must not use an oath", Barclay.

μητε ... μητε ... μητε ... "not [by heaven] or [by earth] or .." - NEITHER [by THE HEAVEN] NOR [THE EARTH] NOR [ANY OTHER OATH]. A negated correlative construction.

μητε αλλον τινα ὀρκον "or anything else" - NOR ANY OTHER OATH. Jesus had identified the hypocrisy of oath-taking that avoided the name of God by using some other important symbol to support the veracity of their statement. Here James gives a blanket direction, "do not take oaths at all."

ητω [ειμι] pres. imp. "let / all you need to say is a simple" - [BUT/AND] LET BE. As noted above, commentators argue back and forth as to whether these words reflect the oral tradition recorded in Matthew's gospel. This does seem likely, but many commentators disagree, eg., Ropes, "unlikely and unnecessary". The point being made is simple enough, "our truthfulness should be so consistent and dependable that we need no oath to support it", Moo.

το "[Yes]" - THE [YES OF YOU YES AND] THE [NO of you NO]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the particles "yes" and "no" into nouns.

ινα μη + subj. "or / otherwise" - LEST [YOU FALL]. Introducing a negated purpose clause, "in order that you don't ..." Note the variant "lest you fall into hypocrisy". James is not slow in reminding his readers that we have to answer for our behaviour; "for fear you draw down judgment on yourselves", REB.

υπο + acc. "-" - UNDER [JUDGMENT]. Here expressing subordination.

5:13-20

6. Forgiveness and restoration, 5:13-20

The prayer of faith for the restoration of an erring brother

Argument

In his final set of sayings, James deals with the prayer of faith for the "sick" in soul. James has gone into great detail to lay out the right behaviour of a child of faith. Anyone reading his words is inevitably convicted of sin. So now, in these concluding sayings, James deals with the issue of forgiveness, a forgiveness made effective through prayer, prayer which rests on the promised grace of God.

Issues

i] Context: See 1:1.

ii] Background: 1:1.

iii] Structure: The concluding sayings; *Forgiveness and restoration*:

Topic

salvation in the light of eternity.

Instructions:

#1. Pray in hard spells and sing sacred songs in moments of joy, v13-16a;

#2. The prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective, v16b-18;

#3. Restore an erring brother, or sister, v19-20.

iv] Interpretation:

The subject of prayer for healing is often treated literally, rather than figuratively, and this because some translators have left little room for us to be read it any other way. As a result, the passage is often wrongly used to support faith healing. It is most unlikely that James is teaching that prayer makes a sick person well when accompanied by confession and faith. Even the topic of faith healing itself is unrelated to the subject matter of James' epistle. It is more likely that v13-20 serve as the conclusion of James letter. The sins addressed by James include misuse of the tongue, jealousy, lack of concern for the poor, worldliness, quarrelling, all serve to lead us from gospel truth. If we have strayed from the truth it is then we need the aid of a brother to turn us from error and enable us, through the prayer of faith, to look to the Lord to heal our sick soul / save / renew / gift wellbeing, ie., forgive our sins.

If this assessment of the concluding verses is correct, then James has followed a well-trodden path. By exposing sin, Law both leads us to grace and guides our life of faith.

v] Homiletics: *Reconciliation*

It's a funny thing about sin. In itself, sin cannot separate us from God while our eyes are set on Jesus for our eternal salvation. To some degree, all believers are murderers and adulterers; we all sin; our righteousness is but filthy rags. Any believer who is not convinced that they have "fallen short of the glory of God" should read James again. Yet, no matter how far we have "fallen short", if we are holding onto Jesus our salvation is secure.

The trouble is that habitual sin (sometimes called recurrent sin), or even worse, denied sin, can indeed undermine our salvation by turning our eyes from Jesus; it can easily undermine our reliance upon Jesus for salvation. A life of selfishness turns us from the Lord, and once our eyes are no longer set on Jesus, our eternal salvation is compromised.

For a brother or sister, sensing they have turned from the Lord, James' advice is simple:

- Seek out those with a pastoral ministry in the congregation;
- Confess the sin that has prompted the separation from the Lord;
- Participate in the prayer for forgiveness;
- Accept God's offer of forgiveness.

Remember, the Lord willingly raises up those who have fallen.

Text - 5:13

Instruction #1: Pray in hard spells and sing sacred songs in moments of joy, v13, pray in faith for the sick, v14-15, and do this with a repentant heart, v16a. The concluding words of this letter begin with a simple observation: the person who is suffering distress needs to commit their troubles to the Lord, while the person who is in good spirits needs to rejoice in the Lord. The troubles may range from inner distress to a misfortune like persecution. In the face of trouble, it is easy to turn to either stoicism or righteous indignation, but James calls us to prayer.

