# A MISSIONAL READING OF THE LETTER OF JAMES

# HEARING THE VOICE OF JAMES IN MISSION

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A thesis submitted to the University of Gloucestershire in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Media, Arts and Technology

April 2021

Word Count 87,817

#### **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the letter of James from the perspective of mission, applying a missional hermeneutic to the letter. This is an approach that understands the mission of God's people as intricately linked to the prior mission of God, or *missio Dei*. In this sense, the whole of Scripture is missional since it records the narrative of God's redemptive mission. Thus, texts such as James, which have been previously neglected in mission literature, can be fruitfully explored.

I begin with recent developments in Jacobean scholarship that set the foundation for my own reading and then consider the use of James in mission literature, showing the lack of engagement with the letter in this field. I then outline the development of missional hermeneutics, in which several streams have been developed to date, three of which can be interwoven to provide a robust reading of the text. These ask how the text draws on and speaks into the *missio Dei*, how it forms God's people to participate in this and how the author uses biblical tradition for this purpose.

From this basis I investigate the letter, following a structure that reflects the presentation of the different themes of James as they appear in the first chapter and are then developed in the rest of the letter. I explore the missional implications of diaspora and restoration, perfection in trials, wisdom and the double-souled, poverty and wealth, and active faith and right speech. James offers a distinctive contribution to mission theology through these themes. The author builds a missional identity that draws on OT and the Jesus tradition that focuses on the attractional nature of the audience as God's people. Thus, this thesis brings the voice of James to the missional conversation and contributes to scholarship on the letter.

## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. Moreover, this thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed	Graham P. Dancy	Date 26th April 2021

doi: 10.46289/BJ22UY47

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I owe a large debt of gratitude to many people without whom I would not have completed my thesis.

Prof. Philip Esler, my first supervisor, has been of great encouragement from start to finish. His insight and direction have benefited my research, as has his enthusiasm and expertise in a great diversity of areas in biblical studies. I am grateful to him for taking me on and for his patient input along the way.

I am also grateful to Dr. Tim Davy of Redcliffe College (now All Nations Christian College) for his introduction to missional hermeneutics and the encouragement to step out on this path.

The Bible Society generously sponsored a large proportion of my fees and so many thanks are due to them.

My own journey in mission has been greatly enriched through this period of study and I am grateful to my mission family, Ambassadors Football, particularly the International Director, Jonathan Ortlip, for his encouragement to begin, continue and finish this project even when this has meant I have had less capacity for my work responsibilities. I am also grateful to all my colleagues who took on extra loads so that I could have a sabbatical period at the beginning of 2020.

My biggest debt of gratitude is to my own family, especially my wife Natasha. She has constantly encouraged me and believed in me, even when finishing this seemed a distant prospect. Without her encouragement and sacrifices I would not have made it this far. Thanks too to my three sons who have put up with my long hours locked away in the office.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Paul and Jean Dancy, and 'mis suegros,' Pablo and Jane Carrillo, who have dedicated their lives to further the *missio Dei* and have modeled holistic mission in a way that no doubt James would have approved of!

Κατακαυχᾶται ἔλεος κρίσεως

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#### **ABBREVIATIONS**

AB Anchor Bible

AGGSNT von Siebenthal, Heinrich. Ancient Greek Grammar for the Study of the New

Testament, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019

AOTC Apollos Old Testament Commentary

APB Acta Patristica et Byzantina ASE Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi

ASMS American Society of Missiology Series

AUSS Andrews University Seminary Studies

BAGL Biblical and Greek Linguistics
BBR Bulletin for Biblical Research

BBRSup Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement

BDAG Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich.

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 (Danker-Bauer-

Arndt-Gingrich)

BDB Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the

Old Testament

BDF Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. A Greek Grammar of

the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Chicago: University

of Chicago Press, 1961

BECNT Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium

Bib Biblica

BibInt Biblical Interpretation BibSac Bibliotheca sacra

BINS Biblical Interpretation Series

BJSUCSD Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego

BNTC Black's New Testament Commentary

BSTS Bible Speaks Today Series
BT The Bible Translator
BTB Biblical Theology Bulletin
CahRB Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
CBO Catholic Biblical Ouarterly

CBW Conversations with the Biblical World

ChSt Christian Studies

CTR Criswell Theological Review
CuadT Cuadernos de Teología

CurBR Currents in Biblical Research
CurTM Currents in Theology and Mission

DPL Dictionary of Paul and His Letters. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and

Ralph P. Martin. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993

ECM Editio Critica Maior

EGGNT Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament

ESEC Emory Studies in Early Christianity

EvQ Evangelical Quarterly
 FN Filología Neotestamentaria
 GOCN Gospel and Our Culture Network
 GOCS Gospel and Our Culture Series

HALOT The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Ludwig Koehler,

Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the

supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999

HBT Horizons in Biblical Theology

Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible

HS Hebrew Studies

HTR Harvard Theological Review HvTSt Hervormde Teologiese Studies

IBMR International Bulletin of Missionary Research

IBS Irish Biblical Studies

IDS In die Skriflig Int Interpretation

IRM International Review of Mission

JAJ Journal of Ancient Judaism

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature

JECH Journal of Early Christian History

JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society

JJMJS The Journal of the Jesus Movement in Its Jewish Setting

JOTT Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics

JRE Journal of Religious Ethics

*JSHJ Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 

JSJ Journal for the Study of Judaism

JSJSup Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism

JSNT Journal for the Study of the New Testament

JSNTSup Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series

*JSP Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 

JSPSup Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series

JTInt Journal of Theological Interpretation

JTS Journal of Theological Studies

JTSA Journal of Theology for Southern Africa

L&N Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New* 

Testament: Based on Semantic Domains. 2nd ed. New York: United Bible

Societies, 1989

LBS Library of Biblical Studies (T&T Clark)

LEH Lust, Johan, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds. Greek-English Lexicon of

the Septuagint. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2015

LENT Linguistic Exegesis of the New Testament

LNTS Library of New Testament Studies

LSJ Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. A Greek-

English Lexicon. 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996

McMNTS McMaster New Testament Series

MFAR Mission Focus Annual Review

Mission Focus Annual Review

Missiology Missiology: An International Review

MSJ Master's Seminary Journal

MwJTMidwestern Journal of TheologyNASBNew American Standard Bible

NBC New Bible Commentary

NCBC New Cambridge Bible Commentary

Neot Neotestamentica

NICNT New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC New International Greek Testament Commentary

NKJV New King James Version
NovT Novum Testamentum

NovTSup Supplements to Novum Testamentum

NRSV New Revised Standard Version
NSBT New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTC The New Testament in Context
NTM New Testament Monographs

NTS New Testament Studies

NTTSD New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents
Paideia Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PIBA Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association

PLAL Perspectives on Linguistics and Ancient Languages

PNTC Pillar New Testament Commentary

Presb Presbyterion: Covenant Seminary Review
PTMS Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
PVTG Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece

RBS Resources for Biblical Study

REB Revised English Bible RevExp Review and Expositor

RIBLA Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana

SBJT Southern Baptist Journal of Theology

SBLDS Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SDSS Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature

SHS Scripture and Hermeneutics Series

SICNTS Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament Series

SJT Scottish Journal of Theology

SNTSMS Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTSU Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt

ST Studia Theologica

StBibLit Studies in Biblical Literature

SUNT Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments

SwJT Southwestern Journal of Theology

SymS Symposium Series

TBN Themes in Biblical Narrative

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and

Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids,

MI: Eerdmans, 1964–1976

ThTo Theology Today
TJ Trinity Journal
TR Textus Receptus
VE Vox Evangelica
VEC Verbum et Ecclesia

WATSA What Are They Saying About Series

WBC Word Biblical Commentary

WUNT Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

WW Word and World

ZAC Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal of Ancient Christianity

ZECNT Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

ZNW Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren

Kirche

## Primary Sources & Ancient Authors

Abbreviations for primary sources and ancient authors follow the recommendations set forth in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Editions*, 2nd ed (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014).

#### **Electronic Sources**

The text for the following sources come from Accordance 13 Bible Software Version 13.1.4., Oaktree Software, and searches have been made using the following text versions:

Apostolic Fathers The Apostolic Fathers: Revised Greek Texts, edited by J. B. Lightfoot

and J. R. Harmer, MacMillan: London, 1891 (version 2.0)

BHS Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm

Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983 (version 1.8)

Josephus Works of Flavius Josephus, Greek text 1890 Niese edition, public

domain (version 3.6)

LXX Septuaginta, edited by Alfred Rahlfs, Editio altera by Robert Hanhart

2006 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart (version 5.5)

NA28 Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland, 28th ed (Acc. version 3.6)

NETS A New English Translation of the Septuagint. Edited by Albert Pietersma

and Benjamin G. Wright. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007

(version 3.9)

Philo Works of Philo, The Norwegian Philo Concordance Project 2005 Peder

Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth, Roald Skarsten (version 3.9)

Pseudepigrapha The Greek Pseudepigrapha, Electronic text, Craig A. Evans, Acadia

Divinity College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia (version 6.5)

Other searches have been carried out with:

TLJ Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: A Digital Library of Greek Literature

(abridged), Maria Pantelia, Project Director (open access available at

http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/)

Perseus Perseus Digital Library, Tufts University, Gregory R. Crane, Ed.-in-

Chief (available at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/)

# CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO A MISSIONAL READING OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

The letter of James<sup>1</sup> has suffered a rough ride in the history of biblical scholarship, not only in its initial reception history but subsequently due to Martin Luther's well-known dislike of its teaching and then through the unfortunate designation of the letter as paraenesis by Martin Dibelius, which among other things, meant that it had 'no theology.'<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that James has not been highly regarded elsewhere, inspiring such diverse authors as the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer and the African-American activist Frederick Douglass,<sup>3</sup> as well as being fundamental to the twelve step programme of Alcoholics Anonymous.<sup>4</sup> However, until the last decade it was customary for monographs and articles on James to decry the neglect of the letter in scholarship. This is no longer the case and, as Darren Lockett has recently pointed out,<sup>5</sup> there has been something of a renaissance in research into James, a fact confirmed by Todd Penner's extensive but now dated survey of developments<sup>6</sup> and Alicia Batten's more recent and helpful

<sup>-</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Henceforth, I will use 'James' to denote both the letter and author and will say more on authorship in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Martin Dibelius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, trans. Michael A. Williams, 11th ed., Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 21. See further below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Sheila Delany, "Doer of the Word: The Epistle of St. James as a Source for Chaucer's 'Manciple's Tale," *The Chaucer Review* 17, no. 3 (January 1, 1983): 250–54; John McNamara, "Chaucer's Use of the Epistle of St. James in the 'Clerk's Tale," *The Chaucer Review* 7, no. 3 (January 1, 1973): 184–93; Margaret P. Aymer, *First Pure, Then Peaceable: Frederick Douglass, Darkness, and the Epistle of James*, LNTS 379 (London: T & T Clark, 2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Dale C. Allison, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James, ICC (London: T & T Clark, 2013), 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Darian R. Lockett, "Wholeness in Intertextual Perspective: James' Use of Scripture in Developing a Theme," *MwJT* 15, no. 2 (2016): 92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Todd C. Penner, "The Epistle of James in Current Research," *CurBR* 7 (October 1999): 257; cf. Todd C. Penner, *The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Re-Reading an Ancient Christian Letter*, JSNTSup 121 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 33–120.

study in the WATSA series.<sup>7</sup> Even since this last publication there have been several new commentaries as well as many more monographs, chapters and articles on James. As far as mission literature goes, however, a similar attention to James has not developed (although there has been increasing engagement) but this is not necessarily surprising given the apparent lack of anything remotely to do with mission, at least as it has been traditionally understood, in James. The surprise may rather be that this study is dedicated to James and mission and so this deserves some explanation before I proceed any further.

What has allowed, and even necessitated, such a study in James is a change in perspective on mission. Mission has usually been defined as a determined effort to proselytise, either cross-culturally or within a culture that requires the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>8</sup> Even to the casual observer there is no trace of such concerns in James.<sup>9</sup> However, alongside the resurgence of interest in James, significant developments in missiology led to a broader definition of mission that has enabled a much more comprehensive approach to studying the Bible from this perspective. I will go into this in more detail in chapter three where I will outline my method and approach, but suffice it to say here that mission can now be understood not simply as an activity (or activities) of the church aimed at winning converts but as 'God's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See Alicia J. Batten, *What Are They Saying About the Letter of James?*, WATSA (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), whose brief monograph lists over one hundred articles, essays, commentaries and monographs, many of which have been published from the 1990s onwards.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Dean E. Flemming, Recovering the Full Mission of God: A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing, and Telling (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 17. For a narrow definition of mission, see for example, Robert L. Plummer, Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize? (Bletchley: Paternoster, 2006), 1–2, who defines "missions" as the "attempt to convert non-Christians to the Christian faith, regardless of any geographical or cultural considerations". Although he uses the term "missions" it is clear he makes no distinction between "mission" and "missions"; cf. Stanley E. Porter, "The Content and Message of Paul's Missionary Teaching," in Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations and New Testament Developments, ed. Cynthia Long Westfall and Stanley E Porter, McMNTS (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 135, who cites this approvingly; Rainer Riesner, "A Pre-Christian Jewish Mission?," in The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles, ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein, WUNT 127 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> As is commonly pointed out, the lack of any mention of Christ's death and resurrection and the apparent contradiction of Paul's gospel of salvation by faith led to the famous dismissal of the letter by Luther as a "right strawy epistle" in his preface to the New Testament of 1545. See further Timothy George, "A Right Strawy Epistle': Reformation Perspectives on James" 4, no. 3 (2000): 23–28.

comprehensive purpose for the whole of creation and all that God has sent the church to [be and] do in connection with that purpose.' This allows all Scripture to be studied through the lens of mission, in other words with a missional hermeneutic ('missional' being used adjectivally) that privileges mission in understanding the text. As I will show later, bringing this understanding of mission to the hermeneutical equation respects the initial context and purpose of Scripture and thus is a vital element for a more complete understanding of the texts we have in the Bible as a whole.

By this I am not suggesting that a narrow definition of mission is wrong or that every approach must be missional. Rather, this broader understanding of mission has the potential to engage with texts that have generally been ignored in mission literature and allows previously neglected voices, one of which is the letter of James, to contribute to an understanding of the mission of the church. It will be the task of my next chapter to show that there are no sustained engagements with James from this perspective (other than a few chapter length studies) and that James is regularly neglected in mission literature even when elements of this broader definition of mission are acknowledged and where there is a specific rationale to include James. Moreover, we will see that none of the many valuable and insightful recent studies on James from other biblical disciplines incorporate mission to any great extent. Thus my thesis will fill this gap and, as another case study for a missional reading, will add to the growing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God*, 17. I have added the words in square brackets because the missional identity of the church is also vital as we will see in subsequent chapters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> This also has the advantage of restoring mission-consciousness to biblical scholarship. On this, see for example, Michael D. Barram, *Mission and Moral Reflection in Paul*, StBibLit 75 (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 11; and Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 3–4, who both note the relative neglect of mission within broader biblical scholarship.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Such as, for example, in studies on mission in the Catholic/General epistles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Exceptionally, Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 4–13, gives some space to reading James within the story of God's mission in the introduction of his commentary but does not integrate this in the remainder to any great degree. Wall's canonical reading of James also has some crossover with a missional reading as we will see later. See Robert W. Wall, *Community of the Wise: The Letter of James*, NTC (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997).

corpus of such works.<sup>15</sup> More importantly, it will introduce the oft-neglected voice of James to the missional conversation that informs the church's mission as it takes its place in God's mission. Before I move on to do this, I will briefly consider some of the typical introductory issues that are necessary for exegesis of the text and which will also provide a working structure for this thesis.

#### **INTRODUCTORY ISSUES IN JAMES**

As I pointed out above, since the turn of the century there has been a steady increase in monographs and commentaries on James from a variety of perspectives. All of these have contributed greatly to moving the conversation forwards since the landmark commentary of Martin Dibelius, <sup>16</sup> which classified the letter as paraenesis in the form of a collection of aphorisms with no structure, real author, audience or theology. <sup>17</sup> This had the unintended effect of relegating interest in James, since Dibelius had concluded that not much of critical interest could be learned from it in terms of the historical and theological development of the early Christian movement. <sup>18</sup> Many of Dibelius' assumptions and assertions have been subsequently challenged, particularly on such introductory issues as genre and structure so I will consider some of these and other introductory areas to give a foundation for my own investigation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Although not tackling one specific text, the monumental study of Wright, *The Mission of God*, has paved the way for such readings. See, for example, Dean Flemming, "Exploring a Missional Reading of Scripture: Philippians as a Case Study," *EvQ* 83, no. 1 (2011): 3–18; Dean Flemming, "Revelation and the *Missio Dei*: Toward a Missional Reading of the Apocalypse," *JTInt* 6, no. 2 (September 1, 2012): 161–77; Michael W. Goheen, ed., *Reading the Bible Missionally*, GOCS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016); Barram, *Mission and Moral Reflection in Paul*; Timothy J. Davy, "Job and the Mission of God: An Application of a Missional Hermeneutic to the Book of Job" (Cheltenham, University of Gloucestershire, 2015); (recently published as Timothy J. Davy, *The Book of Job and the Mission of God: A Missional Reading* [Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2020]); Martin C. Salter, *Mission In Action: A Biblical Description of Missional Ethics* (London: Apollos, 2019).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> See Dibelius, *James*. The 7th German edition was published in 1920 and subsequent editions were revised with separate addenda by Heinrich Greeven until they were incorporated in the 11th German edition in 1964. This was translated by Michael A. Williams in 1976 for the Hermeneia Commentary series and all citations are from this edition. It is customary to simply refer to this under Dibelius' name since it became such a well-known commentary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 3–11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> See Penner, "Epistle of James," 264–65. This has a very comprehensive survey of research in James in the decades prior to his review and post Dibelius, in which he shows the evidence of scholarly neglect (pp. 257-260).

# Authorship, Dating and Audience

Traditionally the authorship of the letter has been ascribed to James, the brother of Jesus, who is portrayed as a key leader in the Jerusalem church until his death in AD 62,<sup>19</sup> both in Acts and by Paul in two of his letters.<sup>20</sup> If legendary sources about James are also taken into account, then his position as the main leader of the Jerusalem church is fairly well established.<sup>21</sup> However, as many commentators note, even early on in its reception history there were doubts about the authorship of the letter,<sup>22</sup> and this issue has by no means been resolved to date. Alongside the traditional view still upheld by many scholars,<sup>23</sup> the majority view today is that James is a pseudepigraphal writing from mid to late first century or early second century AD.<sup>24</sup> A third mediating position is that the letter contains much original material from James that was then edited posthumously and formed into the letter.<sup>25</sup> Two of the latest commentaries are split

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> On the death of James, see Richard Bauckham, "For What Offence Was James Put to Death?," in *James the Just and Christian Origins*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, NovTSup 98 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> See Acts 15:13-21; 21:17-26; Gal 1:18-19; 2:9-11; 1 Cor 15:7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> See for example John Painter, "Who Was James? Footprints as a Means of Identification," in *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner (Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 10–65; Bruce D. Chilton, "James in Relation to Peter, Paul, and the Remembrance of Jesus," in Chilton and Neusner, eds, *Brother of Jesus*, 138–60; later edited and published as Bruce D. Chilton, "James, Peter, Paul and the Formation of the Gospels," in *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul: Tensions in Early Christianity*, ed. Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans, NovTSup 115 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 5–28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> See, for example, the discussion in Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 37A (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 126–29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> See, inter alia, Dan McCartney, *James*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 30–32; Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 401; William F. Brosend, *James and Jude*, NCBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2–5; P. J. Hartin, *James*, SP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 24–25; Richard Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* (London: Routledge, 1999), 25; Johnson, *Letter of James*, 121; James B. Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 18–19; James Hardy Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1916), 28; Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1913), i–lxv.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> See, for example, Dale C. Allison, "The Fiction of James and Its *Sitz im Leben*," *RB* 108, no. 4 (2001): 529–70; Sophie Laws, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1980), 38–42; Dibelius, *James*, 11–21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 21–22; Ralph P. Martin, *James*, WBC 48 (Waco: Word Books, 1988), lxxvii; Andrew Chester and Ralph P. Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11–15; John Painter and David A. DeSilva, *James and Jude*, Paidea (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 20–25.

on the authorship which perhaps suggest that there will never be consensus. Scott McKnight states, after opting for the traditional view, '... the arguments against the traditional authorship are inconclusive; the arguments for traditional authorship are better but hardly compelling.' In contrast Dale Allison concludes,

One can indeed slot James into pre-70 Palestine if so inclined. But one can equally read the epistle, as does this commentary, as a second-century pseudepigraphon composed in the diaspora. The vagaries of our letter and the gaping holes in our knowledge allow different scholars to place James in different times and places.<sup>27</sup>

However, if there is no consensus on the actual author, there is general agreement that the tradition represented by the letter is connected with, and at least to a certain degree representative of, James the brother of Jesus. As Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr suggests, 'Whatever answer one chooses to give, the question of the meaning and the implications of authorship by the Lord's brother arises in any case, and remains independent, to a great extent, of any decision on a historical level.' This will be the stance I take rather than opting for one side or another of such a debated topic, although I find McKnight's evidence and arguments for traditional authorship plausible. However, for a missional hermeneutic it is more important to discern the missional intention and identity of the purported author from the text itself rather than a given historical reconstruction. This will be examined in more detail in chapter four and indeed throughout the thesis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> McKnight, *James*, 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Allison, *James*, 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, "James in the Minds of the Recipients," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> McKnight, *James*, 23–38. Of course, as McKnight admits there is no way to prove conclusively this position (or its contrary); cf. Johnson, *Letter of James*, 118–21; and Hartin, *James*, 16–25. Often the good or even high level of Greek in James is given as a reason for pseudonymity but as McKnight and others point out, the level of Greek in Galilee is often understated and the level of Greek in James overstated. Cf. William Varner, *The Book of James - A New Perspective: A Linguistic Commentary Applying Discourse Analysis* (Woodlands: Kress Biblical Resources, 2010), 51–52, who notes that the Greek of James does not include several characteristics associated with a high literary style such as the extended periodic sentence found frequently in other works such as Hebrews.

Dating is inevitably tied up with authorship. Assuming the traditional view requires a date at least prior to AD 62 as noted above. This is complicated by the possible conflict with Paul's view (or more likely a distorted Pauline theology) of justification by faith, in James 2:14-25. However, this does not necessarily require a later date than this as McKnight points out, settling for a date in the 50s.<sup>30</sup> The many other options for the date range from the 40s AD to early/mid second century AD.<sup>31</sup> Again this issue is not of fundamental importance, so whether the letter is early or a later pseudepigraph can be accommodated equally well by a missional reading and therefore I will not explore this further here.

Likewise the list of possible audiences and provenance are varied and multiple. Of course taking James the brother of Jesus as the author limits the provenance to Jerusalem, but if we allow for a pseudepigraphal composition, the possibilities open up to include a provenance outside of Palestine, such as Antioch in Syria<sup>32</sup> or Rome.<sup>33</sup> The audience is also variously interpreted, depending on whether the address in James 1:1 is taken literally or metaphorically. Again, it is not necessary to know the exact social location of the audience for a missional reading, but there are certain aspects that are brought to the fore depending on how we read this greeting.

A metaphorical interpretation appropriates 'the twelve tribes' motif to a predominantly gentile church and uses 'diaspora' as a description of the church's standing in the world (cf. 1

<sup>30</sup> McKnight, *James*, 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Allison, *James*, 28–29; cf. Davids, *Epistle of James*, 4. Most commentators opting for pseudonymous authorship suggest a date of late 1st C. to early 2nd C. Unusually, David R. Nienhuis, *Not By Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), argues for a mid-2nd C. composition; cf. David R. Nienhuis, "The Letter of James as a Canon-Conscious Pseudepigraph," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 183–200.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Martin, *James*, lxxvi; Matthias Konradt, "The Historical Context of the Letter of James in Light of Its Traditio-Historical Relations with First Peter," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 26; David A. Kaden, "Stoicism, Social Stratification, and the Q Tradition in James: A Suggestion about James' Audience," in *James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions*, ed. Alicia J. Batten and John S. Kloppenborg, LNTS 478 (New York: T & T Clark, 2014), 97–119; cf. Alicia J. Batten, "The Urban and the Agrarian in the Letter of James," *JECH* 3, no. 2 (2013): 4–20; Alicia J. Batten, "The Urbanization of Jesus Traditions in James," in Batten and Kloppenborg, eds, *James, 1 & 2 Peter*, 78–96, who argues for an urban audience.

Peter 1:1).<sup>34</sup> Although such an understanding has obvious missional implications,<sup>35</sup> it seems to me that the evidence points towards a literal understanding, so that the audience are most likely Christ-followers among the Judean diaspora.<sup>36</sup> As Bauckham has pointed out, nowhere else in the NT or early church writings is the term 'twelve tribes' applied to the gentile church and there was still a clearly identifiable Judean diaspora known in the NT period, including the northern tribes, to which James, as leader of the church in Jerusalem, could be writing.<sup>37</sup> That the primary audience are Christ-followers is indicated by James' self-designation in 1:1 and his identification of the audience in 2:1, and reinforced by the authority with which he writes and his undoubtable reliance on the Jesus tradition.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, such an audience coheres with the gathering being described as a  $\sigma \nu \nu \alpha \gamma \omega \gamma \dot{\gamma}$  (2:1) but the community as an  $\dot{\epsilon} \kappa \kappa \lambda \eta \sigma (\alpha)$  (5:14).<sup>39</sup> However, as I will show in my analysis of the epistolary prescript in chapter four, a literal interpretation does not in fact rule out the metaphorical significance of the terms themselves,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 66–67; Laws, *Epistle of James*, 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> As we will see in the next chapter, this is usually how this description is appropriated the few times it is cited in mission literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Chester and Martin, *Theology*, 13; Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 19; Allison, "Fiction of James". Cf. David Hutchinson Edgar, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor?: The Social Setting of the Epistle of James*, JSNTSup 206 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 96–101, who sees the audience as consisting of mainly Jewish Christians but this may include Gentiles that had accepted a Jewish outlook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 14–15; cf. John S. Kloppenborg, "Judaeans or Judaean Christians in James?," in *Identity and Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews, Christians and Others. Essays in Honour of Stephen G. Wilson*, ed. Zeba A. Crook and Philip A. Harland, NTM 18 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 244–45. Note, I will use the term "Judean" rather than "Jewish" when referring to the people described as 'Ioυδαῖοι in the literature of the NT period in recognition that this represents an ethnic group. See further Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *JSJ* 38, no. 4–5 (2007): 457–512; Steve Mason and Philip F. Esler, "Judaean and Christ-Follower Identities: Grounds for a Distinction," *NTS* 63 (2017): 493–515. However, it is difficult to avoid the use of "Jewish" altogether, and this does serve a useful purpose in describing the literature of Israel throughout the biblical era.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> See also Richard Bauckham, "Messianic Jewish Identity in James," in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce, and Francis Watson, LNTS 587 (London: T & T Clark, 2019), 101–20, who provides several other reasons the recipients are Christfollowers. I will say more on this elsewhere in the thesis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Bauckham, "Messianic Jewish Identity," 113–15. Bauckham notes contra Allison, *James*, 758, and Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 155, that in Jewish literature ἐκκλησία nearly always designates the whole gathered assembly of Israel, not an individual local assembly. In contrast, it was used this way from an early stage among Christ-followers.

which are full of missional import particularly for a Judean diaspora audience.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, we will see that the letter may well have apologetic purposes for a wider Judean diaspora audience.<sup>41</sup> It is also worth noting that this literal interpretation of the original setting for the letter, as Bauckham rightly points out, in no way minimises the importance of the letter as a canonical document that speaks to both Jewish and Gentile Christians,<sup>42</sup> and thus how it contributes to understanding the mission of the church today.

#### The Genre of James

If no definitive answer has been reached in terms of its setting, there have been significant advances in understanding the genre of James, although even here, there is also considerable disagreement. Literary and rhetorical studies have challenged not only Dibelius' long-standing definition of James as paraenesis, but also his definition of paraenesis itself as disjointed traditional sayings that have no structure, overall purpose or social location. Several scholars even argue that paraenesis should not even be considered a separate genre, although it is clear that it serves as a useful descriptive category, and at the very least, as a subgenre, in antiquity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Cf. Matt A. Jackson-McCabe, "A Letter to the Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora: Wisdom and 'Apocalyptic' Eschatology in the Letter of James," in *SBL Seminar Papers*, vol. 35, SBLSP (SBL, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 505–17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> This is essentially the conclusion of Allison, "Fiction of James," 569–70. The Judean diaspora audience is "fictional" in that the letter was not sent to the whole Judean diaspora but was written by a Christian who writes to maintain irenic relations with a Jewish community that his group is still a part of; cf. Kloppenborg, "Judaeans," 113–35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 140–57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> See the list of possibilities in Allison, *James*, 72–73. The disagreement extends even to the definitions of the genres!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 3–11; Leo G. Perdue, "Paraenesis and the Epistle of James," *ZNW* 72, no. 3–4 (January 1, 1981): 247.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 23; Wesley Hiram Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus in the Social Rhetoric of James*, SNTSMS 106 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 51–52; Wiard Popkes, "James and Paraenesis, Reconsidered," in *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts*, ed. Tord Fornberg and Lars Hartman (Oslo: Scandinavian Univ. Press, 1995), 535–61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Leo G. Perdue, "The Social Character of Paraenesis," in *Paraenesis: Act and Form*, ed. Leo G. Perdue and John G. Gammie, Semeia 50 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 1990), 5–39; John G. Gammie, "Paraenetic Literature: Toward the Morphology of a Secondary Genre," in *Paraenesis: Act and Form*, ed. Leo G. Perdue and John G. Gammie, Semeia 50 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 1990), 41–77.

Both L. T. Johnson and Patrick Hartin have proposed that James is 'protreptic discourse' which implies that the letter has a rhetorical purpose to bring about a 'commitment to a certain specified lifestyle...' that is 'communicated with a certain urgency and conviction.' Johnson embraces the sense of a 'call to conversion' in this definition, but Hartin follows John Gammie's more careful definition where protreptic discourse is a subgenre of paraenetic literature that contains sustained and developed arguments (rather than loosely connected exhortations), optionally contains precepts and is more narrowly focused than the wide range of concerns typical of paraenesis. Hartin argues that the main emphasis is to urge the audience to live in 'friendship with God as opposed to friendship with the world.' Building again on Gammie, who views paraenetic literature as one of the main subgenres of 'wisdom literature,' Hartin finds that James shares many similarities in both form and content with such a genre. Hartin finds that James shares many similarities in both form and content with such

However, the definition of James as protreptic discourse is disputed by Wesley Wachob (who does not see it as a separate genre) and prefers the designation 'symbouleutic or deliberative rhetoric.' Thus the letter combines exhortation and dissuasion in order to persuade its addressees to particular courses of action. Similarly, Luke Cheung argues against protreptic discourse since in his opinion James fails to meet certain formal criteria for this

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 19–24; Patrick J. Hartin, *A Spirituality of Perfection: Faith in Action in the Letter of James* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 44–49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 20–21. Examples in Johnson include Epictetus, *Discourse* III, 22; Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 77/78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 44–49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Hartin, *James*, 13–14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Gammie, "Paraenetic Literature," 47. See the helpful chart here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Hartin, *Spirituality of Perfection*, 42–45; cf. Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 35–60, who notes the presence of other forms, such as the prophetic judgment oracle of 5:1-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Wachob, *Voice of Jesus*, 48–52. He finds that protrepsis and paraenesis are interchangeable terms in antiquity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Wesley Hiram Wachob, "The Languages of 'Household' and 'Kingdom' in the Letter of James: A Socio-Rhetorical Study," in *Reading James with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James*, ed. Robert L. Webb and John S. Kloppenborg, LNTS 342 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 154–55.

genre,<sup>56</sup> and instead opts for classifying it as Jewish wisdom paraenesis after an extensive study on such literature.<sup>57</sup> Although Penner rejects classifying James as a wisdom document because he views the eschatological and prophetic elements of the letter as the controlling framework of the document,<sup>58</sup> Cheung's study shows that these elements are common in other wisdom literature and their presence should not disqualify it as such.<sup>59</sup>

This brief discussion shows that choosing a particular genre is difficult not only because of the ambiguity in definitions,<sup>60</sup> but also because the eclectic mix of forms and elements in James resists a simple classification.<sup>61</sup> In fact, the presence in James of several different elements tends to muddy the waters. As numerable studies have shown, and as we will see in later chapters, the letter incorporates a strong reliance on the Old Testament (OT),<sup>62</sup> and on intertestamental development of these traditions,<sup>63</sup> as well as Greco-Roman philosophical concepts,<sup>64</sup> and not least the teachings of Jesus.<sup>65</sup> As Penner also rightly points out, James is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Luke L. Cheung, *The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 11–13. Protreptic discourse contains argumentation and "philosophical reasoning" to persuade the audience to follow the philosophy being presented, which Cheung finds lacking in James. Referring to David E. Aune, "Romans as a *Logos Protreptikos*," in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 282-83, he notes the lack of negative critique of rival philosophies and a positive presentation of the truth, also expected in protreptic discourse. Yet James is full of contrasts and given the way both Philo and Josephus speak of the Judeans "philosophising," or their beliefs as a philosophy this conclusion may not be entirely correct (cf. Josephus *B.J.* 2119; Philo *Opif.* 128).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Cheung, Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics, 5–52; cf. Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 29–35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Penner, James and Eschatology, 223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Cheung, *Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics*, 42–48; cf. Richard Bauckham, "James and Jesus," in Chilton and Neusner, eds, *Brother of Jesus*, 111.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> See Cheung, Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics, 12–14; Wachob, Voice of Jesus, 40–52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Duane F. Watson, "The Rhetorical Composition of the Epistle of James," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, ed. Eric F. Mason and Darian R. Lockett, RBS 94 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2019), 115; cf. Duane F. Watson, "An Assessment of the Rhetoric and Rhetorical Analysis of The Letter of James," in Webb and Kloppenborg, eds, *Reading James*, 119–20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> The author is "well-versed" in the OT and draws from a wide range of texts. So Allison, *James*, 52; cf. the chapter on James, in G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 997–1013; Eric F. Mason, "Use of Biblical and Other Jewish Traditions in James," in Mason and Lockett, eds, *Epistle of James*, 27–43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> See, inter alia, Roy Bowen Ward, "Works of Abraham: James 2:14-26," *HTR* 61, no. 2 (April 1, 1968): 283–90; Marion L. Soards, "The Early Christian Interpretation of Abraham and the Place of James within That Context," *IBS* 9, no. 1 (1987): 18–26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, is detailed in this area; cf. Matt A. Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law in the Letter of James: The Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, and the Law of Freedom*, NovTSup (Atlanta: SBL, 2001); John S. Kloppenborg, "James 1:2-15 and Hellenistic Psychagogy," *NovT* 52, no. 1 (January 2010): 37–71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> The literature is extensive on this. See, e.g., Batten and Kloppenborg, eds., *James*, 1 & 2 Peter, and Early Jesus Traditions, LNTS (London: T & T Clark, 2014).

not unusual in that the literature of the period often shows a mixture of eschatological elements, alongside wisdom themes and form.<sup>66</sup> Thus it is best to not force our reading of James into a hermeneutical straight jacket of a narrow genre.

What is more important is that the discussion has moved beyond Dibelius' classification of the epistle as paraenesis that lacks purpose. Although the above definitions have certain contradictions, all are agreed that there is a definite purpose behind the composition of James. Leo Perdue demonstrates that both protreptic discourse and paraenesis have the goal of 'social formation' and Wachob concludes that the rhetoric of James 'is a "world building" discourse... That is, it seeks to effect a particular kind of community by remolding the thought and behaviour of its addressees to conform with a particular understanding of God's truth ...' Similarly Hartin notes that James' purpose is 'to remind his readers of what it means to be part of the "twelve tribes in the Dispersion." It is this sense of world-building narrative that I will show coincides with the missional purpose of the letter, and builds on the missional nature of the designation of the addressees in the opening verse of the letter.

Both Hartin and Johnson also argue (contra Dibelius) that it is appropriate to consider James an actual letter, <sup>70</sup> rather than simply a collection of sayings with an epistolary prescript. Wachob examines this further and demonstrates that according to ancient conventions, James could be considered a type of "literary" letter, that is, not a common private letter. <sup>71</sup> It should further be designated a diaspora letter or encyclical, taking into account the greeting, which falls within the known Judean practice of sending letters from the authorities in Jerusalem to

<sup>66</sup> Penner, James and Eschatology, 221.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Perdue, "The Social Character of Paraenesis," 25–27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Wachob, Voice of Jesus, 187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Hartin, *James*, 15–16; Johnson, *Letter of James*, 22–24; Dibelius, *James*, 2–3. Here he concludes, "All these observations make it impossible to consider Jas an actual letter."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Wachob, *Voice of Jesus*, 5–7.

Judeans in the Diaspora.<sup>72</sup> One of the implications of this, as Bauckham points out, is that one should be careful about reading particular, definite situations into the letter, rather than typical and likely circumstances to the writing.<sup>73</sup> It also means that James writes authoritatively to his audience and expects his audience in the diaspora to accept his instruction.<sup>74</sup>

#### The Structure of James

In the same way that Dibelius' genre classification has been challenged, there is also a growing consensus that James has, at least to a certain extent, a continuity of thought, <sup>75</sup> even if there is no consensus on an exact structure. <sup>76</sup> It cannot be said, though, that the epistle has a linear development of thought from beginning to end, but as Bauckham points out, this does not imply a lack of coherence. <sup>77</sup> Rhetorical and linguistic studies have been at the forefront of recognising this coherence but a great variety of structures has emerged from these studies. <sup>78</sup> Moreover, attempts to find a convincing overarching rhetorical pattern for the whole letter tend to be forced <sup>79</sup> and the main benefit from rhetorical analyses is in applying them to the most clearly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> See Allison, *James*, 73–74, for similar such "*Diasporabrief*", e.g., 2 Macc. 1:1-10. See also Richard Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham, BAFCS 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 423–25; Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 13–21; Donald J. Verseput, "Genre and Story: The Community Setting of the Epistle of James," *CBQ* 62, no. 1 (January 2000): 96; Darian R. Lockett, *Purity and Worldview in the Epistle of James*, LNTS (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> This would certainly be true if James is both wisdom instruction and diaspora letter. See Luke L. Cheung and Kelvin C. L. Yu, "The Genre of James: Diaspora Letter, Wisdom Instruction, or Both?," in Mason and Lockett, eds, *Epistle of James*, 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Contra Dibelius, *James*, 5–7, who states "large portions of James reveal no continuity of thought whatsoever" (citation on p. 6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Mark E. Taylor, *A Text-Linguistic Investigation into The Discourse Structure of James*, LBS 311 (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 61–62, 111; cf. Stanley E. Porter, "Cohesion in James: A Response to Martin Dibelius," in *The Epistle of James: Linguistic Exegesis of an Early Christian Letter*, ed. James D. Dvorak and Zachary K. Dawson, LENT 1 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019), 45–68, who finds that James is a "text with high cohesion, high cohesive interaction, and hence high cohesive harmony."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> See Mark E. Taylor, "Recent Scholarship on the Structure of James," *CurBR* 3, no. 1 (2004): 86–115; and Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 8–38. Varner, *New Perspective*, 13–37, bases his structure on a linguistic analysis of prominence; cf. *idem*, "The Main Theme and the Structure of James," *MSJ* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 2011): 115–29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 62; cf. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 45. For examples, see John Paul Heil, *The Letter of James: Worship to Live By* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), who proposes that James has eleven micro-chiastic units which themselves form a macro-chiastic structure, and Christina Conti, "Propuesta de Estructuración de la Carta de Santiago," *RIBLA* 31 (1998): 7–23, who has a grand chiasm for the whole letter.

identifiable main sections, which demonstrate James' rhetorical skill.<sup>80</sup> This is also evident in the way he binds the units together through transition sections that conclude one argument and at the same time set up the topic for the following section,<sup>81</sup> as well as his use of other literary devices such as catchwords and hook words.<sup>82</sup> James also occasionally places elements from a previous theme within a new section which serves to tie the epistle as a whole together.<sup>83</sup>

Several thematic studies have proposed structures that are based on a particular dominant theme, such as purity, wholeness, trials and temptations, and the contrasting pairing of human desire and God's law.<sup>84</sup> Of these the most comprehensive theme that could be said to underpin the whole letter is the author's concern that his readers/hearers may be 'perfect and whole, lacking in nothing' (1:4), not only as individuals but as a community<sup>85</sup> which is reinforced by the importance of this theme in the first chapter.<sup>86</sup>

The lack of consensus in all these studies renders it difficult to find a definitive structure, at least for the whole letter, but what is clear is that 'James constitutes a highly crafted, cogent discourse.' Mark Taylor's discourse analysis is one of the most thorough studies of the letter

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> See, for example, Duane F. Watson, "James 2 in Light of Greco-Roman Schemes of Argumentation," *NTS* 39, no. 01 (1993): 94–121; Hartin, *James*, 124–38, 156–62; and Alicia J. Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction in James*, ESEC 15 (Blanford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2010), 123–27, 134–36; Wachob, *Voice of Jesus*; Duane F. Watson, "The Rhetoric of James 3:1-12 and a Classical Pattern of Argumentation," *NovT* 35, no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 48–64; Luke Timothy Johnson, "James 3:13-4:10 and the *Topos* ΠΕΡΙ ΦΘΟΝΟΥ," *NovT* 25, no. 4 (October 1, 1983): 327–47.

<sup>81</sup> Taylor, Discourse Structure, 76–90; cf. Cheung, Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics, 83–85.

<sup>82</sup> Dibelius, James, 6–11; cf. Johnson, Letter of James, 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 84–90. For example, the ποιητής νόμου in 4:12 draws on the ποιητής λόγου/ἔργου of 1:22-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> See, respectively, Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*; John H. Elliott, "The Epistle of James in Rhetorical and Social Scientific Perspective: Holiness-Wholeness and Patterns of Replication," *BTB* 23, no. 2 (June 1, 1993): 71–81; D. Edmond Hiebert, "The Unifying Theme of the Epistle of James," *BibSac* 135, no. 539 (July 1, 1978): 221–31; Matt A. Jackson-McCabe, "Enduring Temptation: The Structure and Coherence of the Letter of James," *JSNT* 37, no. 2 (December 2014): 161–84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Martin, *James*, lxxix–lxxxii; Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 177–85; Hartin, *Spirituality of Perfection*, 10–15; Cheung, *Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics*, 162–94; cf. Moo, *The Letter of James*, who suggests "spiritual wholeness."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 57–72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Mark E. Taylor and George H. Guthrie, "The Structure of James," CBQ 68, no. 4 (October 1, 2006): 705.

and it provides a workable macro structure recognised by many other commentators. After the prescript, the letter introduction is from 1:2-28, the main body of the letter consists of 2:1-5:6 and the letter closing is 5:7-20. There is also substantial agreement over some of the main sections and the rhetorical markers used to indicate these, such as the use of the second person plural imperative combined with the nominative plural (vocative) 'brothers and sisters' (ἀδελφοί). Within the letter body, the following have been proposed as independent (but sometimes closely related) sections: 2:1-13, 2:14-26, 3:1-12, 3:13-4:10 and 4:13-5:6. These major sections respect the literary and rhetorical indicators present in the text, including the way chapter one introduces the topics developed in these sections, as we will see next, and so form the basis of my own investigation.

## **READING JAMES MISSIONALLY**

approach. Cf. Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 70–71.

The role of James 1 to introduce the various themes that the author will tackle is generally recognised. Fred Francis introduced the idea of a double opening with two sections, 1:2-11 and 1:12-27, that correspond to one another and introduce the themes of the letter, and has been followed by many commentators. 92 However, the correspondence between the two sections is somewhat forced and unconvincing and also restricts the topics in the letter body to artificially

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Taylor, *Discourse Structure*; cf. Taylor and Guthrie, "The Structure of James", a slight modification of Taylor's original proposal. The identification of letter-wide *inclusios* to form a chiastic macro-structure is not convincing. See further the critique in Allison, *James*, 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 64–65. Other section markers are questions (2:14; 3:13; 4:1; 5:13) and interjections (4:13; 5:1), while aphorisms often close off a section; see also Varner, *New Perspective*, 34–37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> See Allison, *James*, who only differs in maintaining 3:13-18 and 4:1-12 as separate sections. I will follow Johnson, "James 3:13-4:10", with his structure for this passage. For a comparison, see the list of structures in McKnight, *James*, 50–55.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Because I will follow thematic indicators, I will at times treat one or two verses away from their immediate context such as 4:11-12 and 5:12 which I will include in chapter eight where I deal with controlling the tongue.
 <sup>92</sup> See Fred O. Francis, "Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and 1 John," *ZNW* 61, no. 1–2 (January 1, 1970): 110–26. Davids, *Epistle of James*, 24–28, adopted and further developed this

match this double opening.<sup>93</sup> What is clear is that having introduced a theme in the first chapter, James develops this in a much more expansive way than in its first mention, sometimes in a different context.<sup>94</sup> I will follow Cynthia Westfall's more recent analysis that sets 1:2-18 and 1:19-27 as the two main sections of James 1, although within each of these larger units there are subsections that introduce material to be dealt with later.<sup>95</sup> Thus, rather than move sequentially through the letter, I will investigate the missional dimension of each theme introduced in James 1 alongside the subsequent material related to this in the rest of the letter. I will briefly outline this here, providing further justification when I deal with the sections themselves.

The opening subsection of the letter is 1:2-4, which focuses on perfection through perseverance in trials. This is clearly revisited through lexical and thematic parallels in 1:12-15 and the strong ties between 1:13-15 and 1:17-18 mean that it is preferable to extend this theme to verse 18.<sup>96</sup> The end of the letter also contains general exhortations to perseverance in the midst of trials (5:7-11) and then a very practical section on what actions to take within the community for the very specific trials of sorrow, sickness and sin (5:13-18),<sup>97</sup> and so I will consider these sections together in chapter five.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> See, for example, Davids, *Epistle of James*, 24–28. There is no obvious correspondence between 1:5-8 and 1:19-21 nor between 1:9-11 and 1:22-25. His structure for the whole letter also subsumes too much under individual headings.

<sup>94</sup> Watson, "Assessment," 118–19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> Cynthia Long Westfall, "Mapping the Text: How Discourse Analysis Helps Reveal the Way through James," in Dvorak and Dawson, eds, *Epistle of James*, 11–44; cf. Cheung, *Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics*, 66–67. Several commentators view 1:18/19a as the end of the introduction. See, e.g., Martin, *James*, cii–civ; Frankenmolle, 1990, cited in McKnight, *James*, 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Both passages focus on a right understanding of God and use birth language. See also Westfall, "Mapping the Text," 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> The letter closing provides concrete examples of the πειρασμοὶ ποικίλοι of 1:2, setting these within an eschatological framework. On this see Penner, *James and Eschatology*, 211–12, although he views 4:6-5:20 as the letter ending. However, this ignores the coherence of 4:1-10 and makes the framework almost half of the letter; Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 70, lists eight lexical or thematic connections between 1:2-25 and 5:7-20 and of these, seven come from 1:2-4, 12 and 13-18.

Perfection through trials is closely related to the need for wisdom (1:5-8) which is the God-given means of sustaining trials and moving towards wholeness. This leads to a sharp contrast between the person who receives wisdom from God (thus moving towards wholeness) and the divided person, the 'double-souled man' ( $\dot{\alpha}\nu\dot{\eta}\rho$   $\delta i\psi\nu\chi\sigma$ , 1:8) who will not receive anything from God. Wisdom is treated more fully in 3:13-18, and here, the fruit associated with wisdom from above and the fruit of 'soulish and devilish wisdom' (3:17) are contrasted and linked to the community strife outlined in 4:1-10, at the heart of which are again the 'double-souled' ( $\delta i\psi\nu\chi\sigma$ , 4:8) who fail to receive what they ask for (4:2-3). These juxtaposed sections will provide the material for chapter six in which I will focus on the contrast between wisdom and the 'double-souled.'

The third subsection of James 1 introduces the topic of the destitute and the rich (1:9-11) with a powerful reversal theme that taps into the overarching mission of God. The right treatment of the destitute and warnings against greed are central to James' ethic and are picked up again in 2:1-13 and 4:13-5:6 (examples of which are given in 1:27 and 2:15-16). These sections will form the basis for chapter seven which explores the need for holistic mission, a concept I will define further there.

Thus far I have dealt with the subsections from 1:2-18 but it is less straightforward to untangle 1:19-27. However, two new themes are introduced and developed extensively later in the letter and so I will focus on these in chapter eight. The first of these is control of the tongue (1:19, 26) which is extended in 3:1-12 (and in the transition sections 4:11-12 and 5:12) and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> As Marie E. Isaacs, "Suffering in the Lives of Christians: James 1:2-19A," *RevExp* 97, no. 2 (March 1, 2000): 186–87 notes, these are "not infrequently brought together in Jewish writings."

second is the need to be doers of the word rather than hearers only (1:22-25), which finds further expression in 2:14-26.<sup>99</sup>

From this brief structure it is apparent that James frames his letter as a kind of 'two-ways' teaching. 100 Even the address has a metaphorically negative picture (diaspora) alongside a positive picture (twelve tribes) 101 and the main theme of perfection through trials is contrasted with death through giving in to temptation (1:2-4; 13-15). Moreover, within each section James often uses contrasts to make his point. 102 My focus will not be on the dichotomies *per se*, but they do provide, as Tollefson notes, a way of clarifying the prominent themes in the letter, 103 which as Lockett further argues, helps 'pay attention to the persuasive aims of the letter embedded in the matrix of contrasts. 104 This also provides the rationale for considering 1:1 and 5:19-20 together in chapter four, as a suitable frame for the letter since the call to return the wanderer picks up on some of the negative elements of diaspora, as well as challenges the reader to be active in the twelve-tribe restoration. 105

#### **Summary**

Thus far I have introduced my reasons for investigating James from the perspective of mission and traced some of the recent developments in the introductory issues regarding the letter such

<sup>99</sup> Other ways of dividing the text could be followed and in the end no one scheme can capture all the many connections between the sections. For example, prayer could be treated separately matching 1:5-8 with 5:13-18 (cf. 4:2-3) and the description of temptation and desire (1:13-15) also has correspondences with 4:1-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> There are different ways of expressing this. For example, Johnson, *Letter of James*, 14, has friendship with the world/friendship with God; Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness," 72, prefers purity/pollution; Kenneth D. Tollefson, "The Epistle of James as Dialectical Discourse," *BTB* 27, no. 2 (May 1, 1997): 62–69, views the whole letter as a "dialectic discourse" but tends to overdo the dualism, finding a dualism in every section and subsection; Timothy B. Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora: Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James*, SBLDS 144 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), is open to the same criticism. As a case in point, his insistence on contrasts in meaning lead him to understand 1:2-4 as the mistaken theology of the audience that James corrects in 1:5-8 which seems a highly unnatural way to read it (see pp. 58-72).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> I will expand more on these in chapter four, where we will see that diaspora is not totally negative.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Darian R. Lockett, "Structure or Communicative Strategy? The 'Two Ways' Motif in James' Theological Instruction," *Neot* 42, no. 2 (2008): 276–85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Tollefson, "Dialectical Discourse," 63.

<sup>104</sup> Lockett, "Two Ways Motif," 272.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Cf. Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora*, 45–53. I do not follow his full metaphorical reading of diaspora which I will explain further in chapter four.

as authorship, audience, genre and structure. While there is still a lack of consensus in these areas, there is agreement that the teaching in the letter is related to James the brother of Jesus and I will follow the view presented above that the letter is a *diasporabrief*<sup>106</sup> sent to Judean Christ-followers with elements of wisdom teaching and paraenesis. Advances in the study of genre show that there is a purpose behind the letter that I will argue is full of missional significance, while the studies on structure have enabled me to propose a suitable outline for my own investigation.

Notable throughout my discussion on the introductory matters is the lack of interest in mission as a hermeneutical tool in the scholarship I have begun to draw on. In the next chapter I will show how James has been neglected by mission literature and confirm that mission remains a neglected field in Jacobean scholarship. In chapter three I will present the method for this study in greater detail before engaging with the text of James in the following chapters as per the outline above. As a final introductory note, my reading of James will be based on the Greek NA28 text and translations will follow closely the NRSV.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> See fn. 72 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> I will only deal with textual variants where these significantly affect my reading. The NA28 text is based on the 2nd ed of the ECM. See Peter J. Gurry and Tommy Wasserman, "Textual Criticism and the *Editio Critica Maior* of James," in Mason and Lockett, eds, *Epistle of James*, 209–29, who evaluate this positively in the case of James. They also provide an explanation of some of the changes from the NA27. Cf. Andrew Bowden, "James 1:20-27: A Text-Critical Analysis Interacting with the New Nestle-Aland Edition" (ISBL 2013, St. Andrews, 2013).

## **CHAPTER 2: THE NEGLECT OF JAMES IN MISSION LITERATURE**

If the relative neglect of James in biblical scholarship has begun to be redressed, we must ask if this is also true for Mission Literature (henceforth ML). By ML, I mean literature that investigates what the Bible says about mission, such as biblical bases of mission, research in mission in the New Testament (NT), theologies of mission, investigations of particular themes in mission or a particular corpus or passage from the perspective of mission. There are several exceptions to this, as we shall see, but in this chapter I will demonstrate that in most ML, James appears as little more than a footnote, particularly in ML that holds to a narrow definition of mission. Even in the few studies that approach James using the broader definition introduced in chapter one, there remains much to be said from a missional perspective.

Although this is beyond the scope of this chapter, I will also point out that just as ML has neglected James, so recent scholarship has neglected mission as a hermeneutical tool, but nonetheless many of these studies will be indispensable for a missional reading. Indeed, as we will see, one of the advantages of applying a missional hermeneutic to a text (in contrast to the haphazard approach of some ML) is that it explicitly acknowledges its dependence on and need for rigorous grammatical historical studies and other academic approaches as foundational to taking the text seriously.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> I will not include the latter two types of study unless they specifically deal with James (either directly or as part of a corpus that includes James i.e. the General/Catholic Epistles).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> I will discuss this further in the next chapter.

#### JAMES AS A FOOTNOTE IN MISSION LITERATURE

To claim that James is a footnote in mission literature is not meant to be disparaging of ML in general. This reflects two points I have noted already: first, James has only recently benefited from a resurgence of interest on the part of biblical scholars, and second, the letter lacks concepts generally associated with mission. However, one minor critique will be apparent, and that is where works that purport to offer a 'biblical basis' or NT perspective on mission fail to engage at all with James. In these cases there ought to be at least some effort made to incorporate the voice of James into the discussion. On occasion I will also highlight inappropriate uses of James.

Since I cannot give an exhaustive survey here, I will include a representation of major introductory level texts, monographs and journal articles, particularly those that claim to provide a biblical or NT basis for, or perspective on, mission. <sup>111</sup> I will divide my study between a more traditional approach to mission and the newer approach I am advocating for, as already defined in the previous chapter. <sup>112</sup> Where a more sustained approach to James is taken, I will engage with this briefly here, saving the majority of interaction for the latter part of this thesis that has my own missional reading of the text. At the time of writing, this is limited to five chapter-length studies on James, two of which are by authors using an explicitly missional approach.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> To this it is also only fair to acknowledge the obvious point that James is a relatively short epistle (108 verses) and so it is unsurprisingly outweighed by references to and citations from the Pauline corpus and Lukan and Johannine writings in ML. However, even comparable works such as 1 Peter generally tend to receive more attention than James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> It would be impossible and unnecessary to include works that focus exclusively on a text or corpus that does not include James, although there may be some engagement with our text in these. See for example, Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission*, GOCS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015). The fact that he has two citations from James (p.217, 220) ironically means it has more interaction with the letter than some ML that pretends to give a NT perspective on mission.

<sup>112</sup> See also in much more detail Chapter 3.

#### James in Traditional ML

In general, regardless of when such studies were written, traditional ML neglects James and often only mentions one or two isolated verses. Several classic works from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century show this tendency, such as that by J. Bashford, and H. Kraemer which ignore James altogether, while Henry Lapham's *The Bible as Missionary Handbook* only has two footnotes referencing James. However, both these references pick up on themes that will be reiterated in other ML (James' approach to the poor and the role of Rahab) and which I will develop further in my own reading. 115

Robert Glover produced two articles seeking to provide a biblical basis for missions, <sup>116</sup> which then formed the first part of a book called *The Bible Basis of Missions*. Although Glover simply admits that James is beyond the scope of his study, he rightly suggests that for James and the other NT books he was unable to include, 'their true meaning can be fully apprehended only as they are read and interpreted in the light of their original character as missionary letters or documents.' <sup>117</sup> In the rest of the book, Glover's only citations from the epistle are a passing reference to God's care for the poor (Jas 2:5) and to the need for prayer (5:16) since this is the only way for mission to be effective, <sup>118</sup> something of a leap from this reference. <sup>119</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Many of the sources surveyed do not have a Scripture Index so it may be possible that one or two references have been missed. However, this does not affect the overall picture that James is cited infrequently, particularly compared with other NT documents.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> J. W. Bashford, *God's Missionary Plan for the World* (London: Robert Culley, c1910); H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in A Non-Christian World* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1956); Henry A. Lapham, *The Bible as Missionary Handbook* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1925), 32, 112. The references are Jas 2:25 and 2:5, respectively.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> See the chapters on "Destitution and Wealth" and "Faith and Works" respectively. At least in his footnote on Rahab, Lapham, *The Bible as Missionary Handbook*, 32, opens the discussion on her inclusion in the letter even as a non-Israelite and prostitute.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Robert Hall Glover, "The Bible and Missions, 1. The Missionary Character of the Scriptures," *BibSac* 93, no. 369 (January 1, 1936): 101–9; Robert Hall Glover, "The Bible and Missions, 2. The Missionary Heart of the New Testament," *BibSac* 93, no. 370 (April 1, 1936): 193–200.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Robert Hall Glover, *The Bible Basis of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1946), 28–29. This premise is a significant insight that is crucial to a missional reading and so I will return to this in the next chapter.

<sup>118</sup> Glover, *The Bible Basis of Missions*, 148, 173. He does note that James goes beyond the OT narrative in specifying the period of drought as three and a half years and that it was Elijah's prayers that both caused the drought to begin and end. However, he makes no attempt to explain the origin of this tradition. See further chapter five.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> As we will see in chapter seven, poverty (destitution) in James provides a rich missional theme.

As missiology developed in the second half of the twentieth century, more extensive theologies of mission were produced. However, even in these there is a lack of engagement with James. *The Theology of the Christian Mission* edited by Gerald Anderson and Johannes Blauw's significant *The Missionary Nature of the Church*, both contain chapters dedicated to NT perspectives on mission without mentioning James. <sup>120</sup> D. T. Niles does at least cite James and taps into two themes that will be explored in more depth by other writers in ML, and indeed will provide further reflection in my own study, although again there is a substantial leap straight from the letter to his conclusions regarding the identity of the church (the firstfruits of creation cf. Jas 1:18) and the mission of the church (to engage in prayer and healing ministry cf. Jas 5:14-15). <sup>121</sup>

One of the most notable works of the time is Ferdinand Hahn's *Mission in the New Testament* which views James as irrelevant to mission because as a post-Pauline document it reflects a later period in the early church when there was a reduced emphasis on mission and proclamation. Despite the fine scholarship there are several further debatable claims concerning the situation of James, and a reliance on Dibelius' description of the genre of James as paraenesis, thus indicating a focus on exclusively internal concerns. Even if this were the case, a missional reading incorporates such concerns where these build the missional

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *The Theology of the Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1961); Johannes Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962). Admittedly, Blauw's excellent work was more concerned with a survey of "recent" scholarship (i.e. the thirty years previous to his study) rather than an in-depth engagement with biblical texts. However, that James does not even appear at all in such a survey confirms the picture I am presenting here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> D. T. Niles, *Upon the Earth: The Mission of God and the Missionary Enterprise of the Churches* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962), 74, 76. Again, it is not that these conclusions are necessarily wrong but there is much exegetical work that is passed over, particularly for understanding what James means by "firstfruits."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 44, 137–39 (first published in German in 1963).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, 139, 44, suggests that the designation of church leaders as "elders" reflects a later institutionalised stage and that their praying for the sick indicates a cessation of the commission to preach and heal the sick (cf. Lk 10:9-11) respectively. For arguments that both these issues may be located in an early church setting, see Davids, *Epistle of James*, 192–94; and McKnight, *James*, 436–39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, 139. See the discussion on genre in the previous chapter.

identity of the audience and so this by itself is not reason enough to dismiss the letter. Hahn is not alone in ignoring James for this latter reason and is unfortunately joined in this by Andreas Köstenberger who specifically focuses on mission in the General Epistles. 125

Several other important works also ignore James completely such as John Stott's *Christian Mission in the Modern World* and Johannes Verkuyl's *Contemporary Missiology*, as do the studies of Lucien Legrand and Lesslie Newbigin. <sup>126</sup> Even those that contain a few citations from James show little exegesis of the text or awareness of the context, among which are works by J. Herbert Kane, M. Thomas Starkes, Richard De Ridder and Andrew Kirk. <sup>127</sup> This is particularly surprising in the case of De Ridder since he explicitly considers diaspora but relegates James 1:1 to a footnote in this context and two other brief mentions. <sup>128</sup> David Burnett takes James 4:2 completely out of context as evidence that much of human suffering is caused by human wickedness as desires run out of control. <sup>129</sup>

Slightly more interaction is found in George Peters' *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, although several citations are tenuous.<sup>130</sup> He makes the unwarranted claim that the expression 'Lord of Glory' (2:1) means that the author of James had personally experienced the reality and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Mission in the General Epistles," in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William J. Larkin and Joel F. Williams, ASMS 27 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1998), 190. This is despite acknowledging the general neglect of these letters in mission literature. There is no further reference to James in the whole book.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975); Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978); Lucien Legrand, *Unity and Plurality: Mission in the Bible*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1990); Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (London: SPCK, 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> J. Herbert Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 97, 307, 314, (he briefly notes in passing Jas 1:17; 5:14-15; 5:16); M. Thomas Starkes, *The Foundation for Missions* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1981), 170–71, (he only considers Jas 1:1-11 as a passage for meditation); Richard De Ridder, *Discipling the Nations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975), 10, 123, 216; J. A. Kirk, *What Is Mission?: Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999), 124, (he connects Jas 1:26-27 and 1:17 as evidence that other religions express something of who God is since they contain truth and goodness).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> De Ridder, *Discipling the Nations*, 10 fn. 34 and see the previous note.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> David Burnett, *The Healing of the Nations: The Biblical Basis of the Mission of God*, Revised (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 94. While this may be true, James does not present it as a universal principle but rather as an admonition to his hearers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 245–46, 339. His other references are even more incidental.

glory of the resurrected Jesus and further that the prohibition against partiality in this verse was indicative of the apostolic position of the universality of salvation and its availability to the gentiles. He also argues that although James 'neglects to uphold' the centrality of the cross and the resurrection, his 'practical exhortations are built upon it (Jas 5:7-11)' a point that could perhaps be inferred from the expected  $\pi\alpha\rho\sigma\sigma'$  of the Lord (5:7-8) but which is by no means clear. 133

Several authors draw on James in their treatments of poverty and social justice. Orlando Costas cites Jas 1:26-27 and argues that James focuses on the social dimensions of θρησκεία, rather than the cultic, and defines it in terms of the 'horizontal' relationships found with neighbour, widow and orphan. As we shall see below, this passage is explored in more depth by Mariam Kamell and will also provide several areas for consideration in my own reading. Costas argues that 'the practice of justice and the condemnation of injustice are, according to James, the evidence par excellence of one's justification (cf. James 2:14ff), 9et neither of these are particularly evident from the passage cited.

For the latter, perhaps slightly more appropriate would have been Jas 5:1-6 which Waldron Scott uses to critique Western affluence and how this distorts the church's mission. This will certainly be a significant theme I will develop further and is picked up again briefly by William Dyrness who describes James as a prophetic voice in the early church calling for

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 141–43. Whether these claims are true or not is beside the point. They simply cannot be derived from this verse.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions, 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> It seems likely that 'Lord' here refers to the return of Christ, but the latter half of the passage focuses on the prophets and Job as exemplars of perseverance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> Orlando E. Costas, *The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World* (London: Tyndale House, 1974), 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> See especially chapters seven and eight.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> Costas, A Shattering Critique, 66. (He also briefly cites Jas 1:15 on p.67).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Waldron Scott, *Bring Forth Justice: A Contemporary Perspective on Mission* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980), 154, makes a good point but does little to study the passage in its context.

acts of mercy as markers of genuine faith.<sup>138</sup> Likewise, Jonathan Bonk and Peter Cotterell<sup>139</sup> both note the way James tends to favour the poor over the rich and how identification with the poor is important in mission.<sup>140</sup> Bonk goes as far as labelling Jas 5:1-6 under 'New Testament teaching which the Rich find disturbing.'<sup>141</sup> However, neither author notes the rhetorical elements of James' teaching on the rich, something I will explore more fully in chapter seven.

The longest interactions (continuing with this same theme) are from authors writing from within an Asian context. Joseph Velamkunnel dedicates a page and a half to the letter of James in his chapter on 'New Testament Approaches to Social Problems.' He finds agreement in the letter with several NT themes (none of which are explained in much detail) and also argues that there is a vocal denunciation of discrimination against the poor and of the exploitative rich which flows from the OT prophetic denunciation of similar abuses. While he sees this as an improvement on Paul's less challenging tone which simply asks the rich to be generous, he also takes issue with James for being 'inhibited by apocalyptic passivism' and relying on 'divine judgment' rather redressing the situation. His study certainly raises issues that I will address, but ultimately fails to delve very deeply into the context of James that would have uncovered missional themes from areas of the letter's theology that he finds fault with.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> William A. Dyrness, *Let The Earth Rejoice!: A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983), 165–66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem*, ASMS 15 (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991); Peter Cotterell, *Mission and Meaninglessness: The Good News in a World of Suffering and Disorder* (London: SPCK, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> See Bonk, *Missions and Money*, 102–3; Cotterell, *Mission and Meaninglessness*, 205–6. There are a few other incidental notes to James in both works.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Bonk, *Missions and Money*, 97–106. He also cites here Jas 1:27 and 2:19 to show that mission requires costly personal identification with the poor.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Joseph Velamkunnel, "New Testament Approaches to Social Problems," in *Bible and Mission in India Today*, ed. Jacob Kavunkal and F. Hrangkhuma (Bombay: St. Pauls, 1993), 240–41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Velamkunnel, "Social Problems," 240.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Velamkunnel, "Social Problems," 241. It is beyond the scope of this study to consider his treatment of Paul, but at least as far as it intersects with James it shows a superficial engagement. I will briefly return to this in chapter seven.

Roger Hedlund, writing from the same context, dedicates just over two pages to James with regard to social action as part of a chapter on the 'Neglected General Letters.' <sup>145</sup> He identifies James' readers as a church of the poor and suggests that the letter warns the rich (1:10-11) and reminds them of the responsibility implied by their wealth (1:17-18, 22, 27). <sup>146</sup> While some of his ideas have some traction, he ignores that James encourages his audience to care *for* the poor so they themselves cannot all be poor, and he tends to use references somewhat inappropriately. <sup>147</sup> It is not clear that any of the verses cited above are only responsibilities of the rich (or even have anything to do with the topic at hand, e.g., 1:17-18). Some of his application is contextual such as a critique of the Hindu caste system from James 2:1-7, but he also notes the more general need for the practical outworking of faith and love in deeds of mercy (2:12-13, 15, 19). <sup>148</sup> He concludes, 'Here is the case for Christian involvement in society. According to James, Christian social responsibility is a demand of the gospel (2:24). <sup>149</sup> These conclusions are certainly apropos as we will see later, even if arrived at with some superficial (or non-existent) exegesis, a pattern that continues in the remainder of his interaction with James. <sup>150</sup>

I will close this section with Donald Senior and Carrol Stuhlmueller's highly regarded *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, since it typifies the kind of approach to James taken by those purporting to give a biblical basis for mission (or a NT basis).<sup>151</sup> Having dealt with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> Roger E. Hedlund, *The Mission of the Church in the World: A Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 254–56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Hedlund, The Mission of the Church, 254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> See further the discussion in chapter seven.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Hedlund, The Mission of the Church, 255.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Hedlund. The Mission of the Church, 255.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> Hedlund, *The Mission of the Church*, 255–56. For example, Hedlund roots the ills of society in selfishness and jealousy based on Jas 3:14-16 and 4:3 yet this is clearly community admonition. He also tends to apply passages without any exegesis of the verses in question, although I find myself in agreement with many of his conclusions. <sup>151</sup> Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1983). This standard textbook on theology could also have been included in the next section since their approach begins to incorporate some of the newer ways of understanding mission. See also Donald Senior, "The Struggle to Be Universal: Mission as Vantage Point for New Testament Investigation," *CBQ* 46, no. 1 (January 1, 1984): 63–81;

mission in the OT and several NT perspectives, including Pauline, Matthean, Lukan and Johanine theologies of mission, their last chapter deals briefly with the remaining books of the NT. However, even here, any contribution James may make to a biblical perspective on mission is marginalised as offering 'little material that bears directly on the issue of mission.' <sup>152</sup> Picking up very briefly on the theme of faith being accompanied by deeds, they admit that more could be drawn out as regards mission. It is unfortunate that they do not pursue this because in their words 'the author [of James] does not reflect explicitly on the witness value of such good deeds.' <sup>153</sup> It is indeed this kind of conclusion that reveals some of the short comings of traditional ML and confirms the need for a new approach.

Thus far then I have demonstrated that James is a largely ignored text in ML. It is often completely overlooked, even in the cases where James ought to be included as part of the corpus under consideration. Sometimes a few verses are treated in isolation with little or no awareness of debates that affect how the verses are understood, which is also true in some of the slightly longer studies that include James. It remains to be seen how the picture changes, if at all, with a survey of more recent mission theologies that tend to have a broader definition of mission.

### James in Recent ML

With the advent of understanding mission in terms of the mission of God, and thereby rooting the Church's mission in his purposes to redeem the world, the study of missions embraced a broader approach to Scripture that went beyond looking for scriptural justification for missionary activity.<sup>154</sup> Although not all the authors considered here consciously adopt a missional hermeneutic, most have been influenced by this trend and so it would be hoped that

*idem*, "Correlating Images of Church and Images of Mission in the New Testament," *Missiology* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 1995): 3–16. Senior does not mention James in these.

<sup>152</sup> Senior and Stuhlmueller, The Biblical Foundations for Mission, 309.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> Senior and Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 309.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> For more detail see the next chapter.

there is more engagement with James in the ML surveyed. As we will see, the results are mixed but encouragingly two authors explicitly take a missional approach (although even here, there is a discrepancy in what is meant by this) but only in chapter length studies.

It is appropriate that I begin my survey with David Bosch, one of the most renowned missiologists of the twentieth century, a prolific author and one of the foremost proponents of this broader approach to mission. <sup>155</sup> It would be impossible to consider all his works, many of which deal with developments in mission theology or provide penetrating critiques of contemporary mission practice, <sup>156</sup> but at least two of his studies aim to provide biblical foundations for mission. In *Witness to the World* he only cites one reference from James, briefly noting the use of  $\dot{\alpha}\pi\alpha\rho\chi\dot{\eta}$  as a term for the church (1:18), which, he suggests, indicates the advent of a new age, but not its consummation. <sup>157</sup> In *Transforming Mission*, Bosch's extremely well-regarded *magnum opus*, there is no reference whatsoever to the epistle of James. <sup>158</sup> This has been more often critiqued for ignoring the OT, <sup>159</sup> but to this may be added the critique that Bosch focusses on only three NT voices, those of Matthew, Luke and Paul. These are for him 'sub-genres of the early Christian missionary paradigm' but are nonetheless 'representative of

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about this verse are superficial as I will show later.

<sup>155</sup> See particularly, David J. Bosch, "An Emerging Paradigm for Mission," *Missiology* 11, no. 4 (October 1, 1983): 485–510; *idem*, "Towards a Hermeneutic for 'Biblical Studies and Mission," *Mission Studies* 3, no. 2 (January 1, 1986): 65–79; *idem*, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, ASM 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991). Bosch's pioneering and importance in this field is widely recognised. See, e.g., Michael W. Goheen, "A Critical Examination of David Bosch's Missional Reading of Luke," in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, and Anthony C. Thiselton (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 229–64; and Germā Baqala, "The Biblical Narrative of the *Missio Dei*: Analysis of the Interpretive Framework of David Bosch's Missional Hermeneutic," *IBMR* 35, no. 3 (July 1, 2011): 153–56.

156 See, e.g., David J. Bosch, "Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission," in *Toward the Twenty First Century in Christian Mission*, ed. J.M. Phillips and R.T. Coote (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 175–92; *idem*, "The Vulnerability of Mission," *The Baptist Quarterly* 34, no. 8 (1992): 351–63; *idem*, "Salvation: A Missiological Perspective," *Ex Auditu* 5 (January 1, 1989): 139–57; *idem*, "Vision for Mission," *IRM* 76, no. 301 (January 1, 1987): 8–15; *idem*, "Hermeneutic"; *idem*, "The Scope of Mission," *IRM* 73, no. 289 (January 1, 1984): 17–32.

157 David J. Bosch, *Witness to The World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980), 65. Jas 1:18 is merely a supporting reference alongside others but such assumptions

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> See, inter alia, Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Place of Mission in New Testament Theology: An Attempt to Determine the Significance of Mission within the Scope of the New Testament's Message as a Whole," *Missiology* 27, no. 3 (July 1, 1999): 356–57.

first-century missionary thinking and practice.' It is unfortunate, although perhaps understandable, that he has limited his study to these voices thereby losing the distinctives of other texts such as James. 161

Several more recent works also follow this trend, and although have much to offer, fail to engage with James. Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra select passages from both the OT and NT, but none of these come from James, and there appear to be no citations of the epistle. Köstenberger and Peter O'Brien's helpful theology of mission has only one reference to James in a footnote despite the fact that they recognise that 'treatments of mission in the biblical writings tend to set aside the General Epistles and Revelation, because they do not seem to be directly concerned with mission if such is defined too narrowly.' In an attempt to remedy this they do consider Hebrews, 1 Peter and Revelation in some detail, and 2 Peter, Jude and 1-3 John briefly, yet James is the only letter omitted.

Likewise, Johannes Nissen judges James to be of no relevance to his study for the same reason that we saw earlier (its internal focus) although significantly he notes that the failure to find anything of relevance to mission may be due to defining mission too narrowly. It is unfortunate that he does not follow this through. His exclusion of the letter seems inconsistent given that his rationale for looking at 1 Peter and Revelation is 'because they have a number of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 54–55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> As it is, the book already runs to nearly 600 pages and is not intended as a full blown biblical (or even NT) basis for mission. His extensive scholarship also covers a detailed look at the historical paradigms of mission (including the Eastern Church and the medieval Roman Catholic) up to the 1980s, as well as developing a ground-breaking "Ecumenical Missionary Paradigm."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission: The Glory of Christ in All Time and Space*, BSTS (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003). They specifically choose passages that converge with the theme of "God's election of and glorification through his people" which certainly has some intersection with James, as we will see later.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Andreas J Köstenberger and Peter Thomas O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 227. The footnote on Jas is on p. 242 (fn. 33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 227. This chapter is expanded from Köstenberger, "Mission in the General Epistles." See fn. 125 of this thesis. Ironically they criticise Bosch for failing to mention Hebrews! (see fn. 2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> Johannes Nissen, *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives*, 4th ed. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007). The letter 'emphasizes internal congregational matters' (see above on Hahn). Yet Nissen is fully on board with the perspective of mission as defined by the *missio Dei*.

statements on the relation between Christians and the surrounding world' which arguably is true of James.<sup>166</sup> James is also neglected by several other works, including one by Dean Flemming, who expressly adopts a missional approach with several chapters on the NT, but fails to even cite a single verse from James.<sup>167</sup>

Limited mention of James is made by Arthur Glasser who traces the biblical story of God's mission through the framework of the Kingdom of God. He never develops arguments directly from James and his occasional citations are sometimes out of context, he does point out helpfully that mission should not follow patterns of OT conquest, although again his comments are not related directly to the text he draws upon (Jas 1:19-21). Surprisingly Glasser makes more use of James than does Edwin Schnabel's massive and impressive two volume work, *Early Christian Mission* of over 1500 pages, which only refers to James seven times, five of which are footnotes, and for several of these it is hard to see the connection, or if there even is one. The references are generally incidental with no substantial engagement with the letter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> Nissen, New Testament and Mission, 143. See, e.g., Jas 1:2, 27; 2:1-7; 3:9; 4:4-5, 13-17; 5:1-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone*, Christian Doctrine in Global Perspective (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); Rollin Gene Grams et al., eds., *Bible and Mission: A Conversation Between Biblical Studies and Missiology* (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2008); Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> Arthur F. Glasser, Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 106. A point in case is his inference from Jas 4:13-17 that the church ought to use time wisely for missional purposes. There is also no explanation as to how Jas 2:5 indicates that the apostles regarded their churches as "heirs to the promises made to Israel" (p. 225). Incidental references include Jas 3:9 (p. 36) and Jas 1:22 (p. 190).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 62, 77, 92. I will revisit this subject in chapter eight, although not based on this text.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission Volume One: Jesus and the Twelve* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission Volume Two: Paul and The Early Church*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Schnabel, *Paul and the Early Church*, 949, 1552, lists Jas 1:12 as evidence that missionaries are rewarded for their labour, although this is not at all the context in James. He also cites Jas 3:17 in fn. 13 as evidence for the good character of the apostles, again a claim that stretches James' purpose.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> Schnabel, *Paul and the Early Church*, 1582. In what must be an error, Jas 3:12 and 5:7-8 are listed as support to critique missionary church growth statistics (based on the mention of fruit [fn. 44] and harvest [fn. 45] in these verses). Yet the references to James have nothing to do with such arguments.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> For the remaining incidental citations, see Schnabel, *Jesus and the Twelve*, 406, 518 fn. 329; Schnabel, *Paul and the Early Church*, 1565 fn. 4.

Several authors make use of James in passing, much as Glasser does. Some of these simply do not engage enough with the text of James to be useful but others will provide some helpful starting points for further consideration. Christopher Wright's *The Mission of God*, <sup>175</sup> a key text for understanding a missional hermeneutic, briefly enters the fray (and therefore with insufficient depth) on the differences between the Pauline and Jacobean uses of the Abraham tradition<sup>176</sup> and touches on the incongruence of the church proclaiming a message that it fails to live out.<sup>177</sup> More usefully he makes some important points to do with holistic mission and the church's prophetic role that will inform my study when I consider poverty and wealth in chapter seven.<sup>178</sup> In a similar vein Christopher Hays provides some excellent (albeit brief) interaction with James in his chapter on 'Provision for the Poor and the Mission of the Church' that I will have occasion to draw on.<sup>179</sup>

Another prominent author in missional hermeneutics, Michael Goheen, has two works that make minimal use of James, *A Light to the Nations*<sup>180</sup> and *Introducing Christian Missions*. In the former he simply states that the church appropriates the OT designation for Israel as the twelve tribes (Jas 1:1)<sup>182</sup> and in both he notes the eschatological designation of the church as 'firstfruits' (1:18) which for him are evidence of the church's missional identity. Although his points may be valid (based on more detailed argument from other Scriptures) the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> Wright, The Mission of God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 207.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 122, 321. He cites Jas 2:19 and 3:10-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 312; See also Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 157, 195, a follow up volume at a more popular level that reiterates some of these points.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> Christopher M. Hays, "Provision for the Poor and the Mission of the Church: Ancient Appeals and Contemporary Viability," in *Sensitivity Towards Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship Between Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, ed. Jacobus Kok et al., WUNT, II/364 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 569–602. His references to James are 2:15-17 (p. 572) and Jas 5:1-6 (p. 579). There is a whole chapter in this same volume dedicated to James which I will consider later.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Michael W. Goheen, *A Light To The Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> Michael W. Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History, and Issues* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> Goheen, A Light to the Nations, 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> Goheen, Introducing Christian Mission Today, 64; Goheen, A Light to the Nations, 134, 165.

interaction with James ignores the debates around interpreting both these verses and how they apply to the church.<sup>184</sup>

There is also surprisingly little engagement with James in a chapter by Cynthia Westfall on 'The Hebrew Mission: Voices from the Margin?' looking at mission in what she terms the Hebrew Christian corpus, in which she explicitly includes James. Having set the context of James as internal and external conflict (based on Jas 2:1-17; 5:1-6, 7-11) which probably included conflict with Paul or his followers (2:14-26), he relates (and restricts) the contribution of James to the mission of the early church as one of setting values (much as a modern business would have their own mission, vision and values). Although I cannot fault her overall conclusion that for James, 'faithful righteous actions speak louder than orthodox confessions (Jas 2:18-19), his rather limits the contribution of James to mission, although it is a theme that invites further development.

I finish this part of the survey by noting that several authors that I will draw on when considering a missional hermeneutic make no reference to James that I could find. This is partly due to the reasons already stated, but also because many of these works focus more on methodology. <sup>190</sup> In sum, we have seen that generally speaking, both in older approaches and newer approaches to mission, there is a tendency to neglect James as a dialogue partner in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> See Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 100, 141–42, for his other two citations which are even more tangential.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> Cynthia Long Westfall, "The Hebrew Mission: Voices from the Margin?," in *Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations and New Testament Developments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall, McMNTS (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 187–207. She designates as "Hebrew voices" James, the Johanine Epistles, Hebrews and the rest of the General Epistles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>186</sup> Westfall, "Hebrew Mission," 191.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>187</sup> Westfall, "Hebrew Mission," 201. She explains her approach on pp. 187-188 but barely mentions James beyond the note above and the section on values.

<sup>188</sup> Westfall, "Hebrew Mission," 201.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>189</sup> See chapter eight of this study.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> See, inter alia, Michael W. Goheen, "The Urgency of Reading the Bible as One Story," *ThTo* 64, no. 4 (January 1, 2008): 469–83; Michael D. Barram, "The Bible, Mission, and Social Location: Towards a Missional Hermeneutic," *Int* 61, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 42–58; Darrell L. Guder, "Missional Hermeneutics: The Missional Authority of Scripture," *MFAR* 15 (2007): 106–22; Darrell L. Guder, "Missional Hermeneutics: The Missional Vocation of the Congregation - and How Scripture Shapes That Calling," *MFAR* 15 (2007): 125–43.

mission, and thus often James appears as little more than a footnote. However, more recently, several articles and chapter-length works have engaged with James.

# **Extended Treatments of James: Towards a Missional Reading of James**

The recent growth of interest in James has converged with the development of a missional hermeneutic which is reflected by the fact that two authors engage with the letter from a specifically missional perspective, while three other works considered here have their own particular focus. I will only provide a brief overview here since I will engage with much of this material subsequently. What will emerge from this survey is that there is certainly justification for engaging with James through the lens of mission, but that the literature here only begins this process and does not pay sufficient attention to the whole text of James or to the full depth of a missional hermeneutic. <sup>191</sup> I will look at these in order of publication which also demonstrates the move towards an explicitly missional hermeneutic with the final study beginning to explore James in similar ways to which I will advocate in my next chapter.

Wiard Popkes, 'The Mission of James in His Time'

This first work is something of an anomaly in that, despite its title, it should perhaps not be considered in a survey on ML.<sup>192</sup> It is part of a book collection of essays on James in which Popkes' study is the only chapter that actually concentrates on mission and the letter of James.<sup>193</sup> Yet even here there is a disjunction with ML, because mission for Popkes is solely about James' communicative purpose and strategy to address the perceived need of the audience,<sup>194</sup> and he suggests that 'James' mission concentrates on Christian anthropology in its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> This is to be expected given that these are chapter or article length studies.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> Wiard Popkes, "The Mission of James in His Time," in Chilton and Neusner, eds, *Brother of Jesus*, 88–99. However, given the title, some consideration was required.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>193</sup> Painter, "Footprints," 35, (a chapter in the same volume) mentions the mission of James but this refers to James as the leader of the Jerusalem church, not the epistle.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>194</sup> Popkes, "Mission of James," 88–89.

social dimension.' Thus although he appears to embrace a broader definition of mission, since this is not connected to God's mission it has little in common with a missional reading or indeed with any other ML. 196

This focus, while valid in itself, misses the opportunity for missional reflection and sometimes appears to distort the text. The call to "count it all joy" (1:2) can hardly only be considered an 'appeal to the emotions' (in fact it would seem to be the opposite) or just good psychology.<sup>197</sup> As I will show later, the opening of the letter is deeply linked to God's own mission and to the missional formation of the audience.<sup>198</sup> Indeed, Popkes at times touches on this, noting that James' overriding goal is expressed in 5:19-20 as saving others from the wrong path and winning them for "the truth."<sup>199</sup> He concludes, 'In all his attempts to correct wrong ideas, attitudes and modes of behaviour, James's mission is deeply positive, motivated by his desire that his readers reach the goal of "perfection" (1:4), which "God has promised to those who love him" (1:12; cf. 2:5).'<sup>200</sup> This again will have missional implications which will become evident in subsequent chapters. Thus, although Popkes' study has some helpful insights, its failure to connect mission with God's redemptive purposes means that it does not add much to this survey of ML and so I will not go into more detail.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> Popkes, "Mission of James," 95. This also seems to downplay some of the cosmological elements of James such as the presence of demons and the devil (2:19; 4:7) and also too quickly dismisses problems that arise from the faith commitment of the recipients.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>196</sup> It is also worth noting here the follow up publication, Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul: Tensions in Early Christianity*, NovTSup 115 (Leiden: Brill, 2013). This only has one chapter that connects mission to James by John Painter, entitled "James and Peter: Models of Leadership and Mission," (pp. 143–209). However, this actually focuses on the leadership of the character of James as portrayed in Acts and Galatians and so disappointingly does not engage with the letter of James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>197</sup> Popkes, "Mission of James," 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> See chapter five.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>199</sup> Popkes, "Mission of James," 95. As we will see, this is a missional theme in James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> Popkes, "Mission of James," 96.

# E. C. Orsmond and Johan Botha, Missionary Perspectives in the Letter of James

Orsmond and Botha contribute a chapter to a NT perspective on mission, applying insights from the letter to current mission practice by focussing on the contexts of displacement and wealth that they believe form the background to James. <sup>201</sup> They suggest the letter is addressed to believers who had fled Jerusalem sometime in the mid to late first century and was written after the destruction of the Temple when 'ethics replaced religious rituals.' <sup>202</sup> They arrange their discussion around the themes of wisdom, practical faith, the temporariness of wealth, and prayer and pastoral care in difficult circumstances, and conclude with an application to the church's mission today.

Their first section expands on the description of heavenly wisdom (Jas 3:17) and uses this as an outline of ideal Christian behaviour. Rather strangely they suggest that 'the "wisdom that comes from heaven" (v. 17) puts one in the right relation with God...' and argue that another characteristic of divine wisdom 'is to know your place within God's creation.' Their next section provides a useful outline of how James portrays faith in action as essential to true religion, as they call it, 'faith-as-action.' This involves meeting the basic needs of the poor (2:14-26) but also, they suggest, incorporates waiting as an act of faith (5:7-11). Asking the question 'Is material wealth the final answer?' they then move on to deal with the poverty of the displaced believers and their 'idealisation of rich people's situation.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> E. C. Orsmond and Johan Botha, "Missionary Perspectives in the Letter of James," in *Missionary Perspectives in the New Testament: Pictures from Chosen New Testament Literature*, ed. Johann Du Plessis, E. C. Orsmond, and H. J. Van Deventer (Wellington: Bible Media, 2009), 261–71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 261–62. This is similar to the context of Matthew in their opinion and we will indeed see several correspondences with the gospel. Their dating is, however, inconsistent with their view that it was written by the "Apostle James." See the previous chapter on authorship.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 264.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> On the use of the term 'religion' (translating θρησκεία) see chapter eight.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 265.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 266.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 266–67.

There is little engagement with literature on the identity of the poor and rich in James but nonetheless the discussion is helpful in insisting on treating the passages as dealing with real situations and not to be spiritualized away. It is also difficult to understand some of their exegesis, a case in point being their explanation of 2:6 as a reminder to not 'rely on cold-hearted people for a better life,'208 which hardly does justice to the intent of this verse or its context. The authors finish their survey of James by helpfully bringing out the community aspect of faith and the responsibility of church members to one another in prayer and mutual caring (5:13-20).<sup>209</sup>

They conclude with four 'fundamental missionary perspectives' from James that will intersect at times with my own reading. Firstly, the church today must examine how it fulfils her missionary calling in adverse circumstances and makes 'the faith she confesses visible and concrete.' Secondly the witness of the church should include a message of relief for the oppressed and judgment on the oppressors, with a countercultural message against the desirability of wealth. Thirdly, the situation of the audience in James as a displaced minority should encourage the church, particularly in the West, to stand firm against the values of the surrounding culture, rather than opt for the easy path of conformity. Finally, the authors suggest that James, with its emphasis on a practical faith is an example of 'mission on the way'<sup>213</sup> although what this means is not at all made clear.

In sum, Orsmond and Botha have provided some useful points to consider but although they have dedicated a whole chapter to James, there is little in-depth exeges of the text or attention to wider literature on James.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 267.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>209</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 267–68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 268.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>211</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 269.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 270.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 271, citing Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*.

Mariam Kamell. 'James 1:27 and the Church's Call to Mission and Morals'

Mariam Kamell, in an article for the journal Crux, <sup>214</sup> approaches mission in James to try and resolve what she sees as the tension in evangelical North American churches between an emphasis on either moral purity or social action, each generally at the expense of the other and often with the resultant loss of interest by the younger generation if the former prevails.<sup>215</sup> In extremes the two sides lead to what she labels "indolent quietism" and "illusory activism." 216 She develops her article around the 'twofold command' of James 1:27 taking each part of the 'command' in turn.<sup>217</sup>

For the first part, Kamell explains the use of "widows and orphans" as 'a simple way to signify the helpless, the hopeless, those without resources.'218 She traces the concern of James for the poor throughout the letter, noting that wealth and poverty form one of the main themes of James. <sup>219</sup> In her view, we must take at face value God's perspective on the poor (1:9-11; 2:5) and understand that James' use of rhetoric, particularly in 2:5, 'implies that the readers already knew God's standard and should have adopted it, but have failed.'220 Applying this to the modern church, she concludes that '[a]s the rich keep getting richer, Christian leaders and teachers have a responsibility to speak the prophetic message of the God who has a special concern for the poor, the message of social equity and responsibility in a culture that favours the rich.'221 Such a conclusion anticipates what we will see in more detail in later chapters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> Mariam J. Kamell, "James 1:27 and the Church's Call to Mission and Morals," Crux 46, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 15-22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 15. <sup>216</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>217</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 16. Although Jas 1:27 is not a command per se, the expectation for the audience to live according to James' definition of "true piety" is clear.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>220</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>221</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 17–18.

Even in considering the second 'command' of keeping oneself pure from the world the thrust of her article is a critique of the unthinking acceptance of affluence within the church in the North American context, which she likens to 'friendship with the world.'<sup>222</sup> Insightfully she points out that a lack of care for the poor is part of the worldly systems that contaminate the church and so also forms part of James' second concern in 1:27 to be "unstained from the world."<sup>223</sup>

Overall, Kamell's article very helpfully engages with James, although her focus on one verse (with some support from other parts of the letter) and for a particular church context leaves plenty to be explored. Further, although the verse in question might speak to both sides of the tension she presents at the beginning, she focuses on only one side because from her perspective this is needed to redress the balance and confront the neglect of social justice within the church demographic she writes about. I will have occasion to draw on her work, particularly in chapter seven which addresses the need for holistic mission.

Stephan Joubert, 'Homo reciprocus No More: The 'Missional' Nature of Faith in James'
Stephan Joubert's chapter in Sensitivity Towards Outsiders<sup>224</sup> approaches James through ancient reciprocity, and sees the letter as calling for a way of life that goes against the societal norm of the time for reciprocal expectations and sets it within the genre of 'protreptic discourse which aims to persuade the readers to adopt a particular way of behaviour.'<sup>225</sup> He defines 'missionality' broadly as 'the loving involvement of God to restore all of his creation' rightly linking this to a theocentric understanding of mission. Joubert appropriates Leslie Newbigin's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>222</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> Stephan Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus No More: The 'Missional' Nature of Faith in James," in Sensitivity Towards Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship Between Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity, ed. Jacobus (Kobus) Kok et al., WUNT, II/364 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 382–400.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>225</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 384.

understanding of the church's 'missionary dimension' (the church as a welcoming community that is involved in God's mission) and 'missionary intention' (specific activities the church carries out to reach those outside it)<sup>226</sup> to frame his discussion on mission. Thus, his focus is on

James' understanding of the endurance of trials by believers (as an expression of the missionary dimension of the church) and hospitality and loving-kindness towards strangers and community members beyond the framework of asymmetrical reciprocity (as the missionary intention).<sup>227</sup>

In explaining the missionary dimension of the church in James, Joubert views the trials in James as related to poverty and injustice, so that James' prohibition on violent retaliation (4:1-2) and call to obey the "implanted word" (1:21) means that 'the "missional witness" of the messianic communities is directly linked to how they endure various trials and tests without retaliation.'228 Thus, like Jesus, James prohibits personal vindication and the application of the *lex talionis* regulations, although Joubert does not specify where in James he derives this from.'229 Presumably it would include James 2:13-14 and 5:6-11 but these are slightly at odds with his assertion that James does not include the 'notion of leaving retribution to God,'230 since this would seem to be implicit in the imminent return of the Lord as judge (5:9) and moreover, James does describe the judgment that the rich will face precisely in retribution for their greed and mistreatment of the poor (5:2-3). Joubert also points out how in the new community, honour was linked not to vindication but to appropriate responses to suffering and injustice. Thus, 'The missional witness of believers is remedial, but also countercultural. Their attitudes and social interactions are intended to counteract expected forms of behaviour deeply embedded in the social fibre of their societies.' <sup>231</sup> This is further seen through the virtue of enduring trials, which

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>226</sup> Newbigin, 1958, cited in Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 385.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>227</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 385.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 390.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>229</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 390–91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>230</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 391.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>231</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 391.

brings about maturity in their relationship with God (1:4), who is, according to Joubert, their divine benefactor. This will then be reflected in their relationships with both insiders and outsiders thus incarnating Christ and glorifying God.<sup>232</sup>

The missionary intention of James is explained by looking at James' teaching to not show favouritism to the rich (2:1-13) and in the practical command to look after the vulnerable and poor. Joubert suggests that 'a collective new identity marker which distinguishes these messianic communities from the world around them, is their deliberate openness towards nonmembers, irrespective of their social status, as James emphasizes in 2:1-13.<sup>233</sup> Further, since James uses the word synagogue for their meeting place, this implies it was a 'public space' and 'points to a "missional visibility" in their environment beyond the normal range of the oikos as well as to a potential openness to people of diverse social ranks. '234 These statements have not been adequately demonstrated but will still provide useful lines of enquiry. Joubert compares the OT understanding of care for the poor as both required and rewarded by God, with the wider Greco-Roman society. In the latter, reciprocal relationships were used to establish and strengthen unequal power structures but Joubert argues that there is little evidence of Jewish communities participating in this. Thus James, with his rejection of partiality, presents a biblical but counter-cultural expectation which is also seen in the command to love one's neighbour.<sup>235</sup> Further, since honour is derived from faith in God (Jas 1:9-11), honourable behaviour included rescuing "a sinner from the error of his way" (5:20) which Joubert considers as 'probably the most explicit missional remark in the letter. 236

Joubert concludes that:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>232</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 392.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 393.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>234</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 393.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 393–97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>236</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 397.

James' missionality is bound up with his reinterpretation of the basic principle of ancient reciprocity according to which gratitude for benefits bestowed on the side of beneficiaries was understood as the incurrence of an obligation that had to be repaid. He, and other early Christian leaders, developed a new, "highly social ethical code" which declared that Christians cannot please God unless they love one another, and humans must demonstrate their love through sacrifice on behalf of one another.'

This chapter then, provides several areas that will form part of my own study, particularly the right response to trials as part of the missionary dimension of the church, and the social interactions between poor and rich, insiders and outsiders, as part of the missionary intention. However, a weakness with Joubert's article is that he fails to engage with scholars who have advocated a more developed understanding of a missional hermeneutic, which would have opened up the missional dimensions of the letter further.<sup>238</sup>

Joel B. Green, 'Reading James Missionally'

Joel Green contributes a chapter to the book *Reading the Bible Missionally*, a work which sets out to provide a rationale for approaching Scripture through a missional hermeneutic and provides examples of this, including Green's exploration of James.<sup>239</sup> He begins his investigation by noting that James 'on the face of it...seems a poor candidate for a missional reading' and outlines some of the same lack of engagement by ML that I have already detailed.<sup>240</sup> However, his own approach is explicitly formed by some of the recent literature on a missional hermeneutic which specifically seeks to answer two questions: 'How does the letter of James locate its readers within the scriptural narrative of God's mission?' and 'How might James's letter shape its readers in their formation as participants in God's mission?'<sup>241</sup> These

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 397, citing Stark, 1996.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> Such as Wright, *The Mission of God*; Barram, *Mission and Moral Reflection in Paul*; Michael W. Goheen, "Continuing Steps Towards a Missional Hermeneutic," *Fideles* 3 (2008): 49–99; George R. Hunsberger, "Proposals for a Missional Hermeneutic: Mapping a Conversation," *Missiology* 39, no. 3 (July 1, 2011): 309–21. <sup>239</sup> Joel B. Green, "Reading James Missionally," in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael W. Goheen, GOCS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 194–212.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>240</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 194.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 195.

two questions are indeed fundamental to a missional reading and will occupy a substantial part of my own reflection.<sup>242</sup>

Green approaches this task with a brief outline of narrative identity theory in which 'narrative identity refers to a person's internalized and evolving story, which provides her with a sense of unity across time and with purpose and significance.' From this base he argues that since humans live 'story-formed lives,' the scriptural narrative invites a storied life which involves itself in the call to participate in God's mission. This invites reflection then on how James fits within the broader story of God's mission, which he maps in 'four primary kernels: creation; the advent of Christ; present, exilic life; and, new creation,' tracing their appearance in the letter, if only tangentially, since none, apart from the third, are explicitly mentioned. 244

Despite the excellent points Green makes, a significant weakness of this section is related to precisely his choice of kernels to describe the missional story. The jump from creation to the advent of Christ passes over other major kernels that are not only fundamental to the story but also are alluded to and assumed by James, such as the fall, the election of Abraham and the role of Israel within God's mission. In fact, the purported audience of James would no doubt see themselves as, or at least in continuity with, the renewed messianic people of God, a point that Green makes later.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup> I had already begun my own research before this chapter was published so there is some overlap in Green's approach with my own. However, I am able to go into more detail and I also incorporate other aspects neglected by Green. For more on these two questions and the rationale behind them, see the next chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 196–98. He relates this to both the narrative elements of Scripture and conversion from social scientific perspective as a "reordering of the life in terms of the narrative shared with and told by the community of the converted". In this he references Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>244</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 198–99. He borrows the language of "kernels" from Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 53. These refer "to major narrative events" that "force a narrative into one or two (or more) possible paths."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>245</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 205–6. I will develop all these points more fully, both as to the missional story and to how James fits into this in the next chapter and in chapter four onwards.

Rightly Green notes that in answering the first question, he has 'already begun to address the second.' To continue this, he considers how the audience would be led to emulate Jesus, 'as James tells the story' which he frames under three headings, 'embracing exilic life, recognizing God's gracious character, and living an integrated life.' Most of this is brief and the final aspect occupies the majority of his attention. Here he outlines the importance of the call to perfection and wholeness as integral to missional formation, something that I will develop substantially. Overall, this study provides an excellent foray into applying a missional hermeneutic to James but lacks depth both in the exegesis of the text and the application of a fuller understanding of a missional hermeneutic no doubt due to the constraints of space but also to a lack of interaction with some of the methodological work behind a missional hermeneutic that I will explore in the next chapter.

### **Summary**

I have now shown that James has often been dismissed as irrelevant to mission and continues to be a neglected voice in ML. However, the recent trend of applying more explicitly missional approaches to the letter is a step in the right direction but has only been done in a limited fashion. Not only does this provide useful avenues of exploration for my own missional reading, it also confirms the need and opportunity for such an investigation that draws more fully on the developing field of missional hermeneutics. Indeed, examining the references from James cited in ML shows that these come from every chapter of the letter and notably for James 2 and 5, the references cover every verse. Admittedly, many of these references are incidental and alone perhaps do not offer much insight to mission, but the picture is more encouraging when the sum

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>246</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 206. The interrelatedness of these two questions is widely acknowledged in missional literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>247</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 207, (italics original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>248</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 208–11. For much of the final section he relies on Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 177–83.

of the works consulted is considered. There is a convergence of themes across different authors that I will develop in more detail, including the missional identity of God's people, the need for holistic mission (with the letter often referred to as a prophetic voice in this area), and the perfection and wholeness of God's diaspora people.

Although in this chapter I have focused on the use of James in ML, it is also worth pointing out in closing that just as James has been neglected by such ML, so mission has been a neglected hermeneutical tool in research into James. An examination of the many different approaches taken since the previously mentioned surveys by Penner and Batten fails to turn up any that acknowledge mission as important to James, much less a missional hermeneutic (other than those noted in the survey above). It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a survey of recent scholarship here beyond noting a few examples below, but this lacuna will become apparent in my interaction with such scholarship throughout the thesis.

The recent surge of commentaries follow this pattern, and they do not generally consider mission as part of their exegetical approach.<sup>249</sup> Of these, Painter does briefly mention the 'mission' of the letter to Jewish Christians in the diaspora but does not elaborate on this and appears to see this largely in terms of Jewish Christians of the diaspora attempting to maintain their own identity as Jews with a concern exclusively for other Jews.<sup>250</sup> One slight exception is McKnight, who briefly acknowledges the importance of locating James within the 'story' of God's redemptive mission and posits a plotline that encompasses creation, fall, Israel, Christ and the new creation. Within this story, James offers a reading that 'is not one of replacement so much as of fulfilment: his letter summons the twelve tribes to live out the Mosaic Torah as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>249</sup> See Craig Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell, *James*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008); McCartney, *James*; Painter and DeSilva, *James and Jude*; Allison, *James*; Varner, *New Perspective*; William Varner, *James: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Lexington: Fontes Press, 2017) (this goes into depth on the Greek of James but sometimes fails to mention germane scholarship); James D. Dvorak and Zachary K. Dawson, eds., *The Epistle of James: Linguistic Exegesis of an Early Christian Letter*, LENT 1 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019).
<sup>250</sup> Painter and DeSilva, *James and Jude*, 31, 43.