The construction of v13 is best treated as conditional, consisting of two imperatival conditional clauses, even though **ει** is not present; "*if* anyone among you is suffering, let him pray; *if* anyone is cheerful, let him sing praise."

κακοπαθει [**κακοπαθew**] pres. "**is [any one of you / anyone among you] in trouble?**" - *if, as is the case*, [A CERTAIN = ANYONE IN = AMONG YOU] IS SUFFERING PHYSICAL PAIN, HARDSHIP AND DISTRESS, [*then* LET HIM PRAY]. The phrase may be a statement rather than a question, but either way, both serve the imperative "pray". The distress is general rather than a specific. Given the wider

context, the distress is possibly self-inflicted, in the sense of abandonment by God, or possibly chastisement for the sins James has already identified in this letter. It should be noted that most commentators see the trouble as some form of persecution, or external suffering.

τις "anyone" - Nominative subject of the verb "to encourage." Functioning as an indefinite pronoun, rather than an interrogative, although usually treated as setting up a series of quick-fire questions.

εν + dat. " - / among [you]" - IN [YOU]. Local, expressing space, here "among", or association.

ευθυμει [ευθυμew] pres. "**is [anyone] happy**" - IS HAPPY, ENCOURAGED. In a state of inner cheerfulness, in good spirits. "Is anyone feeling good", Johnson.

ψαλλετω [ψαλλω] pres. imp. "**let him sing songs of praise**" - LET HIM SING PSALMS. "Sing psalms", is possibly what James means, although technically it is not what the words means. Technically it means to sing with the accompaniment of a harp. "Let him sing praises to God", Phillips.

v14

James now identifies one particular trouble, namely, sickness. Actually, the Greek word for "sick" means "weakness" or "incapacity" and so it is a word that can either be used of a physical weakness, or an inner spiritual or mental weakness. Most commentators think James is addressing the issue of physical weakness and its cure through the prayer of faith, but in the wider context of his concluding words, it is clear that James is concerned with a sickness of the soul, a soul entrapped by unconfessed sin. James' readers, having read his letter (or better, his sermon on Christian ethics), can now see their state of loss; they have been "dragged away and enticed" "to sin (and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death)". The solution to this condition of loss is provided by the ministers of the church ("elders") who through the grace of prayer can administer forgiveness. They can also anoint the brother with the oil of gladness as a sign of restitution and forgiveness.

As with v13, this verse is best treated as conditional; "if anyone among you is sick, let him"

ασθενει [ασθενew] pres. "**is [any one of you / anyone among you] sick**" - *if, as is the case,* [ANYONE AMONG YOU] IS IN A STATE OF WEAKNESS, [*then* LET HIM CALL THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH]. As already indicated, most commentators suggest some form of physical malady is intended here, but some commentators, eg., Donald Robinson, suggest that James has in mind a sickness of the heart, a sickness of the mind, caused by guilt. The problem James is addressing is most likely sin, not sickness. Taken figuratively, the word would

mean "spiritually weak", cf., Rom.14:2, 1Cor.8:11-12. On the other hand, note how Paul reminds the Corinthians that maladies have emerged in the congregation due to their improper handling of the Lord's Supper, 1Cor.11:29-30. So, it is possible that James has in mind some physical malady flowing from the spiritual weakness of his readers, but the physical is not the issue; "if any one of you are spiritually weak?"

προσκαλεσασθω [προσκαλεομαι] aor. imp. "**he should call**" - CALL TO ONESELF, SUMMON. Urgency is implied.

τους πρεσβυτερουσ [ος] "**the elders**" - Accusative direct object of the verb "to call". Aged members are not intended, rather the term is used for mature members who minister in the congregation - bishop, overseer. No specific form of congregational eldership is demanded and so we are left to work within our own form of pastoral ministry.

της εκκλησιας [α] gen. "**of the church**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive, such that the elders belong to the church, or partitive, the are part of the church, although possibly idiomatic / source, such that the elders are from the church.

προσευξασωσαν [προσευχομαι] aor. imp. "**to pray over him**" - LET THEM PRAY [OVER HIM]. Pray for forgiveness This passage is about restoring a brother who has gone astray. As suggested, the passage is most likely not about faith healing.

αλειψαντες [αλειψω] aor. part. "**anoint**" - HAVING ANOINTED [HIM]. The participle is adverbial, possibly introducing a temporal clause, "after anointing." James gives us little insight into the purpose of this anointing with oil. It may be a symbol of prayer, but this is unlikely. The laying on of hands is a more common symbol of prayer. Olive oil was certainly used for medicinal purposes and so this may be the intention. There are those today who use olive oil in the healing ministry. Martin notes that "the idea of oil-anointing as a mark of honour and joy, derived from God's electing mercy, is well attested in the Jewish and NT literature, cf., Deut.28:40, Am.6:6 etc." In this sense the anointing would be an "outward tangible sign of God's covenant faithfulness", a sign of "restoration and forgiveness." It would be difficult to argue that we should use this sign today, particularly as chrism and unction are now associated with baptismal and funeral rites.