God's enduring will.'<sup>251</sup> He also argues that this Torah is redefined through Jesus' teaching, and that the story of God's redemption is presented in 'moral, wisdom and prophetic keys.'<sup>252</sup> This has helpful introductory elements of a missional reading and McKnight does consider throughout his commentary how James speaks to the messianic renewed people of God but rarely considers its import for the church's mission today or takes on board other aspects of a missional reading.

The same could be said of the many monographs and book collections of articles that engage with the letter, <sup>253</sup> and although all these have valuable insights that will be essential for my own reading, none approach James through the lens of mission. These include social scientific, post-colonial and political identity readings, <sup>254</sup> investigations into the use of the OT and the Jesus tradition in James, <sup>255</sup> as well as the use of exemplars. <sup>256</sup> Finally, the recent interest in James is often part of a wider concern for the Catholic epistles as a collection, and although canonical considerations are important as we will see in the next chapter, these do not incorporate a missional approach. <sup>257</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>251</sup> McKnight, *James*, 5–6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>252</sup> McKnight, *James*, 6–7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>253</sup> For the latter, see, e.g., Eric F. Mason and Darian R. Lockett, eds., *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, RBS 94 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2019).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>254</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction; Ingeborg Mongstad-Kvammen, Toward a Postcolonial Reading of the Epistle of James: James 2:1-13 in Its Roman Imperial Context, BINS 119 (Leiden: Brill, 2013); K. Jason Coker, James in Postcolonial Perspective: The Letter as Nativist Discourse (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015); V. G. Shillington, James and Paul: The Politics of Identity at the Turn of the Ages (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), (unfortunately this only has one chapter on the letter of James).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup> Nelson R. Morales, *Poor and Rich in James: A Relevance Theory Approach to James's Use of the Old Testament*, BBRSup 20 (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018); Batten and Kloppenborg, *James, I & 2 Peter*; Roelof Alkema, *The Pillars and the Cornerstone. Jesus Tradition Parallels in the Catholic Epistles* (Delft: Uitgeverij Eburon, 2018).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>256</sup> Robert J. Foster, *The Significance of Exemplars for the Interpretation of the Letter of James*, WUNT, II/376 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); Nicholas J. Ellis, *The Hermeneutics of Divine Testing: Cosmic Trials and Biblical Interpretation in the Epistle of James and Other Jewish Literature*, WUNT, II/396 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015). This is an impressive piece of research, but a lot of exegetical weight is placed on the exemplars of Job and Abraham who are combined to give an ideal Jobraham figure through which the whole letter is interpreted, despite the fact that between them they only occupy four verses of the letter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>257</sup> See, e.g., Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall, eds., *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); cf. Jacques Schlosser, ed., *The Catholic Epistles and the Tradition*, BETL 176 (Leuven: University Press, 2004), which shares two chapters with this collection; Darian R. Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, ABS (London: T & T Clark, 2012); Darian R. Lockett, *Letters from the* 

Overall then, there are some excellent discussions in all these works noted here that I will interact with further, but none incorporate mission to any great extent in their studies. Thus, just as mission literature has tended to neglect James, so Jacobean scholarship has tended to neglect mission. It seems justified then for such a study to be carried out using the insights of missiology that have led to the development of a missional hermeneutic, and so, in the next chapter, I will outline these developments and explain my methodology.

Pillar Apostles: The Formation of the Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Collection (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017).

### CHAPTER 3: THE METHODOLOGY FOR A MISSIONAL READING OF JAMES

In chapter one I noted that a shift in perspective on mission has led to the development of missional hermeneutics, an approach to the biblical text that privileges mission. In this chapter I will briefly outline some of these developments before spending more time on what comprises a missional hermeneutic. These have by no means been uniform, and as Goheen notes, 'missional' has become something of a plastic word that is used at a popular level in a variety of ways. <sup>258</sup> I will therefore seek to carefully define it here and to explain the different strands of thought that have been identified as forming a missional hermeneutic <sup>259</sup> and how these will be brought together in my study. In order to do this, I will first begin by explaining the background to understanding mission more broadly and in relation to God's prior mission.

### DEVELOPING A MISSIONAL HERMENEUTIC: MISSION AS THE MISSIO DEI

I have already briefly outlined in my introduction the first step towards a missional hermeneutic by defining mission more generally and no longer focusing solely on an effort to proselytise, either cross-culturally or within a culture. The Latin root of the word (*missio*) of course implies 'sending' but as Chris Wright argues, we can understand mission not *only* in sending terms but also in 'its more general sense of a long-term purpose or goal that is to be achieved through proximate objectives and planned actions.'<sup>260</sup> This is not to negate that sending is part of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>258</sup> Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ix. He lists several examples of its varied use: missional church, missional theology, missional hermeneutics and even missional motherhood. As he points out, rather than abandon the term, it is better to have a clear definition since its wide use indicates that "something important is being recovered from obscurity."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>259</sup> This has been most clearly presented in Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic"; and more recently *idem*, "Mapping the Missional Hermeneutics Conversation," in Goheen, ed, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed, 45–67. <sup>260</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 23; cf. Westfall, "Hebrew Mission," 188.

mission, but that it is not all there is to mission; there is a purpose behind the act of sending (e.g., Luke 4:18-19, 43).

### The Mission of God to Redeem the World

Much of the discussion is generated by concern on the one hand not to neglect the importance of missionary activities (by defining 'mission' too broadly) and, on the other hand, not to neglect a full scriptural theology of mission (by defining 'mission' too narrowly). As Goheen notes, Newbiggin's distinction between missionary intention and missionary dimension is helpful here.<sup>261</sup> While there are certainly specific activities of the church that arise from its mission, the church in itself has a missional dimension that should point others to God. In other words, as Newbiggin puts it, 'The whole life of the church has a missionary dimension, though not all of it has mission as its primary intention.'<sup>262</sup> Although the terminology is slightly different, it serves to show that a more general definition of mission can be useful.

Ultimately, as Wright and many others argue, mission should take as its starting point, not biblical imperatives such as the so-called Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20), important as they are, but the prior mission or purpose of God.<sup>263</sup> This is discerned from the whole narrative of Scripture to be the redemption of the whole of creation, a key element in understanding a missional hermeneutic that I will explore further below. But first it is necessary to expand more on what it means to suggest that God has a mission.

The Latin *missio Dei* encapsulates this idea that mission is rooted in the Triune God's purpose to redeem the world, expressed first in God the Father sending the Son, then both Father

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>261</sup> Michael W Goheen, "Bible and Mission: Missiology and Biblical Scholarship in Dialogue," in Porter and Westfall, eds, *Christian Mission*, 214–15. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, Joubert, "*Homo Reciprocus*," 385, makes use of this distinction in his approach to the letter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> Newbigin, 1958, cited in Goheen, "Bible and Mission: Missiology and Biblical Scholarship in Dialogue," 215. <sup>263</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 62–64; cf. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 19; Peskett and Ramachandra, *Message of Mission*, 11; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 392; Hedlund, *The Mission of the Church*, 73–751. These are a few representative examples.

and Son sending the Spirit.<sup>264</sup> Subsequent and subordinate to this is the sending of the church into the world to participate in God's prior mission. As David Bosch argues, 'Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate...'<sup>265</sup> More broadly then, mission is 'linked to the identity and vocation of the church itself,' so that, as Michael Barram explicates, 'the Christian community, inasmuch as its *raison d'etre* reflects divine purposes, is in a very real sense missional by nature.'<sup>266</sup> This opens up an approach to the whole of the scriptures from a missional perspective, even in the absence of explicit missionary or 'missions' related language which is obviously important for this study, given the lack of such language in James.

### The Missional Context & Purpose of Scripture

If the concept of the *missio Dei* is key to a missional hermeneutic, so is the assumption that the context itself of scripture can be related to this mission of God and the consequent missional identity of those who are called to be his people, whether in the Old or New Testaments.<sup>267</sup> This missional context has not been explored greatly in biblical scholarship,<sup>268</sup> but there is an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>264</sup> The history of this concept in modern missiology based on Karl Barth's theological reflection is well documented. See the following: Rodger C. Bassham, "Seeking a Deeper Theological Basis for Mission," *IRM* 67, no. 267 (1978): 329–37; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 389–93; Tormod Engelsviken, "*Missio Dei*: The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in European Churches and Missiology," *IRM* 92, no. 367 (October 1, 2003): 481–97; David M. Whitworth, "*Missio Dei* and the Means of Grace" (Manchester, University of Manchester, 2012); Some scholars argue that the roots of this go further back. See, e.g., Edward W. Poitras, "St. Augustine and the *Missio Dei*: A Reflection on Mission at the Close of the Twentieth Century," *Mission Studies* XVI–2, no. 32 (1999): 28–45; John F. Hoffmeyer, "The Missional Trinity," *Dialog* 40, no. 2 (2001): 108–11, who posits that the idea is present in Thomas Aquinas. Be that as it may, as Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390-392, further notes, this understanding "has been embraced by virtually all Christian persuasions."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>266</sup> Barram, "Bible, Mission, and Social Location," 43; Nissen, *New Testament and Mission*, distinguishes "mission" as *missio Dei* and "missions" (*missiones ecclesiae*) as the way the church becomes involved in the *missio Dei*. However, I prefer to maintain "mission" as a term that encapsulates both.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>267</sup> James V. Brownson, "Speaking the Truth in Love: Elements of a Missional Hermeneutic," *IRM* 83, no. 330 (July 1, 1994): 482. Brownson appears to be the first author to use the term "missional hermeneutic"; cf. Wright, *The Mission of God*, 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>268</sup> This is widely acknowledged. See for example Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 54; Barram, "Bible, Mission, and Social Location", who speaks of a "long-standing rift between missiology and biblical scholarship."

increasing recognition that mission (even narrowly defined) plays a part in the context of much Scripture, and particularly so for the NT. As Marion Soards notes, 'Many of the writings that we study (in painstaking and even painful detail) came to be because of the reality of mission.' <sup>269</sup> I. Howard Marshall concurs with this, suggesting that for the NT,

the documents came into being as the result of a two-part mission, first the mission of Jesus sent by God to inaugurate his kingdom... and then the mission of his followers called to continue his work by proclaiming him as Lord and Saviour and calling people to faith and ongoing commitment to him, as a result of which his church grows.<sup>270</sup>

Both of these observations view mission as an activity of the church but they are still helpful in recognising that the context and reason behind the documents of the NT is the growth and witness of the church to the world.<sup>271</sup> Moreover, the NT documents are not just written in the context of mission, they also inform the mission of the church. As Marshall goes on to say, the theology of the NT 'shapes the continuing mission of the church... The New Testament thus tells the story of mission...' and he concludes, 'New Testament theology is essentially *missionary theology*.'<sup>272</sup> N. T. Wright concurs, suggesting that 'the New Testament was written in order to sustain and direct the missional life of the early church.'<sup>273</sup> This means that we should be alive to the missional context and purpose of the text itself and ask the right questions

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>269</sup> Marion L. Soards, "Key Issues in Biblical Studies and Their Bearing on Mission Studies," *Missiology* 24, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 107; Barram, "Bible, Mission, and Social Location," 49, who suggests that the NT documents "owed their existence to a missional impulse in early Christianity."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>270</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2004), 34–35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>271</sup> Barram, *Mission and Moral Reflection in Paul*, demonstrates the missional nature of the undisputed Pauline corpus convincingly, in my opinion, which as he argues are in themselves a part of Paul's mission (for this claim, see p. 40).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>272</sup> Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 35 (emphasis added). This is not a new perspective given that over a century ago, Martin Kähler [1908] 1971, cited in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 16, called "mission the mother of theology." Although the language of mission is not used, other scholars seem to support at least some elements of this missional context. See e.g. Philip F. Esler, *New Testament Theology: Communion and Community* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 105, who writes that "The NT writers were all trying to persuade their audiences, mostly listeners, to have faith in Jesus as the Christ, God's anointed for the salvation of the world."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>273</sup> N. T. Wright, "Reading the New Testament Missionally," in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael W. Goheen, GOCS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 175.

to bring this to the fore.<sup>274</sup> A missional hermeneutic recognises, then, that the documents of the NT (and even the OT<sup>275</sup>) as a whole, evidence a missional concern and context which is not restricted to missionary activity or language.

This may perhaps be a straightforward assertion for much of the NT. The gospels describe the mission of Jesus and address in an authoritative way the needs and situations of their respective audiences based on the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection as God's appointed Messiah, often with the explicit assumption that his disciples will carry on this mission (Mt 28:19-20; Lk 24:45-49; Jn 17:18-21).<sup>276</sup> Likewise the Pauline epistles deal with the challenges and struggles of growing communities of Christ-followers that began largely though Paul's missionary endeavours.<sup>277</sup> However, such sweeping statements have varying applicability to individual documents within the NT which does raise issues for this thesis because James does not easily fit into this pattern. In fact the setting of James is extremely difficult to determine as we have already seen. Yet even though an exact social location may elude us, there are indicators that do suggest a missional context to the letter, several of which were evident in the survey in the previous chapter, such as the diaspora setting and theme of perfection in testing which will both provide rich missional reflections. These and other elements will become more evident as I engage with the text so I will not dwell on them here. The main point for now is that a missional reading will show that James does indeed have a missional context and purpose.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>274</sup> Barram, "Bible, Mission, and Social Location," 49, overstates it by suggesting it would be "methodologically reductionist" to ignore the missional nature of the text.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>275</sup> On this see, Wright, *The Mission of God*; and for a summary chapter on the OT, Christopher J. H. Wright, "Reading the Old Testament Missionally," in *Reading The Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael W. Goheen, 107–23. <sup>276</sup> For a helpful study on mission in the Gospels, see R. Geoffrey Harris, *Mission in the Gospels* (London: Epworth Press, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>277</sup> For mission in the Pauline literature, see Barram, *Mission and Moral Reflection in Paul*; Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>278</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 50, develops this considerably and extends it to the OT. He argues that many of "these [OT] texts emerged out of the engagement of Israel with the surrounding world, in the light of the God they knew in their history and in covenantal relationship with him" and thus "the Bible is in so many ways a missional phenomenon in itself."

Thus far I have explained the concept of *missio Dei* and how this has broadened the definition of mission and how the very context and purpose of Scripture itself is, at least at some level, missional. In the next section, I will elucidate the main elements of a missional hermeneutic to provide a clear framework for my approach to James.

#### THE STRANDS OF A MISSIONAL HERMENEUTIC

George Hunsberger has been at the forefront of synthesising elements that scholars have used under the banner of missional hermeneutics and has presented a taxonomy for a missional hermeneutic that has been very influential in subsequent missional studies.<sup>279</sup> He describes four main streams that he suggests are representative of the growing body of studies in this area. Three of these streams will provide the basis for my own reading with some modifications, and because they are in fact so interdependent, I will conclude that it is more helpful to view them as interwoven strands. I will briefly present the streams identified by Hunsberger and then, in the next section, describe them in greater detail and the way I will apply them to James.

The first of these streams broadly considers how the text fits within and speaks into the overarching narrative of Scripture that presents God's mission to redeem the world and the role of his people within it. The second focuses on the way the text seeks to form God's people to participate in God's mission and recognises that the scripture is a tool of mission to bring this equipping and formation about. The third looks at how the social location of the interpreter both affects a missional reading and the application of the reading to that location and the fourth considers the way the biblical author uses scriptural tradition in their own context in light of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>279</sup> Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic." This paper was initially presented at the AAR/SBL conference in 2008 and then made available online by the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) in January 2009 at http://gocn.org/resources/articles/proposals-missional-hermeneutic-mapping-conversation; cf. *idem*, "Mapping the Missional Hermeneutics Conversation." See also Michael W. Goheen, "A History and Introduction to a Missional Reading of the Bible," in Goheen, ed, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 3–27; Davy, "Job and the Mission of God," 23–30, for a history of the development of missional hermeneutics.

gospel.<sup>280</sup> Together, these four provide an ample description of a missional approach, yet as we will see, not all are equally relevant or can be applied directly to my study.<sup>281</sup> I will also address a number of difficulties with Hunsberger's streams, which, while not invalidating the approach, means that they require nuancing for a more appropriate application of a missional hermeneutic to the letter of James.<sup>282</sup>

## The Missional Direction of the Story

This first stream provides what Hunsberger calls 'the *framework* for biblical interpretation'<sup>283</sup> and at the heart of this approach lies the understanding of a biblical narrative that can be couched in terms of mission, particularly the *missio Dei* and the role of God's people within it. Wright argues that 'a missional hermeneutic proceeds from the assumption that the whole Bible renders to us the story of God's mission through God's people in their engagement with God's world for the sake of the whole of God's creation.'<sup>284</sup> This framework is generally seen as foundational for missional hermeneutics and the other streams build on it.<sup>285</sup>

Tied to this framework are two aspects that need further explanation. First, a missional hermeneutic draws on certain aspects of a canonical approach and second, it is also linked to a

<sup>280</sup> Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 310–18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>281</sup> These subsequently became the basis for the call for papers at the Missional Hermeneutic forum at several SBL/AAR meetings. A fifth element was added from the response to Hunsberger's presentation by Michael D. Barram, "A Response at AAR to Hunsberger's 'Proposals...' Essay" (Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Chicago: GOCN, 2009), http://gocn.org/resources/articles/response-aar-hunsberger-s-proposals-essay; and James V. Brownson, "A Response at SBL to Hunsberger's 'Proposals...' Essay," in *Missional Hermeneutics* (Society of Biblical Literature, Boston, 2009) both at the 2008 conference but available online subsequently in 2009. The fifth stream focuses on reading the text together with the "culturally and socially 'other'". It would simply not be possible to include such an approach here, although I do, as far as possible, include scholarship from diverse cultural contexts. For the full text of the call to papers, see Michael D. Barram, "GOCN Forum on Missional Hermeneutics," *Call for Papers*, 2012, available at:

https://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/Congresses\_CallForPaperDetails.aspx?MeetingId=21&VolunteerUnitId=491. <sup>282</sup> I am also indebted to Davy, "Job and the Mission of God" for the general format of this section. However, his application of the method to the book of Job means that there are significant differences in foci.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>283</sup> Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 310.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>284</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>285</sup> Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 312.

narrative hermeneutic.<sup>286</sup> I will deal with the second element of these first and then explain what aspects of a canonical approach are incorporated in this study.

#### A Missional Hermeneutic is Narratival

By 'whole Bible' Wright obviously does not mean that every page and passage deals with mission, but rather that through the Bible as a whole, there is a discernible over-arching narrative that is missional. This story is seen in the movement in Scripture from creation to new creation, beginning in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2-3 and ending in the New Jerusalem of Revelation 20-21. N. T. Wright presents the major stages or 'Acts' of this story as Creation, Fall, Israel, Jesus and the current ongoing story of the church and the world. This if of course a very broad generalisation that cannot do justice to the subplots and counter narratives encountered along the way, a point I will return to below. Yet, through Scripture it is possible to trace key elements of such a narrative that describes God's mission to redeem and renew the whole of creation and moves the plot line forward until the anticipated consummation in Revelation 21. For example, Andrew Walker outlines this as a nine-chapter story and suggests that from earliest times Christians 'allowed it to form their identity and character as the people of God, 289 an important concept that ties into the second stream I will consider in a moment. Here I can do no more than set the stage by mentioning some of the crucial texts that provide the main narrative developments for a missional reading.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>286</sup> cf. Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 11–12 who calls this a hermeneutic for the Kingdom of God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>287</sup> N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 141; cf. Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church, and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 190, who suggests, "It is the story of God and the Hebrews, of God and the Christ of God, of God and the Church." <sup>288</sup> For a slightly more detailed story outline see Andrew Walker, *Telling the Story: Gospel, Mission and Culture*, Gospel and Culture (London: SPCK, 1996), 13–14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>289</sup> Walker, *Telling the Story*, 13–14. He begins with the Trinitarian nature of God and creation *ex nihilo* before following a similar outline to Wright (see above). He also expands and adds further chapters to give more explanation to the storyline. He argues that although such a full outline is only appreciated by the church post the patristic era, the main elements were in place from "apostolic times."

One such key passage that is often taken as a paradigmatic text for understanding the mission of God in the OT is Genesis 12:1-3 where Abraham is called by God and promised God's blessing in order to be a blessing to the nations.<sup>290</sup> Although this particular call of Abraham is not in view in James, the letter does present Abraham as an important exemplar based on the Akedah of Genesis 22, which reiterates some of the key elements of this call.<sup>291</sup> Abraham's election introduces a note of tension between the universal and the particular in God's mission. As Wright states: 'the tension between the universality of the goal (all nations) and the particularity of the means (through you) is right there from the very beginning of Israel's journey through the pages of the Old Testament. 292 Brian Russell sets this tension even further back by noting that Genesis 1-11 set the call of Abraham within an 'international context' and that this invites the 'World to read the Bible as its story and not merely the story of Israel and the Church.'293 Likewise, Robin Routledge argues that from the perspective of the Noahic covenant with all mankind, 'God's relationship with Israel is set within the context of his relationship with and his desire to restore and renew the whole world. That is to say his commitment to the redemption of the world precedes his commitment to the redemption of Israel.'294 In other words, even in the OT there is always a universal dimension to the particularity of God's election.<sup>295</sup>

Russell also suggests that God's choice of Abraham after the Babel incident and call for him to leave a power centre to a peripheral land such as Canaan highlights God's unlikely choices in terms of advancing his mission and refusal to cater to human power dynamics. As

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>290</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 191–221. On this nuance of the nations being blessed through Abraham, see Benjamin J. Noonan, "Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations: A Reexamination of the Niphal and Hitpael of ברך in the Patriarchal Narratives," *HS* 51 (2010): 73–93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>291</sup> See further chapter five and chapter eight.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>292</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 223 (italics original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>293</sup> Brian D. Russell, (Re) Aligning with God: Reading Scripture for Church and World (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016), 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>294</sup> Robin Routledge, "Mission and Covenant in the Old Testament," in Grams, ed, *Bible and Mission*, 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>295</sup> This is of course a 'Christian' understanding of the OT and not the only way to read it.

Russell states, 'Reading the Bible missionally involves hearing Scripture's critique of human power constructs and its desire to tear down our strongholds of self-determinism and superiority.'<sup>296</sup> Again James has elements of this, written as it is to those in the diaspora, scattered from their homeland, and with its strong denunciation of the current power structures represented by the rich who exploit the poor (2:6; 5:1-6).

Returning to the missional identity of Abraham and his descendants (described by Paul as 'the gospel in advance,' Gal 3:8) both Chris Wright, in great detail, and Goheen in briefer fashion, adequately demonstrate how this is reiterated throughout the story of the OT.<sup>297</sup> It is not possible here to reproduce all their arguments but it is key to see that Israel's identity as God's chosen people is also the means through which all nations should be blessed. For example, Israel's description as priests and a holy nation (Ex. 19:3-6) suggests that they are to be a distinctive role model to the nations with a mediating function.<sup>298</sup> This is an identity that is then drawn on and reflected on both in the Psalms and the prophets.<sup>299</sup> Thus, undeniably, an important aspect of Israel's identity is missional. This never entails going out to the nations, apart from perhaps the story of Jonah, so their mission is often labelled as centripetal mission. Israel plays a role of attraction to which the nations will respond by coming in (Isa 2:1-4, cf. Micah 4:1-5).<sup>300</sup> As we will see, this attractional element is to the fore in James, particularly through its focus on doing God's commands and the call to live as a community with 'wisdom from above' (Jas 3:17).<sup>301</sup>

That this narrative of God's mission continues in the NT with the advent of Jesus, his death, resurrection and the beginnings of the church is generally assumed although it is helpful

<sup>296</sup> Russell, *Realigning with God*, 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>297</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 191–221, 222–64; Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 64–81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>298</sup> Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 71–72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>299</sup> For example, Ps 67:1-2; 72:17; 86:9;145:8-12; Isa 19:24-25; 25:6-8; 42:6; 45:22-23; Jer 4:1-2; Zech 8:13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>300</sup> Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>301</sup> See particularly chapters six and eight.

to understand the Church's missional identity as deriving from Israel's missional identity. As Goheen notes there is both continuity and discontinuity with Israel's identity, and that in the NT, 'the missional character of God's people is heightened.'302 Added to the centripetal dimension is an emphatic centrifugal dimension with the Jesus' commissioning of the disciples (Mt 28:16-20, cf. Luke 24:47-48) and the call to be witnesses of the risen Christ in Acts 1. The church is now called to live among the nations and be witnesses to Christ in the power of the Spirit. Goheen concludes, 'The church is missional by its very nature; its identity and role in God's mission is to make known God's salvation.'303 It seems reasonable then to speak of a story that begins at creation and ends with New Creation, in which all nations are in sight, and in which God's choice of the particular, as seen in Abraham, Israel, Jesus, and the Church, has a universal missional dimension.

Before continuing there are two points I wish to clarify. First by speaking of an overarching story in Scripture, this is not to claim that all scripture is narrative. There are clearly a multitude of genres in Scripture, but 'story' as a broad category can provide a structure that accommodates other genres. James Barr helpfully argues that

in general, although not all parts of the Bible are narrative, the narrative character of the story elements provides a better framework into which the non-narrative parts may be fitted than any framework based on the non-narrative parts into which the story elements could be fitted.<sup>304</sup>

Story, then, is not so much a genre as the overall shape of Scripture that provides a foundational identity to the community of faith.<sup>305</sup>

This is not to argue, as is made abundantly clear in the literature, that this story is a straightforward unified narrative across all of Scripture. Richard Bauckham describes it as 'a

<sup>302</sup> Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 81.

<sup>303</sup> Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>304</sup> James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1999), 356.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>305</sup> Barr, The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective, 351.

sprawling collection of narratives...' and notes 'the profusion and sheer untidiness of the narrative materials...', rightly pointing out that 'all this makes any finality in summarizing the biblical story inconceivable.' This, as Bauckham concludes, means that,

the particular should not be supressed for the sake of a too readily comprehensible universal. The Bible does in some sense, tell an overall story that encompasses all its other contents, but this story is not a sort of straitjacket that reduces all else to a narrowly defined uniformity. It is a story that is hospitable to considerable diversity and to tensions, challenges and even seeming contradictions of its own claims.<sup>307</sup>

This missional story that I am proposing to frame my interpretation, then, has to be flexible enough to allow for different shades of emphasis or even apparent contradictions between certain elements of the narrative, rather than seeking to harmonize every aspect for the sake of uniformity (in fact, this is important for a reading of James, with its apparent contradictions of Pauline statements about faith). Here it is true that claims such as Wright's that 'mission is what it is all about' are obviously over stated, although one meant to redress a balance where mission has often been side-lined in biblical scholarship, and should be taken with the caveats I have already considered concerning the biblical narrative. Mission is not an exclusive hermeneutical key, but certainly an important one. 310

Secondly, following Bauckham, it must be admitted that the biblical narrative portrays itself as *the* story, not just one story among others.<sup>311</sup> The Bible as a metanarrative claims that it is the God of Israel, Yahweh, who is the one God above all other gods, and Jesus who is Lord

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>306</sup> Bauckham, Bible and Mission, 92–93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>307</sup> Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 93–94; cf. Walker, *Telling the Story*, who suggests that the story was not "an *idée fixe*. This is not quite to say that it was a moveable feast - the sweep of the story was clear enough - but it was a story rich in narrative possibilities and subtle interpretations."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>308</sup> Cf. Wright, "Reading the New Testament Missionally," 177. A missional reading "uncovers paradoxes" rather than ignoring them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>309</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, "Truth With a Mission: Reading All Scripture Missiologically," *SBJT* 15, no. 2 (2011): 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>310</sup> H. D. Beeby, "A Missional Approach to Renewed Interpretation," in *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew, Colin J. D. Greene, and Karl Möller, SHS 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 282, agrees that an exclusive hermeneutic is "unwarranted reductionism."

<sup>311</sup> Bauckham, Bible and Mission, 11–12, 83–112.

and Messiah. Unfortunately, metanarratives are often associated with images of oppressive ideologies, and of course the biblical narrative has been co-opted in this way throughout the church's history.<sup>312</sup> However, the claims of the missional metanarrative are truth claims that should not be forced on others, and, when this happens, it is a betrayal of the biblical story.<sup>313</sup> Bauckham puts it well:

In the cross God acts in character, in so far as he is known from the biblical story, but also in a way that is decisive for the plot of the biblical narrative's movement from the particular to the universal. Here, in the crucified Christ, is God's self-identification as one human being identified with all human beings, the particular which is also universally salvific, and that self-identification is not with humanity in its self-aggrandizement, but with humanity in its degradation, humanity victimized by the human will to power.<sup>314</sup>

To speak of mission and engage in mission as coercive is to go against the very nature of that mission portrayed in the biblical narrative. So, 'the cross [becomes] the critical test of the *content* of church's witness...[and] the critical test of the *form* of the church's witness.'<sup>315</sup> This will have resonances with some elements in James, such as in the presentation of the righteous sufferer who does not resist (5:6) and in the use of the exemplar of Rahab (2:25).

In one sense, it should not surprise us that Scripture portrays some kind of metanarrative given that this is one of the ways of shaping and reinforcing group identity.<sup>316</sup> Where James fits within this story is less obvious as noted above but that he draws on certain aspects of the story is evident as we will see. To speak of an overarching narrative is of course to suggest an

<sup>312</sup> This is readily seen, for example, in the Crusades, the 'Conquista' of Latin America and in aspects of the 'modern' missionary movement linked with colonialism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>313</sup> Craig G. Bartholomew and M. W. Goheen, "Story and Biblical Theology," in *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew et al., SHS 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 167; cf. Scott W. Sunquist, "*Missio Dei*: Christian History Envisioned as Cruciform Apostolicity," *Missiology* 37, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 42. He states that when this occurs, "such times are departures from Christianity" and "contrary to Christianity as found in the very nature of God and as revealed in the primal Christian story, the crucifixion."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>314</sup> Bauckham, Bible and Mission, 102.

<sup>315</sup> Bauckham, Bible and Mission, 102-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>316</sup> Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 22–23.

approach that considers the whole of Scripture, which is to say, a canonical approach and I will now consider how this plays into a missional reading.

## A Missional Approach to James is Canonical

By arguing for a canonical approach, I am not using this in the technical sense of the various branches of canonical criticism generally associated with Brevard Childs or James Sanders<sup>317</sup> and I will also not be looking at the process of James' acceptance within the NT canon.<sup>318</sup> The canonical element of my reading is simply that theologically the parts should be interpreted in light of the whole, and that such a reading is relevant to the church today.<sup>319</sup> Dan Beeby has made the point that canon and mission are inseparable,<sup>320</sup> since 'Christian mission in its completeness requires the whole canon.'<sup>321</sup> Without a canonical approach, missiological reflection can ignore difficult texts or take a proof-text approach that does not do justice to a whole biblical theology of mission.

Indeed this was one of the findings of my survey of ML, that often James is approached piecemeal and ignored even in biblical or NT bases for mission. The approach advocated for here provides a crucial canonical counterbalance to, for example, an excessive dependence on Pauline thought for most framing of mission.<sup>322</sup> However, if hearing the voice of James in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>317</sup> See Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (London: SCM Press, 1984); James A. Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text: Canon as Paradigm* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); idem, "Text and Canon: Concepts and Method," *JBL* 98, no. 1 (March 1, 1979): 5–29. For some helpful chapters on canonical interpretation, see Craig G. Bartholomew et al., eds., *Canon and Biblical Interpretation*, SHS 7 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006). However, I will have occasion to draw on certain elements of canonical criticism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>318</sup> Both Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*; and Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, have explored in some detail the evidence for when James was included in the NT canon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>319</sup> Robert W. Wall and Eugene E. Lemcio, *The New Testament as Canon: A Reader in Canonical Criticism*, JSNTSup 76 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 14–18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>320</sup> H. D. Beeby, *Canon and Mission*, Christian Mission and Modern Culture (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>321</sup> Beeby, "A Missional Approach to Renewed Interpretation," 273.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>322</sup> Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, argues that James is a pseudepigraphical composition precisely for the purpose of balancing aspects of Pauline theology, although this view has not garnered much support; cf. Nienhuis, "Canon Conscious Pseudepigraph", a chapter length summary; Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 25–27, argues for the significance of the canonical placing of James, rather than its composition, as a balance to Paul.

mission is important, so is assessing the voice of James with relation to other Scriptures. Thus it will be important at times to hear other voices alongside James that will help to set James in canonical context, although here this can only be done selectively. This will have to include the seemingly contradictory formulations that Paul presents regarding faith and works but it will also be helpful to draw on Matthew's gospel (for reasons that will be evident later) and 1 Peter, another Catholic Epistle that has some striking correspondences with James.<sup>323</sup>

In insisting on framing mission within the whole canon, Beeby is also helpful in acknowledging that there are two sides to God's mission of redemption, one being God's loving mercy and the other the reality of divine judgment, a fact often glossed over in missional literature trying to make a case for God's mission of redemption to be the main narrative of Scripture.<sup>324</sup> As Beeby puts it, 'The larger context means that every part is overshadowed by both judgment and mercy, both creation and redemption, both death and life...<sup>325</sup> A missional reading of James is ideally placed to notice this tension, given that certain sections in James (particularly 5:1-6) are more akin to OT prophecy in their condemnation of the exploitative rich, while the frame of the letter is explicitly set within the context of judgement (4:12), with the 'judge... at the door' (5:9).

Finally, in the same way that I noted for a narrative approach (and briefly above for the canonical approach), the canonical aspects drawn upon here do not mean a disinterest in the historical and social setting of the original text. Both Childs and Sanders argue for a

<sup>323</sup> Opinions are divided on the literary relationship between James and 1 Peter. For an extensive defence of the use of common tradition but independent elaboration, see Konradt, "Historical Context," 106-8; cf. Laws, Epistle of James, 84–85. For James' dependence on 1 Peter, see Nienhuis, Not by Paul Alone, 169–87; cf. Allison, James, 294-95, who believes that James probably knew 1 Peter. I will not try and resolve this dispute nor carry out indepth comparisons.

<sup>324</sup> Goheen, "Continuing Steps", focuses only on Scripture that confirms a positive missional identity for Israel and the church; Wright, The Mission of God, 136-88, goes some way in addressing this at various points (see also pp. 92-104). 325 Beeby, *Canon and Mission*, 23.

combination of attention to historical and theological analysis.<sup>326</sup> The canonical approach should be viewed as complementary to other approaches rather than exclusive. Robert Wall's commentary on James makes this point, suggesting that a canonical reading pays attention to the historical and literary context, but that the normative function of the text is from its theological properties.<sup>327</sup> I find this helpful in that my own investigation should have relevance for the mission of the church today, which is obviously at a distance from the original sociohistorical setting of the text.

To summarise so far, I have shown that fundamental to a missional approach is to take the *missio Dei* as the framework for biblical interpretation. This depends on aspects of canonical and narratival criticism which locate James within the overarching narrative of the mission of God. However, within the overall direction of the narrative, there must be room for differences, and this allows James' distinctive voice and themes to both complement and challenge our understanding of mission. A final caveat must be made here, and this is that, as Hunsberger points out, in common with all hermeneutical approaches, there is something of an unavoidable circularity present, since 'from the scriptures is discerned the core narrative that becomes the key or clue for understanding the scriptures.' Yet by acknowledging this and being attentive to this, and through attention to the other streams the circularity can be mitigated to a certain extent and so still provide a useful hermeneutical approach. Because of its foundational

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>326</sup> Sanders, *Sacred Story*, 167; Childs, *New Testament as Canon*, 38; James A. Sanders, "Biblical Criticism and the Bible as Canon," *USQR* 32, no. 3–4 (March 1, 1977): 163. There are acknowledged areas of disagreement, even over what to call a canonical approach but neither denies the need for critical tools; cf. John N. Oswalt, "Canonical Criticism: A Review from a Conservative Viewpoint," *JETS* 30, no. 3 (September 1, 1987): 322.

<sup>327</sup> Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>328</sup> Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 312.

<sup>329</sup> See also Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 15–17, who uses Gadamer's phrase of the "two horizons" which presents the problem in a slightly different way. My pre-understanding, in this case of mission, forms one horizon, while the original context and meaning of the text is the other "horizon" and so there needs to be a fusion of horizons. Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 22–23, suggests a hermeneutical spiral (rather than circle) that recognises the "openended movement from the horizon of the text to the horizon of the reader." The spiral moves us closer to the true

nature, both to missional hermeneutics in general and my own study on James, I have spent a disproportionate amount of space on this stream but can now move on to examine the others outlined by Hunsberger.

### The Missional Purpose of the Writings

This second stream unpacks the ways in which the author through the text seeks to form God's people to embrace their missional identity. <sup>330</sup> The missiologist Darrell Guder proposes that the purpose of Scripture is to form witnessing communities.<sup>331</sup> Referring to the NT, he argues that, 'The actual task of these scriptures, then was to deal with the problems and the conflicts, the challenges and the doubts as they emerged in particular contexts, so that these communities could be faithful to their calling.'332 Further, each community is addressed so as to form a witnessing community that continues the apostolic mission.<sup>333</sup> This equipping purpose is sometimes phrased as Scripture being a tool of God's mission.<sup>334</sup> In other words, the text itself plays a role in forming God's people for mission. This is very much linked in with the narrative of God's mission and the missional context of Scripture already discussed.<sup>335</sup> There is considerable overlap between the first two streams in that discerning the missional context of a text and its rendering of the story of God's mission is inevitably connected with the way it equips a community to live within that mission.

meaning of the text in a process of refining our assumptions and understanding to lead to more faithful application; cf. William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Introduction to Biblical Interpretation, ed. Kermit A. Ecklebarger (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), 114-16.

 <sup>330</sup> Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 313.
 331 Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 313.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>332</sup> Guder, "Missional Hermeneutics: The Missional Authority of Scripture," 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>333</sup> Darrell L. Guder, "Biblical Formation and Discipleship," in Treasure In Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness, ed. Lois Barrett, GOCS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 62; cf. Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 91–97, provides a much more detailed argument, although again the focus is on the Gospels and the Pauline corpus. <sup>334</sup> Marshall, New Testament Theology, 35–36. This is not to suggest that the documents of the NT are evangelistic tools per se. See also Bosch, Transforming Mission, 409-20, for a helpful distinction between evangelism and mission. Notably, John's Gospel suggests some kind of evangelistic intention (20:31). <sup>335</sup> Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 91–92.

I agree for the most part with Guder in this aspect although he simply seems to regard it as self-evident. In the case of the Gospels it seems likely that apart from any other consideration, the commissions to Jesus' disciples are also taken as legitimising an ongoing mission by the church to the world. But perhaps this should not be assumed so readily elsewhere, particularly in the Pauline corpus given the paucity of clear direction that Paul gives to his congregations to engage in mission. This has led, for example, Bowers to conclude that mission in the NT is the domain of those specially called out by God for the task. However, several recent studies show that while not explicit, there is an underlying assumption in the Pauline corpus that his congregations are involved in witnessing to and spreading the gospel to others. Thus, Guder's assumptions seem largely justified but, as in keeping with much missional literature, Guder pays scant attention to the Catholic epistles in his analysis. And even though some of the letters such as 1 Peter would seem to fit well within this paradigm, this does not necessarily follow for James.

In fact, the difficulty is more with what it means to be a 'witnessing community.' In the early NT context, it is exclusively applied to those 'eyewitnesses' of Jesus' life and teaching who were uniquely authorised to bear witness about him.<sup>339</sup> But in modern mission terminology this often means sharing the gospel or a personal story of transformation to those outside the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>336</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 862; Esler, *New Testament Theology*, 113; Peter Stuhlmacher, "Matt 28:16-20 and the Course of Mission in the Apostolic and Postapostolic Age," in Ådna and Kvalbein, eds, *Mission of the Early Church*, 42; Senior and Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 228, 252–53, 267–69, 292–94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>337</sup> Paul Bowers, "Church and Mission in Paul," *JSNT* 44 (December 1, 1991): 89–111. In Bower's view, mission is limited to proclamation of the gospel and deliberate attempts to convert others; cf. Luke T. Johnson, "Proselytism and Witness in Earliest Christianity: An Essay in Origins," in *Sharing the Book*, ed. John Witte and Richard C. Martin (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>338</sup> See James P. Ware, "The Thessalonians as a Missionary Congregation: 1 Thessalonians 1,5-8," *ZNW* 83, no. 1–2 (1992): 126–31; Peter T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995); I. Howard Marshall, "Who Were the Evangelists?," in Ådna and Kvalbein, eds, *Mission of the Early Church*, 251–64; James P. Ware, *The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism*, NovTSup 120 (Leiden: Brill, 2005). This is a comprehensive case study on Philippians that shows convincingly the missional undercurrent to the whole letter. See also the aforementioned studies of Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*; Barram, *Mission and Moral Reflection in Paul*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>339</sup> Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World, 47.

church.<sup>340</sup> James does not fit comfortably in either of these interpretations. Yet there is an aspect of witness that is in continuity with Israel's 'witness to the nations', that I do believe can be seen in the letter. In this sense, the community may or may not be active in the proclamation of the gospel, but it bears witness to who God is by living in obedience to his commands and with his wisdom. This presents Israel as a distinctive and attractional community to the surrounding nations, a point that will come to the fore in several areas of James' teaching. To avoid confusion, then, I will primarily speak of the attractional nature of the audience as an intrinsic element of its missional identity, rather than use witnessing community (although at times this may be appropriate). Thus this second stream, at least as I have nuanced it towards missional identity, provides a further element for a missional reading of James.

#### The Missional Locatedness of the Readers

The third stream suggests that a faithful reading of the text is 'from the missional location of the Christian community'<sup>344</sup> and thus privileges the application of the text to a particular community.<sup>345</sup> Michael Barram has proposed this as a necessary element of a missional hermeneutic and suggests that this is best done through asking questions that challenge a given community's understanding of mission.<sup>346</sup> This, of course, recognises that every reading has its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>340</sup> Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 47–48. I am not suggesting this is a wrong interpretation; as Stott points out, such witness corroborates the apostolic witness but is always "secondary and subordinate" to it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>341</sup> On this see, e.g., James Okoye, *Israel and the Nations: A Mission Theology of the Old Testament* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>342</sup> This for example can be seen in Deut 4:6-8. See J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC 5 (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 404–5. For more on this, see Wright, *The Mission of God*, 362–87. I will return to this later on in my investigation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>343</sup> cf. Brownson, 2002, cited in Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 314, who suggests it is more helpful to discuss the purpose of the writings in terms of "imparting a shared identity to the people of God as a body called to participate in God's mission." Thus it is a missional identity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>344</sup> Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 314.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>345</sup> Barram, "Bible, Mission, and Social Location."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>346</sup> The questions were originally posted under Michael D. Barram, "Located Questions for a Missional Hermeneutic," in *AAR/SBL Missional Hermeneutics Forum* (SBL Annual Conference, Chicago, 2006), http://www.gocn.org/resources/articles/located-questions-missional-hermeneutic. However, they are no longer available there but are part of the summary in Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 316.

own context that colours its reading of the text, although this should not ignore either the original context or the author's intended meaning.<sup>347</sup>

The kind of questions Barram envisages are certainly helpful in moving beyond comfortable interpretations that support the status quo and provide a challenge for missional communities today.<sup>348</sup> However, as Hunsberger notes, this stream is located more in the reader of the text (or reading community) than the text itself<sup>349</sup> and so the questions Barram asks are generally beyond the scope of this present investigation. While I do intend, at certain points, to allow the text to speak into modern mission practice and theology,<sup>350</sup> my primary focus is on the foundational aspects of the first two streams that should precede the articulation of socially located questions. Thus it is not necessary to incorporate this element, at least in any depth, at this stage of a missional reading and so I will move on to the fourth stream which, as will become clear, is very relevant to the letter of James, provided it is also nuanced appropriately.

## The Missional Engagement with Culture

The fourth stream identified by Hunsberger considers 'the ways in which the biblical text relates the received tradition to a particular context in light of the good news of the reign of God in Jesus Christ.'351 This draws on work by James Brownson that specifically looks at how biblical (OT) tradition is interpreted, adapted and reshaped by the writers of the NT to meet the needs of their own communities in their particular context. Brownson proposes that the gospel

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>347</sup> Barram, "Bible, Mission, and Social Location," 43–44; cf. Wright, *The Mission of God*, 40–47, who agrees that plurality and diversity are welcome in a missional reading but argues against unlimited readings that ignore the original context and meaning. A missional reading must still make use of "grammatico-historical tools in seeking to determine as far as is possible their authors' and editors' intended meaning in the contexts they were spoken or written" (p. 40).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>348</sup> For an example of an explicitly socially located reading of James, see Frank Pimentel, "Codicia, Resistencia y Proyecto Alternativo: Un acercamiento Socio-liguístico y Actualizante a la Carta de Santiago," *RIBLA* 31 (1998): 68–85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>349</sup> Hunsberger, "Mapping the Missional Hermeneutics Conversation," 66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>350</sup> The social location of my own reading would inevitably be that of the western Protestant missionary 'world' so any observations I make under this rubric will tend to be directed towards this small subset of the global Church. <sup>351</sup> Hunsberger, "Missional Hermeneutic," 316.

provides the interpretive matrix for the NT authors, and that their use of tradition is an inherently missional process.<sup>352</sup>

Recognising the contextual nature of interpretation, Brownson allows for multiple readings as a natural outworking of the many different contexts that are brought to Scripture. However, these readings should not do violence to the meaning in its original historical context, or the authorial intention, as far as this can be determined. As he puts it, 'Every interpretation must do justice to the same text. Moreover, every interpretation must connect, in some way, with our basic humanity.'353 Thus, although there is a plurality of readings, these cannot be infinite or ignorant of the context of the NT. This leads Brownson to suggest that as well as a hermeneutic of diversity, there should also be a move towards a hermeneutic of coherence. His suggestion is that the gospel, as broadly understood in the NT, provides such a hermeneutic.<sup>354</sup>

This provides a model for interpretation that draws together the socio-historical context of the NT document, the tradition (generally OT Scripture) that is drawn upon and the way this is developed and adapted through the gospel matrix. Although the NT presents diverse aspects of the gospel, Brownson suggests that it can broadly be defined as containing three motifs identified by James Dunn, namely the proclamation of the risen, exalted Jesus; the call for faith; and a promise (grace, mercy, forgiveness, salvation, etc.) held out to faith. To these Brownson adds a fourth, the identity of Jesus and his death, and he argues that these provide a useful starting point to define the gospel in general terms.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>352</sup> James V. Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love: New Testament Resources for a Missional Hermeneutic* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 41; cf. Sanders, *Sacred Story*, 71. This is similar to the emphasis in Sanders' canonical criticism which focuses on how texts are taken up and retold in new contexts. He refers to this as a "theocentric, monotheizing hermeneutic."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>353</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 16–17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>354</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 28–31.

<sup>355</sup> Brownson, Speaking the Truth in Love, 1998, 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>356</sup> Dunn, 1977 cited in Brownson, Speaking the Truth in Love, 1998, 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>357</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 47.

in the midst of substantial diversity in articulating the gospel, it seems clear that for New Testament writers, the gospel is always tied up with the identity, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, a story that is announced as an act of God that offers hopeful promise for the whole world.<sup>358</sup>

Although not every writer will work from the same core formulation, the generality of such a description allows for a model that can be qualified and refined where necessary. Thus 'gospel provides the hermeneutical perspective or matrix by which the convergence of tradition and specific historical context is *interpreted*.'359 In this way, a missional hermeneutic seeks to discern the specific situation that is being addressed in the text, in what way biblical traditions are used to speak into the situation and in what way the hermeneutical assumptions in this process relate to the Christian gospel formulated as above. 360 The final element is for this process to inform the application of the text to a new context through the matrix of the gospel which will require attention to the social location of the community as in the previous stream. 361 As Brownson concludes, 'Scripture... models for us a flexible hermeneutic that holds Christian faith together within the framework of the gospel yet affirms the validity and necessity of diverse expressions of Christian faith within the pluralist and conversational structure of the canon itself.'362

The possibilities and the problems of this aspect of a missional reading are immediately apparent in studying James. Although direct quotations are few, the epistle of James draws on the OT extensively and is also widely acknowledged to be dependent on the Jesus tradition.<sup>363</sup>

358 Brownson, Speaking the Truth in Love, 1998, 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>359</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 49 (italics original); cf. Sanders, *Sacred Story*, 115, who suggests a hermeneutical triangle of "texts, contexts and hermeneutic."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>360</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 55, 56–77. Brownson applies this model to "Christians and Roman rule" showing how different authors present different emphases on the appropriate response to such rule, from acceptance to critique.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>361</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 78–82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>362</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>363</sup> There are a host of studies in this area, but a few examples will suffice here. See, inter alia, Luke Timothy Johnson, "The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James," *JBL* 101, no. 3 (September 1982): 391–401; Dean B. Deppe, "The Sayings of Jesus in the Paraenesis of James: A PDF Revision of the Doctoral Dissertation the Sayings of Jesus in the Epistle of James" (Amsterdam, The Free University of Amsterdam, 1990); Patrick Gray, "Points and Lines: Thematic Parallelism in the Letter of James and the Testament of Job," *NTS* 50, no. 03 (2004): 406–

James' use of OT exemplars, such as Abraham and Rahab (2:21-25), explicitly draws on biblical (and extra-biblical) tradition which has promise in terms of the missional identity of the community. Thus it is clear that this is an important approach to incorporate but caution will be needed in discerning the scope and nature of these allusions which are often debated. Approaches to the somewhat imprecisely labelled concept of intertextuality, <sup>364</sup> such as that of Richard Hays, <sup>365</sup> are useful but without due control can lead to implausible readings that are anachronistic, particularly given the level of education of most audiences and the lack of availability of Scripture to the average auditor. <sup>366</sup> However, this is mitigated to a certain extent by the greater level of familiarity that the audience of James would have with the Septuagint (LXX) as diaspora Judeans, and also given the likelihood that they are in an urban context with

<sup>24;</sup> Carroll D. Osburn, "James, Sirach, and the Poor," *Ex Auditu* 22 (January 1, 2006): 113–32; Patrick J. Hartin, "James and the Jesus Tradition," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 55–70; Karen H. Jobes, "The Greek Minor Prophets in James," in "*What Does the Scripture Say?*": *Studies in the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity. Volume 2: The Letters and Liturgical Traditions*, ed. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias, LNTS 469 (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 147–58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>364</sup> On this, see Russell L. Meek, "Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner Biblical Allusion: The Ethics of a Methodology," *Bib* 95, no. 1 (2014): 280–91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>365</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). He outlines his criteria for discerning "echoes" on pp. 29-32. For a more nuanced although still optimistic approach, see G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 29–40. His modified criteria summarised are (p. 33): 1) Availability (i.e. likely shared knowledge of the source text); 2) Volume (i.e. significant verbal and/or syntactical overlap); 3) Recurrence (i.e. the author uses this source elsewhere); 4) Thematic Coherence (i.e. what is alluded to fits thematically and supports the author's argument); 5) Historical Plausibility (i.e. the author and audience could be expected to make or recognise the allusion and such usage fits within the wider Jewish context); 6) History of Interpretation (i.e. recognition by other commentators of the same allusion); and, 7) Satisfaction (i.e. does the allusion and context help to understand the text and the rhetorical goals of the author). As Beale notes, the last three are far more subjective. More critical is Stanley E. Porter, "Allusions and Echoes," in *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley, SymS 50 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2008), 36–39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>366</sup> See the critique in Paul Foster, "Echoes without Resonance: Critiquing Certain Aspects of Recent Scholarly Trends in the Study of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament," *JSNT* 38, no. 1 (September 2015): 96–111. See also Christopher D. Stanley, "Paul's 'Use' of Scripture: Why the Audience Matters," in *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley, SumS 50 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2008), 130–36. He also critiques Hays' use of "metalipsis," whereby an author cites a source and thereby deliberately evokes the wider context of the citation; cf. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 176–77. Note also, as R. W. L. Moberly, "Scriptural Echoes and Gospel Interpretation: Some Questions," *JTInt* 11, no. 1 (2017): 5–20, points out, even on literary grounds, metalepsis may not be intended by the author. As he puts it, "one can cite and allude without metalepsis if that which is cited says resonantly what one wants to say, and if what follows the words cited speaks of something else" (p. 9).

a reasonable level of education.<sup>367</sup> Further, lack of audience recognition does not mean the author could not have intended an allusion,<sup>368</sup> and it may be that the teachers in the audience (3:1) would be able to explicate connections missed by others.<sup>369</sup> It seems reasonable then that James' audience could and should recognise the use of the OT in the letter at least to a certain extent, but that caution is needed in evaluating such allusions or echoes and in assuming recognition of the wider context.<sup>370</sup> This latter aspect requires significant thematic and/or verbal links and an open appraisal of the differences as well as similarities.<sup>371</sup>

It must also be recognised that the use of tradition in James is not limited to the OT, as I briefly noted above.<sup>372</sup> A further layer of ambiguity is introduced by James' use of the Jesus tradition since, as Bauckham has argued, James appears to deliberately paraphrase Jesus' teaching without any indication when he does this.<sup>373</sup> Kloppenborg has suggested that this corresponds to the rhetorical technique of emulation (*aemulatio*) in which an author reformulates an original text in a way that is both recognisable to the audience and seeks 'to rival and vie' with the original for the way in which it is formulated.<sup>374</sup> Roelof Alkema

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>367</sup> Batten, "Urban and Agrarian," 5–7; John S. Kloppenborg, "James 3:7-8, Genesis 1:26 and the Linguistic Register of the Letter of James," in *Christian Origins and the New Testament in the Greco-Roman Context: Essays in Honor of Dennis R. MacDonald*, ed. Margaret Froelich et al. (Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2016), 115, 121–23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>368</sup> Stanley E. Porter, Sacred Tradition in the New Testament: Tracing Old Testament Themes in the Gospels and Epistles (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>369</sup> But see Stanley, "Why the Audience Matters," 140, who dismisses this possibility for a Pauline Gentile audience. He also somewhat overstates the case against this by claiming that everyone would have to "memorize vast sections of the Jewish scriptures." The point is here that authorised teachers would be more familiar with the texts cited and could explain the allusions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>370</sup> See Porter, *Sacred Tradition*, 34–46, for slightly more precise categorisation than Hays. He has five categories: quotations with an explicit marker, quotations without such, paraphrase, allusion and echo. However, such precision is difficult to maintain and so I will simply note quotations, allusions and echoes. I will also keep in mind Beale's criteria although I will not formally apply them. See Beale, *Handbook*, 33, and fn. 365 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>371</sup> Foster, "Echoes without Resonance," 109. As Foster notes, particularly in the area of allusions and echoes, this "will remain an art rather than an exact science."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>372</sup> Allison, *James*, 51, sees five principal sources: the LXX, extra-canonical Jewish tradition, popular Hellenistic philosophy, the Jesus tradition, and other early Christian traditions and texts. Particularly striking, according to Allison, is the way James draws on biblical tradition. See the table with a summary of James' use of the Pentateuch, the Former and Latter Prophets and the Psalms and Wisdom Literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>373</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 74–111; cf. Hartin, "Jesus Tradition," 56–57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>374</sup> John S. Kloppenborg, "The Emulation of the Jesus Tradition in the Letter of James," in Webb and Kloppenborg, eds, *Reading James*, 133. For this overall aim he cites Quintilian's Progymnasmata. But see Richard Bauckham,

recognises both Bauckham's and Kloppenborg's approaches, but questions whether James would seek to rival such an authoritative tradition in his composition, and so argues against labelling this as *aemulatio*. He suggests instead that James engages in 'rhetorical paraphrasing' based on Theon's description of progymnastic rhetoric.<sup>375</sup> In this, the 'idea' of the saying is of prime importance, so that the author is free to change the form to suit his own purposes. This should be done to 'make what is said dwell in the mind of the hearers.'<sup>376</sup> This of course does not make the task any easier of determining whether there is an allusion to a text or not, but at least we are alerted to the kinds of use of tradition that we may encounter in James.<sup>377</sup>

As far the Jesus tradition is concerned, one final note is in order here before I return to considering other challenges to this area of missional hermeneutics. It has often been noted that the great majority of correspondences between James and the Jesus tradition are found in Matthew's gospel, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>378</sup> Whether this is with the gospel itself or some kind of pre-Matthean Q tradition is beyond the scope of my thesis,<sup>379</sup> but my point here is that there are undeniable links with this material and so occasionally it will be appropriate to explore conceptual echoes with the Sermon and not just clear allusions.<sup>380</sup>

<sup>&</sup>quot;James and Jesus Traditions," in Mason and Lockett, eds, *Epistle of James*, 37–39, who pushes back against this development of his argument and prefers his model based on the Jewish wisdom tradition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>375</sup> Alkema, *Pillars and the Cornerstone*, 37–39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>376</sup> Alkema, *Pillars and the Cornerstone*, 37, citing Theon, 70, based on Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 13-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>377</sup> Allison, *James*, 57. This for Allison is "encouraging and discouraging." Encouraging in that there can be "dependence... even when the verbal links are minimal," discouraging because it makes such "intertextual judgments more difficult."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>378</sup> Patrick J. Hartin, *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus*, JSNTSup 47 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) argues for 21 parallels between James and the Sermon on the Mount. Bauckham, "James and Jesus Traditions," 25, notes 13 sayings in the Sermon that are "behind" the text of James. Somewhat more conservative is Deppe, "Sayings of Jesus", who only finds 8 conscious allusions to the sayings of Jesus, but 6 of these are from the Sermon on the Mount.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>379</sup> The classic study on this is Hartin, *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus*, who believes James draws on a form of Q that is closer to Matthew (Q<sup>Matt</sup>) than Luke. This has been accepted by several other commentators, such as Kloppenborg, "Emulation". In contrast Allison, *James*, 59, is unconvinced and sees a link with Matthew rather than O.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>380</sup> One such concept is perfection, cf. Hartin, *Spirituality of Perfection*, 129–47, who links perfection in James and the Sermon on the Mount. I will say more on this in chapter five.

# The Missional Use of Tradition in James

Returning to my discussion of Brownson's proposal, I must point out another obstacle to applying his approach to James. Quite simply, as I have already noted, the letter fails to mention the gospel, and so to propose this as an interpretive matrix may be unwarranted. However, Brownson argues that even where the term gospel is not used this emphasis may be present.<sup>381</sup> This seems likely for James since the two explicit references to him in the letter certainly show a post-Easter perspective with the use of the title 'Lord' (1:1) and even 'glorious Lord' (2:1), so that the letter should indeed be interpreted in light of the importance of the identity, death and resurrection of Jesus. Moreover, the audience is to await his  $\pi\alpha\rho\sigma\sigma\sigma(\alpha)$  (5:7-8), even perhaps as the judge at the door (5:9),<sup>382</sup> so it would seem reasonable to assume that these elements play an important, if not always explicit, role in the theology of James and in his use of biblical and other traditions.

This encompasses not only the use of recognised Scripture, but also what Beeby calls the 'transformed borrowing' of words and concepts from other cultures to express theological truth. As we will see, disputed terms like the  $\xi\mu\phi\nu\tau\sigma\varsigma$   $\lambda\delta\gamma\sigma\varsigma$  (1:21) may draw on certain elements of Stoic thinking as well as more clearly defined roots in biblical tradition. Beeby suggests tentatively that such borrowing is a reflection of cross-cultural encounter, that is in itself a 'form of mission.' Evidently James is capable of borrowing from Stoic and other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>381</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 48. One may even question if such a unifying concept of the gospel is evident in NT literature and much less whether this forms a matrix for interpretation.

 $<sup>^{382}</sup>$  As we will see, some of the references to χύριος in the text are ambiguous as to whether they refer to Jesus or God. I will deal with these within the thesis itself.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>383</sup> Beeby, "A Missional Approach to Renewed Interpretation," 281; cf. Sanders, *Sacred Story*, 186. This also relates to his "monotheizing hermeneutic" which he sees at play even when biblical texts borrowed certain idioms from the surrounding polytheistic cultures.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>384</sup> Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, argues that this is a Greek philosophic concept that James borrows; cf. Jason A. Whitlark, "Εμφυτος Λόγος: A New Covenant Motif in the Letter of James," *HBT* 32, no. 2 (2010): 144–65, who argues for an OT new covenant background.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>385</sup> Beeby, "A Missional Approach to Renewed Interpretation," 280.

philosophical writers to communicate persuasively with his diaspora audience,<sup>386</sup> and so I will also note where this occurs although I cannot in the interests of space explore this in much detail.

A final element suggested by Brownson is that the NT authors in reinterpreting tradition present this as a 'summons to allegiance,' in the same way that the story is presented as *the* story. Brownson draws on speech-act theory to suggest that the reading of the text is an 'illocutionary act calling forth some specific response from the hearer/reader,' in other words, it 'seeks to bring about a new state of affairs.' So the use of traditional material in James may be seen in the light of the wider purpose of the author to influence the hearers/readers towards their missional identity.

This obviously integrates with the first two streams given that the use of biblical tradition is only discerned through attention to the rest of Scripture, which both provides the overall narrative of the *missio Dei* and the missional identity of God's people. This will affect how I integrate them to this study, summarised below.

### **Summary**

In this chapter I have argued for the appropriateness of a missional reading of James, recognising that mission encompasses God's redemptive purposes and the missional context of Scripture (in a general sense). From there, I then explained the different streams (or 'interlocking realities')<sup>389</sup> that are incorporated in missional hermeneutics. I have argued that these must be refined and adapted before I can apply them, and that the first, second and fourth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>386</sup> Matt Jackson-McCabe, "The Letter of James and Hellenistic Philosophy," in Mason and Lockett, eds, *Epistle of James*, 50, argues that "James is both thoroughly Jewish and thoroughly Hellenistic - the letter of James is both/and."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>387</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>388</sup> Brownson, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, 1998, 51; cf. Esler, *New Testament Theology*, 151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>389</sup> cf. Barram, "GOCN Forum On Missional Hermeneutics" where the streams are described as lines of enquiry that are "interlocking realities."

streams are the most appropriate for my reading of James. Since, as I have already noted, these streams are highly interdependent, I feel it is more helpful to treat them as interwoven strands that together form a robust missional hermeneutic.

More explicitly, my intention is to focus on the way James both speaks from within and into the mission of God and how the text seeks to form the missional identity of its hearers. I will also draw upon the missional reframing of prior traditions within Scripture integrating these three strands to enable a missional reading of James. I have modified Hunsberger's helpful taxonomy as have other missional readings of scripture,<sup>390</sup> and my study of James will provide another test case for this methodology, as well as add to the growing corpus of missionally interested readings of Scripture.

It is common with hermeneutical approaches to speak of providing a map for biblical interpretation.<sup>391</sup> As Wright points out, any hermeneutical framework functions like a map, in that it is impossible for a map to represent every aspect of the terrain it represents. 'The given reality is the whole text of the Bible itself.... [a missional hermeneutic] does not claim to explain every feature of the vast terrain of the Bible, nor to foreclose in advance the exegesis of any specific text.'<sup>392</sup> Rather, a missional hermeneutic should be judged for its 'heuristic fruitfulness'<sup>393</sup> and the overall sense it brings to the major features of the landscape, as well as the way it provides insight into neglected areas.<sup>394</sup> As is clear from the recent scholarship on James, there are already many other features clearly marked on the map. A missional reading

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>390</sup> For example, see Davy, "Job and the Mission of God"; Flemming, "Exploring a Missional Reading of Scripture: Philippians as a Case Study"; and Flemming, "Missional Reading of the Apocalypse."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>391</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 68–69. This of course applies to other fields. See, e.g., the similar descriptive language used by Stephen C. Barton, "Social-Scientific Criticism," in *Handbook To Exegesis Of The New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Boston: Brill, 2002), 280; cf. John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?*, New Testament Series (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 43–44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>392</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>393</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 68–69. The phrase quoted is from p. 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>394</sup> Cf. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism*?, 43, who suggests the same for social models, as does Barton, "Social-Scientific Criticism," 280. As he puts it, "the social sciences offer an interestingly different map of the same ground."

is not meant to obliterate these but rather add some often neglected and important details that help provide a truer picture of the terrain being studied. As I noted earlier, I am not proposing that a missional hermeneutic is an exclusive approach, nor that the work of more traditional grammatical historical studies or recent advances in social studies, rhetorical studies and linguistic analyses should be ignored. Rather, a missional hermeneutic that is robust will rely on these tools for an in-depth exegesis of the text but without losing sight of the missional nature of, and missional concerns within, the text.

Thus having outlined my own approach to James, it is time to turn my attention to the text of James and the remainder of the thesis is dedicated to this. In the next chapter I will unpack the missional identity of the author and recipients as presented in the prescript of the letter.

# **CHAPTER 4: DIASPORA AND RESTORATION (Jas 1:1 & 5:19-20)**

In chapter one of this study, I explained my decision to approach James based on the themes that are introduced in James 1:2-27 and then developed further in the main body of the letter. However, before this, it is necessary to look at the letter greeting (1:1) and alongside this, as a suitable frame to the letter, James' final exhortation with its call to restore the wanderer (5:19-20).<sup>395</sup> As I have explained previously, there are extensive debates on the authorship and over whether the title for the addressees is intended metaphorically or literally.<sup>396</sup> Although I agree with those who take a literal approach and posit a Judean diaspora audience, it seems to me hard to ignore that the very language itself is loaded with significance beyond the literal meaning.<sup>397</sup> Certainly obscured by the English use of 'James,' the greeting from *Jacob* ( $I \dot{\alpha} x \omega \beta o \varsigma$ ) to the *twelve tribes* could hardly but have deeper resonances with its hearers,<sup>398</sup> particularly if it is primarily addressed to Judean Christ-followers.

Unfortunately, most mission literature simply assumes a fully metaphorical understanding of the greeting where the twelve tribes represent the universal church, currently in a state of 'diaspora' from its heavenly homeland.<sup>399</sup> The church views itself as the 'eschatological community' of the people of God continuing the mission of Israel on earth as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>395</sup> Cf. Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora*, 49. I will say more on this when I deal with this section.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>396</sup> See the relevant section in chapter one on the audience. Allison, *James*, 127–33, provides a summary of the arguments and concludes that the terms are meant to be taken literally but are in fact a fictional construct.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>397</sup> As Johnson, *Letter of James*, 171 notes, a literal meaning does not preclude a "spiritual" significance since these are "false alternatives."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>398</sup> Interestingly, Allen Cabaniss, "A Note on Jacob's Homily," *EvQ* 47, no. 4 (1975): 219–22, takes the model of Jacob's address to his twelve sons, the twelve tribes of Israel, as a way to frame the letter; cf. Allison, *James*, 120, who notes the connection with Gen 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>399</sup> See the survey in chapter two. Such literature is probably dependent on Dibelius, *James*, 66, for this view.

the 'twelve tribes' to be a light to the nations awaiting full redemption. 400 Such conclusions are often derived from making a direct connection to the very similar greeting in 1 Peter without taking into account the different contexts of the letters and the much more explicit missional emphasis in 1 Peter. 401 Moreover, simply assuming the title to refer metaphorically to a Gentile church 402 loses the deeper significance of the terms that might resonate with an audience of Judean Christ-followers.

It is necessary then, and more helpful, to investigate the terms of the greeting as they would be heard in a Judean diaspora context to gain an understanding of the weight behind them. Several studies on this exist which I will draw on as I establish the backdrop to these terms that would be part of a shared semantic universe for James and his addressees. <sup>403</sup> I will argue that the terms 'diaspora' and 'twelve tribes' evoke past judgment and future hopes of restoration, which fall within the biblical narrative of God's redemptive mission. <sup>404</sup> We will also see that the way James communicates would appeal to a broader audience than just Christ-following Judeans and thus there is an apologetic function to the letter which adds to its missional weight. However, I will first show that the author himself claims an inherently

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>400</sup> Goheen, A Light to the Nations, 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>401</sup> Goheen clumps these two greetings together. See Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 159; cf. Martín Ocaña Flores, "Los 'Extranjeros' en la *Missio Dei*: Apuntes para una Misiología con y hacia los Emigrantes," *Teología y Cultura* 14 (November 1, 2012): 106. It is not that a comparison is unhelpful, but it should be made with an understanding of the different contexts of the two letters, which I will briefly do later on in this chapter. For mission in 1 Peter, see Christoph Stenschke, "Mission According to First Peter," in Grams et al, eds, *Bible and Mission*, 180–218; Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 237–43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>402</sup> See Joel Marcus, "The Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora' (James 1.1)," *NTS* 60, no. 4 (October 2014): 433–47, for the suggestion that the Gentiles who believed were viewed as the lost ten tribes of Israel and since they responded to the Gospel, they became genuine Israelites.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>403</sup> For studies on exile and restoration that refer to and provide comprehensive lists of references for both "twelve tribes" and "diaspora", see James M. Scott, ed., *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, JSJSup 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1997); and James M. Scott, ed., *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, JSJSup 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2001). See also E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 80–99, who is frequently referenced; cf. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 268–73. For specific studies on James, see Jackson-McCabe, "Twelve Tribes"; and Marcus, "Twelve Tribes"; Allison, *James*, 127–34, is also detailed here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>404</sup> cf. Johnson, *Letter of James*, 171–72. The readers "become...the hoped-for restored Israel among the nations... living in service to God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

missional identity and authority that is further enhanced by being, or being associated with, James of Jerusalem.

## THE MISSIONAL IDENTITY OF THE AUTHOR

In his greeting, James claims to be the slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are two key identities that show the author's allegiance both to the God of Israel and to Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory (2:1). This double allegiance is developed throughout the letter and is something that James wishes his audience to emulate, although as we will see in the next section, he deliberately mutes (although does not silence altogether) the second element to have a wider appeal. In order to understand the missional nature of this double identity, I will consider this in the light of the way these terms are used in Scripture.

#### James the Slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ

It has often been noted that by claiming for himself the title 'slave of God' (θεοῦ... δοῦλος), the author is not (only) taking a stance of humility but is placing himself firmly in the OT tradition of those called and anointed as leaders in Israel.<sup>405</sup> As Dibelius suggests, the author makes a favourable comparison with 'Israel's men of God' and thus writes from a position of authority.<sup>406</sup> What is not often noted is that the position of leadership is clearly linked to the purposes of God for his people, often with a redemptive focus, and in a way that moves the story of God's mission forward.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>405</sup> See, e.g., Johnson, Letter of James, 171.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>406</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 66; cf. Coker, *Nativist Discourse*, 71, 75, who from the perspective of a postcolonial reading, argues that the letter greeting also establishes the authority of James: he writes from the centre to the margins, the diaspora.

## Slave of God

Moses is perhaps paradigmatic for this usage as the great liberator of God's people from Egypt and is frequently given the title 'the servant of the LORD' (עבד־האלהים) and, occasionally, 'the servant of God' (עבד־האלהים). 407 Such a designation continues throughout the history of Israel, with the same title being given to Joshua, Moses' immediate successor, David and the prophets. 408 The concept of God's Servant is also taken up in Isaiah, most famously in the well-known Servant songs (Isa 40-53) but also elsewhere, 409 which influenced the early church understanding of Jesus' identity and mission 410 and that of the apostles, particularly Paul. 411

Indeed, some commentators see a link between the letter greeting and a reference to the Servant in Isaiah 49:5-6. 412 The comparison in Allison shows the significant verbal overlap when compared with the LXX. 413 The Lord (κύριος) forms his servant (δοῦλον) for a specific purpose (49:5) which is amplified in verse 6: 'It is a great thing for you to be called my Servant  $(\pi\alpha \tilde{\imath}\delta\dot{\alpha})^{414}$  so that you may set up the tribes of Jacob  $(\tau \dot{\alpha}\varsigma \ \phi \upsilon \lambda \dot{\alpha}\varsigma \ I \alpha \kappa \omega \beta^{415})$  and turn back  $(\dot{\epsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\rho\dot{\epsilon}\psi\alpha\iota)$  the dispersion  $(\tau\dot{\gamma}\nu\ \delta\iota\alpha\sigma\pi\sigma\rho\dot{\alpha}\nu)$  of Israel. These are striking similarities but there are some obvious differences in emphasis, not least that the servant is the one addressed. It is also 'the tribes of Jacob' rather than the 'twelve tribes,' although this unique expression 417 'by

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>407</sup> For the former see, e.g., Num 12:8, Deut 34:5, Josh 1:1 and *passim*, 2 Chron 1:3. For the latter, see 1 Chron 6:49; 2 Chr 24:9; Neh 10:29 (30); Dan 9:11 cf. Rev 15:3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>408</sup> Joshua is given a similar title in Josh 24:29 and Judg 2:8; David in 2 Sam 7:5 *passim*, 1 Kgs 8:25 and frequently in the titles to Psalms; and the prophets in 2 Kgs *passim*, and Jer 35:15.

 $<sup>^{409}</sup>$  The Servant (עבד) is referred to 17x in the Servant Songs in the MT. In the following chapters, the reference is always plural referring to restored Israel (11x).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>410</sup> Peskett and Ramachandra, *Message of Mission*, 146–47; cf. Craig A. Evans, "A Light to the Nations: Isaiah and Mission in Luke," in Porter and Westfall, *Christian Mission*, 93–107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>411</sup> Don N. Howell, "Mission in Paul's Epistles: Theological Bearings," in Larkin and Williams, eds, *Mission in the New Testament*, 64; cf. Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 165–66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>412</sup> Wall, Community of the Wise, 41; Cargal, Restoring the Diaspora, 212–13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>413</sup> Allison, *James*, 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>414</sup> Both δοῦλος and παῖς are used in the LXX for עבד, so that the use of this term in v. 6 rather than the former is not significant. For example, Moses is both ὁ παῖς κυρίου (Josh 1:13) and ὁ δούλος κυρίου (2 Kgs 18:12), as is David (LXX Ps 17:1 and 35:1). Although the preference for παῖς is clear in the Servant Songs, in Isa 49, the Servant is twice referred to using δούλος (49:3, 5, cf. 48:20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>415</sup> The LXX has Ἰαχωβ rather than Ἰάχωβος which is simply the Hellenized form (BDAG, 464).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>416</sup> I will generally follow the NETS English translation of the LXX (here I have changed 'Iakob' to 'Jacob').

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>417</sup> This only occurs here in the LXX τὰς φυλὰς Ιακωβ and the equivalent שָבְטִי יַעֵּקֹב in the MT.

definition suggests the whole twelve-clan people. Thus even though a clear allusion cannot be determined here, the unique language, the way the Servant songs informed the early church's mission and the way this particular servant seeks to correct his audience throughout the letter, all suggest that James is drawing on this broader servant tradition. I am not suggesting that the author claims to be *the* Servant of the Lord, but rather positions himself in continuity with the task of the Isaianic Servant in turning Israel back to God with its wider implications. This is strengthened by James' encouragement to return  $(\dot{\varepsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\rho\dot{\varepsilon}\varphi\omega$  x2) the brother or sister who has wandered (5:19-20) which I will consider later in this chapter.

This also includes the motif of being 'a light to the nations' (Isa 49:6; cf. 42:6), <sup>421</sup> which is already prefigured in Isa 49:3 where God says that Israel is his 'servant (LXX δοῦλος) in whom I will be glorified.' Goldingay and Payne argue that God's glory has an attractional nature which is embodied in Israel and the servant <sup>422</sup> so that 'the world comes to recognise it and seek to share it.' This idea of missional attraction is one that James taps into more than once, as we will see later in this thesis.

Although 'slave of God' is limited in the NT, its uses are quite significant, applying to those who play pivotal roles in God's mission. Paul refers to himself as the 'slave of God' (δοῦλος θεοῦ, Tit 1:1 cf. Acts 16:17) and in Revelation, where the designation appears several times, it identifies those who are faithful martyrs in the eschatological vision of Revelation 19

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>418</sup> John Goldingay and David F. Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55: Volume II*, ICC (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 162–63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>419</sup> Allison, *James*, 125. Earlier though, the servant is given the name Jacob (Isa 44:1, 2; 48:20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>420</sup> See fn. 411 above and also James M. Scott, "Acts 2:9-11 as an Anticipation of the Mission to the Nations," in Ådna and Kvalbein, eds, *Mission of the Early Church*, 109; and Evans, "A Light to the Nations," 103–5.

<sup>421</sup> Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 41.

<sup>422</sup> Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55 Vol. II*, 158–60. They translate אָשֶׁר־בְּּךְ אֶתְפָּאָר as "in whom I will display my attractiveness" based on the nuance of מאָר and its related noun as beauty, splendour (see HALOT, 1722). On translating פאר in Isaiah, see also John Goldingay and David F. Payne, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40-55: Volume I*, ICC (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 335, 367.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>423</sup> Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55 Vol. II*, 166. They also point out that vv. 5, 6a and 6b effectively restate vv. 3a and 3b.

(see v. 5).<sup>424</sup> Hence both from the perspective of OT tradition and NT appropriation of such tradition, James, by claiming to be God's servant, draws on the theme of participating in God's purposes as his servant to turn his people back to him, and by extension to become a light to the nations, an inherently missional identity.

# Slave of the Lord Jesus Christ

This missional identity is greatly strengthened by the author's further self-designation as 'a slave of [the] Lord Jesus Christ' (κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος). The similarity with other NT epistolary prescripts is evident<sup>425</sup> and it is also a common designation among the Pauline missionary teams.<sup>426</sup> This may suggest a missional significance as in Paul's letters, yet the weight of Paul's missional identity is more heavily carried by his self-understanding as an 'apostle of Christ Jesus,'<sup>427</sup> so that the same emphasis is not explicitly present in James.

However, the designation of Jesus as  $\varkappa \iota \iota \rho \iota \circ \varsigma$  in the letter greeting is significant, particularly as Jesus is placed alongside God in the letter greeting. Moreover, attributing glory to the Lord Jesus Christ in 2:1 clearly represents a post-death-and-resurrection understanding of who Jesus is. He being a servant of God draws on the Isaianic idea of the Servant, this would be even more to the fore by associating his servanthood with the Lord Jesus

<sup>424</sup> Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos, 1999), 21. It also refers to Moses (15:3) and believers in general in the last days (7:3 cf. 1:1). It is also applied this way in 1 Pet 2:16, its only other occurrence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>425</sup> Four other letters use a similar epithet. These are Rom 1:1, Phil 1:1, 2 Pet 1:1 and Jude 1:1. Surprisingly Margaret Mitchell, "The Letter of James as a Document of Paulinism?," in Kloppenborg and Webb, eds, *Reading James*, 85, views this as evidence that the letter comes from within the Pauline world. But it is strange that James hits on the one combination not used in any Pauline letter! Further, Paul always uses "Christ Jesus" rather than "Jesus Christ" compared to the other letters noted here. Other differences also weaken any comparison (James does not claim to be an apostle and there is no adapted blessing typical to Paul such as "grace and peace"); cf. Edgar, *Social Setting*, 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>426</sup> Harris, Slave of Christ, 23–24.

<sup>427</sup> This designation appears in 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Titus 1:1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>428</sup> McCartney, *James*, 78, argues that this shows a high Christology; cf. Chris A. Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament*, EGGNT (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2013), 9–10, who notes that the genitives are emphatically placed before the head noun, and both relate to the noun.

<sup>429</sup> Edgar, Social Setting, 49–50; cf. Niebuhr, "Minds," 50.

Christ, *the* Isaianic Servant for the early church.<sup>430</sup> James thereby sees himself in continuity with the mission of Jesus who is now also Lord.

The association of the letter with James the brother of Jesus further enhances the authority of the author. Not only was he an acknowledged 'pillar' of the church in Jerusalem (Gal 2:6-10; Acts 15:13-21),<sup>431</sup> he was known as one who had seen the risen Jesus (1 Cor 15:7) and, at least in Paul's perspective, had been entrusted with the mission to the 'circumcision' (Gal 2:9).<sup>432</sup> James certainly writes with the authority that would be expected from the leader of the church in Jerusalem.<sup>433</sup> This is notable in the high proportion of imperatives in the letter<sup>434</sup> and in how he addresses the recipients, most often as brothers and sisters, but also quite sternly on occasion, even calling them adulteresses and sinners (4:4, 8).<sup>435</sup>

It would follow, then, that the author of the letter, identified as or associated with James of Jerusalem, would have this missional task very much to the fore. To claim to be a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ implies much more than simply claiming an authoritative position over the recipients. It is to place one's self in continuity with the mission of Jesus who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>430</sup> Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 118–19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>431</sup> On the significance of this term, see Bauckham, "Jerusalem Church," 441–48. This confirms James' prominence in the Jerusalem church and, if Bauckham is correct, also locates James as part of "the group which led the Jerusalem church's mission to the Jewish people..." (p. 448).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>432</sup> On this and the leadership of James, see Matti Myllykoski, "James the Just in History and Tradition: Perspectives of Past and Present Scholarship (Part I)," *CurBR* 5, no. 1 (2006): 84–86, which meant that James (and Peter) "were early on regarded as powerful men among members of the new community in Jerusalem" (p. 85). By extension, James' authority would encompass Judean diaspora Christ-followers and further hints at this as the audience.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>433</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis, but there are several traditions surrounding the person of James of Jerusalem that may well add to his authority. See, e.g., Painter, "Footprints," 36–46; Matti Myllykoski, "James the Just in History and Tradition: Perspectives of Past and Present Scholarship (Part II)," *CurBR* 6, no. 1 (2007): 23–83. Among these salient features would be his piety, prayer, law-abidance and concern for the poor. The embellishments in this literature give James an even more prominent place in continuing the ministry of Jesus. For example, the Gos. Thom. 12, makes the startling claim that James is to lead the church, since for his sake "heaven and earth came into being."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>434</sup> See Varner, *New Perspective*, 50–51, who counts 55 imperatival forms and four future imperatives in the 108 verses, a higher ratio than any other NT book. This figure should be reduced though, as six of the imperatives are not directed to the audience and are in fact contrary to what James wants from his hearers (2:3 x3; 2:16 x3). Even with this adjustment, using Varner's other figures, James would still be higher than any other NT document.

<sup>435</sup> See further Edgar, *Social Setting*, 95–136.

came as the Servant of the Lord and commissioned his followers to continue that mission. Simply put, by describing himself thus, the author claims a missional identity.

This is also true of the identity of the recipients of the letter as presented in the greeting as I will show in the next two sections, first exploring the missional nature of diaspora.

#### DIASPORA AS A MISSIONAL LOCATION

While 'diaspora' was used as a technical term for the Judeans outside of Palestine, <sup>436</sup> it would also evoke a deeper meaning since it was closely linked to exile, a theme permeating much of the Hebrew Bible. <sup>437</sup> As I pointed out in the first chapter, the genre of James is that of a 'diaspora letter' and is often compared to the letters of Jeremiah and Baruch. In these, the sins of the people are given as the reason for exile. <sup>438</sup> Yet alongside the punishment, there is clearly the promise of restoration, as is made clear in Baruch 2:30-35 which holds out the hope of future restoration, contingent upon turning from their sin. This is reemphasized even more in Baruch 4 where virtually the whole chapter is dedicated to the reasons for exile but also the hope of restoration. <sup>439</sup> Likewise the Epistle of Jeremiah 1:2 ends with the promise that 'after this I will bring you from there with peace.' These two missional themes of judgment and return associated with diaspora are prevalent, as I will show below, so that by locating his audience there, James evokes this deeper significance. <sup>440</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>436</sup> E.g., see its use in John 7:35, the only other occurrence of the word in the NT apart from our letter and the similar greeting in 1 Peter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>437</sup> As Robert P. Carroll, "Deportation and Diasporic Discourses in the Prophetic Literature," in Scott, ed, *Exile*, 64 notes, "The Hebrew Bible is the book of exile... The grand narrative of the Hebrew Bible (especially as constituted by Genesis-2 Kings) seems to reflect and to testify to a subtext of deported existence."; Cf. Chaim Milikowsky, "Notions of Exile, Subjugation and Return in Rabbinic Literature," in Scott, ed, *Exile*, 265.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>438</sup> Ep Jer 1:1; Bar 1:13-22 cf. 2 Bar. 78.5; 79.2; 84.5; 4 Bar. 6.21. Cf. John S. Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse: The Construction of Ethos in James," *NTS* 53, no. 02 (2007): 269. Of course, the relevance of 2-4 Baruch is debatable given their later date. However, they still show a consciousness among diaspora Judeans of the negative reasons for exile.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>439</sup> Interestingly, Baruch like James, suggests that wisdom is needed in the midst of diaspora trials (4:1-4 cf. Jas 1:5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>440</sup> Although as Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse," 269–70, points out, a literal return is lacking in James, I am focusing on the metaphorical significance of the terms in James' address which are enhanced by the eschatological

# Diaspora as Judgment & Hope of Return

The prevailing sense of diaspora would be one of judgment as has been shown by van Unnik's detailed study. 441 As Jackson McCabe well puts it, 'The diaspora is precisely where the twelve-tribe people ought *not* to be. 442 It will be helpful here to briefly consider a few examples from OT passages and other literature that link diaspora to judgment before looking at the positive nuance associated with the term.

### Diaspora as God's Judgment on Israel

The overwhelmingly negative aspect of diaspora in the OT is obvious even from a cursory survey, particularly of the Greek term in the LXX. In this, διασπορά, its verbal cognate διασπείρω<sup>443</sup> and its synonym διασκορπίζω are often used to signify being dispersed or scattered in judgment by God.<sup>444</sup> For example, God will scatter (διασπερεῖ, Deut 4:27; 28:64; cf. Lev. 26:33) Israel among the nations for their disobedience. In fact, in Deuteronomy 28, being scattered is the culmination of the curses that will come upon Israel for their disobedience (28:15-68) and thereby is portrayed as the severest possible judgment.<sup>445</sup> Indeed, elsewhere

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framework and call to return the wanderer. I am suggesting a both-and reading where the literal diaspora has metaphorical significance.

Summarised in James M. Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period," in Scott, ed, *Exile*, 178–81. This is contra Schmidt *TDNT*, II, 98-104, who argues that diaspora was a positive term used to replace the negative "exile". Cf. John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 422, who agrees with van Unnik's general conclusion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>442</sup> Matt A. Jackson-McCabe, "The Messiah Jesus in the Mythic World of James," *JBL* 122, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 714, (italics original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>443</sup> Perhaps significantly, the first occurrences in the OT with God as the subject of the verb are Gen 11:8-9 where God scattered (διέσπειρεν) the people at Babel in an act of judgment on human pretension and pride. See further Allen P. Ross, "Studies in the Book of Genesis Part 4: The Dispersion of the Nations in Gen 11:1-9," *BibSac* 138, no. 550 (April 1, 1981): 127. He also sees a possible allusion to the first act of expulsion from the Garden of Eden (p. 131).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>444</sup> Διασπορά related to exile (translating multiple Hebrew terms) is seen in Deut 29:25; 30:4; Neh 1:9; Ps 147:2; Jer 15:7; 34:17. Both verbs are used frequently to translate מור (to disperse) or זרה (to scatter – see HALOT, 918, 280). See, e.g., Lev 26:33; Deut 4:27; 28:64; 30:3; Neh 1:8; Jer 9:16; 13:24; 18:17; Ezek 11:16; 12:15; 22:15. They are also used together several times, e.g., Ezek 12:15, 20:23, 22:15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>445</sup> Gary G. Porton, "The Idea of Exile in Early Rabbinic Midrash," in Scott, ed, *Exile*, 260, notes that Sifre Deuteronomy (3rd C. CE) suggests exile is the worst of all God's punishments.

διασπορά itself is equivalent to being 'a horror' (τευπ) to other nations (Deut 28:25; Jer 34:17). 446 Moreover, all three terms can signify the stronger sense of not just being scattered but being 'driven out' (נדח) into exile. 447

Given this portrayal in the OT, Scott agrees with van Unnik's fundamental conclusion that, 'the Diaspora was commonly viewed as a great misfortune which God will someday remedy.'448 This negative aspect of diaspora, moreover, is not just associated with God's judgment but also reflects a failure in missional identity. This can be seen through a closer look at the context of such pronouncements on the reasons for God's people being scattered.

## A Failure of Missional Identity

In one such passage noted above, God will scatter (διασπειρεῖ, Deut 4:27)<sup>449</sup> Israel because of their idolatry and worship of false gods and their failure to keep the commandments of the Law (4:25-28).<sup>450</sup> Significantly, the nearness of Israel to God through the covenant and the wisdom evidenced by their Law played a missional role in Israel's relationship to the nations (4:6-8)<sup>451</sup> since through the 'visibility of Israel's society' they were to show to the surrounding nations

<sup>446</sup> Deut 28:25 has זְּשֶבְה. See HALOT, 267 for an explanation. Note Jer 34:17 is LXX Jer 41:17. Caution is needed when drawing conclusions from the way the LXX may differ from the MT. See Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 92, for a list of factors, such as a different Hebrew Vorlage or translator bias and/or mistakes. Indeed, Scott, "Exile and Self-Understanding," 180, criticises van Unnik for attaching too much significance to the LXX rendering of the Hebrew to argue that diaspora is distinct from and worse than exile.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>447</sup> For διασπορά see Deut 30:4; Neh 1:9; Ps 147:2. For διασπείρω and διασκορπίζω see Isa 56:8 and Jer 32:27, and Deut 30:3 and Dan 9:7, respectively. This verb is also associated with Israel being led astray, πλανάω, (see, e.g., Deut 4:19; 13:5 (6); 30:17; 2 Chr 21:11), so that two ideas in this one verb relate to James (1:1, 16; 5:19).

<sup>448</sup> Scott, "Exile and Self-Understanding," 181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>449</sup> References from Deuteronomy and the wider Deuteronomic literature are quite significant and in what follows I will draw on this literature frequently. This reflects the insight of Jackson-McCabe, "Twelve Tribes," 516, that James is written within "both an eschatological and a deuteronomistic framework."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>450</sup> This whole chapter has some striking links with James, such as trials and wholehearted commitment to God (vv. 29-30; cf. Jas 1:2-4); God as judge (v. 3, 24; cf. Jas 4:12); God as a God of mercy (οἰκτίρμων, v. 31; cf. Jas 5:11); God as law giver (vv. 12-14; cf. Jas 4:12); the people to be 'wise and understanding' (σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων, v. 6; cf. Jas 3:13); obedience to the Law required (v. 30; cf. Jas 1:22-25); the latter days (v. 30; cf. Jas 5:3).

<sup>451</sup> I will elaborate more on the role of wisdom in chapter six.

how great Israel's god Yahweh was.<sup>452</sup> Commenting on the whole chapter Christopher Wright summarises the argument as follows:

Israel is summoned to live in wholehearted obedience to God's covenant law when they take possession of the land (vv. 1-2); ...covenant loyalty and obedience will constitute a witness to the nations whose interest and questions will resolve around the God they worship and the just laws they live by (vv. 5-8); this witness, however, would be utterly nullified by Israel going after other gods, and so they must be strenuously warned against that through reminders of their spectacular past and warnings of a horrific future if they ignore the word (vv. 9-31). 453

This, as Wright goes on to say, reflects their unique position as God's people which requires faithful obedience, the call to which is the thrust of Deuteronomy 4: 'Therein lies their future security as a people and thereby also hangs their mission as the people chosen by God for the sake of his mission (v. 40).'454 It is clear then, that being scattered indicates not just their disobedience but also implicitly the failure to play their role within God's mission

### The Hope of Return from Diaspora

While diaspora then, is undoubtedly negative in thrust, Scott also argues convincingly that diaspora and exile can include positive aspects. As Scott makes clear, exile and diaspora are essentially synonyms and 'often stand within the covenantal context of sin-punishment-return' and 'both terms are used in the context of the return from exile/dispersion upon repentance.' Virtually every mention of diaspora as judgment is followed by the positive hope of restoration. In both texts of Deuteronomy mentioned above, scattering is immediately followed by the expectation of return (4:30-31; 30:1-5). In the latter, from wherever God had scattered (30:1: διασκορπίση) them, the promise is given that 'from there' (ἐκεῖθεν) God will

<sup>452</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 378.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>453</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 386.

<sup>454</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 386.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>455</sup> Scott, "Exile and Self-Understanding," 184–85. See especially fn. 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>456</sup> For an extensive list of references portraying restoration in OT and 2nd Temple literature see David E. Aune, "From the Idealized Past to the Imaginary Future: Eschatological Restoration in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," in Scott, ed, *Restoration*, 158–59.

gather them (συνάξει) and 'from there' (ἐκεῖθεν) he will take them and bring them back (LXX 30:4-5). 457 In other words, diaspora is a location of hope because of what God will do taking them *from there* and restoring them. 458 Thus, although the diaspora experience is initially one of judgment, it is also strongly associated with restoration. 459 The prophetic literature also develops this concept with God promising to gather and restore those he has 'scattered.' 460 Moreover, this is not just for Israel but several times includes a reference to 'the nations' in making God's glory known and drawing the nations to God in salvation (e.g., Isa 49:6; 56:8; Jer 33:7-9).

However, the hope of return is always dependent on the people in exile turning to God in repentance and seeking him wholeheartedly as the passages above also show (Deut 4:29-30; 30:2).<sup>461</sup> In Deut 4:29 the LXX links affliction to this wholehearted seeking after God,<sup>462</sup> a concept that resonates with what immediately follows James' greeting (Jas 1:2-4). Even if that is incidental, the fact remains that diaspora is a location where God's people ought to be seeking and obeying him wholeheartedly, something that James is keen to inculcate in his audience as we will see later.

In sum, diaspora encapsulates not only the judgment on God's people who have failed to fulfil their role in God's mission, it also marks the place of hope and return to God, which is also a return to be his missional people as a light to the nations (Isa 49:5-6).

<sup>457</sup> As McConville, *Deuteronomy*, notes, "the curses need not spell an absolute end."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>458</sup> J. G. McConville, "Restoration in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Literature," in Scott, ed, *Restoration*, 39. Restoration "may be said to be in the warp and woof of the book" and is integral to the Deuteronomic history "as if implied in the fundamental concept of the covenant with Yahweh" (p. 13).

<sup>459</sup> Shemaryahu Talmon, "Exile' and 'Restoration' in the Conceptual World of Ancient Judaism," in Scott, ed, *Restoration*, 118, says that the expected return is a "distinguishing mark of the biblical universe of thought".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>460</sup> For return after 'scattering' see, e.g., Isa 11:12; Jer 32:37 and Ezek 11:17. For the general sense of return after exile, see, e.g., Jer 33:7-9, 14, 23-26. Diaspora can also refer to the people kept by God (Isa 49:6 cf. Ezek 11:16). <sup>461</sup> cf. McConville, "Deuternomic Literature," 12 who notes that the verb שוב links the two returns doing double duty for both the return to Yahweh and the return to the land.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>462</sup> The LXX moves the beginning of v. 30 to the end of v. 29 linking the tribulation directly to seeking God: καὶ ζητήσετε ἐκεῖ κύριον τὸν θεὸν ὑμῶν καὶ εὑρήσετε, ὅταν ἐκζητήσητε αὐτὸν ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου· καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου ἐν τῆ θλίψει σου. Compare this with the MT which links the affliction to returning to God generally, not the seeking of God wholeheartedly, although these are obviously connected.

## Diaspora in Other Literature

These broad conclusions seem to be borne out by other literature, such as the apocryphal letters mentioned above, and even works produced in the diaspora such as Tobit. 463 In the penultimate chapter of Tobit, dispersion is depicted as God's punishment but also as the place where God will show mercy and gather those in exile (Tobit 13:3-6 cf. 14:5). Significantly, the missional nature of Israel is made clear in this passage: not only are the 'sons of Israel' to confess their allegiance to God 'before the nations' but they are also to 'show his greatness and to lift him up before every living thing' (Tobit 13:4). There are clear echoes of Deuteronomy 4 and 30 with calls for a whole-hearted return to God (13:6) followed by Tobit's own declaration of witness to God 'in the land of my captivity' (13:8), exalting God's kingdom 464 and calling sinners to repentance. Although there is a responsibility on God's people to repent and live pious lives, 465 restoration is brought about by God who will return (ἐπιστρέψει) them, and moreover the nations will 'turn back (ἐπιστρέψουσιν) to fear the Lord' (14:4-6). Commenting on Tobit, Francis M. Macatangay concludes that,

exile is thought of not just as an historical punitive event, but as a present and liminal state of being that extends into the inauguration of the eschatological time. ...Diaspora in Tobit, is an interim period, or an age between their previous life in the Holy Land and the end-time rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple to which nations will be drawn to bring gifts and sing a song of praise. 466

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>463</sup> This is a tale set in the Eastern Diaspora after the fall of the Northern Kingdom. See Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 11–12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>464</sup> Michael E. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 44, describes Tobit as "profoundly doxological in content and tone."

<sup>465</sup> Stone, Jewish Writings, 44–45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>466</sup> Francis M. Macatangay, *The Wisdom Instructions in the Book of Tobit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 275.

Thus Tobit indicates that 'even in the strange land of exile, God is actively present' with a clear missional purpose for diaspora. 468

Diaspora identity was also informed by prophetic texts which led to a sense of mission, according to Shemaryahu Talmon, such as was true of the 'Alexandrian Jewry' in the last centuries BC. He argues that although there was no missionary enterprise per se,

Diaspora ... comes to be seen as the soil in which the expatriates' transplanted faith can experience an improved and richer growth. In such instances, a diaspora community may conceive of itself as being sent to become a "light to the nations," a symbolic watchword derived from a biblical matrix (Isa 42:6; 49:6). 469

Craig Evans argues that in the time of the NT the exile was viewed as ongoing due to the continued diaspora existence of many Judeans and the subjugation of Israel by foreign powers, and due to 'the failure on the part of many Jews to obey the Law.'<sup>470</sup> Similarly, Rabbinic literature viewed Israel as 'in a state of uninterrupted exile,'<sup>471</sup> but with the understanding that God's blessings and presence were still available even in a diaspora setting.<sup>472</sup> There was also an expectation of return,<sup>473</sup> so that one can see a continued belief in this aspect even if it is more of an eschatological hope (as is reflected in James) rather than an imminent expectation.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>467</sup> Macatangay, The Wisdom Instructions in the Book of Tobit, 276; cf. Stone, Jewish Writings, 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>468</sup> See also the prayers for restoration in, e.g., 2 Maccabees 1:29; 2:7, 18 and the Psalms of Solomon (8:27-30) which also celebrates the return (11:1-4) and the division of the land to the tribes and the nations coming to worship God (17:26-32, 44).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>469</sup> Talmon, "Exile' and 'Restoration," 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>470</sup> Craig A. Evans, "Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the Gospels," in Scott, ed, *Exile*, 316. In this assessment, he agrees with N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 269; cf. Richard Bauckham, "The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts," in Scott, ed, *Restoration*, 436, who defends Wright's thesis that there was a general acknowledgment even by Jews in Palestine that they were in exile, although he prefers to call this "subjugation."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>471</sup> Milikowsky, "Notions of Exile," 295.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>472</sup> Porton, "Idea of Exile," 264.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>473</sup> Milikowsky, "Notions of Exile," 295; cf. Stefan C. Reif, "Some Notions of Restoration in Early Rabbinic Prayer," in Scott, ed, *Restoration*, 296–97, who notes the prayers for restoration used in various services. Of interest is the prayer for the return of those "who are scattered and dispersed among the nations... Repatriate Israel to where it belongs and the tribes of Yeshurun to their inheritance..." Despite the fact that these come from a much later time period, such prayers do reflect the thought world of the "earlier Talmudic period" (p. 281).

The picture painted so far has highlighted both the negative side of diaspora as evidence of God's judgment for unfaithfulness and a failure of missional identity, but also the positive hope of return and the missional expectation on God's people in diaspora – to seek God, to stay faithful to him and to be a light to those around. There was not necessarily an expectation of immediate return but there was an eschatological perspective that this would happen with the full restoration of Israel. It seems clear that these aspects are so prevalent that it would be surprising if they are not evoked by James' address, particularly when combined with the restoration label of 'twelve tribes' as we will see below. It remains to examine the limited NT use of diaspora and to this I now turn. 474

## Diaspora in the NT – a launchpad for Mission

Apart from somewhat incidental uses in the Gospels,<sup>475</sup> diaspora is the result of persecution and effectively becomes the launchpad for mission. In the book of Acts, Judean believers that are scattered ( $\delta i\alpha\sigma\pi\alpha\rho\acute{e}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ , 8:4; 11:19 cf. 8:1) subsequently share the gospel outside of Judea, which eventually extends to the Greek speaking population of Antioch (11:20-21).<sup>476</sup> Thus, as De Ridder puts it, 'The NT church was scattered in the service of the Gospel.'<sup>477</sup>

This is reinforced when we consider that the birth of the church at Pentecost involves diaspora Judeans (Acts 2:5), some of whom, if we are to explain the early growth of the church, must have subsequently shared their belief in Jesus as Messiah to their diaspora communities.<sup>478</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>474</sup> Again, I will include here διασπορά, διασπείρω and διασκορπίζω.

A. Draper, "Holy Seed and the Return of the Diaspora in John 12:24," *Neot* 34, no. 2 (2000): 356. Other uses of διασκορπίζω are not relevant to my study (see Mt 25:24, 26; 26:31//Mk14:27; Luke 1:51; 15:13; 16:1; Acts 5:37). 

<sup>476</sup> Literally "Hellenists" (Ἑλληνιστάς), which in the context should be taken to mean the Greek speaking population of Antioch, not Hellenistic Jews. See Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 414. An alternative textual tradition "Ελληνας supports this (see "Additional Notes" on pp. 419-420); cf. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 340–42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>477</sup> De Ridder, *Discipling the Nations*, 217; cf. Thompson, *Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>478</sup> Scott, "Acts 2:9-11," 106–7 states, "The scene is programmatic for the world-wide mission to follow."