ελαιψ [ον] dat. "**with oil**" - Instrumental dative, expressing means, or simply a dative of material. Possibly just medicinal.

εν + dat. "in [the name of the Lord]" - Often taken as instrumental, giving the sense "with / by the authority of the Lord's name", ie. under the authority of his person, but possibly temporal, "while invoking the name of the Lord", Adam.

may be expressed outwardly in a sickness of the body. The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive, although sin is forgiven in the asking, not so healing.

v16a

Therefore, those convicted of sin by this letter need to confess their sins, hand the matter over to the Lord in prayer, supported by the ministers of the church, and they will be forgiven / renewed ("healed").

οὖν "therefore" - Inferential, drawing a logical conclusion. Omitted in some manuscripts.

ἐξομολογεῖσθε [ἐξομολογεῖω] pres. imp. "**confess**" - Sin and suffering (sickness) are certainly linked throughout the Bible and public confession was seen as a way through suffering in Judaism and the early church. Yet, sin is the issue here; suffering is but a sign of sin (although not necessarily so, eg., Job, Jn.9:2,3.). Note also that confession is mutual in character, confessing to one another. Variants have even attempted to alter this rather unique NT instruction.

ἀλλήλοις dat. pro. "**to each other**" - TO ONE ANOTHER [THE = YOUR SINS]. Dative of indirect object.

ὑπερ + gen. "**[pray] for**" - [PRAY] ON BEHALF OF [ONE ANOTHER]. Expressing advantage / benefit; "on behalf of / for the sake of."

ὅπως + subj. "**so that**" - Probably introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that", but possibly consecutive, expressing result, "with the result that." It may serve to introduce a dependent statement of direct speech expressing the actual content of the prayer, "may you be healed."

ἰαθητε [ἰαομαι] subj. pas. "**healed**" - YOU MAY BE MADE ABLE, STRONG. Often, cause someone to become well again after having been sick, but the word also has a figurative meaning in the sense of cause something to change to an earlier, correct, or appropriate state, to renew*. So, here again it is quite possible that James intends a figurative sense of healing, of getting well, a healing of the soul through forgiveness.

v16b

Instruction #2 - The prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective, v16b-18. The person who trusts the Lord (the "righteous man"), will find that their prayers are effective. Elijah was just such a man; a flesh and blood person who trusted the Lord. God revealed that there would be a drought and revealed when it would end, 1Ki.18:1. So, Elijah, resting on the revealed will of God, prayed, believing, and saw his prayer answered.

The division of verse 16 is open to question, but it does seem likely that v16b introduces a separate saying supported by the Elijah illustration, which is possibly itself an independent saying.

γαρ "-" - for. Variant transitional connective used to stitch the two independent sayings.

δικαιου gen. adj. "**a righteous man**" - [*the* PETITION] OF A JUST / RIGHTEOUS ONE. The genitive is usually taken as verbal, subjective, "a righteous person prays", Adam. In the context, the righteous person is the person who trusts the Lord, who relies on God's revealed will. He is the person who can pray the prayer of faith. Of course, a more general sense may be implied, "a just person / a good person".

ενεργουμενη [ενεργεω] mid/pass. part. "**effective**" - BEING ENGAGED *in a particular activity* [*has* GREAT POWER]. The participle may be classified as either adjectival or adverbial, middle or passive, see Moo EGNT. In the middle voice "the prayer is very powerful in its working", or in the passive voice the "prayer is very powerful when it is energized by the Spirit." Either way, the prayer for forgiveness by the righteous person is effective for the forgiveness of sins.

v17

ομοιοπαθης adj. "**like**" - [ELIJAH WAS A MAN] OF LIKE NATURE. A man with the "same limitations" as every other human person. Elijah was a person just like us, flesh and blood, and he prayed a prayer of faith and saw the prayer answered, 1 Kings 17, 18. So, Elijah serves as an example for us. The interesting feature of his prayer is that it was based on the revealed word of God. The Lord told him there would be a drought and later told him that it would rain, cf., 18:1. So, his prayer was answered because it was a prayer of faith, a prayer that rested on God's revealed will. Similarly, a prayer for forgiveness will be answered because God has promised to forgive a repentant person. Note that we are not told in first Kings that Elijah actually prayed for drought, but it is likely that he prayed for rain, cf., 1King.18:42ff.