Strikingly, Pentecost is viewed by many as the reversal of Babel, the first scene of 'scattering' in the Bible, since people of different 'tongues' are gathered back together and hear the disciples proclaiming 'the mighty works of God' (Acts 2:11).<sup>479</sup> This event marks the beginning of the church's mission in the NT which includes the apostolic task of gathering the twelve tribes and 'the restoration of the diaspora,' as Bauckham explicates.<sup>480</sup>

The only other NT letter that addresses recipients in the diaspora is 1 Peter, which despite its considerable differences with James, provides some useful comparisons in this regard. The mainly gentile audience of 1 Peter requires a metaphorical reading not just of this designation, but of the many other appropriations of Scripture concerning Israel applied to the church (e.g., 1 Pet 2:9). The recipients are described as 'chosen strangers of the diaspora...' (ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς ...; 1:1) which, in Lutz Doering's view, deliberately draws on 'the complementary concepts of election and otherness' that form two basic notions of 'Jewish identity in the Diaspora. This fortifies the recipients' identity as the people of God, on the one hand, and encourages group boundaries on the other hand. Furthermore, the author 'sharpens them by making election the intrinsic reason for Diaspora and reconceiving otherness in terms of an existence as strangers...' 484 Edgar Krantz suggests that, 'Such language elevates this resident alien status to an honor conferred by God.' 185 In other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>479</sup> Even with the first scattering in Genesis 11 some commentators see a positive aspect. So Theodore Hiebert, "The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures," *JBL* 126, no. 1 (2007): 29–58, who argues that it was God's intention all along to disperse and diversify culture; cf. Bernhard W. Anderson, "Unity and Diversity in God's Creation: A Study of the Babel Story," *CurTM* 5, no. 2 (1976): 69–81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>480</sup> Bauckham, "The Restoration of Israel in Luke-Acts," 473. Both NT authors to use "diaspora" terminology in their epistles were at this seminal event according to Acts 1:14 and were associated with the diaspora letter of Acts 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>481</sup> See Lutz Doering, "First Peter as Early Christian Diaspora Letter," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 215–36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>482</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, "Designation of the Readers in 1 Peter 1:1-2," *BibSac* 137, no. 545 (January 1, 1980): 67; J. Ramsey Michaels, *I Peter*, WBC 49 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 2004), 13–14; Doering, "First Peter," 231. For an argument that the readers are "Jews" in the diaspora, see James D. G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making: Volume 2 - Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 1147–66, but this is a minority view.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>483</sup> Doering, "First Peter," 231.

<sup>484</sup> Doering, "First Peter," 231.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>485</sup> Edgar Krentz, "Creating a Past: 1 Peter and Christian Identity," BR 53 (January 1, 2008): 45.

words, as in Acts, diaspora is not a result of judgment but an inevitable consequence of calling, a calling to be distinct from the world and witness to the world, prominent themes in 1 Peter.<sup>486</sup>

Although the language of election is muted in James, arguably the use of 'twelve tribes' plays the same role as we will later (see also 1:18; 2:5, 21). Similarly, James is concerned with maintaining boundaries from the world, as is perhaps most clearly stated in 4:4 (also 1:27), which I will explore further below.<sup>487</sup> There are, therefore, similarities in the two authors' use of diaspora to reinforce the identity of the recipients as the people of God. Although James is far less explicit about witness to the surrounding community, implicit in diaspora identity are the requirements of being faithful to God and distinctive from the surrounding culture, which inevitably leads to a missional identity.

We have seen thus far that diaspora plays a double role. It is both a reminder of God's judgment on his people for failing to live as his people and an indication of their missional identity. Within this is the expectation of wholehearted commitment to God through maintaining a distinctive identity from the surrounding nations. However, there does remain an often-overlooked reality and that is how the recipients themselves viewed their location, so it is necessary to give some consideration to this.

# **Diaspora Perspectives & Challenges**

The theological interpretations of diaspora above do not of course mean that diaspora Judeans always saw themselves as being in exile or needing to return to Judea. John Barclay explains that diaspora experiences and realities varied from place to place and person to person. Eric Gruen agrees, noting that 'Jews formed stable communities in the diaspora, entering into the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>486</sup> John H. Elliott, "Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research," *JBL* 95, no. 2 (June 1, 1976): 250.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>487</sup> Cf. Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>488</sup> Barclay, Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora, 399.

social, economic, and political life of the nations they joined, aspiring to and often obtaining civic privileges in the cities in the Hellenistic world.'489 Indeed both Josephus and Philo present a picture of diaspora as very much a normalised existence.<sup>490</sup> Josephus goes as far as to cast diaspora as a fulfilment of God's promise to cause the Israelites to be spread out in the world with great fame.<sup>491</sup> For Philo, it was perfectly congruent for diaspora communities to both be strongly attached to Jerusalem and still consider their places of birth as their homeland.<sup>492</sup>

Although this may, as Coker argues, challenge 'scholarly notions about the diaspora as punishment for disobedience,' 493 at least from the perspective of those in the diaspora, this cannot overturn the negative associations completely that are so prevalent, as we have seen repeatedly in the literature above. Notably, both Philo and Josephus seem to avoid the term  $\delta\iota\alpha\sigma\pi\sigma\rho\dot{\alpha}$ , perhaps because of its negative connotations, 494 and Philo does show some indication that he has the overall framework of an eventual return, as Barclay points out. 495 In light of these perspectives, it is worth briefly considering some of the challenges associated with diaspora, particularly as regards the difficulties of maintaining a group identity against the threat of assimilation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>489</sup> Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 242.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>490</sup> Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 422–23. See also Louis H. Feldman, "The Concept of Exile in Josephus," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott, JSJSup 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 145–72; cf. Coker, *Nativist Discourse*, 81–82, who draws on a study by Sarah Pearce, 1998.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>491</sup> Feldman, "The Concept of Exile in Josephus," 153. In *A.J.* 4.155-116, Josephus attributes this as a prophecy to Balaam, although it is not found in Numbers 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>492</sup> Gruen, *Diaspora*, 243, citing *Flacc*. 46. Here Philo describes the many generations of settlers in foreign lands which they now count as their "homelands" (πατρίδας); cf. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 422.
<sup>493</sup> Coker, *Nativist Discourse*, 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>494</sup> Scott, "Exile and Self-Understanding," 180. Philo cites Deut 30:4 in *Conf.* 197 and uses διασπορά metaphorically in *Praem.* 115 about the "dispersion" of the soul into vice. By imitating others as models of virtue, the soul can "effect a return to virtue and wisdom." Both authors use διασπείρω very generally and Josephus only once applies this to judgment on Israel (*A.J.* 11.212). Cf. Feldman, "The Concept of Exile in Josephus," 172, who notes that Josephus regularly refers to diaspora existence in terms such as "colony" and "transportation" rather than exile and punishment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>495</sup> Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 176, citing *Praem*. 162-170, a "rare but significant eschatological vision" (fn. 121). See also *Praem*. 165 which speaks of those who had been "scattered" ( $\sigma\pi$ οράδες) outside Judea who would "rise up" and "all hasten to one place appointed to them." Unfortunately, Gruen, *Diaspora*, 243, ignores this and overstates the case when he claims that Philo's appreciation for their diaspora homes "eradicates any idea of the 'doctrine of return."

## Boundaries and Identity in Diaspora

Establishing and strengthening group identity would be an important aspect of living as the diaspora people of God, surrounded by a competing and dominant worldview. 496 Cultural assimilation and compromise are threats to identity in general, and missional identity in particular. While Coker sees the letter as 'a nativist attack on all forms of assimilation' rather than 'celebrating hybridity as cultural leverage, '497 this goes beyond the evidence and falls into the extremes warned against by Philip Harland. Given the complexities of assimilation it is necessary to avoid assuming either complete or no assimilation from diaspora communities. Barclay helpfully (if somewhat 'crudely', as he puts it) suggests that we can measure assimilation to culture on three scales: assimilation (here as a technical term) measures 'social integration,' in other words how far the group takes on board the customs of the surrounding culture; acculturation measures the integration to and use of the 'linguistic and literary heritage of the culture'; and, accommodation measures 'how Jews used the acculturation they had acquired.' These are not hard and fast categories but descriptive scales when looking at how a diaspora group lives within the surrounding culture.

Darien Lockett applies these scales to the letter and suggests that the level of Greek and use of rhetorical techniques show a fairly high acculturation. However, James calls for limited assimilation, defining 'true piety' in terms of keeping oneself 'unstained by the world'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>496</sup> Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 376–79, notes such a concern in 4 Maccabees. According to Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse," 270, "the maintenance of Judean identity is a key issue for the addressees" who are faced with "constant threats of assimilation" in their Diaspora setting.' And as I think the rest of the letter shows, it is not just Judean identity but such an identity as a Christ-follower that is at stake.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>497</sup> Coker, *Nativist Discourse*, 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>498</sup> Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity In The World of The Early Christians: Associations, Judeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 103–4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>499</sup> John M. G. Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?," *JSNT* 60 (December 1995): 93–98 (italics original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>500</sup> Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 146–84. He has an extensive discussion of James' use of Greek and Greco-Roman rhetorical techniques (see pp. 166-170).

(1:27), and encourages friendship with God, not the world (4:4). James is low on accommodation since the acculturation shown is used to maintain a distinctive countercultural community rather than to extol Greco-Roman virtues. Yet only in certain areas does James draw very strong lines to demarcate the acceptable group identity. The author insists on keeping the 'royal law' (2:8), on practical deeds of mercy that prove genuine faith (2:14-26), and refusal to follow prevailing cultural norms of patronage, benefaction and wealth generation. In other words, 'James indicates a greater interest in complete and wholehearted loyalty to God rather than in maintaining strict separation from secular society' and so 'indicates a complex and variegated relationship with Greco-Roman culture...' As we will see in subsequent chapters, James advocates a community ethic that is in keeping with OT tradition and Jesus' teaching, thus maintaining a missional identity as God's people.

From this brief analysis it seems reasonable to suggest that the author wants the recipients to fall into line with his understanding of an appropriate diaspora identity, one that is acculturated but not overly assimilated in certain key areas to wider Greco-Roman society and that is accommodated in defence of the author's values.<sup>504</sup> Such an identity would then be ideal for encouraging the missional identity inherent in being the people of God. Reasonable acculturation allows interaction with others while low assimilation protects the witness of the community to the surrounding culture, and low accommodation means that the acculturation is used to defend certain key areas that are under challenge from the wider culture.<sup>505</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>501</sup> Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 183. He notes Harland's work in showing that groups could integrate in certain areas and take part in wider society but still maintain strict separation in other areas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>502</sup> See, e.g., Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness"; John S. Kloppenborg, "Patronage Avoidance in James," *HvTSt* 55, no. 4 (1999): 755–94; Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>503</sup> Lockett, Purity and Worldview, 183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>504</sup> Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 180–81, suggests the key areas are patronage and speech although more will be apparent as we continue. This fits in well with the conclusion of Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 443, who notes that the Judean diaspora survived not by living in "total isolation but by clarity of differentiation at socially decisive points."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>505</sup> I will explore this concept further in chapter eight.

## The Danger of a Double Identity in Diaspora

In sum, this study of diaspora has shown that the term itself evokes more than just the technical reality of a homeland outside of Judea. There are undeniable judgment and restoration themes in the use of the word. This is not to say that James views all his recipients as having wandered and that he is in effect restoring them through the letter. <sup>509</sup> Rather, he has chosen the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>506</sup> Coker, *Nativist Discourse*, 75–76 (italics original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>507</sup> I will say more on the ἀνὴρ δίψυχος in chapter six.

This is a point borne out by modern diaspora studies. Clifford Geertz has noted how, in the case of Islam, this can lead to several options from a 'watering down of belief' to a 'more assertive' form of Islam, but also in his words 'a "double-minded" dividing of the self, and the self's life, in two vaguely communicating inward and outward halves.' See Geertz, 2005, cited in Steven Ybarrola, "Anthropology, Diasporas, and Mission," *Mission Studies* 29, no. 1 (2012): 85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>509</sup> Contra Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora*, 49, who asserts that by the end of the letter, through a "backreading," the audience should "accept the view that they are (also) the 'Diaspora' because they have 'wandered from the

term to remind his readers of the subtle dangers of diaspora existence, a place that points to God's judgment on Israel for assimilating to the behaviour of the nations of its day, so that the recipients do not fall into the same trap of becoming friends with the world (4:4). Instead, by maintaining certain boundaries (that will be expressed in adherence to OT tradition and Jesus' teaching), they can make diaspora a place of restoration and missional attraction until the Lord returns. In other words, diaspora for James' audience is a missional location. <sup>510</sup>

In closing this section, it is helpful to recognise along with De Ridder that the church, wherever it is found, still 'lives not only in assembly but also in dispersion.' The biblical portrait is that ultimately God uses 'diaspora' for the good of his people and the world, because his people are still expected to be witnesses even in diaspora or, indeed, especially in diaspora. As De Ridder concludes:

The ... Church still lives in diaspora. But it is a diaspora with a purpose.... The whole program of God is moving toward the creation of a reality which will be in accordance with the promise... The church's diaspora is being sent out by Christ. The gathered ones go out to gather yet others. The significance of the Christian diaspora is to be found in its mission dimension.<sup>512</sup>

Thus diaspora, although linked with God's judgment and the hope of restoration, is ultimately a place of mission. This is enhanced by James' other designation for the recipients and his call to return the wanderer to the truth, and even the way he writes to reach a wider audience, all of which I consider next.

truth." This ignores the fact that it is not the whole community that has wandered but a brother or sister (5:19). James does of course challenge his readers to repent and return to God at certain points (e.g., 4:1-10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>510</sup> The importance of diaspora to mission has led to the rise of "diaspora missiology." See the studies of Maria L. Nacpil, "The Church in an Age of Diaspora: Rethinking Mission," *Didaskalia* 26 (2016): 135–57; Ybarrola, "Anthropology, Diasporas, and Mission"; Samuel George, "Diaspora: A Hidden Link to 'from Everywhere to Everywhere' Missiology," *Missiology* 39, no. 1 (January 2011): 45–56. Some of this, in a somewhat reductionist manner, is focused on strategies to reach the "unreached" who are now on the "doorstep" of churches rather than in far off lands. Others more helpfully focus on the concept of mission from everywhere to everywhere that is not bound by Western paradigms of mission. However, such diaspora missiology is not without its critics. See, e.g., Matthew Krabill and Allison Norton, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: A Critical Appraisal of Diaspora Missiology," *Missiology* 43, no. 4 (October 2015): 442–55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>511</sup> De Ridder, *Discipling the Nations*, 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>512</sup> De Ridder, *Discipling the Nations*, 217.

#### RESTORING THE TWELVE TRIBES

If diaspora is a term loaded with significance beyond its literal meaning, then the same can be said of James' use of 'twelve tribes' to describe his audience. As David Edgar suggests, it seems inevitable that δώδεκα φυλαῖς draws on the 'eschatological hopes of God's restoration of the chosen people.' Restoration is also the theme that closes the letter, and indeed could be argued to be part of its apologetic strategy as a whole. In what follows, I will consider each of these aspects in turn.

#### The Symbolism of the Twelve Tribes

The Twelve Tribes as the Fullness of Israel

Based on the literal configuration of Israel as twelve tribes in the Pentateuch and early historical literature, the 'twelve tribes' as a term represents the defining identity of Israel in its fullest and most complete sense as the people of God. Even during the time of the divided kingdom there is a sense that the twelve tribes provide the true identity of Israel (see, e.g., 1 Kgs 18:31). This continues into the return from exile, where Ezra offers a sin offering of, among other things, 'twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel' (Ezra 6:17) thereby indicating that the return somehow represents all Israel despite the fact that this only involved the southern Kingdom.

The most emblematic use of twelve tribe imagery is in the prophet Ezekiel, even where the number of tribes is not specified. Ezekiel 37 is particularly relevant since it links the tribal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>513</sup> Edgar, *Social Setting*, 134; cf. Jackson-McCabe, "Twelve Tribes," 510, who calls this a "highly evocative address."

This sense is prominent in Exodus (24:4; 28:21; 39:14) and then subsequently in Joshua frequently. For a detailed list of references to do with the reunification of the twelve tribes see James M. Scott, "And Then All Israel Will Be Saved' (Rom 11:26)," in Scott, ed, *Restoration*, 519 fn. 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>515</sup> Scot McKnight, "Jesus and the Twelve," BBR 11, no. 2 (2001): 215–16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>516</sup> H. G. M. Williamson, Ezra-Nehemiah, WBC 16 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 111.

structure with the return from diaspora. Following on from the vision of the valley of dry bones which represent 'the whole house of Israel' (37:11), the prophet is commanded to unite two sticks, one which represents Judah and one that represents Joseph/Ephraim 'and the tribes (τας φυλάς, LXX) of Israel associated with it...' (37:19), symbolizing that God will re-join the tribes together. The oracle then goes on to state that God will gather Israel from the nations and make them one and restore them to their own land (37:21-22) which God had given 'to my servant Jacob' (τῷ δούλῳ μου Ιακωβ, 37:25). For Block the main significance of the sign-act in verses 15-17 is the 'participation of all twelve original tribes in the fulfilment of Yahweh's ancient but eternal promises to Israel ...' This is conclusively demonstrated in Ezekiel 47-48 where Jerusalem has twelve tribal gates and the land is shared out to the twelve tribes at the climax of an eschatological vision for a regathered Israel once more faithfully worshipping Yahweh. Ezekiel's vision marks the culmination and highpoint of Jewish hopes for full restoration that represents the OT narrative of God's redemption, which even includes the 'alien' living among the tribes who is given full inheritance rights alongside the tribes of Israel while remaining as an alien (47:22-23).

Although such imagery is muted in the Hellenistic period, the hope for the full restoration of Israel continues to be present. For example, Sirach prays that God would 'gather all the tribes of Jacob ( $\pi \dot{\alpha} \sigma \alpha \varsigma \phi \nu \lambda \dot{\alpha} \varsigma I \alpha \kappa \omega \beta$ ) and give them an inheritance, as from the beginning' (Sir 36:13; LXX 36:10) and then later recalls the predicted role of Elijah to restore

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<sup>517</sup> The LXX emphasizes the tribal element, translating "stick" (ψψ) as "tribe" φυλήν/φυλάς twice (37:19). See Daniel I. Block, The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 397 fn. 24. 518 Block, *Ezekiel*, 25-48, 195; cf. Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel* 20-48, WBC 29 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>519</sup> The unrealistic tribal distribution which pays no attention to actual geography or the pre-exilic land division shows this is a visionary hope with a theological agenda. So Harold Brodsky, "The Utopian Map in Ezekiel (48:1-35)," *JBQ* 34, no. 1 (January 2006): 20–26; Block, *Ezekiel*, 25-48, 723.

<sup>520</sup> Block, *Ezekiel, 25-48.* Block also notes here how Ezekiel switches from "the house of Israel" (בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל), his preferred "collective designation" for the nation, to "the twelve tribes of Israel" (אָנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל), ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς τῶν υίῶν Ισραηλ) in this passage, which is used 8 times here but nowhere else except chapter 37.

521 Jackson-McCabe, "Twelve Tribes," 510–15.

the tribes of Jacob (καταστῆσαι φυλὰς Ιακωβ; LXX 48:10).<sup>522</sup> But as Jackson-McCabe points out, there is a renewed and 'widespread interest' in twelve-tribe restoration during the Roman domination of Judah that likely influenced James' address.<sup>523</sup> Indeed, E. P. Sanders states that 'the expectation of the reassembly of Israel was so widespread, and the memory of the twelve tribes remained so acute, that "twelve" would necessarily mean "restoration." <sup>524</sup>

This concept is central to Jewish eschatology and was a concept that 'fuelled the eschatological imaginations of apocalyptic writers...'525 Similarly, Lawrence Schiffman finds that in the Temple Scroll of Qumran the 'ideal Jewish community in the Land of Israel will consist of representatives of all the tribes...'526 Thus, there is prevalent evidence throughout Jewish literature that twelve tribes is a restoration motif signifying a return to the ideal state for the people of God so that it seems clear that it inspires far more than just a cursory reading would suggest.

## The Twelve Tribes as NT Eschatological Hope

The way the term is used in the Gospels continues to suggest the hope of the restoration of Israel, but with an integrated theme of the prominence of the twelve disciples of Jesus who will judge the twelve tribes of Israel in the coming kingdom (Mt 19:28//Lk 22:30).<sup>527</sup> This was

522 Neither of these references mention the twelve tribes but it is clear that all twelve are in view cf. Sir 44:23.

525 Aune, "Idealized Past to Imaginary Future," 164, 176.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>523</sup> Jackson-McCabe, "Twelve Tribes," 513–15. See pp. 512-513 for a list of references some of which I considered when I investigated the term "diaspora."

<sup>524</sup> Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>526</sup> Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Concept of Restoration in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Scott, ed, *Restoration*, 212–16; cf. McKnight, "Jesus and the Twelve," 216–17. See also Llewellyn Howes, "Judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel: Q 22:28, 30 in Light of the Psalms of Solomon and the Community Rule," *VE* 35, no. 1 (January 14, 2014): 8, who points to 1QS 8:1-4 where twelve men (and three priests) will make up the leading council. He writes, "There should be no doubt that the number twelve... refers to the twelve tribes of Israel... it remains difficult to see the twelve men... as anything other than leaders of the different tribes."

<sup>527</sup> Richard A. Horsley, Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 262–63, reads "judge" here as "establish justice" based on the equivalence in the LXX of κρίνω to υσω, which can take this positive nuance. But this is rightly rejected by Llewellyn Howes, "Condemning or Liberating the Twelve Tribes of Israel?: Judging the Meaning of Κρίνοντες in Q 22:28, 30," VE 35, no. 1 (January 14, 2014); and Howes, "Judging the Twelve Tribes." Howes accepts the overall thesis that the restoration of Israel is in view but not this change in meaning for κρίνω. See also Yongbom Lee, "Judging or Ruling

'intended to symbolize the reconstitution of the twelve tribes of Israel' and thus the restoration of Israel under the judgment and leadership of the apostles.  $^{528}$  A similar picture emerges in Acts 1 with the 'reconstitution of the twelve',  $^{529}$  and possibly in Acts 26 where the 'twelve tribes'  $(\delta\omega\delta\epsilon\kappa\dot{\alpha}\phi\nu\lambda\sigma\nu)$  are 'hoping to attain' the same promise for which Paul is on trial, which he describes as the 'promise made by God to our ancestors' (Acts 26:6-7). Although the hope is expressed in terms of the resurrection,  $^{530}$  this likely incorporates the hope of Israel's restoration.  $^{531}$ 

Twelve tribe imagery is absent in the rest of the NT until the eschatological scenes in the book of Revelation. The twelve thousand gathered from each of the twelve tribes is the forerunner to the 'great multitude' signalling the final triumph of God's redemptive mission (Rev 7:4-12), which as Wright points out, is the 'fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise' of Gen 12:3 as people from every nation are redeemed and gathered together. The identity of the 144,000 is extensively debated but important here is that 'twelve tribes' is used to picture a select group of God's people who enter into God's kingdom having faithfully endured the trials of the last days and maintained their testimony to Jesus. The closing scenes of Revelation are influenced by the visions already discussed in Ezekiel and return to the twelve tribe imagery.

the Twelve Tribes of Israel? The Sense of  $K\rho i\nu\omega$  in Matthew 19.28," BT 66, no. 2 (August 2015): 138–50, who does not engage with either Horsley or Howes but reaches the same conclusion as the latter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>528</sup> Evans, "Aspects of Exile," 318; cf. John P. Meier, "Jesus, the Twelve and the Restoration of Israel," in Scott, ed, *Restoration*, 404. The twelve disciples are patently not from every tribe but McKnight, "Jesus and the Twelve," 228, helpfully points out that "Jesus chose the twelve to embody *all of Israel* but not to represent *each tribe*" (italics original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>529</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 74–91; See also David H. Wenkel, "When the Apostles Became Kings: Ruling and Judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel in the Book of Acts," *BTB* 42, no. 3 (August 2012): 119–28, who connect Acts 1 to Lk 22:30 so that the reconstituted twelve begin to rule with Jesus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>530</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 714–15. Cf. Acts 23:6 and 24:15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>531</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 714–15. See Acts 23:6; 24:15. The restoration motif is argued for by Thompson, *Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 73; Scott, "Acts 2:9-11," 108; cf. Jackson-McCabe, "Twelve Tribes," 514.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>532</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 328.
<sup>533</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Rev, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 168. The 144,000 are usually understood as either the fully redeemed Israel returning from exile or the faithful martyrs of the church.

<sup>534</sup> Mounce, Revelation, 379–80.

The twelve gates with 'the names of the twelve tribes (τῶν δῶδεκα φυλῶν) of Israel' and the twelve foundation stones of the new Jerusalem with the names of the twelve apostles bring together a blend of NT and OT tradition for a fitting culmination to God's final redemption (Rev. 21:12-14).<sup>535</sup>

In considering all that we have seen so far, it seems likely that the term 'twelve tribes' is used by James because of the early church conviction that it was a Judean renewal movement in continuity with and in fulfilment of OT promises.<sup>536</sup> So although it may be right to limit the recipients to Judean diaspora Christ followers, there is an undoubted subtext behind the literal meaning that is intricately linked to the missional narrative of redemption and restoration.

Furthermore, by drawing on this picture of a full if not yet fully restored Israel (since they are still in the diaspora) the author cleverly places certain expectations on the recipients. As Edgar suggests, 'the addressees were thus present[ed] as belonging to that restoration, and consequently expected to share the values associated with it.'537 These values will be made clear as the letter develops and include missional concerns that I will look at in due course. It is evident then, that by identifying his recipients as 'the twelve tribes,' James draws on a deep theological construct that represents the promised hope of God's redemption. The letter greeting locates the readers within salvation history as part of the renewal of God's people within the ongoing narrative of redemption, calling the readers to live faithfully to God in contrast to the world around. The resonances, particularly with Ezekiel and Revelation, show that the audience

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>535</sup> In later Christian literature, the concept is not widely mentioned. However, Oscar Skarsaune, "The Mission to the Jews - a Closed Chapter?," in Ådna and Hans Kvalbein, eds, *Mission of the Early Church*, 69–83, notes its use in the *Epistula Apostolorum* as a designation for Israel which the church was to reach with the gospel to restore them to their position as witnesses. He also comments on its use in the Shepherd of Hermas to designate the entire Gentile world that the apostles reached with the gospel (Herm. Sim. 9.17.1-2a). On the latter, see Bauckham, "Messianic Jewish Identity," 108–10, who argues that Hermas is attempting to interpret Jas 1:1 through this usage. <sup>536</sup> cf. Moo, *The Letter of James*, 50, who suggests that by using this greeting "James claims that they constitute the true people of God of the 'last days.'" This does not preclude Gentile Godfearers or proselytes as part of the community.

<sup>537</sup> Edgar, Social Setting, 134.

should identify with the mission of God and look forward to its culmination, which in turn ought to motivate them to follow James' lead in restoring the wanderer, a missional statement that I will consider next.

## **Restoring the Wanderer to the Twelve Tribes (James 5:19-20)**

The Hypothetical 'Wanderer' & the Community

James' rather abrupt ending for the letter is linked with what precedes it by referring to a hypothetical member of the community (ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν cf. 5:13-14)<sup>538</sup> but also concludes James' thoughts with his final use of the vocative (Ἀδελφοί μου). <sup>539</sup> James now focuses on one who has 'wandered from the truth' (πλανηθῆ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας), which mirrors what Ralph Martin calls 'the thrust of the entire epistle,' namely to prevent his audience from straying. <sup>540</sup> Although James has already warned against 'wandering' ('Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, 1:16), there are no doubt those in danger of apostasy. <sup>541</sup> Such people in James' view have not just wandered away from the community but from the truth itself, which is 'not just doctrine but life' and are thus in danger of death (5:20 cf. 1:15). <sup>542</sup> Rather than allowing his hearers to shrug their shoulders over the fate of such a person, James gives a call to action. The community has the corporate responsibility to return those who have wandered, <sup>543</sup> just as Elijah, his final exemplar, was famous for doing as we will see in the next chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>538</sup> In 5:13-18 he uses this device to deal with the sad, the happy and the sick.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>539</sup> Hartin, James, 286; McCartney, James, 262.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>540</sup> Martin, *James*, 218. This is presented more positively in the letter opening with the call to move to perfection. See further the next chapter.

Davids, *Epistle of James*, 198. He notes that this is either wilful disobedience or through being deceived by others.

<sup>542</sup> McCartney, James, 263; cf. Hartin, James, 283.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>543</sup> Jacobus Kok, "A Comparison Between James and Philodemus on Moral Exhortation, Communal Confession and *Correctio Fraterna*," *HvTSt* 69, no. 1 (January 14, 2013): 7.

The call to action is to anyone ( $\tau\iota\varsigma$ ) in the community. The one who turns back the sinner is encouraged that his <sup>544</sup> actions have eschatological significance: a soul is saved from death and a multitude of sins are covered. Although it is ambiguous as to who is saved (the referent of the second  $\alpha\dot{v}\tau\sigma\tilde{v}$ ) and whose sins are covered, the most common reading is that the 'soul' saved is that of the sinner since he is the one brought back from 'his path of wandering' (ἐ $\kappa$  πλάνης ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ) which allows the same referent for αὐτοῦ both times. <sup>545</sup> It would then also be most likely that the sins covered are those of the sinner. <sup>546</sup> Many commentators see a dependence on Proverbs 10:12 with James closer to the MT on this occasion, <sup>547</sup> so that the act of restoring someone is first of all an expression of love (cf. 1 Pet 4:8). <sup>548</sup> The covering of sins is equivalent to the forgiveness of sins (Ps 32:1; 85:3), <sup>549</sup> which completes the restoration of the wanderer before God and the community.

#### A Missional Exhortation

Jakobus Kok remarks that the exhortation is within the community of faith and so 'is not in the first instance meant to be understood as missionary intention to the outside' and William Brosend goes as far as lamenting the 'parochial' nature of the exhortation. Such dismissals of the exhortation show an unfortunate tendency to view this as a non-essential or unimportant

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>544</sup> I am using masculine pronouns throughout to reflect the masculine αὐτοῦ used here which has some significance in what follows, although of course the principle enunciated here is not restricted to gender.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>545</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 200–201. For the possibility of the alternative position, see McKnight, *James*, 458–59, although he ultimately chooses the majority view.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>546</sup> Moo, *The Letter of James*, 250.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>547</sup> Allison, James, 788. Compare 'love covers all trespasses' (MT: בֶּל־פְּשֶׁעִים הְּבַּפֶּה אַהֲבָה) to 'friendship covers all those not loving strife' (LXX: πάντας δὲ τοὺς μὴ φιλονειχοῦντας καλύπτει φιλία).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>548</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 240–41, suggests this became a common saying in the early Church since it is also found in writings such as 1 Clem 49:5 and 2 Clem 16:4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>549</sup> Hartin, *James*, 285. In LXX Ps 31:1 (32:1) and Ps 84:3 (85:3), the covering of sins (ἐπικαλύπτω and καλύπτω respectively) are in parallel with ἀφίημι.

<sup>550</sup> Kok, "James and Philodemus," 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>551</sup> Brosend, *James and Jude*, 161.

element of the church's mission. Yet for James it is a crucial responsibility of the church with which he closes the letter.

Although James does not say how this is to happen, it must involve the effort of someone from the community to seek out those who have wandered to persuade them to return. This resonates with Jesus' teaching to his disciples to seek the lost sheep (Mt 18:12-14 cf. Lk 15:3-7) that had gone astray (τὸ πλανώμενον), a passage that follows on from a description of the procedure for 'fraternal correction.'552 Johnson argues that restoring the wanderer likely incorporates an element of rebuke since the final verse of the letter is 'functionally closer' to Leviticus 19:17b than Proverbs 10:12. 553 In other words, return is accomplished by rebuke. In Luke 15, there is a chain of three parables all with the theme of seeking the lost. These were told to rebuke the Pharisees and scribes who were grumbling because Jesus welcomed 'tax collectors and sinners' (Lk 15:1). They reveal the 'nature of the divine response to the recovery of the lost<sup>2554</sup> with rejoicing in heaven over the repentance of a sinner, and this may be part of the community dynamics that James seeks to inculcate. The natural response of the community may be more akin to that of the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son, who refuses to accept the wayward brother because he has brought shame on the family (Lk 15:28-32). 555 The faithful in the community may equally have felt betrayed by the 'wanderers' and so to seek them out and welcome them back would not necessarily be a natural response. Like the older brother, they are challenged to 'align themselves with the divine economy and, having done so, join in the celebration at the table with the lost who have been restored...'556 Seeking the lost would demonstrate 'their solidarity with the redemptive purposes of God' unlike the Pharisees

<sup>552</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 338.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>553</sup> Johnson, "Leviticus 19," 398–99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>554</sup> Green, *Luke*, 573.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>555</sup> Green, Luke, 584.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>556</sup> Green, *Luke*, 579. See the commentary on the passage (pp. 570-586) for the particular significance of table fellowship and the social implications of this which seem to be at the heart of the Pharisees' complaint.

in Luke's gospel.<sup>557</sup> Thus, James here follows Jesus' teaching about his own mission,<sup>558</sup> and therefore the church's, which must also be 'to seek and to save the lost' (Lk 19:10), in other words to seek out the wanderer.

In fact, the language here recalls Ezekiel 34:4 which is likewise linked to healing the sick (see Jas 5:13-16). The correspondences in the LXX are striking as Allison has pointed out: Israel's false shepherds are condemned for not 'strengthening the weak' (τὸ ἠσθενηκὸς οὐκ ἐνισχύσατε) and for not returning the wanderer (τὸ πλανώμενον οὐκ ἐπεστρέψατε). <sup>559</sup> Allison finds further strong correlation between the vocabulary of James 5:19-20 and Ezekiel 33-34 which suggests that these chapters have influenced James' thought. <sup>560</sup> Significantly, through the prophet God declares: 'I will seek the lost, and I will turn about the one that strayed' (LXX Ezek 34:16: Τὸ ἀπολωλὸς ζητήσω καὶ τὸ πλανώμενον ἐπιστρέψω cf. 33:11). In other words, the role of the community to seek and return the lost is based on this prior purpose of God, so that it is certainly appropriate to frame this as an integral part of God's mission, and thus the church's mission. <sup>561</sup>

It is significant then, that James concludes his letter with an overtly missional statement to the whole community.<sup>562</sup> This ties in closely, as we have seen, with his own missional appropriation of the servant theme as one who 'returns the diaspora' and suitably frames the

<sup>557</sup> Green, *Luke*, 586.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>558</sup> I am not suggesting any direct dependence between James 5:19-20 and Luke 15 although interestingly, Green, 574-5, sees a link between Luke 15 and Ezekiel 34, a passage that is likely in the background to the passage in James. See further below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>559</sup> Dale C. Allison, "A Liturgical Tradition Behind the Ending of James," *JSNT* 34, no. 1 (September 1, 2011): 9. Allison's main purpose at this point is to find evidence linking "healing" with "turning", not something that I am concerned with here.

<sup>560</sup> Allison, "Liturgical Tradition," 11–12. Evidence for the connection between Ezekiel 33-34 and our passage includes the use of πλανάω with ἐπιστρέφω which only occurs 4x in the LXX, two of which are in the Ezekiel passages. Added to this are parallels to the following terms found in James 5:19-20: ἀμαρτωλόν, ἐκ ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ, σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, θανάτοῦ, πλανηθῆ. Not all parallels are exact, but the cumulative effect is convincing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>561</sup> cf. Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 271, who calls this a final commission similar to Jesus' commissioning of his disciples.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>562</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 397.

letter with a missional identity and exhortation that also implicates the audience to be and do the same.

# An Apologetic to the Twelve Tribes

One final aspect of this restoration theme may also shed light on a puzzling aspect of the letter, and that is James' apparent reluctance to draw more explicitly on Christological themes. As Allison points out, it would be entirely appropriate to use Jesus (and perhaps even the early disciples) as an exemplar on multiple occasions. Moreover, James uses ambiguous language that could be taken one way by a Christ-follower and another way by Judeans in general. Allison argues that the reason for this is a deliberate apologetic intention and that the letter 'has a twofold audience – those who share the author's Christian convictions and those who do not. In explaining this, he notes but rejects Moulton's hypothesis that James was written with a 'missionary strategy' by a Christian to reach a Jewish audience and instead builds on the theory of A. H. McNeile that it was rather an 'apologetic strategy.'

Allison compares the letter to Matthew's Gospel, which also represents a 'Jewish Christianity' and upholds the Torah. However, James is written with the hope of maintaining good relations within the synagogue for Christ-followers, unlike Matthew in which a split had already occurred with the synagogue. <sup>566</sup> He finds evidence for such an approach in the Qumran document 4QMMT that 'seemingly addresses outsiders' with the purpose of persuasion, <sup>567</sup> and which, as John Collins points out, is 'framed in terms that might in principle be persuasive to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>563</sup> Allison, "Fiction of James," 564.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>564</sup> Allison, "Fiction of James," 570.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>565</sup> Allison, "Fiction of James," 563–65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>566</sup> Allison, "Fiction of James," 565–67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>567</sup> Allison, "Fiction of James," 567. Allison also notes in passing the example of Origen, who would conceal his Christianity in conversation with pagans until he had their attention, and the Sentences of Sextus (p. 562).

any Jew, appealing primarily to the Law of Moses,' rather than argue from the position of the sect.<sup>568</sup> Thus, Allison concludes, 'James was still seeking to keep relations irenic.'<sup>569</sup>

Whether or not Allison's *Sitz im Leben* is accurate, his arguments for an apologetic function to the letter carry weight. There is not, however, the same overt appeal to a 'you' group that is different from James' own community as in 4QMMT<sup>570</sup> so the apologetic function is less evident and while deliberate is more of a desired outcome rather than a stated aim. Further, as noted above, James speaks with very direct authority over the recipients which would hardly be the case if he were writing in such an appealing fashion. A final problem with Allison's theory is that it requires an interpolation in 2:1 of the phrase 'our Lord Jesus Christ' in order to distance the readers from necessarily having allegiance to Jesus.<sup>571</sup> As I noted in the first chapter and will consider in more detail in chapter seven, such an interpolation is unlikely.

Richard Last attempts to improve on Allison's argument by comparing James with Pseudo-Phocylides, in which the author conceals his sources in a similar way, and therefore perhaps for similar reasons.<sup>572</sup> One of the main sources for the work is the LXX but this is never cited as such, and so the text is given a double meaning through its use of a concealed source.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>568</sup> John J. Collins, "The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, SDSS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 81. The comparison by Allison of James with Matthew and 4QMMT is perhaps indicative of these three documents providing a spectrum of Judean perspectives. Paul Foster, *Community, Law and Mission in Matthew's Gospel*, WUNT 177 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 80–93, compares Matthew's Gospel with 4QMMT in more detail and it would seem that these two documents have more similarities than James and 4QMMT.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>569</sup> Allison, "Fiction of James," 566; cf. Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse," 253–55, who largely follows the argument of Allison, and suggests that James "argues from common ground, not from the distinctive beliefs of the Jesus movement." Thus, the letter "is bifocal, addressing outside and inside relationships."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>570</sup> See Collins, "Expectation of the End," 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>571</sup> Allison, "Fiction of James," 564. It seems artificial to imagine that the mention of Jesus Christ in 1:1 would be acceptable but not in 2:1. If James derives his authority from Jesus, then this would surely be a stumbling block to an antagonistic Judean (see further chapter seven).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>572</sup> Richard Last, "Concealed Sources in the Letter of James and Other Ancient Writings," *CBW* 31 (January 1, 2011): 177–79. Pseudo-Phocylides is written by a Judean but with a Greek audience in mind using the pseudonym of a classical Greek poet from the 6th century BC. Last also provides other less convincing analogies from Greek literature including the "written and unwritten" Platonic traditions which for some ancient authors had a deeper meaning or "secret doctrine" to be discovered (see pp. 169-170).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>573</sup> Last, "Concealed Sources," 176–78. Last draws on theories of "subordinate discourse" and "hidden transcripts" from the work of James C. Scott (see pp. 179-180).

The text thus had two aims: it 'sought to foster respect among Greeks for a universal morality from a Judean perspective' but also 'appealed to Judeans by confirming the place of Judean tradition in Greek culture.' However, since James does not omit reference to Jesus, Last suggests that the concealment is not as strong as Pseudo-Phocylides. Yet the author also refuses to compromise on a key identity issue, namely the uniqueness and oneness of God (Ps.-Phoc. 54), certainly a sticking point for some segments of Greco-Roman society. Broad appeal and concealment then, does not necessarily mean the removal of all that would offend. Where this is a non-negotiable, neither writer is willing to compromise. For Pseudo-Phocylides that is the oneness of God, for James it is the lordship and glory of Christ.

Thus, it seems likely that James writes primarily to Judean Christ-followers but in such a way that it would also be well-received by those Judeans in the diaspora who were not altogether closed to the possibility of Jesus as Messiah. With his reliance on the OT and the Jesus tradition, James shows that 'faith in Jesus' is in continuity with the message and ethos of the OT for a Judean audience. This serves a dual function alongside the broader didactic aims of the discourse. It both provides an apologetic for Christ-followers in the eyes of the Judean diaspora communities and also confirms the place of the Jesus tradition in Judean piety thus validating for Christ-followers their sense of belonging. Thus, although James may have no 'missionary strategy' it would be appropriate to speak of a missional strategy and purpose to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>574</sup> Last, "Concealed Sources," 178–79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>575</sup> Last, "Concealed Sources," 181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>576</sup> Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 429–34. As he points out, the fact that Judeans rejected other gods was "perceived by non-Jews as intolerance" (p. 431). The well-known counter charges of "atheism" and "impiety" were only to be expected (p. 432).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>577</sup> It is interesting that in his use of OT exemplars, unlike other diaspora writings, James makes no mention of Moses. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 426–28, states that diaspora Judeans are "for better or worse... followers of Moses" and notes the prominence of Moses as a hero in this literature. James' silence here may also subtly hint that Jesus has now become more important than Moses as the authorised interpreter of the Law. I will consider more on this later, particularly with James' mention of the "royal law" (2:8).

the letter. Not only might this keep relations irenic, it might also stimulate interest and further openness within the Judean diaspora towards faith in Jesus.<sup>578</sup>

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I have explored the evocative nature of the letter greeting. The author as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ places himself in a position of authority and in continuity with the mission of God's servants in the OT and Jesus in the NT. He writes as one restoring God's people to their true identity in continuity with God's mission to redeem the world. Through the terms 'twelve tribes' and 'diaspora' the writer begins the letter with language that evokes traditions of judgment and restoration that locates them as God's chosen people within God's redemptive narrative, a strong missional identity.

Further, by engaging in an apologetic with those Judeans that might have an opportunity to read the epistle but do not follow Christ he hopes to ease tensions for his audience with the larger Judean diaspora. He also hints at how they too might be restored to the renewed 'true' Israel that acknowledges James of Jerusalem's brother as Lord and Christ. However, James' main audience are Christ-followers in the Judean diaspora with the ultimate concern that they do not depart from the faith in their challenging diaspora location, and so, as we will see in the next chapter, he seeks to move them towards perfection.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>578</sup> For Maurice Hogan, "The Law in the Epistle of James," *SNTSU* 22 (1997): 79–91, this also means that the letter continues to be suitable as a tool for interfaith dialogue. He states that "James' grounding of his moral exhortations in theological rather than Christological principles provides a genuine bridge between Christians and Jews who share a belief in the One God, Creator, Lawgiver and Judge."

#### **CHAPTER 5: PERFECTION AND TRIALS**

James is aware of the challenges facing his audience in its diaspora setting, and that these trials may lead to them turning from the faith. Yet, in the author's mind, trials are also an opportunity to move towards perfection, if faced with the right attitude. The use of perfection language by James is prominent compared to other NT authors, with the adjective 'perfect' ( $\tau \dot{\epsilon} \lambda \epsilon \iota o \varsigma$ ) occurring five times<sup>579</sup> (linked to key themes in James)<sup>580</sup> and the cognate verb and other terms from the  $\tau \epsilon \lambda$ - word group used elsewhere in the letter.<sup>581</sup> As we will see in this chapter, perfection and wholeness ultimately equips the audience for participation in God's mission. As I outlined in chapter three, such missional formation is an integral part of my reading and so, after explaining further the sections of the letter considered in this chapter, I will show how James does this by drawing on traditions that are part of the narrative of God's mission.

As I outlined previously, the principal sections of the letter that develop the theme of perfection through testing are found in James 1:2-4, 1:12, 1:13-18 and 5:7-18, effectively forming an *inclusio* for the letter.<sup>582</sup> James also draws on Abraham (2:21-23) and Job (5:11), archetypes of testing in Jewish literature, and further frames several sections as tests of the faith of the audience (e.g., 2:1-13; 2:14-25) so that, implicitly and explicitly, the theme of testing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>579</sup> Jas 1:4 (x2), 17, 25; 3:2. Elsewhere in the NT it occurs 14x but nowhere as frequently per word as James (2.86x per 1000 words – the next closest is Colossians with 1.26x per 1000 words), and nowhere as often as James cf. Matthew (3x), 1 Corinthians (3x) Hebrews (2x), all much longer letters, and Colossians (2x). However, the verbal cognate τελειόω is only used once in James but in Hebrews (9x) and 1 John (4x).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>580</sup> Cheung, *Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics*, 177–78. These include ἔργον (which gains prominence in 1:19-27 and 2:14-26), gifts from above including wisdom (1:17; 3:17-18), and speech (3:2). Added to that the letter closing reminds the audience of the merciful purpose (τέλος) of God (5:11). <sup>581</sup> Jas 2:8; 5:11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>582</sup> See the discussion in chapter one of this thesis. On the inclusio, see Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 70.

runs throughout the letter.<sup>583</sup> In what follows, however, I will limit myself to the main sections mentioned above. I will first look at James 1:2-4 alongside 1:12,<sup>584</sup> then examine 1:13-18, which functions as a unit and changes the nuance to temptation, and lastly, consider the expected responses to a variety of trials presented in 5:7-18.

### THE PURPOSE OF TRIALS: FIT FOR THE MISSIO DEI (JAMES 1:2-4, 12)

James begins his letter with a powerful statement introducing what is probably the major theme of the letter, the perfection of the recipients.<sup>585</sup> This is presented through a chain saying which moves from joy in trials to the testing of faith, then to endurance and finally to perfection and wholeness. Similar progressions are found in Romans 5:2-5 and 1 Peter 1:6-7 which will provide some useful comparisons,<sup>586</sup> although a detailed analysis of these parallel passages is beyond the scope of this investigation.<sup>587</sup> I will unpack the various key terms that James uses in the chain, which draw upon the biblical tradition of testing and perfection and are themselves embedded in the narrative of God's mission to redeem the world, locating James' readers within this mission. Since many of these key terms are also repeated in 1:12, which I take as an *inclusio* with the opening section, I will treat this verse here.<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>583</sup> Jackson-McCabe, "Enduring Temptation."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>584</sup> Verse 12 is either taken as the summary of 1:2-11 or the introduction to the next section (1:13-18). I will follow Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 61, who argues that the verse plays a transitional role, closing out one section and beginning another; cf. Taylor and Guthrie, "The Structure of James," 687. For the purposes of this section, I will focus on its summary role for the preceding section, particularly 1:2-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>585</sup> See Patrick J. Hartin, "Call to Be Perfect through Suffering (James 1,2-4): The Concept of Perfection in the Epistle of James and the Sermon on the Mount," *Bib* 77, no. 4 (January 1, 1996): 477–92; and Hartin, *Spirituality of Perfection*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>586</sup> James either borrows from Romans and 1 Peter here or works from common tradition or even provides a possible source for both. The tangle of similar wording yet different emphases and even meaning in terms makes it difficult to posit more than common tradition. Somehow, one has to account for the fact that Romans and 1 Peter have no vocabulary in common, yet James has almost identical vocabulary with Romans (6 words) interspersed with identical vocabulary to 1 Peter (7 words). See the next footnote for comparisons.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>587</sup> See Davids, *Epistle of James*, 65–66; Peter H. Davids, "James and Peter: The Literary Evidence," in Chilton and Evans, eds, *James, Peter, and Paul*, 34–35; and Nienhuis, "Canon Conscious Pseudepigraph," 174–80, for comparisons of the Greek texts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>588</sup> On this see more below.

Many of the epistles in the NT follow a pattern of greetings followed by a blessing or thanksgiving section. S89 Unlike these, James, after a typically Hellenistic salutation ( $\chi\alpha(\rho\epsilon\iota\nu)$ , S90 immediately begins the letter, adding to the impact of the opening section, thus highlighting the importance for our author of this opening theme. To understand the missional significance, I will examine the call to joy and the testing tradition evoked (1:2), then consider the key concept of endurance (1:3-4a), and then focus on the culmination of James' exhortation, the perfection of his recipients (1:4b). Finally, I will consider the additional eschatological significance that is provided by verse 12.

# The Exhortation to Joy (Jas 1:2)

James' call for joy as a response to trials that opens the letter is striking, even if not unique, and, as we will see, is inherently missional. However, before going further it is important to determine what is meant here by 'trial' ( $\pi \epsilon \iota \rho \alpha \sigma \mu \delta \varsigma$ ) and then see how the biblical tradition of testing informs our reading of James.

## What Kind of Trials?

Commentators are divided as to whether James refers to the general trials of daily life, which may include temptation, or persecution because of faith in Christ.<sup>591</sup> Davids is typical of those who argue for the latter,<sup>592</sup> yet in support of this position cites a passage from Sirach which mentions a variety of trials including those of daily life: 'Accept whatsoever is brought upon

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>589</sup> McKnight, James, 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>590</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 49. As a letter greeting, χαίρειν is only used in the NT elsewhere in the Jerusalem encyclical (Acts 15:23) and the letter of Lysias to Felix (Acts 23:26).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>591</sup> See Kloppenborg, "Hellenistic Psychagogy," 55 fn. 39, for a comprehensive list of commentators on both sides. A third but less common option is that πειρασμός refers to temptation throughout. See Andrew Bowden, "Count What All Joy? The Translation of Πειρασμός in James 1.2 and 12," *BT* 65, no. 2 (2014): 113–24. Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, avoids the issue by using the term "probation" throughout.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>592</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 67. He considers persecution to include social, economic and physical dimensions; cf. Dibelius, *James*, 71.

thee, and be patient in disease and poverty' (Sir 2:4).<sup>593</sup> Elsewhere he also suggests that trials are the suffering 'that one experiences as a result of Christian faith, for it forms a test of faith' but then has to expand trials to 'inner communal conflict' in light of how trials are presented elsewhere in the letter.<sup>594</sup>

Even though misfortune could be viewed as an indication of God's judgment,<sup>595</sup> any kind of trial tests faith so it is best to follow the cues of the author here who describes the trials as 'various' (πειρασμοῖς ... ποιχίλοις) and says that they are 'fallen into' or 'stumbled upon' (περιπέσητε), descriptors that hardly evoke only persecution.<sup>596</sup> Further, the conclusion of the letter (5:7-18) gives expression to a variety of trials, including sadness and sickness which are not necessarily related to persecution. It seems reasonable, then, to suggest that the trials the author has in mind include the everyday trials of life, although these will surely include persecution and its resulting poverty.<sup>597</sup> The theme of testing also draws on a strong biblical tradition that is worth considering briefly here.

### The Testing Tradition

James' use of πειρασμός, a 'Greek biblicism' according to Allison,<sup>598</sup> evokes the theme of the 'testing' of God's people which spans the biblical narrative, even going back to creation, which James draws on when he discusses temptation (1:13-18), a point I will return to in more detail

<sup>594</sup> Peter H. Davids, "Why Do We Suffer? Suffering in James and Paul," in Chilton and Evans, eds, *James, Peter, and Paul*, 437–38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>593</sup> Cited in Davids, *Epistle of James*, 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>595</sup> For example, in Luke 13:1-4 this is assumed by the crowd. See Green, *Luke*, 513. This is also true of the disciples in John 9:2. See J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 543.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>596</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 3; Allison, *James*, 142. Edgar, *Social Setting*, 140, points out that the subjunctive περιπέσητε following ὅταν emphasises the general nature of the trials; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 3. Kloppenborg, "Hellenistic Psychagogy," 56, suggests that ποικιλός alongside temptation and desire would evoke thoughts of Aphrodite as a seductress and temptress. However, since desire and the nuance of temptation only come to the fore later in vv. 13-15, it seems unlikely it would be evoked here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>597</sup> Moo, The Letter of James, 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>598</sup> Allison, *James*, 146. Allison notes that this term is rare in non-biblical Greek but is common in the Septuagint.

in the following section. It is notable that Abraham, Moses, and the people of Israel are all tested  $(\pi \epsilon \iota \rho \acute{a} \zeta \omega)^{599}$  and that this continues into the NT. It is worth looking further at the testing of Abraham (Gen 22) since James will later draw on this narrative (Jas 2:20-24). There James specifically draws on the *Akedah* (the story of Abraham offering Isaac) which would certainly evoke Abraham's faithful endurance of trials.

Abraham's faithfulness in the trial of the *Akedah* is linked inseparably in this passage with God's blessing on him and on the nations through him. This theme begins in Genesis 12, a fundamental passage to a missional reading of Scripture,<sup>601</sup> and is repeated three times, culminating in Genesis 22.<sup>602</sup> Thus, for Wright the promise to bless the nations through Abraham and his seed is a clear indication of God's ultimate purpose in the election of Abraham.<sup>603</sup> As he concludes, '*Blessing for the nations is the bottom line, textually and theologically, of God's promise to Abraham*.'<sup>604</sup> At the *Akedah*, all this is put on the line when God tests Abraham's faith and commitment. In other words, Abraham's faithful endurance of this trial confirmed the viability of the mission of God at this juncture in the biblical narrative.

The prevalence of this account and the prominence given to it in extra-biblical literature suggests that the audience would link this to the opening section even before James draws on it explicitly in 2:20-24. In Jubilees and rabbinic literature, the *Akedah* was the climax of the ten trials of Abraham which were routinely referred to as his 'works' (ἔργα, cf. Jas 2:23). <sup>605</sup> In the LXX, both 1 Maccabees and Sirach comment on Abraham as one who was found faithful in a trial (ἐν πειρασμῷ εὑρέθη πιστός, 1 Macc 2:51; Sir 44:20). As Roy Ward explains, the normal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>599</sup> LXX Gen 22:1; Ex 15:25; Ex 16:4; Judges 3:1, 4. Psalm 94:8 (πειρασμός). Note also Judith 8:25 which reminds the readers how God 'tests us just as our fathers also' and then lists Abraham and Isaac as examples of testing. <sup>600</sup> Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 203. I will look at Jas 2:20-24 in greater detail in chapter eight.

<sup>601</sup> See chapter three of this dissertation.

<sup>602</sup> Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18. It is also confirmed to Isaac (26:4-5) and Jacob (28:14).

<sup>603</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 191–221.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>604</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 194 (italics original).

<sup>605</sup> Soards, "Interpretation of Abraham," 19.

Jewish interpretation of this narrative is that 'the offering of Isaac was pre-eminently an example of faithful Abraham on trial.'606 Sirach also links Abraham's faithful obedience in the trial with the blessing to the nations that would come through him so that 'nations would be blessed by his seed' (ἐνευλογηθῆναι ἔθνη ἐν σπέρματι αὐτοῦ, Sir 44:21). The *Akedah*, with all its missional significance, thus encapsulates the testing tradition, and would probably be evoked by James' opening exhortation.

As noted above, the testing tradition is carried on in the NT, where Jesus is sent to the wilderness to be tested ( $\pi \epsilon \iota \rho \alpha \sigma \theta \tilde{\eta} \nu \alpha \iota$ ) by the devil (Mt 4:1-11; cf. Luke 4:1-13) in a way that clearly echoes the testing of the people of Israel, including the nature of the temptations themselves.<sup>607</sup> Fundamentally, the three temptations Jesus faced were all to do with his messianic identity, and in contrast to Israel, he is presented as the faithful son who stays true to God: 'Where Israel of old failed, there Jesus succeeds.'<sup>608</sup> France rightly gives this narrative a missional slant concluding that it is 'an elaborate typological presentation of Jesus as himself the true Israel, the "Son of God" through whom God's redemptive purpose for his people is now at last to reach its fulfilment.'<sup>609</sup> Thus testing and mission are intricately linked in these key narratives for God's people.

The NT also leaves us in no doubt that Christ-followers should also expect testing as an inevitable part of their commitment to God.<sup>610</sup> By beginning his letter with this theme, the author has tapped into a biblical tradition that draws in the readers to take their place alongside

<sup>606</sup> Ward, "Works of Abraham," 285.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>607</sup> So Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 510; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1 - 13*, WBC 33A (Nashville: Nelson, 1993), 62; cf. Penner, *James and Eschatology*, 246. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew. Vol. I: Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I-VII*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 352–53, describe this account as a haggadic midrash on Deuteronomy 6 - 8 since all three of Jesus' citations are found there.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>608</sup> Fitzmyer, Gospel According to Luke, 510.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>609</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>610</sup> 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Thess 3:5; Heb 2:18; 1 Pet 4:12; 2 Pet 2:9; Rev 2:10.

the tested people of God through the ages, including Abraham and Jesus who were both paradigmatic in their faithful endurance to fulfil the purpose of God. As the servant of the one who was tested and endured patiently, James urges his own readers to the same kind of faithful endurance, thus showing their identity as faithful participants in God's mission.

### The Priority of Joy

Returning to James 1:2, it is notable that whatever the nature of the trials faced, the author gives a seemingly incongruous but emphatic call to respond with joy  $(\pi\tilde{\alpha}\sigma\alpha\nu \chi\alpha\rho\dot{\alpha}\nu \dot{\eta}\gamma\dot{\eta}\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon)$ ,  $^{611}$  employing a hook word technique to move from the greeting  $(\chi\alpha l\rho\epsilon\iota\nu)$  straight into the opening theme. The insertion of the vocative address after the first phrase also serves a rhetorical function to heighten what follows, namely that any kind of trial is an occasion for joy. The addresses the audience as 'my brothers and sisters'  $(\dot{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phiol(\mu \nu \nu))$ , which he does throughout the letter, a common term of address in Scripture. However, James never uses generational kinship language, unlike Paul or the wisdom tradition, for separates himself off as an apostle. James' use of fictive kinship language emphasises that he shares a 'common identity' with the audience for and 'puts the author beside the readers. In other words, James, as the servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, shares in their trials and encourages them to respond as he would.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>611</sup> Varner, *New Perspective*, 52, notes that James unusually fronts the verb with its complement which only occurs here and in 5:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>612</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 174; cf. Allison, *James*, 143–44 who notes that "wordplays on χαίρειν appear to have been conventional" and provides a list of examples.

<sup>613</sup> Stephen E. Runge, "Redundancy, Discontinuity and Delimitation in the Epistle of James," in *From Ancient Manuscripts to Modern Dictionaries: Select Studies in Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek*, ed. Tarsee Li and Keith Dyer, PLAL 9 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2017), 450. He describes this as a "dramatic pause."

<sup>614</sup> Jas 1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19. See Allison, *James*, 145 fn. 66, for an extensive list of OT uses. In the NT, it is common in the speeches in Acts and in the Pauline epistles, particularly 1 Cor (x20), 1 Thess (x14) and Rom (x10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>615</sup> Edgar, Social Setting, 101–2. See for example 1 Cor 4:14-17; Gal 4:19.

<sup>616</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 109; cf. Harland, Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians, 81, who shows that Greco-Roman Associations also made use of fictive kinship language to encourage and draw on "the ideal of solidarity and identification."

<sup>617</sup> Allison, James, 144.

The parallel passages in Romans 5 and 1 Peter 1 mentioned above show that this call to joy is traditional yet more forceful in James. In 1 Peter, joy is not so much commanded as assumed because of the promised future salvation and in fact, the verb linked to trials is 'grieving' (λυπηθέντας ἐν ποικίλοις πειρασμοῖς, 1 Pet 1:5b-6), a more natural way of presenting the experience of going through trials. There is also a different nuance in Romans 5 where Paul uses the verb usually translated 'to boast' (καυχάομαι) in the parallel expression (5:3).<sup>618</sup> Neither Romans nor 1 Peter, then, has the same emphasis on joy as the *response* to trials as James, a force which is intensified by calling it 'all joy' or 'sheer joy (πᾶσαν χαράν).'<sup>619</sup>

In fact, this kind of response makes sense best when the missional aspect is understood. Because the author has already drawn on the future hope of restoration and return (1:1), the audience can respond in joy, a common theme surrounding this hope in the prophetic literature. This response also demonstrates that the audience understands and participates in God's mission as those who are being brought to perfection and salvation, but who expect trials and opposition in their present experience as followers of Christ. In fact this is already mandated by Jesus who, much like James, emphasises a strong response of joy to trials ( $\chi\alpha l\rho\epsilon\tau\epsilon$   $\kappa\alpha l$   $\alpha l$   $\alpha$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>618</sup> The EVV are divided as to whether to translate this here (and in v. 2) as "boast" or "rejoice." See Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 329 fn. 49, for an indicative list. Yet rejoice is not a normal sense for this word (see BDAG, 536) and "boast" is used in the other 35 occurrences in the NT (including 3 in Romans). In fact, as I will point out later in chapters seven and eight, James also uses this verb and cognates and it is better to translate these with terms such as "honour-claim."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>619</sup> "Sheer joy" is more appropriate than "nothing but joy" (NRSV). See Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 15; Davids, *Epistle of James*, 67.

<sup>620</sup> Jer 31:10-12 [LXX 38:9-13] cf. Isa 8:19; 9:9; 66:10, 14; Joel 2:21, 23; Zeph 3:14, 20; Zech 2:6-13. Cf. Baruch 2:4, who says (after speaking of God scattering (διέσπειρεν) Israel, "Behold, your sons are coming, whom you sent away; they are coming, gathered from east until west, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing (χαίροντες) in the glory of God." (cf. 2:13; 5:5; Tobit 13:13; 14:7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>621</sup> In the NT, joy accompanies key aspects of the *missio Dei*: Jesus' incarnation and resurrection, the repentance of sinners and the suffering of the nascent church. See, e.g., Lk 1:14; 2:10; Jn 3:29 (incarnation); Lk 24:41, 52; Jn 16:21-22 (resurrection); Lk 15:5, 7, 32 (repentance); Acts 5:41; 13:52 (suffering).

<sup>622</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 67, notes the similarities with this "Q" saying (Mt 5:11-12//Lk 6:22-23).

# **Endurance and Perfection (1:3-4a)**

In the next two verses, James continues to build his step-saying drawing on shared knowledge<sup>623</sup> that points to the missional nature of the testing his audience faces. I will examine here the tradition behind the key term 'endurance' (ὑπομονή), which adds to our understanding of the way James seeks to form his readers, before considering the text in more detail.

### Shared Knowledge about Testing

The ground for being able to consider trials as 'all joy' follows in 1:3, beginning with a causal participle:<sup>624</sup> "knowing (γινώσκοντες) that the testing of your faith produces endurance." It is striking that for James, the process towards perfection requires proper understanding, an emphasis that, according to Johnson, sets apart chapter one from the rest of the letter.<sup>625</sup> This is certainly important to James since a lack of wisdom is presented as the most immediate problem that prevents wholeness (1:5). The author realises that trials can have the opposite effect to the desired one and lead people away from the truth (1:13-16; 5:19-20) and so appeals to what they should know.<sup>626</sup>

The parallel passages noted earlier are again instructive here in their differences as much as in their similarities. In Romans 5 Paul likewise appeals to what his readers know and follows virtually the same construction and vocabulary as James: εἰδότες ὅτι ἡ θλῖψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται (Rom 5:3). 627 Yet there are significant differences. Paul does not mention faith (although he does speak of hope) and it is suffering that produces endurance, while for James

<sup>623</sup> Allison, James, 149.

<sup>624</sup> Varner, James, 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>625</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 175. He counts 17 terms in the first chapter concerned with an "aspect of knowing" as opposed to only 7 in the rest of the letter.

<sup>626</sup> This would include the testing tradition noted above. See also Davids, *Epistle of James*, 67.

<sup>627</sup> Paul's use of εἰδότες ὅτι is not surprising; he appears to prefer this to γινώσκοντες ὅτι which only appears twice elsewhere in the Pauline corpus compared to 11x for the first expression (and a further 6x without ὅτι). This is even more marked than Paul's preference for οἶδα (100x) over γινώσκω (50x).

it is produced by the 'testing of your faith' (τὸ δοχίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως). This exact same phrase is used in 1 Peter, although with a different meaning: there the 'genuineness of your faith' is in view (1 Peter 1:7).<sup>628</sup> Moreover, what sets these parallel passages apart is their Christological framework. For Paul, the grace of God in Christ Jesus and the 'hope of the glory of God' provide the initial motivation (Rom 5:3), while for the author of 1 Peter their genuine faith leads to praise and glory and honour at the revealing of Christ and the 'final goal' is receiving the 'salvation of your souls' (τὸ τέλος τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν σωτηρίαν ψυχῶν, 1 Pet 1:9). Yet there is also an eschatological element here in James<sup>629</sup> that is further emphasised in 1:12 as we shall see, which hints at a missional framework.

The Maccabean martyr tradition provides another instructive parallel.  $^{630}$  In 4 Maccabees 7:22 the writer states that a philosopher who trusts in God is able to control their feelings 'knowing that ( $\epsilon i\delta \omega_{\varsigma} \delta \tau i$ ) it is blessed to endure ( $\delta \pi \omega_{\iota} \omega_{\iota} \omega_{\iota} \omega_{\iota} \omega_{\iota})$ ) every pain for the sake of virtue.' This has a synonymous causal participle (although in the singular) appealing to shared knowledge, but the main emphasis is on the mastery of passions which is only possible for the 'wise and courageous' (7:23). In this case, the cause of suffering is very clearly persecution and the response, as we will see below, demonstrates the faith of those undergoing it. For James, the virtue is endurance itself (but then it too must do its own 'work') but nonetheless, there is a similar thought process.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>628</sup> In James, more literally the phrase is "the means of testing of your faith." See further BDAG, 256 and the discussions in Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 18; and Allison, *James*, 150–51. For an argument that the "genuineness of your faith" is also the meaning in James, see Edgar, *Social Setting*, 141.
<sup>629</sup> Penner, *James and Eschatology*, 184.

<sup>630</sup> This is explored in more detail in Bryan R. Dyer, "The Epistle of James and the Maccabean Martyr Tradition: An Exploration of Sacred Tradition in the New Testament," in Language and Literature of the New Testament: Essays in Honour of Stanley E. Porter's 60th Birthday (Leiden: Brill, 2017). As he points out, although 4 Maccabees is probably later than the NT, it reflects the oral tradition that existed prior to its composition and this could well have been known to James and his audience (see p. 714). As we will see below, James' use of ὑπομονή is similar to that of 4 Maccabees in particular.

Indeed, the expression τὸ δοχίμιον<sup>631</sup> ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως shows that there is an underlying theological meaning to trials. In whatever shape or form they come, trials ultimately are about a person's faith in God, and the trial itself is the means of testing of that faith. This requires a faith that is not simply a mental assent to the existence of God. As James will point out later, that kind of faith is both idle (2:20) and dead (2:17, 25) and can neither save (2:14) nor justify (2:24). At first glance it seems counter-intuitive that the test of faith produces ὑπομονή, the very virtue that is needed to pass the test. However, this is a process (indicated by the present tense  $κατεργάζεται)^{632}$  that happens during the period of trials and so is neither automatic nor instantaneous.<sup>633</sup>

# The Perfect Work of Endurance (1:4a)

This leads James to build his next link in the chain by introducing another exhortation  $^{634}$  to 'let endurance have a perfect work' (ή δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω). Although τέλειος here is a descriptor for 'work,' Dibelius concludes that the best way to take this is as referring to the outcome of endurance in those undergoing trial: "Let endurance effect a perfect work," finds its completion in the final clause: "You are that perfect work." Endurance then plays a vital role in the chain of movement from trials to perfection so it is worth pausing briefly to explore further the use of ὑπομονή before I look at the climax of the step-saying.

Throughout Scripture, the language of endurance under trial is associated with the idea of staying faithful to God, often under persecution. The use of ὑπομονή by James shows

<sup>631</sup> Allison, *James*, 150–51, discusses the textual variant δόκιμον but concludes that this is not original; cf. Davids, *Epistle of James*, 68.

<sup>632</sup> Vlachos, James: Exegetical Guide, 18.

<sup>633</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 68–69.

 $<sup>^{634}</sup>$  This is somewhat unexpected. The parallel passage in Romans is a much clearer chain: building from εἰδότες ὅτι there are a series of three δέ + noun clauses that use the object of the previous clause as the subject of the subsequent clause. James only does this once and 1 Peter 1:6-7 does not follow this pattern at all.

 $<sup>^{635}</sup>$  Dibelius, *James*, 74. He suggests that this is the only reasonable explanation that takes into account the double use of τέλειος and the argument of the chain saying.

correspondence with Greek OT apocrypha and pseudepigrapha rather than the Hebrew Bible. In passages that the Hebrew Bible and LXX have in common, ὑπομονή translates two related Hebrew words for hope, miqveh (αισιπ) and tiqvah (αισιπ), rather than endurance. In contrast, it is clearly used as 'endurance' in several passages exclusive to the LXX. In 4 Maccabees it signifies the faithful endurance of those suffering for their faith, 636 mainly of the priestly family who are all tortured and put to death. In the midst of a graphic description of the tortures that a mother is forced to watch her sons go through, including finally being burnt to death, the writer speaks of her being tried (πειρασθεῖσα, 15:16 cf. 9:7) and her endurance (ὑπομονήν, 15:30) and then goes on to extol the virtue of the whole family, concluding that, 'Virtue, proving (δοκιμάζουσα) them through endurance (ὑπομονής), gave a reward' (17:12). In this account, faithful endurance is also faithful witness, a point made clear by describing their patient suffering as a witness (διαμαρτυρία, 16:16) for the nation. David DeSilva concludes that they 'bear witness to the nation's character, and in particular to its commitment to the covenant relationship initiated by God at Sinai. '637 Here, then, there is a clear missional dimension to endurance under trial that would challenge the audience in their own trials.

Such witness, though, is not limited to persecution, as the use of ὑπομονή hints at in the apocryphal Testament of Joseph and Testament of Job.<sup>638</sup> In the former, after a brief summary of the various trials he faced, including being sold, being tested day and night by Potiphar's wife and thrown into prison, Joseph concludes by saying, 'In ten trials (πειρασμοῖς) he [God] showed me approved (δόκιμον), and in all of them I was patient (ἐμακροθύμησα), because patience (μακροθυμία) is a powerful medicine and endurance (ὑπομονή) gives many good

<sup>636</sup> Dyer, "Maccabean Martyr Tradition," 715. It is used 11x here of the 25x in the LXX. In fact, if you remove the 9x it occurs in the books that the LXX has in common with the MT where it means hope, then it accounts for 11 out of 16 uses. Arguably, even its use in Sirach (4x) and Pss. Sol. (x1) could be translated as hope.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>637</sup> David A. DeSilva, "The Human Ideal, the Problem of Evil, and Moral Responsibility in 4 Maccabees," *BBR* 23, no. 1 (2013): 71.

<sup>638</sup> I will return to the T. Job later in the discussion on Jas 5:11

things' (T. Jos. 2.7). The verbal parallels are multiple, particularly when the comparison is extended to the final sections on trials in James 5:7-11 which calls for patience (μακροθυμία) and endurance (ὑπομονή). The point to make here though, is that Joseph, through his endurance of every kind of trial, becomes the public demonstration of faithfulness to God, even on occasion seeking the repentance of those testing him (6:7), and giving public testimony to God (8:5). In sum, by appealing to the shared knowledge of the effect of endurance in trial, regardless of the cause or type, James uses a missional concept to form his hearers which should finally result in perfection.

# Perfection and Wholeness (1:4b)

James concludes his step-saying encouraging the recipients that the goal of their testing is 'that you might be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing' (ἵνα ἦτε τέλειοι καὶ ὁλόκληροι ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι, 1:4). James' usage of τέλειος must be set in the wider understanding of perfection language which was common in the Greco-Roman world and permeated Scripture and non-biblical writings from the period. In an extensive study on such literature, <sup>639</sup> Hartin notes that in Greek literature, τέλειος frequently expresses a cultic idea (e.g., a 'perfect sacrifice') but also in common parlance indicates physical maturity. <sup>640</sup> In philosophy it referred to an ideal or goal that was to be strived for, since something (or someone) is τέλειος, perfect, if it has reached its τέλος, end or goal. <sup>641</sup> However, Hartin concludes that the OT framework is particularly relevant since perfection language 'gave expression to the biblical idea of wholeness and completeness that included an unconditional relationship between God and God's people. That relationship was demonstrated above all in a life led in obedience to the Torah. <sup>642</sup> There are also similarities

<sup>639</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 17-39; cf. Hartin, "Perfect Through Suffering."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>640</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 17–18.

<sup>641</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 18–22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>642</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 34.

with perfection language in the Matthean Sermon on the Mount<sup>643</sup> so that in what follows, I will consider several key texts from the OT and Matthew's gospel, to better appreciate the missional dimension to this theme in James.

# The Background to James' use of τέλειος

In the LXX, τέλειος is used to translate *tamim* (תמים) and *shalem* (שלם) which both carry the idea of completeness, soundness and wholeness. Hartin argues that to understand τέλειος it is necessary to examine the full range nuances of תמים, which is best defined in the context of the 'sacrificial worship of Israel' since 'only what was whole, complete, and without defects could be offered to God. However, τέλειος is translated as תמים only once in the context of animal sacrifice (Ex 12:5), and elsewhere is used to indicate how people are, or should be, in their relationship to God. Odd.

This is highlighted by its use in Deuteronomy 18:13: 'Be perfect (MT: תְּמִים; LXX: τέλειος) before the LORD your God.' This is in a series of prohibitions against living like the nations that would surround the people of Israel in the promised land. In another words, it sets out a stark choice for God's people: either live perfectly in God's presence or imitate the surrounding nations, leading to pollution and defilement. The diaspora setting of James and the similar stark choices set in the letter (e.g., 4:4) suggest a similar understanding of perfection. Likewise, Genesis 6:9 states that 'Noah was a righteous man, ממים (LXX: τέλειος)

<sup>643</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 129–47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>644</sup> BDB, 1022 and 1071 respectively.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>645</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 22–23 (citation on page 22).

 $<sup>^{646}</sup>$  A closer look suggests that this aspect of πανα is translated by ἄμωμος (blameless), which is used 68x to translate it compared to only 4x by τέλειος, as Hartin himself admits. See Hartin, *Spirituality of Perfection*, 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>647</sup> Gen 6:9; Deut 18:13; 2 Sam 22:26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>648</sup> McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 302. As McConville states, "The emphasis is on integrity in relationship..."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>649</sup> There is also a similar exhortation to perfection made to Abram in Genesis 17:1 at the point of covenant giving. Abram is told by God, 'I am God Almighty, walk before me and be perfect (תְּמִים)' which here the LXX renders 'blameless' (ἄμεμπτος). This only translates πατα here and in Job 12:4 (see also fn. 646).

in his generation,' which clearly refers to his virtuous life compared to those around him. 650

The primary emphasis conveyed by τέλειος in the LXX then, concerns a person's behaviour and commitment to God. 651

This is reinforced by the fact that τέλειος also translates ψ in the context of a heart that is 'wholly true' (or not) to God so that being τέλειος is equivalent to 'wholehearted devotion to the Lord.'652 It seems evident, then, that James' use of perfection language reflects this OT thrust, particularly since the letter immediately decries the double-souled (Jas 1:8). This ties in closely with the diaspora identity we have noted above that calls for wholehearted commitment to God and the missional implications which correspond to this.

The unique scriptural combination of τέλειος with 'whole' (ὁλόκληρος, 1:4) adds the nuance of being complete, <sup>653</sup> further defined as 'lacking in nothing' (ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι). The meaning of ὁλόκληρος in later works in the LXX moves towards 'moral excellence,' a meaning it has in wider Greek literature where it is also combined with perfection. <sup>654</sup> As the letter continues, James also addresses several areas where the audience may be lacking and which disqualify them for service. The most proximate and important lack is wisdom (1:5-8) but also some in the audience lack self-control (1:13-15), others lack deeds (1:22-25) and others lack

 $<sup>^{650}</sup>$  Notably, Philo uses this verse to illustrate someone who is full of virtues and lives in accordance with those virtues (Abr. 31).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>651</sup> A similar emphasis is evident in the Qumran community, who use ממים frequently and call themselves the "perfect ones" (e.g., 1QS 3:3). See Hartin, *Spirituality of Perfection*, 27–29. cf. Cheung, *Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics*, 167–68, who concludes that for the Qumran community, "Perfection is virtually synonymous with righteousness or uprightness." The community also expected wholehearted service of God. However, perfection is also closely related to obeying the rules of the community, something absent in James, as is the emphasis on ritual cleansing to attain perfection.

<sup>652</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 25. See 1 Kings 8:61; 11:4; 15:3, 14; 1 Chron 28:9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>653</sup> In the LXX δλόκληρος is very generally used for 'whole' and translates both שלם and man and שלם. For the former, see Lev 23:15 - 'seven whole weeks'; Ezek 15:5, and for the latter, see Deut 27:6 - seven 'whole' (i.e. uncut) stones; Josh 9:4 (LXX 8:31).

<sup>654</sup> Allison, *James*, 159. See Wis 15:3 and 4 Macc 15:17. In the latter, the mother mentioned earlier is praised as the one who gave birth to 'complete piety' (τὴν εὐσέβειαν ὁλόκληρον). Philo, again commenting on Noah, combines the two remarking that 'the perfect man [is] complete from the beginning' (ὁ μὲν γὰρ τέλειος ὁλόκληρος ἐξ ἀρχῆς, *Abr*. 47). See further the examples in Allison.

control of the tongue (1:26).<sup>655</sup> The sense of wholeness without lack may also indicate a preparedness to serve God.<sup>656</sup> Thus wholeness and perfection reflect wholehearted devotion to God expressed in obedience and service to God.

The closest parallels in the NT are in Matthew's gospel in 5:48 and 19:21.<sup>657</sup> As I noted in the introduction, the connections between the letter of James and the gospel of Matthew are well established,<sup>658</sup> and the majority of these are in the Sermon on the Mount (SM).<sup>659</sup> There are also considerable overlaps in themes treated by both authors,<sup>660</sup> so that it seems justified to draw on a Matthean understanding of τέλειος to inform my reading of James.<sup>661</sup> In both, perfection is predicated on the *imitatio Dei* (explicitly in Matthew and implicitly in James) and implies obedience and wholeness, as I will show below. Hartin's comparison only encompasses the SM<sup>662</sup> and neglects any missional dimension so I will focus on this, first examining the use of τέλειος within the context of the SM and then its use in Matthew 19:21.

Matthew 5:48 calls for the disciples to 'Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν). 663 This is a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>655</sup> As I noted in the first chapter, all of these themes are expanded on further in the letter, and moreover, all have links to perfection language in James, as I will point out below.
<sup>656</sup> McCartney, *James*, 88.

<sup>657</sup> See further Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 32–38, who provides a summary of the use of τέλειος in the NT. This includes a strong Christological emphasis in the Pauline literature. However, he finds Matthew's use closest to the OT nuances above and therefore to James. Moreover, only in Matthew and James, τέλειος is the predicate complement to εἰμί, although strangely, Hartin describes these as attributive uses (p. 130).

<sup>658</sup> Allison, "Fiction of James," 565; Hartin, "Perfect Through Suffering."

<sup>659</sup> See, for example, Virgil V. Porter Jr., "The Sermon on the Mount in the Book of James: Part 1," *BibSac* 162, no. 647 (July 1, 2005): 344–60; *idem*, "The Sermon on the Mount in the Book of James: Part 2," *BibSac* 162, no. 648 (October 1, 2005): 470–82. He provides 45 parallel statements between James and the SM (part 1, pp. 347-352). Not all of these parallels are particularly close and certainly would not bear weight as to claims of literary dependence. This is also not to say that James only resonates with Matthew. At times he is closer to Luke (or Mark). See, e.g., John S. Kloppenborg, "The Reception of the Jesus Traditions in James," in Schlosser, ed. *Catholic Epistles*, 97–98, who argues that Jas 2:5 draws on Q 6:20b (the Lukan form of the saying). Cf. Paul Foster, "Q and James: A Source-Critical Conundrum," in Batten and Kloppenborg, eds. *James*, 1 & 2 Peter, 23, who notes closer parallels between Jas 4:9 and 5:1 with Lk 6:25 and 6:24 which have no Matthean parallels.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>661</sup> Hartin, *Spirituality of Perfection*, 144. This does not necessarily imply dependence between the two works, as Hartin clarifies.

<sup>662</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 129–47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>663</sup> It is unlikely that James alludes to this verse directly. See Foster, "Q and James," 6.

summary of the immediately preceding verses (vv. 43-48) but also of the whole sermon up to this point, 664 and 'establishes an ethic for those within the Christian community. 665 The immediate context is Jesus' requirement to love one's enemies, which is perhaps one of the most striking and obvious foundations for mission. This is linked to the character of God who mercifully makes the sun rise and the rain fall even on the unjust (Mt 5:45). 666 For James, the love command later is also central (2:8) although he does not extend it to include one's enemies. He does, however, recognise the same character of God as the God who gives without reproach (1:5), who is the 'Father of lights' 667 and the giver of good gifts (1:17) and who is compassionate and merciful (5:11). 668 Thus, for Matthew explicitly, and James implicitly, perfection is rooted in God's character and actions and extends to trying to emulate this. 669 As Davids states, James sees the 'culmination of Christian life not simply in the secure holding of the faith, but in a fully rounded uprightness, an approach toward the character of God or an imitation of Christ. 670

Given the summative nature of Matthew 5:48,<sup>671</sup> it is worth noting that the SM begins with a strong missional emphasis with the call to be salt and light (5:13-16), which Luz describes as a 'missionary commission.' Thus, as Luz continues, '[s]alt is not for itself, it is seasoning for food. In the same way the disciples are not there for themselves but for the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>664</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 338; Hagner, *Matthew 1 - 13*, 133; Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3-7:27 and Luke 6:20-49)*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 320; Foster, *Community, Law and Mission*, 138.

<sup>665</sup> Davies and Allison, Matthew I-VII, 566.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>666</sup> Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 316, points out that it is "his sun" referring to God the Father, and so "some kind of solar theology, probably derived from a hymnic background appears to be presupposed..."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>667</sup> This most likely refers to the sun and moon. So Davids, *Epistle of James*, 88. This connects the thought in Mt 5:45 where God controls the sun, since it is his. See the previous note.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>668</sup> cf. Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 142.

<sup>669</sup> Sophie Laws, "The Doctrinal Basis for the Ethics of James," in *Papers Presented to the Fifth International Congress on Biblical Studies Held at Oxford, 1973*, SE 7 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), 304. It seems likely that Deut 18:13 is in the background to this saying which was chosen to summarise the series of antitheses (5:17-48). See Davies and Allison, *Matthew I-VII*, 560. As they point out, the parallel saying in Luke would be more appropriate to the immediate context: 'Be merciful (οἰκτίρμων) just as your Father is merciful' (Lk 6:36).

theme in Mt 19:21 which I will consider in a moment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>671</sup> Dale C. Allison, "The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount," *JBL* 106, no. 3 (September 1987): 431. <sup>672</sup> Luz, *Matthew*, 249.

earth.'673 The warning against salt losing its saltiness (Mt 5:13b) is very similar to James' concern that the audience choose friendship with the world (4:4), something to the fore in their diaspora existence. Similarly, the disciples are the 'light of the world,' through their good works, thus pointing, and bringing glory, to a good and merciful Father (cf. Jas 1:17; 5:11).<sup>674</sup> This is commensurate with the negative corollary in James that certain actions deny the very faith that God's people claim to hold (Jas 2:1, 13-26). In contrast, true piety and faith and wisdom in action (1:27; 2:14-26; 3:13) provide a distinctive attractional presence that ultimately becomes a witness to society of the very nature of God.<sup>675</sup>

The only other use of τέλειος in the gospels is found in Matthew 19, in the story of the rich young ruler, <sup>676</sup> which also has links to the context of perfection in James. After defending his adherence to the law, the protagonist asks the question of Jesus, 'What do I still lack?' (τί ἔτι ὑστερῶ; 19:20). Jesus' response – 'If you wish to be perfect (τέλειος), <sup>677</sup> go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me' (19:21) – joins perfection to 'lack' as is the case in James. <sup>678</sup> Notably, both the rich young ruler and the rich in James (1:9-11) fail to realise the transitory nature of wealth and that, moreover, riches are a snare to wholehearted devotion to God (2:5-6; 4:13-5:6). Hence, for both James and Jesus, perfection is opposite to reliance on, and love for, wealth. <sup>679</sup> It is also notable that in both Matthean passages, perfection is achieved through obedience to Jesus, not just to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>673</sup> Luz, *Matthew*, 206.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>674</sup> If, as I have suggested earlier, there is a probable echoing of Isaiah 49:6 in the letter greeting, then there is another slender strand of connection here, since Matthew undoubtedly draws on this same verse. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew I-VII*, 475.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>675</sup> The sense of witness is not explicit but follows on implicitly from the theology of James in these passages as I will argue elsewhere. It may be muted because of the apologetic nature of the letter. See the previous chapter and Allison, "Fiction of James"; Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>676</sup> Interestingly, Davies and Allison, *Matthew I-VII*, 563, point out that "perfect" follows virtually the same list of commandments in 19:16-22 that appear in the antitheses of 5:21-48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>677</sup> Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 322, suggests that the use of perfect here is "influenced by the SM" since it is not in the Markan version (Mk 10:17-22 cf. Lk 18:18-25)].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>678</sup> Λείπω and ὑστερέω are from the same semantic domain. See Louw & Nida, 562-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>679</sup> I shall develop this more in chapter seven, but here it serves to reinforce James' and Matthew's similar use of perfection.

the Law, <sup>680</sup> which many commentators argue is behind James' designation of the love command as the royal law. <sup>681</sup>

# Perfection as the Telos of Mission

From this composite picture of  $\tau \not\in \lambda \varepsilon \iota \iota \varsigma$ , we have seen that James' call to perfection and wholeness is full of significance. For James, God's purpose for the recipients is not just salvation but perfection, which is brought about through enduring trials. As James moves forward through the epistle, much of it does in fact deal with areas in which the audience falls short of that perfection, often providing the solution in terms of perfection language. Lack of self-control is remedied through receiving perfect gifts from above (1:17) which undoubtedly include wisdom (3:15-18), a lack of deeds is remedied by attention to the perfect law (1:25 cf. 2:8), and the control of the tongue is achieved by the perfect person (3:2). This last verse does, however, introduce a note of realism, in that James includes himself in the admission that everyone stumbles in many ways, confirming that he views this as a process (see above) that the readers should cooperate with and thus align themselves with God's purposes.

This process of moving towards perfection will only be completed at the eschaton, which is to the fore in the parallel step passages. The culmination in these of sharing in God's glory (Rom 5:3; 1 Pet 1:7) must require perfection and provides an obvious eschatological framework that has missional overtones since this points to God's purpose for his people. This eschatological element becomes more explicit in James as the letter progresses, as we will see next, and certainly includes and looks forward to God's final work of transformation. Perfection, then, is the end goal of God's mission, and thus James' audience should fully

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>680</sup> See, e.g., Foster, *Community, Law and Mission*, 94–142, especially the summary on p. 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>681</sup> See for example Painter and DeSilva, *James and Jude*, 79; McKnight, *James*, 153–58; Varner, *New Perspective*, 100; Johnson, *Letter of James*, 214; Martin, *James*, 45–46; Davids, *Epistle of James*, 99–100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>682</sup> See fn. 580 above and Cheung, Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics, 177–78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>683</sup> See 1:12 and the 'crown of life' and particularly 5:7-11. See also Rom 8:28-30; 2 Cor 3:17; 1 Jn 3:2.

embrace trials which bring it about. Indeed, this has always been and continues to be an essential part of the Church's mission.<sup>684</sup>

It only remains in this opening section to add some eschatological light to the theme of perfection through trials from verse 12. In what follows I will argue that given the summary role this verse plays, it further informs our understanding of 1:2-4, heightening the missional elements of the opening theme.

## The Crown of Life (1:12)

Following 1:2-4, James moves on to discuss wisdom (1:5-8) and then the poor and rich (1:9-11) before returning to trials and endurance in verse twelve. Although there is debate whether 1:12 is a conclusion to what precedes or an introduction to what follows, the verbal and thematic links to 1:2-4 are undeniable; the verse reintroduces the person who 'endures trial' (ὑπομένει  $\pi$ ειρασμόν) and is 'approved' (δόκιμος). Such close correspondence shows that it clearly functions as an *inclusio* with the opening section. Yet the links to what follows are also obvious with the continued use of the  $\pi$ ειρα- word group, although it is also marked off from this section in several ways. It seems then that it is best to take verse 12 as a transitional verse that both sums up the section preceding it and introduces what follows. Here I will focus on the first of these roles, since this saying introduces an explicit eschatological focus that was absent from the treatment of trials in the opening section.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>684</sup> Barram reaches a similar conclusion from his study on the Pauline epistles. See Barram, *Mission and Moral Reflection in Paul*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>685</sup> Even Dibelius, *James*, 88 agrees with this despite his otherwise fragmentary approach to James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>686</sup> Jackson-McCabe, "Enduring Temptation," 166; Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>687</sup> Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 49. These include a shift from an aphorism to exhortation utilizing diatribe, a mood change from indicative to imperative and a change from noun to verb (πειρασμός to πειράζω) as well as a possible semantic shift from testing to temptation (on this see more below).

<sup>688</sup> See Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 61; Taylor and Guthrie, "The Structure of James," 687.

James introduces a makarism that is expressed in formulaic language from the wisdom literature of the LXX (μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὅς...). 689 Yet it is also close in form to the beatitudes in the gospels, using a ὅτι clause to give the reason for the blessing, <sup>690</sup> a formulation which does not occur in the LXX. 691 James thus provides a unique blend 692 that takes OT formulations and combines them with the language of the Jesus tradition, even if it does not necessarily cite it directly. 693 If the focus in the opening section of the letter is the ongoing process towards perfection through enduring trials, the emphasis clearly shifts here to the future reward granted for faithful endurance. Those who endure to the end 'will receive the crown of life' (λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς), in other words, the crown 'which is eternal life,'694 which is received at 'the consummation of the age.' The στέφανος speaks of the victor's wreath (cf. 1 Cor 9:25), also awarded for faithful service (2 Tim 4:8). In Revelation 2:10, τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς is promised to those who are also faithful unto death (πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου) in the trials which are occurring 'so that you may be tested' (ἵνα πειρασθητε), highlighting the full eschatological nature of the reward. This introduction of the eschatological to the theme of endurance in testing clearly draws on the narrative of God's redemptive plan for his people who are promised a glorious future. 696

Even with the eschatological focus of this verse, our author is concerned to form his hearers in line with his understanding of their eventual destiny, so that they live faithfully in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>689</sup> For example, Ps 1:1; 33:9; Prov 8:34; 28:14; Sir 14:1, 20; Pss. Sol. 6:1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>690</sup> See Matthew 5 and Luke 6; cf. Mt 13:16; 16:17; Luke 1:45; 12:37; 14:14; 1 Pet 4:14

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>691</sup> Allison, *James*, 227.

<sup>692</sup> The only other use in the NT of μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὅς is in Romans 4:8 (ὅν instead of ὅς) and this is a citation of Ps 31:2 (LXX) so not original to Paul.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>693</sup> Kloppenborg, "Reception," 122–29, argues that this is dependent on Mt 5:11-12//Lk 6:22-23. For arguments to the contrary see Johnson, *Letter of James*, 188, who views the closest parallel as Dan 12:12 (Th).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>694</sup> Here ζωῆς is an epexegetical genitive. See Varner, *James*, 83; and Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 40; cf. Martin, *James*, 33 who gives the same meaning but calls it a genitive of content.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>695</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>696</sup> Rom 5:2; 8:18; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 1:18; Col 3:24; Rev 7:15-17.

present.<sup>697</sup> By looking forward to their eventual reward, they are enabled to remain faithful under pressure. This is already implicit in the use of  $\mu\alpha\kappa\dot{\alpha}\rho\iota\sigma\varsigma$ , which is synonymous in the biblical tradition for those in right relationship with God.<sup>698</sup> Additionally, James' final qualifying statement again speaks to their present reality since the crown of life is promised by God<sup>699</sup> 'to those who love him' ( $\tau\sigma$ iς  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\omega\sigma\iota\nu$   $\alpha\dot{\nu}\tau\dot{\sigma}\nu$ ), 'a stock description of the faithful who will receive it. Their love for God is manifest in their faithful endurance.'<sup>700</sup> Thus, the author draws on the narrative of God's reward and final promise of eternal life to enable his people to stay faithful in their present trials.

# Fit for Purpose

Thus far we have seen that James begins his letter with a call to his readers to cooperate with God's mission to bring about their own growth to perfection. This requires a reminder of their shared knowledge of the effect of enduring trials which will enable James' audience surprisingly to find joy in the midst of these difficulties, since the end goal will be their perfection. While this certainly has eschatological elements of reward and blessing, James does not want his readers to lack what they need in the present to participate in the process of perfection. This will be worked out in different ways as the letter unfolds, and in fact the next section that deals with trials corrects a substandard theology regarding who is to blame for failure.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>697</sup> As is plainly the case in Revelation 2:10. See Mounce, *Revelation*, 76. Note also Rev 3:11, which is an even more urgent call to steadfastness with a warning that the crown might be taken from the Philadelphian believers. <sup>698</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 187. See also the references above from the LXX.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>699</sup> Certain textual variants add in either God or Lord, but this appears to be a clear case of the divine passive. For further details see Dibelius, *James*, 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>700</sup> McCartney, *James*, 101 cf. Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9. The parallel expression in Jas 2:5 also points to the future age.

## THE TEMPTATION TO BLAME GOD (JAMES 1:13-18)

As the opening chapter progresses, the author moves from the reward for perseverance in trials to deal with those who blame God for their own shortcomings. James removes any grounds for blaming God for either trials or temptations, first by negatively showing that failure under temptation is caused by a person's own desire (1:13-15) and then by positively teaching the goodness of God (1:17-18), with both sections held together by the imperative not to be deceived (1:16). In what follows I will first argue that 'tempting' captures best the nuance intended by the author in his use of  $\pi \epsilon \iota \rho \dot{\alpha} \zeta \omega$  in 1:13-14. Then, following Ellis, I agree that there are allusions to Genesis 1 creation language in 1:17-18 and also of the temptation scene from Genesis 3 (and possibly Genesis 4) in 1:13-15. James does this in language that perhaps draws on, or is at least compatible with, 'Hellenistic psychagogy' using similar terms to Philo, particularly sexual imagery to explain  $\sin z^{0.02}$  For my purposes, however, it is most helpful here to focus on how the audience is reminded of creation to reinforce God's goodness, and the Fall to challenge the mistaken view that any responsibility for sin rests with God.

## Does God not test or not tempt?

Most English versions of the NT switch from the language of trials in 1:2-4 to temptation in 1:13-14 yet this is an area of debate.<sup>703</sup> Since 1:12 summarises the previous section, the continued translation of  $\pi \epsilon \iota \rho \alpha \sigma \mu \delta \varsigma$  here as 'trial' is not often disputed. Yet, as I noted above, verse 12 also launches a new discussion which continues using the  $\pi \epsilon \iota \rho \alpha$ - word group so it is appropriate to question why 'temptation' would be more appropriate.

<sup>701</sup> McCartney, James, 107; Runge, "Redundancy," 449.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>702</sup> Kloppenborg, "Hellenistic Psychagogy"; Walter T. Wilson, "Sin as Sex and Sex with Sin: The Anthropology of James 1:12-15," *HTR* 95, no. 2 (April 1, 2002): 147–68; but see the criticism of both positions in Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 173–75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>703</sup> See the discussion in Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 16–18.

Some commentators, going at least as far back as Mayor, point out the subtle shift from noun to cognate verb which in their opinion signals a change in nuance from test to temptation that is confirmed by the verses that follow. Indeed, the most compelling argument to switch to 'tempt' here is that the author himself immediately clarifies that God is not the source  $(\dot{\alpha}\pi\dot{\alpha})$  of temptation because 'God is not tempted by evil' (v. 13b;  $\dot{\delta}$   $\dot{\gamma}\dot{\alpha}\rho$   $\theta\epsilon\dot{\delta}\dot{\varsigma}$   $\dot{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\dot{\rho}\rho\alpha\sigma\tau\dot{\delta}\dot{\varsigma}^{706}$   $\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu$   $\kappa\alpha\kappa\omega\nu$ ). If full weight is given to the specificity introduced by narrowing the agent of testing to evil, then the next statement should be taken in context as: 'God tempts no one [with evil]' (v. 13c), where 'with evil' is understood implicitly. As Mayor puts it, 'God is incapable of tempting others to evil, because He is Himself absolutely insusceptible to evil.' This nuance alleviates the tension with the extensive evidence elsewhere that God does *test* his people, and most famously Abraham, which James will later draw on.

Many commentators attempt to mitigate this apparent contradiction by suggesting that James has been influenced by secondary literature from the 're-written Bible' genre, such as Jubilees.<sup>709</sup> In this, Mastema, the prince of demons, incites God to test Abraham (*Jub.* 17.16)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>704</sup> Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 50. Mayor states "The subst. πειρασμός denotes the objective trial, the vb. πειράζομαι subjective temptation." Cf. McKnight, *James*, 114–15; Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 49; Isaacs, "Suffering," 183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>705</sup> A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), 579.

<sup>706</sup> The passive sense "who cannot be tempted" is clear here according to BDAG, 101 cf. Allison, James, 53, who notes the clear parallel in Sir 15:11: μὴ εἴπης ὅτι Διὰ κύριον ἀπέστην ἃ γὰρ ἐμίσησεν, οὐ ποιήσει. Peter H. Davids, "The Meaning of Ἀπείραστος Revisited," in New Testament Greek and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Gerald F. Hawthorne, ed. Amy M. Donaldson and Timothy B. Sailors (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 225–40, uniquely argues that ἀπείραστος here means that God should not be put to the test by men. However, this does not seem to fit the context as well as the standard interpretation; cf. Peter H. Davids, "Meaning of Apeirastos in James 1:13," NTS 24, no. 3 (April 1, 1978): 386–92.

<sup>707</sup> Mayor, The Epistle of James, 53. Mayor gives many parallels. See, e.g., Philo, who states that God (ὁ θεός) is "ἀκοινώνητος κακῶν" (Cher. 86). See also the parallel in the previous note with Sirach.

 $<sup>^{708}</sup>$  LXX Gen 22:1 ὁ θεὸς ἐπείραζεν τὸν Αβρααμ.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>709</sup> This "refers to the retelling, usually with omissions, supplements and loose paraphrases, of biblical narratives" Evans, *Noncanonical Writings*, 46; cf. Peter H. Davids, "The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles," in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Craig A. Evans, JSPSup 14 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 229. Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 184, argues that there is a widespread trend in 2nd Temple literature to absolve God of blame, following the pattern of Job.

which appears to distance God from being the tester.<sup>710</sup> Davids asserts that such absolution of God from testing works as 'an overlay grid through which the OT Scripture is to be understood,' and relieves any contradiction with Gen 22:1.<sup>711</sup> Yet in the very passages cited from Jubilees by Davids and others, it still speaks of God testing Abraham in various different ways and concludes: 'In everything in which He [the Lord] tested him [Abraham], he was found faithful' (*Jub.* 17:18). It seems more likely then, that it is the notion of being tested *with evil* that removes God from the equation, and given that, at least in English, temptation carries the appropriate nuance, it is simpler to use that in what follows.<sup>712</sup> In any case, the distinction is somewhat artificial since every temptation can be a trial or test of faithfulness, and every trial can be a temptation to unfaithfulness.

This is strengthened by the following verse, since not only is God not the source of temptation, James goes on to give a clear elaboration of how this kind of temptation arises: through a person's own desires (ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας, 1:14). Although ἐπιθυμία is fairly neutral in meaning, here similarly to Hellenistic moral discourse, 'it refers, not to legitimate human desire, but to desire disordered by sinful passion.' It may be that James draws on the concept of the *yetzer ha ra* '(צבר הרע) although clearly not to its full later rabbinic development. Either way, the point is that the blame for falling into temptation lies

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>710</sup> Cf. the parallel accounts in 1 Chronicles 21:1 and 2 Samuel 24:1. In the latter, God incites David to take a census but the former reworks this to have Satan incite David to take a census, rather than God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>711</sup> Davids, "Pseudepigrapha," 230. Note, I am not arguing that James is not influenced by such literature, only that this still does not adequately explain James' statement that God does not test anyone as it stands. Allowing for the implicit "with evil" relieves the tension more satisfactorily.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>712</sup> Daniel K. Eng, "The Role of Semitic Catchwords in Interpreting the Epistle of James," *TynBul* 70, no. 2 (2019): 266, points out that in this kind of catchword association between sections, it is quite normal for a different nuance of the word or cognate to be used in the second section. This "relieves the exegete from the task of harmonising adjacent sections of the text."

<sup>713</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 204. See further pp. 193-194. The verbal cognate also describes coveting in the LXX (see, e.g., Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21) and also the stronger 'craving' of the rabble in the wilderness (ἐπεθύμησαν ἐπιθυμίαν, Num 11:4).

<sup>714</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 83–84; Joel Marcus, "The Evil Inclination in the Epistle of James," *CBQ* 44, no. 4 (October 1, 1982): 606–21. Johnson, *Letter of James*, 194, argues against this since there is no sign of the corresponding good inclination (*yetzer ha tob*) in James and a role is also given to Satan later on. For a more indepth critique see Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 177–82. Ellis concludes that "a pre-rabbinic, pseudo-

firmly within the person being tempted. The use of iδίας even more emphatically places the blame on the person himself. The use of iδίας even more emphatically places the blame on the person himself. Moreover, the two accompanying participles explain that this is to do with a person's own sinfulness since the person is 'lured and enticed' (ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος) by their own desire. Nothing could be further from the testing of Abraham noted above than the process of temptation and sin clearly outlined by James. James is rebuking those who make excuses for their sin by blaming God for the temptation, a thought reinforced by James' warning against self-deception in verse 16.718 In other words, whatever is going on externally is not the issue, the real problem comes from within. As Wilson puts it 'the decision that confronts the human self in its experience of evil, then, is presented as a decision between endurance and desire. This then leads either to the virtuous chain presented in the letter opening, or the non-virtuous chain that we will consider next: desire conceives and gives birth to sin, sin grows fully (ἀποτελεσθεῖσα<sup>720</sup>) and then gives birth to death (1:15).