ημιν dat. pro. "**us / even as we are**" - TO US. Dative after a comparative adjective; "in like nature to / with us."

προσευχη [η] dat. "**[he prayed] earnestly**" - [AND] IN PRAYER [HE PRAYED]. The dative "in prayer" is instrumental, but possibly adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of his prayer, "prayerfully" = "earnestly". Elijah's prayer was not answered because of his earnestness; it was answered because it was God's will. "Elijah prayed intensely, earnestly desiring."

του μη βρεξαι [βρεχω] aor. inf. "**that it would not rain**" - OF THE NOT TO RAIN. This construction, the genitive article **του** + an infinitive, usually serves to introduce a purpose clause; "so that it would not rain."

και "and" - Here probably expressing result; "and as a result it did not rain"

επι + gen. "on [the land]" - [IT DID NOT RAIN] UPON [THE EARTH]. Spatial.

ενιαυτους τρεις και μηνας εξ "three and a half years" - YEARS THREE AND SIX MONTHS. This period possibly reflects the symbolic period of judgment, Dan.7:25, 12:7.

v18

και "[again he prayed] and" - [AND AGAIN HE PRAYED] AND [THE HEAVENS GAVE RAIN AND THE EARTH CAUSED THE FRUIT OF IT TO SPROUT]. Here again consecutive, expressing result; "again he prayed and as a result the heavens gave rain."

v19

Instruction #3 - Restore an erring brother, or sister, v19-20. James rounds off his letter by restating the truth of v13-18. James' letter has covered the details of the Christian way, and in these final verses he makes the point that a brother who has turned from the way, wandered "from the truth", a brother who is soul-sick, needs to turn from their error. The ministers of the church are well positioned to lead the brother through their repentance and by the prayer of faith, declare forgiveness for "a multitude of sins." A brother who has turned to the Lord is saved.

These verses are often treated as if unrelated to v13-18. Yet, v13-18 are concerned with the sickness of sin, of going astray, and of restoration through the prayer of faith. So, it is more than likely that v13-20 is part of a thematic whole which serves to conclude the treatise.

εαν + subj. "if" - [BROTHERS OF ME] IF. Introducing a conditional clause, 3rd class, where the stated condition has the possibility of coming true; "if, *as may be the case*, *then* [let him know that]". Verse 19 serves as the protasis and v20 the apodosis (the *then* clause).

εν + dat. "of [you]" - [ANYONE] IN [YOU]. Local, expressing space / association; probably with the sense "among you."

πλανηθη [πλανομαι] aor. pas. subj. "wander" - WANDERS, STRAYS. "If any of your number strays from the gospel message", Junkins.

απο + gen. "from [the truth]" - Expressing separation; "away from."

επιστρεψη [επιστρεφω] aor. subj. "should bring [that person] back" - [AND SOMEONE] TURNS BACK, RETURNS [HIM BACK]. This was the function performed by the elders in v14.

v20

ὅτι "- " - [let him know] that. Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what he / they should know.

ὁ επιστρεψας [επιστρεφω] aor. part. "**whoever turns [a sinner]**" - THE ONE HAVING TURNED BACK, TURNED AROUND [A SINNER]. The participle serves as a substantive.

εκ + gen. "**from [the error]**" - FROM [WANDERING]. Expressing separation; "away from." The many evils identified by James which weigh down the brother with guilt.

ὁδου [ος] gen. "**of [his] ways**" - OF WAY [OF HIM]. Compacted genitives always cause a problem with translation. The general rule is that "each succeeding genitive depends on the one that preceded it, though this is not always the case", Wallace. So here the genitive "way" is usually taken to be verbal, subjective, "*the way* is what strays", Adam, and the genitive "him" idiomatic / descriptive, "the way which he takes", or possessive, "the error of his ways." Yet, note McKnight who argues that the preposition εκ modifies ὁδου, "way" = "from the way of his error" = "from his wandering", ESV.

σωσει [σωζω] fut. "**will save [him / them]**" - WILL SAVE [SOUL OF HIM]. "Soul" here most likely means "eternal soul" rather than just "self", and "death" would similarly mean "eternal death" rather than just physical death. Turning a brother around, who is in a state of rebellion against the Lord, serves to save the brother from eternal damnation.

εκ + gen. "**from [death]**" - expressing separation.

καλυπει [καλυπτω] fut. "**will cover**" - [AND] WILL COVER. Some commentators suggest that the action of turning a sinner from error serves to wipe away the sins of the one ministering to the sinner. This is unlikely. The sins of the one who turns are the sins covered, or better, forgiven.

ἁμαρτιων [α] gen. "**of sins**" - [A MULTITUDE] OF SINS. The genitive is adjectival, partitive.

8/23

Finis