#### **Unchecked Desire and the Original Sin (1:13-16)**

It is in this chain of temptation to death that Ellis finds resonances with the account of the Fall in Genesis.<sup>721</sup> If Ellis is correct then we can assume that the author deliberately draws on creation and fall in reverse order in this section and the following one to locate his readers in

demonic yetzer cannot be rejected in James out of hand" but that it may well "over-state the nefarious role of the ἐπιθυμία" (p. 182).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>715</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 83; Allison, *James*, 246.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>716</sup> Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 171. Ellis notes that since the two participles are masculine singular they must have ἕκαστος as their head-noun. This allows for ἐπιθυμία to be the means of testing rather than the agent of testing. In James' cosmology, unlike Ben Sirah and Philo, the devil plays this role since there is room for the demonic (cf. 2:19; 3:15; 4:7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>717</sup> Abraham is certainly not lured or entited by his own desire to sacrifice Isaac, the son he loved.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>718</sup> There are also clear parallels here with wisdom literature. Prov 19:3 and Sir 15:11-20 express similar thoughts. cf. Martin, *James*, 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>719</sup> Wilson, "Sin as Sex," 158.

 $<sup>^{720}</sup>$  For an explanation of this atypical meaning see Allison, *James*, 252, cf. BDAG, 123. Allison points out that it stands in opposition to the positive τέλειος in 1:4 which highlights strongly the contrast in the chain sayings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>721</sup> Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 185–98; cf. McKnight, *James*, 122; Martin, *James*, 36. However, Martin only sees this "at a surface level" and argues for James' thought to be in line with the rabbinic teaching on the "evil impulse."

the biblical narrative, first by indicating what they should not do – blame God for their own sin and follow desire – and then what they should do – trust God's goodness as Creator and live as his firstfruits.

Ellis posits that 'desire' (ἐπιθυμία) is also a key link with the narrative of Genesis 3.<sup>725</sup> Although ἐπιθυμία is not present here in the LXX, <sup>726</sup> the Hebrew verb used to describe the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>722</sup> Ellis, Hermeneutics of Divine Testing, 193.

<sup>723</sup> G. J. Wenham, *Genesis*, NBC: 21st Century Edition (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>724</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 194; cf. McCartney, *James*, 34. Adam implicitly does this by describing Eve as "the woman whom you gave to be with me" (Gen 3:12). Similarly, Eve blames the serpent.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>725</sup> Ellis, Hermeneutics of Divine Testing, 194.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>726</sup> cf. The Greek Life of Adam and Eve. Eve describes the process of temptation and concludes that "ἐπιθυμία is the root and beginning of all ἀμαρτίας" (Greek LAE 19.3). See Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition*, PVTG 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 256–68. Of course, the unknown dating for this text makes comparisons with James tentative. Tromp dates the work 100-300 AD. But see Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism: Volume 1 - Christological Origins: The Emerging Consensus and Beyond* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 256–58, for a pre-Christian Jewish provenance. Note also the rare expression in Jas 1:17 found in Greek LAE (see further below).

woman's desire, hamad (πας); Gen 3:6), is often translated in the LXX as ἐπιθυμέω in the context of illicit desire. Gen 3:6), is often translated in the LXX as ἐπιθυμέω in the context of illicit desire. The link is strengthened by the fact that Eve's desire is to be made wise, which for James comes from God (Jas 1:5-8) and is 'from above' in contrast to an earthly, demonic wisdom later on (3:15-17). Eve also admits that the serpent deceived her (LXX Gen 3:13: Ὁ ὅφις ἢπάτησέν με), an outcome that James does not want for his readers, and so ends this section with an emphatic imperative: 'Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers and sisters! (Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, 1:16). As Ellis concludes, 'In refuting the deception, James sees within the human heart the same weakness, susceptible to the same Tempter, and facing the same consequences as the first parents.'

Arguably, the story of the first fratricide is even more illustrative of James' statement. <sup>729</sup> In his vivid imagery of desire conceiving and birthing sin, James uses the phrase συλλαβοῦσα τίκτει (1:15), <sup>730</sup> which in this particular construction is only found in Genesis, <sup>731</sup> and introduces the narrative of Cain and Abel directly after the temptation account. Eve conceives and bears Cain (מַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד); συλλαβοῦσα ἔτεκεν, Gen 4:1), who grows up and murders his own brother Abel (καὶ ἀπέκτεινεν αὐτόν, 4:8) when Abel's offering is preferred by God. Unsurprisingly Cain becomes an archetype of sinful humanity in Jewish tradition. <sup>732</sup> Moreover, in the conversation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>727</sup> See Ellis, *Hermeneutics of Divine Testing*, 194 fn. 33, for a full list of references and fn. 713 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>728</sup> Ellis, Hermeneutics of Divine Testing, 196.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>729</sup> Note that John Byron, "Living in the Shadow of Cain: Echoes of a Developing Tradition in James 5:1-6," *NovT* 48, no. 3 (July 2006): 261–74, argues this passage is the background to James 5:1-6, so that it seems likely James was familiar with this tradition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>730</sup> Allison, James, 250, calls this a Semitism or Septuagintalism and notes that the phrase is uncommon in secular Greek. The verbal combination of συλλαμβάνω + τίτκω is used in the LXX frequently to translate תהר ותלד.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>731</sup> The aorist participle of συλλαμβάνω followed immediately by τίκτω (συλλαβοῦσα ἔτεκεν) is found 8x in Genesis (once with a word in between), three of which are in Gen 4. The same construction is also used four times in Philo, each time commenting directly on a passage in Genesis (*Cher.* 46; 54; *Post.* 33; 124). Elsewhere, both verbs are aorist indicatives and have several words between them (e.g., 1 Sam 2:21; Ps 7:15; Isa 8:3; Hos 1:3, 8; 1 Chr 7:23). Allison, *James*, 252, suggests a parallel with its use in Psalm 7:15 but Genesis 4 is verbally closer and shares the same concepts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>732</sup> John Byron, Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry, TBN 14 (Boston: Brill, 2011), 20; Byron, "Shadow of Cain," 265–67. Cf. Jude 11.

between God and Cain, God exhorts Cain to overcome sinful desire (4:7)<sup>733</sup> which he fails to do and thus desire brings death (through the sin of murder) which has resonances with James' caution to his audience.<sup>734</sup> Even if this link is less evident, the progression of events certainly paints a vivid picture of the chain that James elaborates. By drawing on the language of desire, sin, conception and birth, he directs his audience back to the primitive biblical narratives of the first sin and first murder, both a result of unchecked desire. Our author thus lays bare what is at stake, the life or death of the audience.

In spite of the overall negative direction of James' thought thus far, within the temptation narrative there is a note of hope and redemption sounded in the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:17 and this is often expanded on in intertestamental literature.<sup>735</sup> James will likewise turn to the positive redemptive work of God giving birth to us by the word of truth (1:18) which he will then further define as the 'implanted word' with its salvific efficacy (1:21). I will return to this latter concept in chapter eight but will now explore the second part of James' double attack on those who blame God for their sin.

#### From Creation to Redemption (1:16-18)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>733</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 224, notes that this is one of the hardest verses to translate in Genesis. However, the issues are not around sin's desire.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>734</sup> One could also see Abel's death as the end result of Eve's desire which also fits the pattern in James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>735</sup> Ellis, Hermeneutics of Divine Testing, 197.

<sup>736</sup> McKnight, James, 122; Martin, James, 31, 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>737</sup> This softens the admonition so far and encourages the audience. So Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, Loc. 1511.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>738</sup> Runge, "Redundancy," 449–50.

the goodness and integrity of God contrasting the negative trajectory of 1:13-15.<sup>739</sup> There is an interesting synthesis of creation and redemption language used that continues to locate the readers in God's purposes that is worth unpacking.

#### The Unchanging Goodness of the Creator God

The goodness of God is evident because he is the source of every good gift and every perfect gift (πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον, 1:17) which effectively rebuts any idea of God tempting people to sin. More positively, the return to perfection language reminds the recipients of the goal they should be striving for, but also shows that it is God's gift that enables this. While some commentators limit the δώρημα τέλειον to wisdom since it 'comes down from above' (ἄνωθεν ἐστιν καταβαῖνον cf. 3:15, 17),<sup>740</sup> this unnecessarily restricts what the author has in mind, particularly with the repetition of 'every' in front of the two synonyms for 'gift.'<sup>741</sup> These gifts come 'from the Father of Lights' (ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων<sup>742</sup>) who is thereby designated as the creator of the sun, moon and stars which are referred to as lights in the OT. <sup>743</sup> James then draws on technical astronomical terms to present the unchanging nature of God, namely that 'with him there is no variation or shadow due to change' (παρ' ῷ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγὴ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα). <sup>744</sup> In contrast to the 'lights' of the universe which follow seasonal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>739</sup> William R. Baker, "Who's Your Daddy? Gendered Birth Images in the Soteriology of the Epistle of James (1:14-15, 18, 21)," *EvQ* 79, no. 3 (July 2007): 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>740</sup> John C. Poirier, "Symbols of Wisdom in James 1:17," *JTS* 57, no. 1 (April 1, 2006): 57–75. Poirier adduces support from Philo QG 3.43 but the link to wisdom is tenuous. Even more unlikely is that the pairing of "perfect" with "lights" alludes to the Urim and Thummim which also denote wisdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>741</sup> This certainly includes wisdom, as is evident by the parallel expressions in 3:15 and 17, but is applicable to "whatever comes from God." So Johnson, *Letter of James*, 195. The differences in the synonyms shouldn't be overplayed, as he states, "The point of using both is the rhetorical force of repetition with variation and to place emphasis on the unequivocal goodness and perfection of whatever comes from God."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>742</sup> This expression is unique in Scripture and only occurs elsewhere in T. Ab. 7:6 and in the Greek LAE. See Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve*, 164–67. The expression occurs at 36:3 and 38:1 but not in all mss.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>743</sup> McKnight, James, 127; Hartin, James, 93; Johnson, Letter of James, 196. For example, LXX Gen 1:14-18 has φωστῆρες and Ps 135:7-8 has φῶτα.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>744</sup> All three nouns are NT hapax legomena which has "caused endless difficulty." So Davids, *Epistle of James*, 87–88, who also has a helpful discussion on these terms. McKnight, *James*, 127, provides a list of all the textual variants that have arisen from the confusion.

patterns and cast shadows that change, God is constant and unchanging.<sup>745</sup> Donald Verseput argues that this language may remind the audience of the regular Jewish morning prayers, that although not necessarily in the fixed form of later centuries, follow certain 'stock themes' that praise God for his 'divine faithfulness' as the one 'who both created and governs the heavenly lights.' This verse then thoroughly reinforces that God is not the source of evil or temptation, and is rather the source of the gifts that move a person to perfection.

The comparison with the previous section is brought into focus in verse 18. According to the divine will (βουληθείς), God 'birthed us' (ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς) in contrast to sin 'birthing' (ἀποκύει) death (1:15). <sup>747</sup> As Allison notes, there are three possible interpretations of who James refers to by 'us': it may simply be humanity in general given the creation language already used, or it may refer to the birth of Israel as God's chosen people or finally, the supernatural birth of Christ-followers. <sup>748</sup> These interpretations depend on whether God giving birth 'by [the] word of truth' (λόγφ ἀληθείας) refers to God's speech at creation, or the birth of Israel through the Torah or the birth of Christ-followers through the gospel message. Correspondingly, 'firstfruits' would then refer to humanity or Israel or the messianic community.

This likely deliberate ambiguity means that James appeals to his Judean diaspora readers, whether Christ-followers or not, a missional strategy I argued for in the previous chapter. Thus, I will look at each aspect in turn and then suggest a comprehensive reading that follows a missional trajectory from creation to Israel to redemption.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>745</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>746</sup> Donald Verseput, "James 1:17 and the Jewish Morning Prayers," *NovT* 39, no. 2 (April 1997): 177–91, provides extensive evidence for the existence of set morning prayers as customary for devout Judeans which may predate the NT, but certainty on this is not possible. The citation is on p. 186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>747</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 88–89. These are the only two occurrences of ἀποκυέω in the NT so the contrast is deliberate, particularly as the verb is normally reserved for mothers giving birth. Interestingly, in the LXX it is only found in 4 Mac. 15:17 regarding the mother I noted earlier who "gave birth to complete piety" (τὴν εὐσέβειαν ὁλόκληρον ἀποκυήσασα).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>748</sup> Allison, *James*, 285.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>749</sup> Allison, *James*, 285.

## Creation by the word of truth

Although the λόγος ἀληθείας is not linked directly with the creative act of God in Scripture, some understand it as referring to God's word that brought forth the world. <sup>750</sup> The oft-repeated 'And God said...' in Genesis 1 demonstrates that his spoken word effectively brings about his will in creation. <sup>751</sup> Yet there is surprisingly little development of this in the OT with the only explicit reference in Psalm 33:6 (although see also Ps 148:4-5). <sup>752</sup> The concept of God's word as creative word is common however, <sup>753</sup> and Philo even speaks of God as the Father of creation who unites with Wisdom (ἐπιστήμη) who then 'births' (ἀπεκύησε) the world (*Ebr.* 30), providing a strong correlation in the use of birthing language for creation. The verse also begins with God's purpose (βουληθείς) which could certainly point to God's will to create the world and in particular mankind (Gen 1:26-27; cf. Ps 135:6). <sup>754</sup> This is certainly a possible inference from the end of the verse, in which the explicit purpose is for 'us to be the firstfruits of his creatures' (εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχήν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων) where κτίσμα 'refers to the whole of creation, not just humanity. <sup>755</sup> Here then, ἀπαρχή, although not usually associated with creation, would point to humanity's prominence compared to the rest of creation. <sup>756</sup> Thus, there are several strands, that taken with the previous verse, suggest a reference to creation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>750</sup> L. E. Elliott-Binns, "James 1 18: Creation or Redemption?," NTS 3, no. 2 (1957): 148–61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>751</sup> This of course is matched by the corresponding "And there was..." or "And it was so," found throughout Genesis 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>752</sup> It is more common for creation to be accomplished by God's wisdom and understanding or power or all three (Ps 104:24; 136:5; Prov 3:19; 8:22-31; Jer 10:12; 32:17; 51:15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>753</sup> See Allison, *James*, 280 fn. 181, for a comprehensive list of references to God's creative word. Examples include Wis 9:1; Jud 16:14; John 1:1-4; Heb 11:3; 2 Pet 3:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>754</sup> F. J. A. Hort, *The Epistle of St. James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>755</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 89; cf. Elliott-Binns, "Creation or Redemption," 154–55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>756</sup> Elliott-Binns, "Creation or Redemption," 153.

Israel's birth through Torah

In this interpretation, <sup>757</sup> God gives birth to Israel (Deut 32:18 cf. Num 11:12-13), his firstfruits (Jer 2:3). <sup>758</sup> The Torah would then be equivalent to the λόγος ἀληθείας, an idea that has some OT support. The law is equated with truth (Ps 119:142) but the only direct correspondence to 'word of truth' is in Psalm 119:43 (ܕܕܕ־སྡལྡལྡ), λόγον ἀληθείας, LXX 118:43) referring to God's word (119:42). <sup>759</sup> This is suggestive since 'word' is one of the eight key words in the Psalm that function together synonymously, <sup>760</sup> with 'law' (ܕܕܕܕ יܕܕܕ) being the 'first among equals' since the 'celebration of the law of the Lord (ܕܕܕܕ יܕܕܕ) is the main theme of the Psalm. <sup>761</sup> Even here though, there is some ambiguity since the two words do not overlap exactly and 'word' refers to the promise of salvation in verses 41-42 rather than Torah. <sup>762</sup> Commentators note other correspondences with the 'word of truth' but these are also often ambiguous. <sup>763</sup> However, it still seems probable that a Torah-observant Judean would understand this passage as referring to Israel and the Torah.

Although the main focus is Israel here, the use of  $\alpha\pi\alpha\rho\chi\dot{\eta}$  suggests that not only is there more fruit to come, but that those who are the firstfruits play a special representative role for the rest. G. M. Burge notes that in the OT law, the firstfruits of flock and field were to be offered to God with the result that 'the sacrifice of the part thus effected the blessedness of the

<sup>757</sup> See, e.g., Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse," 246–48; Allison, *James*, 256, 282–84.

<sup>758</sup> The LXX uses ἀρχὴ γενημάτων rather than ἀπαρχή here.

<sup>759</sup> Allison, James, 283.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>760</sup> Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101 - 150*, WBC 21 (Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>761</sup> David Noel Freedman, *Psalm 119: The Exaltation of Torah*, BJSUCSD 6 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 25, 77. In the Psalm, Torah is much more than a reference to the Pentateuch. See the discussion in Kent Aaron Reynolds, *Torah As Teacher: The Exemplary Torah Student in Psalm 119*, VTSup 137 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 109–46. Interestingly he states that "Torah is not the Logos."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>762</sup> So John Goldingay, *Psalms: Psalms 90-150*, Adobe Digital Edition, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 360. He states, "The truthful word is then that reliable word of promise."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>763</sup> See, e.g., Allison, *James*, 283, who states that "the 'word of truth' is the Torah... in several texts" although apart from Ps 119:43 the references (via a previous footnote on p. 279) are not to Torah per se (see fn. 166, Ps 119:142, 151). Additional references provided by Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse," 247, are also not directly equivalent to the Torah. In T. Gad 3.1 the expression is in the plural and the λόγους ἀληθείας are not the Law but rather the sage's teaching which the children should listen to so that they "do righteousness and the law" (τοῦ ποιεῖν δικαιοσύνην καὶ πάντα νόμον ὑψίστου). Similarly, in Pss. Sol. 16.10, the λόγοις ἀληθείας do not refer to the Law but to the words of the writer's own mouth.

whole.'<sup>764</sup> As we saw above, Jeremiah directly applies this to Israel and declares them to be 'holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest' (Jer 2:3). The missional implications of this are neatly captured by Thompson who states, 'As with the harvest, so in the world of man, Israel comprised God's portion of the harvest of the nations that would one day be realized.'<sup>765</sup> This missional sense would be even more prominent for the primary recipients who are Christ-followers, so it is also necessary to set this verse within its broader NT framework.

## New Creation through the Gospel

The phrase 'word of truth' appears four times in the NT all of which are in the Pauline corpus, and is synonymous with, or refers to, the gospel in the majority of cases. This is clearly so in Ephesians 1:13, where τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας is in apposition to τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν (cf. Col 1:5). In 2 Timothy 2:15, while the reference is not explicitly the gospel, the context suggests that it still refers to it. <sup>766</sup> Even in 2 Corinthians 6:7, where the phrase is best understood as 'truthful speech' (so NRSV), several commentators argue that it also stands for the gospel. <sup>767</sup> There is, then, a strong connection between 'word of truth' and the gospel.

This is reinforced by one of the predominant Pauline uses of 'firstfruits,' either as a metaphor for the first to believe in a particular area (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:15;), or as the redeemed church (2 Thess 2:13), and thus the result of the gospel. Combined with the OT sense noted above, James' audience should not only feel the privilege of being  $\alpha \pi \alpha \rho \chi \dot{\eta}$  but also the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>764</sup> Burge, G.M. DPL, 300. As he also points out, the use of the term became a metaphor for devotion to God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>765</sup> J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 164.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>766</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 521.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>767</sup> See Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 476; Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: Volume I*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 460–61; Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle To The Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 329; and Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32A (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 345. This is also reflected in other EVV such as the NKJV, NASB and REB.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>768</sup> It is applied to the Holy Spirit in Rom 8:23, to Christ or perhaps the patriarchs in Rom 11:16 and to Christ unequivocally in 1 Cor 15:20, 23. The only other reference is in Rev 14:4 where it refers to the much debated 144,000.

responsibility of dedication to God and bringing God's blessing to others, as the first part of a much greater harvest.

When we compile all three readings, we have an interesting trajectory that begins at creation and moves forward through Israel to the Church as the redeemed people of God. 769 This is based on the firm purpose of God who willed (βουληθείς) to give birth to humanity, Israel and the church. Wherever James' audience finds itself in that trajectory (either Judean or Judean Christ-follower) they are able to apply the metaphor to themselves. Given God's unchanging nature as already laid out in verse 17, it cannot be too much to conclude with Baker that 'the word of truth ... refers, then, to the gospel, but the gospel as an extension of the creative breath of God'<sup>770</sup> and, we might add, as an extension of the Law which set Israel apart from the nations. As Kamell Kovalishyn summarises,

The God who willed initial creation into being by his word, now acts again...The believers may be a minority in their communities now, oppressed and struggling, but they are not the culmination of the work of God. Rather, their birth is a signal that God's work has begun and, like Israel, they are to be a distinctive community that witnesses to the redemption of God.<sup>771</sup>

Thus far we have seen how James has taken his readers on a journey within the redemptive story of Scripture in order to fortify them for trials in the present. Having begun with the call for endurance, he reminds them of the eschatological reward awaiting them (which also incorporates a present state of being 'blessed'; 1:12) and that the origin of sin is not with God but their own desire as in the Garden of Eden and finally returns to the image of creation to remind them that they have been birthed as the firstfruits of a new creation, the renewed people of God, by the word of truth. James clearly wants them to endure trials, and resist

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>769</sup> By this I am not suggesting that one replaces the other. All three continue somewhat in parallel as a new strand is added.

<sup>770</sup> Baker, "Who's Your Daddy?," 205.

<sup>771</sup> Mariam Kamell Kovalishyn, "Salvation in James: Saved by Gift to Become Merciful," in Mason and Lockett, eds, Epistle of James, 133; cf. McKnight, James, 132.

temptation in order to be those who are on display as God's people, blessed in the present and assured a future reward. It remains, then, to see how James closes the letter, returning directly to the various trials and temptations faced by those who follow God.

## THE RIGHT RESPONSE TO ΠΕΙΡΑΣΜΟΙ ΠΟΙΚΙΛΟΙ (JAMES 5:7-18)

Although commentators are divided about what actually constitutes the letter closing of James,<sup>772</sup> the author undoubtedly 'sends' his readers back to chapter one with his 'call to patient endurance.' After developing further the theme of endurance in trials (5:7-11), James introduces a prohibition of oaths (5:12) before elaborating the right response to various trials such as sickness and  $\sin (5:13-18)$ , which would remind his readers of the  $\pi \epsilon \iota \rho \alpha \sigma \mu o \iota \pi o \iota \lambda o \iota$  of the letter opening (1:2). I will take the two main sections just outlined (I will deal with 5:12 in chapter eight) and show how James once again challenges his readers to respond appropriately to trials by drawing on exemplars and Scripture in a way that informs the mission of the church today.

#### A Patient Response to Trials (5:7-11)

After warnings against the boastful rich (4:13-17) and the exploitative rich (5:1-6), James addresses his audience as brothers and sisters again. The connective οὖν (5:7) suggests that this builds on the preceding section but it is mainly by way of contrast with the fate of the rich and in imitation of the righteous sufferer (5:6). This short passage is held together by its focus on patience and endurance variously expressed by μακροθυμέω/μακροθυμία and ὑπομένω/ὑπομονή which here probably function as synonyms and should not be pressed too hard for subtle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>772</sup> Most commentators opt for either 5:7-20, 5:12-20, or 5:19-20. See, e.g., Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 95–96; Cheung, *Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics*, 79–82; Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, loc 362, respectively. The fullest discussion is in Taylor's monograph.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>773</sup> Allison, *James*, 694; cf. Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 248; Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 69–70, provides a useful list of repeated terms and themes between James 1 and 5:7-20.

differences in meaning,<sup>774</sup> perhaps simply reflecting the choice of exemplars that James uses to ground his exhortation.<sup>775</sup> While at face value these may be simple illustrations that encourage patience, the explicit eschatological context and the language and examples used are suggestive of a deeper significance to what James is saying. The passage already transparently points the readers to God's final purpose for them, but the underlying motifs enrich our understanding of that purpose so it is worth unpacking these verses in more detail.

#### The Patient Farmer (5:7-9)

James begins by exhorting his audience to wait patiently (μακροθυμήσατε) for the coming of the Lord (ἔως τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου), just as the farmer (ὁ γεωργός) expecting fruit from the earth waits patiently 'until it receives the early and the late rains' (ἔως λάβη πρόϊμον καὶ ὄψιμον). The use of the 'early and late rains' calls to mind the normal pattern for rainfall in Palestine, the use of the 'early and late rains' calls to mind the normal pattern for rainfall in Palestine, that also speaks of God's covenant blessings to Israel predicated on their obedience. A five-fold call to covenant obedience in Deuteronomy 11<sup>778</sup> is linked to the promise of the early and late rains (LXX: Deut 11:14 καὶ δώσει τὸν ὑετὸν τῆ γῆ σου καθ' ὥραν πρόιμον καὶ ὄψιμον). This theme is also present in the prophetic literature as a sign of God's restoration. The formular interest here is the possible allusion to Hosea 6:3 which likens these phenomena to God coming to Israel (LXX: καὶ ἥξει ὡς ὑετὸς ἡμῖν πρόιμος καὶ ὄψιμος τῆ γῆ), if Israel first returns to God. In light of the OT tradition, then, the phrase suggests more than just a simple

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>774</sup> Varner, New Perspective, 178–79.

The switch from patience to endurance occurs with the introduction of Job, whose ὑπομονή is a well-known theme from the *T. Job*. Ironically, the one use of  $\mu$ ακροθυμέω in LXX Job is precisely where he refuses to be patient since he will not live for ever (Job 7:16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>776</sup> According to Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 614, ὑετόν is implied and is added in some mss "in accord with the consistent usage of the Septuagint." See also Dibelius, *James*, 243.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>777</sup> McCartney, James, 241.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>778</sup> Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 207–8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>779</sup> See Hos 6:3; Joel 2:23; Zech 10:1. The phrase is also used in Jer 5:24-25 as a reason for judgment because the people do not remember the God who gives them the early and late rains and sin against him.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>780</sup> Richard J. Bauckham, "The Wisdom of James and the Wisdom of Jesus," in Schlosser, ed, *Catholic Epistles*, 89–90, argues that James' use of Hosea 6:3 fits within a widely evidenced Christian exegesis that applies "prophecies that 'YHWH will come' to the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus." For further correspondences between Hos

illustration. Rather, it is one that reminds the readers of their covenant relationship with God calling for obedience and when necessary, return, to him, since his coming is certain.

It is ambiguous here whether the returning χύριος is God as per OT expectation, or Jesus. While the language noted above certainly points to the OT expectation of the day of the Lord when God returns to restore his people and judge the nations, this is never described in the Septuagint as ἡ παρουσία [τοῦ κυρίου], which is on the other hand, a stock phrase (or some variation of it) for the return of Christ in the NT. Again, James' ambiguity means that 'we have a line here that Christians could have read one way, Judeans another. However, in verse 8, James repeats the call to patience and additionally exhorts his hearers to 'strengthen your hearts' (στηρίξατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν) which Allison describes as 'a snippet of early Christian paraenesis, '783 noting the parallel with 1 Thessalonians 3:13: 'And may he so strengthen your hearts (στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας)... that you may be blameless... at the coming of our Lord Jesus (ἐν τῇ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ)....' The explanation for the exhortation is 'because' (ὅτι) the Lord's coming 'is near' (ἤγγικεν), '784 further approximating the NT tradition of the Lord's return since this is almost always used to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is near, or the 'last hour.'785

The picture of the farmer, then, draws on motifs from both the OT and NT that prepare James' readers for an imminent return of the Lord. On the one hand this means patient trust for God to bring the rain of restoration, and on the other hand, there is a call for the waiting to be

<sup>6:1-3</sup> and James 5:7-20, see James M. Darlack, "Pray for Reign: The Eschatological Elijah in James 5:17-18" (MA in New Testament, South Hamilton, MA, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2007), 89–90. The verbal parallels are the use of ἐπιστρέφω, ἰάομαι and ἀνίστημι/ἐγείρω.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>781</sup> Outside of James, παρουσία refers to Christ's return 13x including 4x as the παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου (1 Thess 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess 2:1). In 2 Pet 3:12 the readers are told to hasten τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας but the thought is still of the coming of Christ (2 Pet 3:4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>782</sup> Allison, *James*, 699.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>783</sup> Allison, *James*, 703.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>784</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 315–16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>785</sup> See Mt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mk 1:15; Lk 10:9, 11 for the former, and Lk 21:8; Rom 13:12; 1 Pet 4:7 for the latter.

'active' waiting. The readers are to strengthen their hearts so that they stand firm and continue the farmer's usual tasks of preparation for harvest. The harvest is described as the 'precious fruit of the earth' ( $\tau \delta \nu \tau \ell \mu \iota \nu \nu \kappa \alpha \rho \pi \delta \nu \tau \eta \varsigma \gamma \eta \varsigma$ , 5:7), a unique designation in Scripture, suggestive of more than a simple agrarian illustration. The precious fruit for them at the Lord's return is to be a whole and perfect people (1:2-4) who receive the crown of life (1:12), and thus realise God's redemptive purposes.

The example of the farmer is followed by another injunction, this time not to grumble against each other (μὴ στενάζετε, ἀδελφοί, κατ' ἀλλήλων)<sup>788</sup> so that they might not be judged (ἴνα μὴ κριθῆτε, 5:9). Dibelius sees this as an isolated saying with no connection to what precedes or follows.<sup>789</sup> However, the continued motif of the imminent coming of the Lord, this time described as 'the judge standing at the doors' (ὁ κριτὴς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἔστηκεν, cf. Mk 13:29), and the repeated ἰδού from verse 7 suggests there is a coherence of thought here.<sup>790</sup> As many commentators point out, a natural result of impatience and testing is for a community to grumble against each other,<sup>791</sup> a theme prominent in the wilderness wanderings of Israel and an issue in the NT communities.<sup>792</sup> As we will see in more detail later, James tackles speech ethics throughout the epistle,<sup>793</sup> here perhaps combining his own earlier thought in 4:11 with a logion of Jesus (Μὴ κρίνετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε, Mt 7:1) to reinforce his point.<sup>794</sup> Since the Lord's return is imminent and he is standing at the door as judge, the community would do well not to grumble

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>786</sup> Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, loc. 6390.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>787</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 314.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>788</sup> This is an idiosyncratic use by James that is not found elsewhere in the NT or the LXX. Στενάζω more usually indicates sighing or groaning under adversity but followed by κατ' ἀλλήλων indicates complaining or grumbling against others. See Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 172 cf. BDAG, 942.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>789</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 244.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>790</sup> Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>791</sup> So Gray, "Points and Lines," 423.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>792</sup> More typically with γογγύζω and cognates (Acts 6:1; 1 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:14; 1 Pet 4:9; Jude 16). Note that the reference in 1 Cor 10:10 draws on the complaining of the Israelites in the wilderness, using similar terms.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>793</sup> William R. Baker, Personal Speech-Ethics in the Epistle of James, WUNT 68 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>794</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 185. Allison, *James*, 706, points out that the second half of the phrase is found only in Jas 5:9 and Mt 7:1 and nowhere else in Christian literature other than quotes of these texts.

against each other since this only leads to them being judged. Maturity and perfection have already been directly linked to control of the tongue (3:1) so that again, James pushes his readers towards this principal purpose.

*The Patience of the Prophets and the Perseverance of Job (5:10-11)* 

James now moves from a hypothetical farmer to draw first on the prophets and then Job as examples of patient endurance. For those following Christ, it may appear strange that he does not bring in the example of Christ here as the epitome of endurance in suffering, <sup>795</sup> but this again might be a deliberate silence to gain a hearing from Judeans through focusing on examples from the OT tradition. In verse 10, the prophets are presented as an 'example of suffering and patience' (ὑπόδειγμα... τῆς κακοπαθείας καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας, 5:10). <sup>796</sup> This draws on a traditional understanding of the experience of the prophets both in Jewish and Christian writings (including the NT) as one of suffering, <sup>797</sup> and thus encourages the audience in their trials. It may also allude to the saying of Jesus found in Matthew 5:11-12, which as we saw earlier, has similarities with the opening of the letter. James thus grounds this call further in the Jesus tradition, mitigating the lack of mention of Jesus as exemplar here. <sup>798</sup>

The prophets are further described as those 'who spoke in the name of the Lord' (οῦ ἐλάλησαν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου) which suggests the reason for their suffering is because they are engaged in speaking God's message to the people. In other words, their participation in God's mission leads to their suffering and they thus provide an example for James' readers to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>795</sup> cf. Heb 12:1-3 which follows the OT exemplars in Hebrews 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>796</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 186, suggests that "suffering and patience" form a hendiadys better translated as "patience in suffering." This coheres with the introduction to the letter and the emphasis of this section; cf. Johnson, *Letter of James*, 318.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>797</sup> In support of this Allison, *James*, 710–11, mentions the collection "The Lives of the Prophets," Hebrews 11, 1 Clem 17:1 and early church Fathers such as Tertullian.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>798</sup> John S. Kloppenborg, "The Reception of the Jesus Tradition in James," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 78–79, argues that James draws on the Jesus logion in Q 6:22-23.

follow in their footsteps; they are called not to passive but to active patience,<sup>799</sup> enduring the troubles that will inevitably come their way if they follow the prophets in participating in God's mission.

James concludes the section by appealing to the somewhat surprising (and unique in the NT) exemplar of Job. In doing so he switches from μαχροθυμέω/μαχροθυμία (used in 5:7-10) to ὑπομένω/ὑπομονή, 800 and reminds his readers that those who endure are blessed (ἰδοὺ μαχαρίζομεν τοὺς ὑπομείναντας), echoing his own sentiment in 1:12 (cf. 1:2-4) and also possibly Jesus' words just noted above (Mt 5:11-12). 801 The choice of Job is viewed by many as inexplicable if based on the narrative of the canonical book, given that Job does not come across as particularly patient, 802 yet he does endure to the end, which is what James points his audience to, reminding them of the 'endurance of Job' (τὴν ὑπομονὴν Ἰώβ). 803 Wall suggests that James is mainly drawing on the narrative frame of the book of Job which is already expanded in the LXX compared to the MT and would provide an appropriate source for James in content and theme. 804 Job is described as 'blameless and upright' (Job 1:1 MT: ਜ਼ਿਯੂ ਜ਼ਿਯੂ LXX: ἀληθινός, ἄμεμπτος, δίκαιος, θεοσεβής) and after enduring trial is doubly blessed by God (42:12) and so is a fitting character for James to refer to, given his previous use of perfection language (see

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>799</sup> Elsa Tamez, *The Scandalous Message of James: Faith Without Works Is Dead*, Rev. ed (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 44–46, unfortunately describes this as "militant patience" (p. 44 and p. 46) in her discussion on this passage and 1:2-4. Certainly, James joins the prophetic tradition in denouncing oppression, but "militant" suggests the kind of action that James seeks to avoid. His audience is to wait for God to act to bring about the great reversal of 1:9-11 and 5:1-6.

 $<sup>^{800}</sup>$  As I noted above, the switch to ὑπομονή is probably due to the use of Job as exemplar. As we will see in a moment, this may reflect the use of traditions such as the Testament of Job and that endurance is the primary meaning for this word in literature such as the Maccabean martyr tradition cf. Foster, *Exemplars*, 196–97.

<sup>801</sup> So McKnight, James, 419; cf. Kloppenborg, "Reception of the Jesus Tradition," 78–79, noted above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>802</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 187, is representative of these and maintains this position consistently. See further references below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>803</sup> 'The patience of Job' is not the best rendering of this despite its popularity. For arguments that the canonical book is in mind here, see Kurt Anders Richardson, "Job as Exemplar in the Epistle of James," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, McMNTS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 213–29. Other commentators allow for at least some influence from canonical Job. See Martin, *James*, 194; McKnight, *James*, 420–22; Allison, *James*, 714–16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>804</sup> Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 255–56. These elaborations would also provide a suitable basis for the Testament of Job. Both McKnight, *James*, 420–22; and Allison, *James*, 714–16, point out similar developments in the targum of Job from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

above). Moreover, there are other aspects of Job that also make him a suitable exemplar for James. Although wealthy, he is described as having a concern for the orphan and widow (Job 29:12-13; cf. Jas 1:27) and as someone who keeps himself from evil (Job 2:3 cf. Jas 1:27). Further, although he certainly complains against God, he never 'sins with his lips' by charging God with wrong (Job 1:22) or cursing God (2:9-10; cf. Jas 1:26 and 3:1-11)<sup>805</sup> and in the end accepts God as the ultimate arbiter of human destiny (Job 42:2 cf. Jas 4:12).

However, the dissimilarity between James' use of ὑπομονή and how it is used in general in the LXX<sup>806</sup> (including in the book of Job)<sup>807</sup> suggest to others that James is using the Testament of Job directly or at least the traditions on which it is based.<sup>808</sup> After casting doubt on canonical Job as an exemplar of patience, Davids states, 'All this changes, however, when one reads the Testament of Job, for the whole work revolves around ὑπομονή.'<sup>809</sup> This is evidenced by Job's opening declaration about his 'endurance' (ὑπομονή, 1:5), the promise of the angel to make Job famous if he endured (ἐὰν ὑπομείνης, 4:6), Job's confident affirmation that he will endure unto death (Ἄχρι θανάτου ὑπομενᾶ, 5:1) and his challenge to his wife to endure (ὑπομένομεν, 26:4).<sup>810</sup> This exhortation to his wife is particularly resonant with James since Job bases this on the expectation of the Lord's compassion and mercy (ἔως οὖ ὁ κύριος σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐλεήσῆ ἡμᾶς), which James also draws upon in 5:11 (τὸ τέλος κυρίου εἴδετε, ὅτι πολύσπλαγχνός ἐστιν ὁ κύριος καὶ οἰκτίρμων). DeSilva writes that, 'Both – and only – James and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>805</sup> Richardson, "Job as Exemplar," 224.

<sup>806</sup> See the earlier discussion in the first section. By way of reminder, ὑπομονή generally corresponds to 'hope' (מקוה and מקוה) in the canonical books and this also seems to be the case in Sirach (2:14 and 41:2) and Sol 2:36

<sup>807</sup> It is only used once in Job 14:19 to translate 'hope' as elsewhere in the LXX. Its verbal cognate ὑπομένω appears more frequently (14x) but does not appear in the narrative framework and is not describing Job's patient waiting or endurance. Cf. Peter H. Davids, "What Glasses Are You Wearing? Reading Hebrew Narratives through Second Temple Lenses," *JETS* 55, no. 4 (2012): 231.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>808</sup> Kelsie Gayle Rodenbiker, "The Persistent Sufferer: The Exemplar of Job in the Letter of James," *ASE*, The Epistle of James: Theology, Ethics and Reception, 34, no. 2 (2017): 479–96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>809</sup> Davids, "Second Temple Lenses," 765 fn. 13. He goes as far as claiming that James probably does not know the canonical book of Job; cf. *idem Epistle of James*, 187; *idem* "Pseudepigrapha," 231–32; and *idem* "Suffering in James and Paul," 443.

<sup>810</sup> Cf. Gray, "Points and Lines," 413. He also calls on his children to endure patiently (μακροθυμήσατε, 27:7).

the Testament invoke specifically these qualities of God as a rationale for endurance and an assurance of the better consequences that follow endurance in regard to Job's story.'811 Finally, in the Testament he resists the devil who withdraws defeated (T. Job 27:6; cf. Jas 4:7).<sup>812</sup> Despite these striking correspondences, Patrick Gray concludes that there is simply not enough evidence to prove a formal literary relationship, given the uncertainties around the dating of both works.<sup>813</sup> Nonetheless, it is clear that Job, either through the elaborated traditions found in the Testament and/or the canonical book, provides a suitable exemplar for James to draw on to call his own audience to show ὑπομονή as part of their group identity.

## Job as Missional Exemplar

In considering the Joban example, then, several areas seem pertinent to a missional reading. James appeals to Job's endurance which ties into the way James has used this missionally in 1:2-4 and 12. Although from Job's limited perspective the sufferings are groundless, a key missional theme to the canonical book, according to Davy, is found in the Accuser's challenge to God: 'Does Job fear God for nothing?' (1:9; cf. 2:3). 814 This is the crux of the opening narrative frame that sets up the contest between God and the Accuser. B15 Davy argues that 'Job becomes the test case in an examination of an absolutely fundamental issue...' B16 If human beings only worship and serve God in response to prosperity and not for who he is then Job's piety and character are in doubt. Further, if God is not intrinsically worthy of worship then 'the very integrity of God himself is under question, as is the integrity of the way God relates to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>811</sup> David A. DeSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude: What Earliest Christianity Learned from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 247.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>812</sup> Rodenbiker, "Persistent Sufferer," 493, points out that one of the main differences between Job and T. Job is that in the latter, Job actively participates in a battle against Satan. For her, this provides a more likely connection with James 4:7.

<sup>813</sup> Gray, "Points and Lines," 422-23.

<sup>814</sup> Davy, "Job and the Mission of God," 164.

<sup>815</sup> See the discussion and the authors cited in Davy, "Job and the Mission of God," 162–63.

<sup>816</sup> Davy, "Job and the Mission of God," 164.

humanity.'817 In light of this Davy suggests that 'The accuser's question is, therefore, an essential one in regard to the mission of God' and continues:

In the *missio Dei* God's purpose is to restore the broken relationship between humanity and himself. However, if this relationship turns out to be a sham, then the project of the missio Dei is likewise a sham, rendered meaningless by an unattainable goal. It is at this pivotal moment in the mission of God that Job plays his part... As such Job tackles head on a question that threatens the validity of the entire project of the mission of God. Read in this way it becomes clear that, in the book of Job, nothing less than the mission of God is at stake.<sup>818</sup>

The conclusion of the narrative shows that God is indeed vindicated as is Job's character, who, despite his complaints, also trusts God for redemption (19:5) and that he will come through God's testing as gold, since God's purpose cannot be thwarted (23:10, 13; 42:2; cf. Jas 1:2-4). Since both God and Job are validated, then the conclusion must be that the mission of God is validated.<sup>819</sup> This is perhaps why James appeals to 'the purpose of the Lord' (τὸ τέλος κυρίου) with regards to the life of Job, 820 which is evidenced by God's restoration of Job bringing a double blessing to his life (Job 42:10-17). 821 This then holds out hope for James' readers of a similar vindication in line with God's purpose for them. The mission of God is not defeated by the suffering of his servants but rather put to the test and validated in their faithful endurance.

This restoration purpose does not depend on Job's righteousness (although this is not in question) but on the character of God as compassionate and merciful noted above (πολύσπλαγχνός... καὶ οἰκτίρμων). This undoubtedly draws on God's pivotal revelation of

<sup>817</sup> Davy, "Job and the Mission of God," 163.

Bland the Mission of God," 164–65.Davy, "Job and the Mission of God," 196.

<sup>820</sup> There is no need to differentiate whether this refers to the "end" which God brought about in Job's life or the "purpose" of God. See the discussion in Allison, James, 717-18. He cites Burchard approvingly, noting that the purpose of God is worked out in the end of the story and sees a similar use of τέλος in Rom 10.4; cf. Cheung, Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics, 251.

<sup>821</sup> John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 540.

himself to Moses (Ex 34:6)<sup>822</sup> that is repeated throughout the OT and into the NT, and may allude to Jesus' call to be merciful (oìxtĺρμονες) based on God's merciful (oìxτĺρμων) nature (Luke 6:36, cf. Jas 2:13).<sup>823</sup> It is noteworthy that Job is only restored and blessed after he prays for his friends and offers sacrifices on their behalf.<sup>824</sup> In other words, Job's restoration is contingent upon him emulating the divine mercy he receives. Job must cooperate with the divine purpose ( $\tau$ έλος) and mercy highlighted here, thus revealing the missional nature of God and by extension, his people.

Finally, the battle with Satan in the Testament is precisely because he has become a proselyte, and in doing so has rejected idolatry (T. Job 4) and has committed to following the one true God regardless of the consequences (T. Job 7:13). Since the Testament is written as a testimony by Job, he thus becomes a witness to God's purposes in his life. As DeSilva points out, his 'anti-idolatry activism and witness well suit a Diaspora context' and reinforce James' message (e.g., 4:4), since Job is thus not only a role model for other proselytes but becomes 'a model Jew who consistently resists all of Satan's advances, eyes fixed on God's promises for the faithful.'825 In sum, Job is not only a paragon of endurance but also of commitment to God's mission, an apt exemplar in this section with its focus on patiently waiting for God's final purposes to be revealed.

Having set these foundations for patient endurance in trials, James goes on to elaborate examples of the 'various trials' that the community may face in the next section.

<sup>822</sup> DeSilva, Jewish Teachers, 246–47. The similarities in the LXX are evident: Κύριος ὁ θεὸς οἰκτίρμων καὶ ἐλεήμων, μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινός.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>823</sup> This is the only other use of οἰκτίρμων in the NT.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>824</sup> This sense is amplified in the targum of Job. See McKnight, *James*, 422, who cites 11Q10 [Tg Job] 38:1-9].

<sup>825</sup> DeSilva, Jewish Teachers, 244–45.

## A Prayerful Community Response to Trials (5:13-18)

This closing section of the letter re-introduces a key community response to the various trials outlined. 826 If patient endurance is the correct response to trials in the opening of James' letter, then here communal prayer is the key to achieving this. 827 In what follows, I will begin by looking at the response of prayer, particularly for the sick person (5:13-16a), then consider how our author uses Elijah as an exemplar (5:16b-18). In both sections we will see that James speaks to the missional nature of the church as a healing and prayerful  $\partial x \partial y \partial x \partial y \partial x$ .

Responding to Sadness, (Happiness), Sickness and Sin (5:13-16a)

James begins with three rapid fire questions and responses that lay out hypothetical circumstances to which the community of faith ought to respond (5:13-14). Although the first two questions are clear enough, McCartney warns that 'this brief passage is remarkably full of difficult problems. Virtually every verse either evinces interpretive difficulties or raises complex theological questions. Apart from the notorious debate over the rite of extreme unction, debates continue as to whether the sickness and subsequent promised healing is physical, spiritual, both or some combination thereof, what role the anointing with oil plays, in whose name it is done, what the prayer of faith is and what the relationship is between sickness and sin. Under the many other minor debates that are ongoing. However, I will endeavour to give a coherent reading that draws out the missional implications that arise from this communal instruction.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>826</sup> For an explanation of the way James juxtaposes prayer for healing and restoring the wanderer, see Allison, "Liturgical Tradition." He notes a similar arrangement in other Christian and Jewish liturgical sources.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>827</sup> Προσεύχω and cognates appear in every verse of this section.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>828</sup> The NA28 does not punctuate them as questions although most commentators continue to treat them as such, and I will also do so here. See *AGGSNT*, 607, which describes this as an *if*-preposition represented by an interrogative clause.

<sup>829</sup> McCartney, James, 251; cf. Allison, James, 740.

<sup>830</sup> C. John Collins, "James 5:14-16a: What Is the Anointing For?," *Presb* 23, no. 2 (1997): 80.

James begins in verse 13 with two questions that are bound to be answered affirmatively in any community: 'Is any among you suffering (Kαχοπαθεῖ)?... is anyone cheerful (εὐθυμεῖ)?' The two verbs together suggest general situations of distress and happiness rather than only persecution and deliverance from it.<sup>831</sup> Irving Wood, remarking on χαχοπαθεῖ, suggests that 'the word is as broad as the ills of life.' The correct response to any distress is for the person to pray (προσευχέσθω) while the cheerful person is to praise God in song (ψαλλέτω). Thus, the believer is to depend on God for deliverance and to praise God for blessings. Both responses evoke the use of the Psalms (although certainly not restricted to this), the first suggesting the Psalms of lament as aids to prayer, and the second, Psalms of praise.<sup>833</sup> These are not just individual responses but public expressions of prayer and praise in the gathering.<sup>834</sup> and thus become a response of trust in God, serving as a witness to the wider community.

Verse 14 introduces an extended discussion on the right response to sickness, which requires the whole community's involvement. If anyone is sick or weak (ἀσθενεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν), they are to call the elders of the church (τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας) who are to pray for them (προσευξάσθωσαν), anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord (ἀλείψαντες αὐτὸν ἐλαίφ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου). The crux of the interpretive difficulties of this passage hangs

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>831</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 225; cf. Irving F. Wood, "The Prayer of Faith: James 5:13-18," *The Biblical World* 24, no. 1 (July 1, 1904): 31–34; there is no need to limit it to the sufferings of the poor at the hands of the rich as does McKnight, *James*, 433.

<sup>832</sup> Wood, "Prayer of Faith," 31. This is not to say that it is irrelevant to those undergoing persecution, since the cognate noun was used earlier to describe the suffering of the prophets. Even εὐθυμέω can be used in contexts of difficulty (e.g., Acts 27:22, 25 cf. Philo *Deus* 4 - here Abraham gave up Isaac with εὐθυμία).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>833</sup> So Davids, *Epistle of James*, 192; but more explicitly Robert J. Karris, "Some New Angles on James 5:13-20," *RevExp* 97, no. 2 (March 1, 2000): 207–8; and Wesley Hiram Wachob, "The Epistle of James and the Book of Psalms: A Socio-Rhetorical Perspective of Intertexture, Culture and Ideology in Religious Discourse," in *Fabrics of Discourse*. *Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins*, ed. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2003), 265.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>834</sup> There are only four others uses of  $\psi$ άλλω in the NT, all in the context of the gathered assembly (see, e.g., Eph 5:19).

on whether ἀσθενέω and the subsequent promised healing, as mentioned earlier, refer to either physical or 'spiritual' sickness and healing or both.<sup>835</sup>

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Hayden notes that ἀσθενέω primarily refers to weakness and is often used to describe the spiritually weak in other NT Epistles. Similarly, κάμνω normally means 'weary' and its only other occurrence in the NT refers to spiritual weariness (Heb 12:3), with a similar call for the spiritually sick to be healed ( $i\alpha\theta\tilde{\eta}$ , Heb 12:13). Bowden also argues that James is influenced by the language of the 'prophetic LXX,' where ἀσθενέω frequently designates

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>835</sup> The word 'spiritual' here in the commentaries simply refers to those who have fallen away from the faith or are wavering in their commitment, rather than suffering physically and this is how I use it in the following discussion. <sup>836</sup> Andrew Bowden, "An Overview of the Interpretive Approaches to James 5.13-18," *CurBR* 13, no. 1 (October 2014): 78. See the rest of the paper for a list of the possible interpretive options and the scholars who hold them. <sup>837</sup> These are  $\sigma \dot{\omega} \zeta \omega$  + the accusative participle of  $\kappa \dot{\alpha} \mu \nu \omega$ . See Allison, *James*, 765–66. These appear, e.g., in Philo, *Sacr.* 123 and *Decal.* 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>838</sup> See, e.g., Mt 9:21-22; Mk 5:23; 6:56; 10:52; Lk 8:48. Mt 9:5-6; Mt 9:25; Mk 1:39; Lk 7:14. However, these terms do not occur together as in James.

<sup>839</sup> Strange, *Moral World*, 32; Moo, *The Letter of James*, 238. cf. Walter T. Wilson, "The Uninvited Healer: Houses, Healing and Prophets in Matthew 8.1-22," *JSNT* 36, no. 1 (2013): 53–72, who understands Mt 8:1-22 to legitimise the houses of the early Christian believers as places of healing, which coheres with a sick person here being able to summon the elders to her home, presumably.

<sup>840</sup> Collins, "Anointing," 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>841</sup> Daniel R. Hayden, "Calling the Elders to Pray," BibSac 138 (1981): 260–61; cf. Strange, Moral World, 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>842</sup> Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 612–13. Note, in the TR there is another similar use of κάμνω in Rev 2:3 where the Ephesian church is commended for "not growing weary" (οὐ κέκμηκας).

'spiritual fallenness' although some of the evidence is somewhat ambiguous. <sup>843</sup> More clearly, the repeated use in Hosea to translate 'stumble' ( $\Box \Box \Box \Box$ ) referring to the people of Israel going astray from God fits well the context of James. <sup>844</sup> This is particularly true of the final chapter of LXX Hosea which uses  $\dot{\alpha}\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu\dot{\epsilon}\omega$  twice (14:2, 10) and in these same verses also contains terms used in James. <sup>845</sup> Hence, Bowden may well be right that we should read James' use of  $\dot{\alpha}\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu\dot{\epsilon}\omega$  at least with one eye on its use in Hosea and other prophetic texts. <sup>846</sup> And although  $\sigma\dot{\omega}\zeta\omega$  and  $\dot{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\dot{\epsilon}\rho\omega$  can be used for physical healing, they also often have an eschatological nuance, <sup>847</sup> which in Albl's view means that James presents 'an integral connection between present bodily healing and eschatological salvation: the two cannot be separated. '848 Moreover, the promised healing and restoration following confession ( $\delta\pi\omega\varsigma$   $\dot{\alpha}\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$ , 5:16), while including the possibility of physical healing, is synonymous with forgiveness and restoration. <sup>849</sup>

Thus, as James Strange notes, an exclusive reading in either direction 'strip[s] the language of its multifaceted and metaphorical power.'850 He then rightly concludes that,

in light of the mingling of these ideas in the gospel traditions and the Septuagint, James is best read as holding together in a single conceptual framework both physical and

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<sup>843</sup> Andrew Bowden, "Translating 'Aσθενέω in James 5 in Light of the Prophetic LXX," *BT* 66, no. 1 (2015): 96. See Jer 18:23; 27:32; Isa 7:4; 29:4. Isa 7:4 is particularly significant since it is combined with ἰάομαι yet it clearly does not refer to someone in the situation James describes. Further, there are several examples where ἀσθενέω is used simply for some kind of physical weakness (Isa 28:20; 29:4; 44:12; Jer 26:6, 12 [MT 46:6, 12]; Ezek 21:20); cf. Jobes, "Greek Minor Prophets."

<sup>844</sup> Hosea 4:5 x2; 5:5 x2; 14:2, 10 (it appears 5x elsewhere in the Minor Prophets).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>845</sup> In the first, the prophet calls on the people to return to God (ἐπιστρέφω, Hos 14:2 cf. Jas 5:19, 20) and in the second he asks a rhetorical question (τίς σοφὸς καὶ συνήσει ταῦτα;) that is close to James 3:13 although we will see later in the study that this probably draws on Deut 4:6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>846</sup> Jobes, "Greek Minor Prophets", shows that the language of James has most in common with Hosea out of the minor prophets.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>847</sup> Strange, *Moral World*, 33. As Collins, "Anointing," 85, notes, everywhere else in James  $\sigma \dot{\omega} \zeta \dot{\omega}$  "refers to entry into eschatological salvation by those who continue in faith and obedience..." (Jas 1:21; 2:14; 4:12; 5:20). He then asks, "Should we suppose it to mean otherwise here?"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>848</sup> Martin C. Albl, "Are Any Among You Sick?" The Health Care System in the Letter of James," *JBL* 121, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 138; cf. Collins, "Anointing," 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>849</sup> McKnight, *James*, 447, notes the influence of Isa 6:10 here where healing (ἰάομαι) refers to God's restoration. The verse was obviously known in the early church since it is cited in Mt 13:15; John 12:40 and Acts 28:17. To this we can add its use in Heb 12:13 as noted above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>850</sup> Strange, *Moral World*, 33; cf. Allison, *James*, 766, who acknowledges that to insist on physical healing rather than spiritual healing may be a false dichotomy since "bodily and spiritual health were scarcely distinct categories for early Christians..."

spiritual malaise, salvation of the whole person, both rising from one's sickbed and being raised by the Lord at the eschaton, and both recuperation and restoration to the community.<sup>851</sup>

Martin Albl's study on this passage is helpful to develop this holistic reading further. 852
Using insights from medical anthropology (which analyses a 'particular culture's understanding and treatment of illness as a *health care system*') he argues that there is a distinction between disease as a physical problem and illness as the way culture explains the disease. Thus in ancient healthcare, healing an illness may deal with the physical disease but fundamentally provides 'culturally relevant meaning for the disruption caused by the illness.' 853 He suggests that the sickness of a member meant their separation from the community and potentially division in the community. 854 So the process described by James may be for the physically sick but the dimension of healing (rather than cure) 'whether of bodily ailments or of sin, reintegrates the ill "member" into the community body.'855 This, in Karris' view, also restores meaning and 'the sufferer is returned to purposeful living.'856

Such a reading sheds light on the purpose of the anointing with oil that also accompanied miraculous healing by the disciples (Mk 6:13). Here the anointing is in the 'name of the Lord' and it is the prayer of faith ( $\dot{\eta}$  εὐχ $\dot{\eta}$  τῆς πίστεως) that heals, so although its use was well-known for medicinal purposes, it is unlikely that any purported such properties of olive oil are in view, nor all of the many possible nuances associated with anointing. See It seems simplest to

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<sup>851</sup> Strange, Moral World, 33.

<sup>852</sup> Albl, "Health Care System."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>853</sup> Albl, "Health Care System," 124–26; the citations are on p. 124 (italics original) and p. 126. He follows the approach of Hector Avalos and John J. Pilch.

<sup>854</sup> Albl, "Health Care System," 130–31; cf. Karris, "Angles," 207, who notes that ancient Jewish healthcare excluded the chronically ill from the Temple and community.

<sup>855</sup> Albl, "Health Care System," 131; cf. Kok, "James and Philodemus," 6.

<sup>856</sup> Karris, "Angles," 211, citing Pilch.

<sup>857</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 331. It is used for healing in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:34).

<sup>858</sup> Elsewhere in the NT (Acts 18:18; 21:23) this means 'vow' but clearly here refers to prayer (cf. BDAG, 416)

<sup>859</sup> McKnight, *James*, 439. It is unlikely, as Karris, "Angles," 211–15, argues that it symbolises all the nuances of God's blessing of life, eschatological life, consecration to God, and gladness at the coming reversal. Even more speculative is David H. Wenkel, "A New Reading of Anointing with Oil in James 5:14: Finding First-Century Common Ground in Moses' Glorious Face," *HBT* 35 (2013): 166–80, who proposes that the anointing of oil would

take this as a symbolic act that is subsidiary to the main imperative to pray<sup>860</sup> and, in light of the discussion above, indicates a restored relationship with God and the community. The fact that the elders, as leaders and representatives of the community (ἐκκλησία) go and pray ἐπ' αὐτόν (and thereby probably touch)<sup>861</sup> the sick person removes the stigma and separation that might be associated with the illness, thus effecting restoration to the community and strengthening the expectation that God will act on their behalf (1:5, 17).<sup>862</sup>

James makes this explicit with the promise of forgiveness for any sins the sick person may have committed (κἂν ἁμαρτίας ἢ πεποιηκώς, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ, 5:15b). 863 As Albl puts it, the visit of the elders ensures community acceptance of the sinner so that it is effective 'at the social level (the social isolation of the individual is overcome), and the cosmic level (the patient participates, in some unspecified sense, in eschatological salvation). 864 Any stigma associated with sickness has been removed and any guilt before God due to sin has been dealt with, and the ritual of anointing and prayer may well be expected to bring physical healing as well. 865

This hypothetical individual case provides the grounds for a community wide exhortation to the mutual confession of sins and prayer with a general promise of healing (5:16a: ἐξομολογεῖσθε οὖν ἀλλήλοις τὰς ἁμαρτίας καὶ εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων ὅπως ἰαθῆτε). 866 Both the prayer and confession of sin are communal and public acts, a common practice in the

give a shiny face thus evoking the Moses tradition of his encounter with God and thereby encourage the readers to seek a similar encounter.

<sup>860</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 193; Varner, James, 382–83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>861</sup> Albl, "Health Care System," 136, notes Origen's quotation of James which includes the phrase "and they will lay their hands on him" (*Hom. Lev.* 2.4.5). This may also be implicit in the act of anointing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>862</sup> Strange, *Moral World*, 34. The "prayer of faith" clearly reminds the recipients of 1:5-6 and thus here, as there, the prayer should be without wavering; cf. Jacques Matthey, "Mission et Guérison: Le Role des Communautés Chrétiennes Selon Textes Choisis du Nouveau Testament," in *Figures Bibliques de la Mission: Exégèse et Théologie de la Mission: Approches Catholiques et Protestantes*, ed. Marie-Helene Robert, Jacques Matthey, and Catherine Vialle (Paris: Cerf, 2010), 230.

<sup>863</sup> This does not require sin to be the cause of the sickness in question since it is introduced as a conditional (third-class) statement. So Varner, *James*, 386; cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, 1007–20, who titles these as "undetermined" statements with an element of uncertainty; contra Bowden, "Translating ἀσθενέω," 99.

<sup>864</sup> Albl, "Health Care System," 139.

<sup>865</sup> Allison, James, 767.

<sup>866</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 195.

Scriptures, rather than a private ritual.<sup>867</sup> The two commands together form a 'general principle of preventative medicine', and may alleviate the community conflict described in Jas 4:1-2 and 4:11-12.<sup>869</sup>

James has thus moved from several hypothetical situations that generally call for prayer of some form or other, to a communal command to pray for one another. He will then use Elijah as an example of the power of prayer but before looking at this, it is worth thinking further about the missional implications of the discussion above on healing. In the first place, and most simply, as Wilkinson urges, the church community should have a concern for the sick.<sup>870</sup> Matthey concurs arguing that, 'physical healing is a sign that necessarily accompanies the mission of the Church.'<sup>871</sup> While such healing cannot be guaranteed, the church still has a responsibility to come alongside those isolated by sickness. The integral nature of the healing offered in James reflects the character of God revealed in scripture and in the ministry of Jesus,<sup>872</sup> and so the Church's mission should reflect this and move people towards wholeness, both physical and spiritual.<sup>873</sup>

The importance of the reintegration of the person to the community as opposed to being isolated should also not be underestimated. Karris notes the benefits of the communal anointing of the sick in the Roman Catholic church (citing Pheme Perkins): 'One of the most important effects of healing services that involve the whole community, not just the sick, is breaking the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>867</sup> See McKnight, *James*, 445–46, who includes a list of references to confession in the OT (e.g., Lev 5:5-6; Ezra 10) and the early church (Mt 3:6; 1 John 1:8-9; Did. 4:14; Barn. 9:12). Strange, *Moral World*, 29, notes that public confession was required in 1QS, although this was impersonal and ritual in nature (pp. 170-173).

<sup>868</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 195.

<sup>869</sup> McCartney, James, 258.

<sup>870</sup> John Wilkinson, "Healing in the Epistle of James," SJT 24, no. 3 (1971): 342.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>871</sup> Matthey, "Mission et Guérison," 231, "la guérison physique est un signe qui accompagne nécessairement la mission de l'Église" (my translation).

 $<sup>^{872}</sup>$  For the former see Ex 15:26 (I am the God who heals [LXX: ἰάομαι] you) cf. Deut 32:39; Hos 6:1; Jer 3:22. For the latter see Mt 11:1-6 cf. Lk 4:16-21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>873</sup> Wilkinson, "Healing," 345. As he puts it, healing 'is not confined to the saving of the soul or the repair of the body but includes both in the redemption of the whole man.'

barriers of silence and isolation that illness often imposes on the sick and their families.'<sup>874</sup> As Matthey observes, unfortunately the church can reinforce isolation and condemnation through making sin the cause of all sickness (cf. John 9:1-3), yet the ambiguity in James suggests such an approach is misguided.<sup>875</sup> More importantly, bringing the physically or spiritually sick back into fellowship is a deeply missional expression where the community shows that it shares responsibility for each other's health (physical or spiritual).<sup>876</sup>

Further, the accessibility of the health care offered by the church has an implicit missionary dimension. Albl notes that in contrast to other ancient health care systems, James presents one that is accessible to all regardless of wealth or status. The elders are not professional healers or doctors and can be summoned by one and all without any cost, <sup>877</sup> and as Karris adds, there is no need to go to a shrine or make an offering. <sup>878</sup> Albl further contends that this 'open-access' health care may have been 'characteristic of many early Christian communities,' to the point that it was a key factor in attracting converts. <sup>879</sup> While some churches have unfortunately sought growth through offering guaranteed healing, <sup>880</sup> the main point I am making here is that meeting the needs of the vulnerable and excluded (often on health grounds) is the very definition of God's heart and mission.

<sup>874</sup> Karris, "Angles," 211 citing Perkins, 1995.

<sup>875</sup> Matthey, "Mission et Guérison," 233.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>876</sup> As we have already seen, the latter is reflected in the letter closing (5:19-20). See also Kok, "James and Philodemus," 6.

<sup>877</sup> Albl, "Health Care System," 139–41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>878</sup> Karris, "Angles," 211.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>879</sup> Albl, "Health Care System," 141–42. He draws on Hector Avalos, 1999, and also notes John Dominic Crossan's assertion that early followers of Jesus offered healing in exchange for food and shelter; cf. Reidar Hvalvik, "In Word and Deed: The Expansion of the Church in the Pre-Constantinian Era," in Ådna and Kvalbein, eds, *Mission of the Early Church*, 285, who points to the claim of Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria (recounted in Eusebius, Hist. eccl.7.22) that in the great epidemic of 251, Christians cared for the sick, sometimes dying in the process, in contrast to others who left their sick unattended.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>880</sup> See the critique of this approach in Matthey, "Mission et Guérison," 239–40, who sees the emphasis on the spectacular and miraculous as incongruent with the message of the cross, although he does not rule out the possibility of God answering prayer for miraculous healing. Cf. Ezekiel A. Ajibade, "Anointing the Sick with Oil: An Exegetical Study of James 5:14-15," *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 13, no. 2 (January 1, 2008): 166–77, who, writing from a Nigerian context where such practices are prevalent, also warns against superstitious uses of anointing oil.

One further missional implication may be drawn from this short passage. The significance of mutual communal confession and prayer has largely been lost in the church today. Confession has generally been confined to the confessional or to the liturgy or to private prayer, whereas James portrays a community that confesses to one another and prays for one another in community. If as Bosch states, 'The broken Christ is the one who heals the broken world,'881 then the admission of brokenness through confession seems an entirely necessary characteristic of God's people.<sup>882</sup> This is important for unity in the gathering so that in effect the letter opens and closes with a call to wholeness, first individually and then communally. A fractured community cannot fulfil its attractional function and so the missional dimension of a community depends on communal care, confession and prayer. Matthey concludes in a way that the author of James would no doubt agree with, and provides a suitable missional summary of these verses:

The missionary and ecclesial norm is a community where the sick and those who live with a disability are welcomed and find sense for their life, where the members confess their sins and forgive one another mutually, a community under the cross which radiates peace in and around itself.<sup>883</sup>

*The Prayer of the Righteous – Elijah as Exemplar (5:16b-18)* 

James' exhortation to community prayer is immediately followed by the encouragement that 'the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective' (πολὺ ἰσχύει δέησις δικαίου ἐνεργουμένη).<sup>884</sup> This draws on the idea that God hears the prayers of the righteous, <sup>885</sup> which

<sup>881</sup> Bosch, "The Vulnerability of Mission," 356.

<sup>882</sup> Cf. the call to repentance in 4:7-10.

Matthey, "Mission et Guérison," 239. "La normalité missionnaire et ecclésiale est la communauté où les malades et ceux ou celles qui vivent avec un hándicap sont accueillis et trouvent sens à leur vie, où les membres se confesssent leurs péchés et se pardonnent mutuellement, communauté sous la croix qui rayonne la paix dans et autour d'elle." (my translation).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>884</sup> EVV's and commentators are divided on whether the participle is adjectival or adverbial, or middle or passive. But as Laws, *Epistle of James*, 234 notes, "the various options make little difference to the overall sense."

<sup>885</sup> See, e.g., LXX Prov 15:29: εὐχαῖς δὲ δικαίων ἐπακούει and Ps 33:16 (34:15) 'The Lord's eyes are on the δικαίους, his ears are toward their δέησιν (cited in 1 Pet 3:12). See also Prov 15:8; Ps 1:5-6; 66:17-20; Jn 9:31.

here as elsewhere in James refers to a righteous behaviour. <sup>886</sup> To illustrate his point James points to the exemplar of Elijah, who was known for his intercession and righteousness and by NT times had taken on legendary status. <sup>887</sup> Yet it is precisely this kind of embellishment that James appears to avoid because he encourages his readers with the thought that Elijah 'was a human being like us' (ανθρωπος ην ομοιοπαθης ημῖν). <sup>888</sup>

This may suggest that James has the biblical portrayal of Elijah to the fore, where, even though in the scene alluded to by James nowhere is Elijah said to pray, this can be deduced from 1 Kings 17:1 where Elijah is said to 'stand before the Lord' (later interpreted as intercession) and from Elijah's prayerful posture in 1 Kings 18:42. 889 Several commentators also draw on the wider narrative (1 Kings 17-19) to understand why Elijah is chosen as exemplar. 990 This provides plenty of evidence of Elijah's powerful prayer, first in raising the widow's son from the dead (17:20-24), and then in praying for God's fire to descend on his offering (18:36-37). 191 Thus Elijah provides a fitting example of a righteous person who 'prayed fervently' (προσευχή προσηύξατο) 992 and accomplished much through his prayer, bringing and then ending drought.

<sup>886</sup> McKnight, James, 449.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>887</sup> Keith Warrington, "The Significance of Elijah in James 5:13-18," *EvQ* 66 (July 1, 1994): 221–22, provides examples of this. Notably, in Sir 48:1-11, Elijah's deeds are recounted and he is described as being glorified by them (48:4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>888</sup> Warrington, "Significance of Elijah," 223; McKnight, *James*, 451. LSJ, 1224, defines this as 'having like feelings or passions.' Cf. Acts 14:15, the only other occurrence of  $\delta\mu$ οιοπαθής in the NT, which has a similar emphasis on the humanity and ordinariness of Paul and Silas. It only appears 2x in the LXX (4 Macc 12:13; Wis 7:3) with the same nuance.

<sup>889</sup> Allison, James, 776–77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>890</sup> This approach is taken by Mariam Kamell Kovalishyn, "The Prayer of Elijah in James 5: An Example of Intertextuality," *JBL* 137, no. 4 (2018): 1027–45; Foster, *Exemplars*, 166–71; Karris, "Angles," 215–16; Warrington, "Significance of Elijah." Not all the arguments are convincing but do show Elijah's exemplarity for the audience. He obeyed God's word (1 Ki 18:36), challenged the double-minded (18:21), cared for a widow and orphan, even raising the son from the dead by prayer (17:8-24) and turned a disobedient nation to God (18:37-40) and yet also fell into despair (19:3-4, 10-14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>891</sup> Unsurprisingly, Elijah was held up as an example of prayer in later literature. See Davids, *Epistle of James*, 197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>892</sup> This reflects the common Semitic infinitive absolute construct which intensifies the verb. See Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 190–91. See further Emanuel Tov, "Renderings of Combinations of the Infinitive Absolute Construction and Finite Verbs in the LXX: Their Nature and Distribution," in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 247–56.

The principle point of the illustration is that Elijah, as a righteous-yet-like-us person, prayed fervently and God answered, and so in the same way James' audience should be encouraged to pray in faith for God to act in the community. As McKnight concludes, 'the rhetorical function of this example is not to make Elijah a hero but to encourage the messianic community that they too can pray for miracles and that God hears their voice as he did in the days of Elijah. In the context, this will of course include prayer for healing for those who are sick but also the more general prayer for the community (5:16a).

However, what Elijah prayed for may also have significance given the wider context of community wholeness in the previous verses and the restoration of the sinner which immediately follows. In James' retelling, Elijah prays fervently and effectively for it not to rain (τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι καὶ οὐκ ἔβρεξεν) resulting in drought, so a sign of God's judgment on Israel who had gone after Baal under the leadership of Ahab (1 Kings 18:18, cf. Deut 11:16-17). James states that Elijah prayed again (πάλιν προσηύξατο), which in the narrative follows the repentance of the people (at least momentarily) after the contest with the prophets of Baal (1 Ki 18:38-46), thus pointing to God's restoration. So James' commentary on this (καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ὑετὸν ἔδωκεν καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐβλάστησεν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῆς) is not directly from the narrative but assumes the restoration of the covenant promise found in Deuteronomy 11:14 where God will give rain (καὶ δώσει τὸν ὑετὸν τῆ γῆ σου) and the land will bear fruit of various kinds as long as his people are

<sup>893</sup> The suggestion in Bowden, "Translating Ἀσθενέω," 100, that this particular incident is chosen from Elijah's life "because it illustrates a prayer for the spiritual healing of sinners" seems unlikely.

<sup>894</sup> McKnight, James, 451.

<sup>895</sup> James specifies a period of "three years and six months" (ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ μῆνας ἕξ) although the OT narrative only mentions the third year of the drought (1 Kings 18:1). See Foster, *Exemplars*, 186, for possible explanations, including some kind of eschatological significance. It seems that this was an established tradition since the same time period appears in Lk 4:25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>896</sup> Warrington, "Significance of Elijah," 225; Kamell Kovalishyn, "Prayer of Elijah," 1044. Perhaps significantly, the LXX uses στρέφω to describe God "turning back" the hearts of the people, so that Elijah also functions as the brothers and sisters are to function in 5:19-20, "turning back" (ἐπιστρέφω) the sinner.

faithful.<sup>897</sup> Given the earlier connection with the early and latter rains in 5:7 also from Deuternomy 11 (v. 14), perhaps James draws a connection with the need for God's people to be faithful as well as full of faith. Thus, righteous Elijah is not only an example of fervent prayer, but of the kind of prayer that effects the repentance and restoration of God's people.<sup>898</sup> This is initiated by God's command<sup>899</sup> so that Elijah cooperates with God's purpose for his people. James' hearers should do no less.

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have examined the missional implications of the theme of perfection through trials by working through the key texts concerning trials that open and close the letter of James. A central element of the mission of God is the perfection of his people and James has linked this inextricably to enduring trials and temptations and responding rightly to the various ways these occur in the life of the people of God. We have also seen several instances where James frames his teaching in such a way that it would appeal to diaspora Judeans, whether Christ-followers or not, which adds to the missional potential of the letter itself. In the next chapter, I will unpack the significance of wisdom within the letter of James, a theme that James places alongside the call to perfection.

 $<sup>^{897}</sup>$  Note, the punishment for turning away after other gods is that ή γῆ οὐ δώσει τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῆς (Deut 11:17). Allison, *James*, 780 even sees a reference back to creation through the use of βλαστάνω here and in Gen 1:11. "It is as though the rain Elijah wrought restored the creation."

<sup>898</sup> Kamell Kovalishyn, "Prayer of Elijah," 1044.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>899</sup> Warrington, "Significance of Elijah," 225. See 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:1 in which Elijah responds to God's commands each time.

#### **CHAPTER 6: WISDOM AND DOUBLENESS**

Wisdom is of utmost importance to James. It is the first topic our author tackles after the opening section on perfection and, in what Varner considers the thematic peak of the letter, 900 is given a more thorough treatment (3:13-18). Although central to James, wisdom is an unlikely topic to be linked with mission and in fact this is reflected in the lack of attention to the wisdom literature of the OT in books that seek to give a biblical basis for mission. 901 However, there are good reasons to suggest that a missional reading can be fruitfully applied to wisdom literature and themes, 902 not least being that they tend to be 'international and universal' in thought, rather than tied to election, covenant and law. 903 Although James itself is not a wisdom document *per se*, as we saw in the first chapter of this study, it does have strong affinities with such literature, 904 and so in this chapter I will focus on the sections of the letter that are most closely linked to this topic. As I outlined earlier, the relevant sections are 1:5-8 and 3:13-4:10 which elevate wisdom and contrast the wise with the double-souled. I will expand on the connections between these sections briefly before beginning my study.

In 1:5-8, James is concerned about a lack of wisdom in his hearers so provides the remedy of praying with faith (1:5-6a) and the warning against division and doubleness (1:6b-8). A contrast is established between having wisdom and being double-souled (δίψυχος) which is marked by deficient prayer and an unstable (ἀκατάστατος) life. In the elaboration on wisdom

<sup>900</sup> Varner, "Main Theme."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>901</sup> Davy, "Job and the Mission of God," 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>902</sup> See Davy's thesis on Job for an example of a highly fruitful and insightful missional reading of a wisdom text. <sup>903</sup> Okoye, *Israel and the Nations: A Mission Theology of the Old Testament*, 4; cf. Wright, *The Mission of God*, 441–48. Wright calls the wisdom literature "the most overtly international of all the materials in the Bible" and makes use of "wisdom materials from other nations" (p. 443).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>904</sup> See Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 29–111; Cheung, Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics, 5–52.

and doubleness in 3:13-4:10, a similar pattern emerges. Wisdom is again central in 3:13-18 and is juxtaposed once more with the problems of instability (ἀκαταστασία, 3:16) and deficient prayer (4:1-3) which are the marks of the δίψυχοι (4:8) who are exhorted to repent (4:4-10). In fact several authors propose that 3:13-4:10 forms one main section that follows Greco-Roman patterns of argumentation, which I will draw upon in my own study. 905 In my analysis, then, I will first look at 1:5-8 and then deal with 3:13-4:10 but break it into the two main sections of 3:13-18 and 4:1-10 for ease of analysis.

The main claim of this chapter is that wisdom is a gift from God that enables his people to fulfil their missional role through the attractional nature of a community of the wise. This comes to the fore not only through what James says but also the way he draws on varied OT passages from Deuteronomic, wisdom and prophetic literature, as well as the Jesus tradition. Conversely, in all three sections we will see that a failure to be wise brings instability which can lead to individual apostasy and community strife and disorder which tarnishes this missional attraction. The remedy, which James presents by drawing again on the same traditions, is to repent and humble oneself before God and thus be once again within his divine purposes.

# WISDOM, DISPUTING AND DOUBLENESS (1:5-8)

The first statement James makes about God explicitly in the letter is connected to wisdom (1:5), and indeed, God's character as described here will 'overshadow all other references to God in James.'906 This section emphasises that God is the source of wisdom, and that based on his character, his people should ask with faith. I will show that by describing wisdom as a gift from God, James draws on a biblical tradition that highlights the attractional nature of wisdom and

906 Wall, Community of the Wise, 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>905</sup> Each author builds on the previous author with some adaptations and changes to their argument. See, in order, Johnson, "James 3:13-4:10"; Hartin, *James*, 203–16; Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 145–69.

that one of the central purposes for God's people to have wisdom is to be an attractional contrast community. I will then explore further the divided nature of the double-souled, who is so unstable that he is unable to draw others to God. Hence, we will see that wisdom and 'doubleness' play opposite roles in enabling or disqualifying God's people in their mission.

## Wisdom and the Prayer of Faith (1:5-6a)

James progresses from the opening verses about perfection to introduce wisdom through the catch words λειπόμενοι/λείπεται (1:4, 5). The fact that wisdom (σοφία) is connected to perfection shows how crucial this is, not just as an isolated concept but as that which will enable the hearers to grow towards maturity. Wisdom will enable the right response to trials and thus is integral to perfection. For James, God is the source of wisdom and therefore it can be received by asking with faith. In what follows we will see that James roots his understanding in the OT and in the Jesus tradition. The emphasis shifts to focus on the person who disputes or doubts in 1:6b so I will consider here 1:5-6a, 909 first unpacking this unit, before considering the attractional nature of wisdom and how it is a prerequisite to participate in God's mission.

# Confidence before the giving God

James begins with the assertion that the person who 'lacks wisdom' (λείπεται σοφίας) only need ask God for it and can be confident of a response because of the very nature of God. <sup>910</sup> God is described as the 'giving God' (τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ) who gives 'to all unreservedly and without reproach' (πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος, 1:5). <sup>911</sup> This also provides the appropriate contrast

 $<sup>^{907}</sup>$  Cf. 1 Cor 2:6; Col 1:28. Wis. 9:6 also expresses a close link between perfection and wisdom: 'For even if someone is perfect (τέλειος) among the sons of men, if wisdom (σοφία) from you is absent, they will be considered as nothing'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>908</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 71–72.

<sup>909</sup> See the structure in Peter Spitaler, "James 1:5-8: A Dispute with God," CBQ 71, no. 3 (July 2009): 570.

<sup>910</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 179.

<sup>911</sup> At root, ἁπλῶς means 'simply' (BDAG, 104) and is often translated as 'generously' (e.g., NRSV, NASB), but combined as it is with μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος it is best translated as 'ungrudgingly.' So McKnight, *James*, 88.

to the double-souled person in view at the end of the section. 912 The offer is open to anyone in the community (Εἰ δέ τις ὑμῶν) who lacks wisdom, so that the clear implication is that such a person can confidently ask God for it since he is not a grudging giver but one who does so without hesitation or reproach.

This description of God is also a reflection of the gracious nature of God, since the gift of wisdom is available 'to all'  $(\pi \tilde{\alpha} \sigma \iota \nu)$ . Although James does qualify who actually receives the gift in the next verse, the offer is at least open to all, presenting God in much the same way as the Sermon on the Mount where he makes the sun rise and sends the rain equally for the righteous and the unrighteous (Mt 5:45). This first portrayal in the letter of God as universally approachable, 'beneficent'913 and merciful is developed throughout the letter (1:17; 27; 2:5, 13; 4:10; 5:11) and suggests that the author is early on beginning to paint a picture for his readers to emulate. The way God deals with them is also how they should treat each other and those around them who may come with needs.<sup>914</sup> This will be reinforced through the attractional nature of wisdom that we will explore below.

Given the nature of the divinity as a 'super-generous God,'915 James can challenge his audience to 'ask in faith without wavering' (αἰτείτω δὲ ἐν πίστει μηδὲν διακρινόμενος, 1:6a). 916 This echoes Jesus' teaching on prayer in the gospels, particularly in Mark 11:22-24 (cf. Mt 21:21-22). 917 Following the cursing of the fig tree and its subsequent withering, Jesus uses the opportunity to teach his disciples about prayer and faith. The event becomes an 'illustration of the power of faith and prayer that must characterize the life and identity of the disciples in the

<sup>912</sup> Dibelius, James, 77-79; cf. Allison, James, 172.

<sup>913</sup> Martin, James, 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>914</sup> See Jas 1:27 and 2:1-8, 13, 15-16.

<sup>915</sup> Kloppenborg, "Reception of the Jesus Tradition," 94.

<sup>916</sup> I will consider more fully the meaning of διακοινόμενος in the next section as the meaning of this is debated but suffice it to say here that more than the common rendering of 'doubt' seems intended.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>917</sup> Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 85–86; Johnson, Letter of James, 180. There are four key words in common: διακρίνω (mid/pass), πίστις, αἰτέω and λαμβάνω.

difficult times ahead.'<sup>918</sup> In similar terms then, James introduces prayer as the way to receive the wisdom needed to endure trials, suggesting that prayer should also characterise the community of James as an essential part of their identity. By restricting prayer to wisdom here, James is on secure ground guaranteeing an answer since it is in conformity with God's purposes for his people. Such teaching on prayer, however, was perhaps misinterpreted by some of James' audience who thought they could pray for anything and receive an answer (cf. 4:2-3). But prayer 'in faith' must be in conformity with that faith and in full allegiance to God and thus without a divided heart (4:4).

The confidence in asking for wisdom is further expressed by the concluding phrase, likely using the divine passive, 'and it will be given to him' (καὶ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ). For many this is a clear allusion to Jesus' teaching on prayer in the SM (αἰτεῖτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν, Mt 7:7//Lk 11:9), <sup>919</sup> or at least 'a *creative reexpression*' of Jesus' teaching capturing the major elements to serve James' purpose here. <sup>920</sup> In essence, James reworks the Jesus logion, omitting some parts and introducing his own emphasis on wisdom, while retaining the confidence in the goodness of God as the generous giver. <sup>921</sup> In the Gospels this confidence is because God is the good heavenly Father who will give 'good gifts' (δόματα ἀγαθά, Mt 7:11), much as in James'

Philip F. Esler, "The Incident of the Withered Fig Tree in Mark 11: A New Source and Redactional Explanation," *JSNT* 28, no. 1 (September 2005): 67. This incident is often taken as a proleptic sign of the destruction of the Temple due to Jesus' rejection by the leaders of Israel. The withered fig tree would refer to Israel and alludes to Hosea 9:10ff which uses similar terms and predicts their rejection by God. Esler argues against such figurative readings because neither Mark nor Matthew make this point themselves (pp. 49-51; 59-60). For arguments in favour of such a reading, see William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 400–401, who notes that since Jesus went looking for fruit out of season, this is to be understood as a prophetic action. For the argument that Mark is drawing on Hosea 9-10 see David DeGraaf, "Some Doubts about Doubt: The New Testament Use of ΔIAKPINΩ," *JETS* 48, no. 4 (December 2005): 746–48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>919</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 180; Deppe, "Sayings of Jesus," 104–10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>920</sup> Bauckham, "James and Jesus Traditions," 17, (italics original); cf. Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 85–86. See also Kloppenborg, "Hellenistic Psychagogy," 38–42, who views this as an example of elaboration and *aemulatio* of Q 11:9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>921</sup> Kloppenborg, "Reception of the Jesus Tradition," 93; cf. Alkema, *Pillars and the Cornerstone*, 55–57, who believes that James combines here both traditions from Mt 7:7 and 21:21-22. In his opinion, James' combination is "far more eloquent and literate, even if he remains fairly close to the Jesus Tradition" (p. 57).

theology where God is the 'giving God' (Jas 1:5) and, as we have already seen, is the Father of lights who gives πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθή (1:17). 922

In the next section, James elaborates further on who will not receive wisdom, or indeed any answer to prayer, because of their dividedness, as we will see below. However, it is first necessary to consider James' emphasis on wisdom from a missional perspective and understand how the wise (and later the wise community) serve God's purposes and become an attractional presence to those around them.

The Equipping and Attractional Nature of Wisdom as a Gift from God

As we have seen, James emphasises that wisdom is a gift from God that is crucial to living in wholeness and perfection before him. This emphasis draws on the OT and sheds light on the missional nature of wisdom.

In Proverbs, wisdom (הְּבְּמְהֹ ; σοφία) is perhaps best known as coming from the fear of the Lord (9:10 cf. 1:7, Job 28:28), but it is also clear that God is the source of and the one who gives it (Prov 2:6).  $^{923}$  A key aspect to the gift of wisdom is that it is given to people as a special equipping for the task God calls them to. This is seen, for example, in Joshua who was given the 'spirit of wisdom' at the command of God through the laying on of Moses' hands to commission him and enable him to lead the people into the promised land.  $^{924}$  Likewise, Daniel

<sup>922</sup> As I noted in the previous chapter, this certainly includes wisdom but is not restricted to it. J. A. Kirk, "The Meaning of Wisdom in James: Examination of a Hypothesis," *NTS* 16, no. 01 (October 1969): 24–38, argues that wisdom in James is equivalent to the Holy Spirit, partly based on the allusions here to Mt 7:7-11//Lk 11:13. For support for Kirk, see Donald E. Gowan, "Wisdom and Endurance in James," *HBT* 15, no. 1 (1993): 143–53. But see William R. Baker, "Searching for the Holy Spirit in the Epistle of James: Is 'Wisdom' Equivalent?," *TynBul* 59, no. 2 (January 1, 2008): 293–315, for a useful critique of Kirk.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>923</sup> In the famous personification passages, Wisdom even cries out in the streets and makes herself freely available to help the simple become wise (Prov 1:20-33, 8:1-11, 32-36 and 9:1-12). See further Hartin, *James*, 59, 75. Cf. Wis 8:21-9:4.

<sup>924</sup> Deut 34:9, cf. Num 27:18-23; Deut 31:14, 23. Here the full phrase in the MT is πράματος συνέσεως. Σύνεσις often appears alongside σοφία (e.g., LXX Ex 31:3; 35:31, 35; 1 Chr 22:12; 2 Chr 1:10-12; Ps 110:10; Prov 1:7).

and his companions, who were placed in a missional context in the deportation to Babylon, are described as 'versed in every branch of wisdom' (מְשָׁבִּילִים בְּכָל־חְבְמָּה; ἐπιστήμονας ἐν πάση σοφία) and are found to be ten times 'wiser (σοφωτέρους) in every matter of wisdom (חַבְּמַת; συνέσει) and understanding' than all the other magicians of the kingdom (Dan 1:20). In the various episodes that follow in Daniel's life, his wisdom is repeatedly recognised as a gift from God<sup>925</sup> to the extent that the kings he serves confess the superiority of Yahweh over other gods (2:46-47; 4:34-37; 6:25-28). Thus Daniel provides an example for diaspora Judeans of how to live faithfully and missionally, and key to this is the wisdom he receives from God.

Although other examples may be noted, 926 the most paradigmatic is that of Solomon which deserves a more extended examination. Solomon asks God for wisdom to govern the people of Israel (2 Chr 1:10-12), rather than riches and power. The connection between this petition for wisdom and God's gift of it to him suggests to Kloppenborg that in fact Solomon in this narrative plays an exemplary function for James. 927 God tells him to ask for anything (Αἴτησαι τί σοι δῶ, LXX 2 Chr 1:7) and in response Solomon prays for wisdom and understanding (νῦν σοφίαν καὶ σύνεσιν δός μοι, 1:10). As a reward God gives Solomon

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>925</sup> E.g., Dan 2:21, 23, 27-28, 47; 4:9, 5:10-11.

<sup>926</sup> A case could be made that the "wisdom" (πρςης σοφία) granted to Bezalel and Oholiab to carry out the artistic design work of the tabernacle and the High Priestly garments is more than just skill and ability (see Ex 31:1-11; 35:30-36:3). As T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, AOTC 2 (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2017), 607–8, notes, the language here deliberately echoes that of creation and Prov 3:19-20 where God builds the cosmos "by wisdom," with the tabernacle and temple being viewed as models of the cosmos. Since the tabernacle was the new locus for God to meet with his people and enabled Israel to function as priests to the nations (Ex 19:5-6), then the tabernacle (and thus wisdom) was necessary for Israel's missional calling. See W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus*, NSBT 28 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 134–51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>927</sup> Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse," 263–65. As well as the link between "asking" and "wisdom" Kloppenborg shows the similarities between themes in the biblical and extra-biblical Solomon traditions that align with James, such as wealth and poverty and the connection between law and wisdom; cf. Alkema, *Pillars and the Cornerstone*, 57.

unsurpassed wisdom along with wealth, long life and fame (2 Chr 1:12) and thus illustrates well James' description of how God gives. 928

More importantly, it is through this very God-given wisdom that Solomon not only governs Israel but also attracts the attention of the surrounding nations. Solomon's interaction with Hiram, King of Tyre, leads to Hiram responding in a profound way for a non-Israelite: he rejoices greatly and then blesses Yahweh because he has given David a wise (חֶבֶם) son (MT 1 Kgs 5:21). Solomon is described as 'wiser than anyone else' with the result that in verse 34 we read: 'People came from all the nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon (חֵבְּבַתַ יִחְכָּמַת שָׁלֹמֹה), τῆς σοφίας Σαλωμων, LXX 5:14); they came from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.' In other words, Solomon's wisdom is the prime motivator for this attraction of 'all the nations' to Jerusalem.

No narrative demonstrates this more clearly than the visit of the Queen of Sheba (1 Ki 10:1-13//2 Ch 9:1-12). Although initially she comes because of Solomon's fame (2 Ch 9:1), once she sees Solomon's wisdom (πράπ της της σοφίαν Σαλωμων, 9:3) she repeatedly extols this in the next few verses (9:5-7). The queen concludes by blessing God for his love for Israel (9:8). Köstenberger and O'Brien may overstate the case when they suggest that the Queen of Sheba thus acknowledges the privileged role of Israel among the nations within the divine plan, 931 but it certainly indicates the missional nature of Israel among the nations.

Not only does this movement towards Jerusalem fulfil Israel's missional purpose to be a community of wisdom (Deut 4:6-8),<sup>932</sup> it also foreshadows the eschatological ingathering of the nations when Jerusalem becomes the place of pilgrimage of the nations to worship God (Isa

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>928</sup> Allison, *James*, 176; Kloppenborg, "Diaspora Discourse," 263, also points out that in the Odes of Solomon, God is portrayed in very similar language as "generous and ungrudging" (7:3).

 $<sup>^{929}</sup>$  The chapter and verse numbering in the MT and EVV do not match here. MT 1 Kgs 5:1-14 = EVV 1 Kgs 4:21-34, and MT 1 Kgs 5:15-32 = EVV 1 Kgs 5:1-18.

<sup>930</sup> She mentions 'your wisdom' 3x in these verses.

<sup>931</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, Salvation, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>932</sup> I will return to this passage in the next main section.

2:2-4; Mic 4:1-5).<sup>933</sup> This 'eschatological ingathering' is central to God's mission, as Köstenberger and O'Brien note:

In what is an amazing reversal, the nations submit to Israel (Is. 60:14) and, in fulfilment of the Abrahamic promises, stream into the city bringing their wealth (vv. 11-22). The worship and praise of the nations are poured out to Yahweh (Ps. 22:27-31), for they are now joined to him, become his people (Zech. 2:11) and participate in his universal salvation.<sup>934</sup>

While this eschatological fulfilment is cast in the future, this should still inform the people of God as to their purpose and role in centripetal mission. Essential to this, as we have seen through the several examples above, is wisdom.

Thus wisdom has an inherently missional dimension that should not be ignored. To put it simply, wisdom is not only a gift from God, wisdom is necessary for the mission of God. James' prioritisation of wisdom suggests that the communities he writes to are to be contrast communities that are attractional in nature, a theme I will expand on further in the next main section.

## The Double-Souled Disputer (1:6b-8)

In these verses, James describes the person who is the opposite of, and even in opposition to, the wise and whole or perfect person. <sup>935</sup> In what follows, I will consider briefly what James refers to by ὁ διακρινόμενος, before I take a more detailed look at the significance of the 'double-souled' person. Through this, we will see that such a person's divided allegiance and unstable life contradicts their faith and disqualifies them from participating in God's mission.

<sup>933</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, Salvation, 40.

<sup>934</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, Salvation, 42.

<sup>935</sup> Hartin, Spirituality of Perfection, 68.

*The Doubter or Divided Person (1:6b-7)* 

James now focuses in on the person who should not expect an answer to prayer, even from the freely-giving God. He refers to this person as ὁ διαχρινόμενος, which is often translated as 'the one who doubts.' Yet this hardly seems to do justice to James' thought in the vivid language that follows where he further describes such a person, suggesting something much more negative than doubt. <sup>936</sup> In fact some scholars propose that there is no warrant to translate διαχρίνω – normally indicating judge, distinguish, divide or dispute <sup>937</sup> – in the middle/passive as 'doubt' which is a meaning not found in secular Greek, the LXX, Hellenistic Jewish writings and rarely, if at all, in the Patristic authors. <sup>938</sup> Certainly, 'doubt' in terms of mental uncertainty and question-raising is not in view. Rather this person shows 'divided motives' 939 so that internally he is in such a dispute with himself that he is truly 'like a wave of the sea' (ἔοικεν κλύδωνι θαλάσσης) which is 'driven and tossed by the wind' (ἀνεμιζομένω καὶ ῥιπιζομένω). Although the language is unusual in the NT, similar descriptors can be found elsewhere for those who vacillate and are led astray, and even the wicked. <sup>940</sup> The two synonyms together add

<sup>936</sup> Ropes, *St. James*, 140, argues that διακρινόμενος describes a person whose allegiance wavers, rather than someone who has doubts (or "speculative intellectual questionings" as he calls them).
937 See BDAG, 231.

<sup>938</sup> Peter Spitaler has written a series of articles that offer extensive evidence for keeping the classical meaning for διακρίνω in the middle/passive as "dispute." See Spitaler, "Dispute"; *idem*, "Διακρίνεσθαι in Mt. 21:21, Mk. 11:23, Acts 10:20, Rom. 4:20, 14:23, Jas. 1:6, and Jude 22 - the 'Semantic Shift' That Went Unnoticed by Patristic Authors," *NovT* 49, no. 1 (2007): 1–39; *idem*, "Doubt or Dispute (Jude 9 and 22-23): Rereading a Special New Testament Meaning Through the Lens of Internal Evidence," *Bib* 87, no. 2 (2006): 201–22. See also DeGraaf, "Doubts about Doubt"; Stanley E. Porter and Chris S. Stevens, "Doubting BDAG on Doubt: A Lexical Examination of Διακρίνω and Its Theological Ramifications," *FN* 30 (2017): 43–70; Benjamin Schliesser, "Abraham Did Not "Doubt" in Unbelief' (Rom 4:20): Faith, Doubt, and Dispute in Paul's Letter to the Romans," *JTS* 63, no. 2 (October 2012): 492–522. Some scholars appear to have been persuaded by Spitaler, e.g., Kloppenborg, "Hellenistic Psychagogy," 41; but see Allison, *James*, 179–81, for a short critique, and who is unconvinced.

<sup>939</sup> DeGraaf, "Doubts about Doubt," 742.

<sup>940</sup> Both participles are hapaxes in the NT. In the LXX, ἀνεμίζω is not found while  $\dot{\rho}$ ιπίζω only appears once. A similar picture is given in Eph 4:14. See further Johnson, Letter of James, 180, who cites Philo, Migr. 148 and Gig. 51. Also of note are the similarities with Herm. Mand. 9. In this (which Johnson views as a commentary on Jas 1:5-8), Hermas is told, 'Remove from yourself the double-soul (τὴν διψυχίαν) and do not be 'double-souled' (διψυχήσης) in asking (αἰτήσασθαί) anything from God...' For portrayals of the wicked in such language, see Isa 57:20 cf. Sir 33:2.

rhetorical force so that James packs a weighty punch against those who pray with such divided motives.<sup>941</sup>

Thus it seems likely that the person James has in mind is more than simply having a few doubts. This person is gripped by a division of soul that leads to internal disputing which is captured by DeGraaf's suggested translation for this part of the verse: 'Let him ask in faith, free from divided motives...' Such vacillation in commitment to God means of course that his prayer is not answered favourably. Such vacillation in commitment to God means of course that his

Even in the next verse, James refers back to δ διακρινόμενος as 'that man' (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος), probably a derogatory reference (1:8). 944 Such a person, James continues, should not think that they will receive anything from the Lord (μὴ γὰρ οἰέσθω 945... ὅτι λήμψεταί τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου) let alone wisdom! James resoundingly corrects such false assumptions that essentially are part of a 'psuedo-faith.' 946 James thus exhorts his audience to 'commit to God and... wholeheartedly and single-mindedly trust his character and his promises.' 947 This is in clear contrast to ὁ διακρινόμενος, whom James further castigates in the next verse, perhaps even coining his own term to do so as we shall now see.

<sup>941</sup> Allison, James, 184.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>942</sup> DeGraaf, "Doubts about Doubt," 742. DeGraaf adds that the person may not be just divided in himself but divisive against others; cf. Stanley E. Porter, "Is Dipsuchos (James 1:8, 4:8) a 'Christian' Word," *Bib* 71, no. 4 (January 1, 1990): 479, who translates it as "being of divided purpose"; and see further Porter and Stevens, "Doubting BDAG on Doubt," 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>943</sup> Edgar, *Social Setting*, 113, understands that there is a more social relational sense to faith in the ancient world, so that asking in faith implies asking with commitment to the person being asked. For this insight, see John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina, eds., *Biblical Social Values and Their Meaning: A Handbook* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 67–70. This perhaps sheds light on the collocation of διακρίνω with πίστις which could then contrast commitment with wavering, rather than faith with doubt. See further DeGraaf, "Doubts about Doubt," 739; Porter and Stevens, "Doubting BDAG on Doubt," 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>944</sup> According to Allison, James, 185, this is a likely Semitism based on איש ההוא. The same expression is used negatively in Mk 14:21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>945</sup> According to Ropes the use of οἴομαι often implies wrong judgment or conceit. See Ropes, St. James, 132.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>946</sup> Dan G. McCartney, "Self-Deception in James," CTR 8, no. 2 (March 1, 2011): 33.

<sup>947</sup> McCartney, James, 91.

## The Double-Souled Man (1:8)

The climactic descriptor of the vacillator is the double-souled man (ἀνὴρ δίψυχος). The origin of the word δίψυχος is by no means clear since it is not found elsewhere in the Greek Bible, nor in any other Greek literature until the early Church Fathers. Some scholars posit that James himself coined it, while others find it more likely that it comes from intertestamental Jewish literature now lost to us. What commentators are agreed upon is that the term itself comes from the Hebrew idiom of the 'double heart' or 'two hearts.' While these terms are never translated as δίψυχος, there is enough similarity of language to suggest this is what James has in mind. These also express the opposite of how the Israelites were to worship God. The Shema requires Israel to love God with their 'whole heart' and their 'whole soul' ( דְּבָלִ־נַבְּשִׁדְּ ; ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου, Deut 6:5). A divided heart would then also suggest a divided soul.

The opposite of a double heart is 'one heart' (対策 ձ朮) which, in the prophetic literature, is the new heart that God promises to give to Israel to enable them to obey him under the new covenant (Jer 32:39; Ezek 11:19). In Jeremiah, this follows God's promise to gather them and return them (ἐπιστρέψω αὐτούς) from where he had scattered them (διέσπειρα, LXX Jer 39:37), which are significant terms for James, as we have already seen. God not only promises

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>948</sup> This is either in apposition to what precedes (most EVV and commentators) or begins a new verbless sentence that functions as a closing aphorism. See Varner, *James*, 69–70, for arguments in favour of this second option.
<sup>949</sup> The most detailed study in favour of this is from Porter, "Dipsuchos."

<sup>950</sup> See the series of articles by Seitz which argue for this: O. J. F. Seitz, "Relationship of the Shepherd of Hermas to the Epistle of James," *JBL* 63, no. 2 (June 1, 1944): 131–40; *idem*, "Antecedents and Signification of the Term ΔΙΨΎΧΟΣ," *JBL* 66, no. 2 (June 1947): 211–19; *idem*, "Afterthoughts on the Term 'Dipsychos,"" *NTS* 4, no. 04 (July 1958): 327–34. Both Bauckham and Allison further develop Seitz's arguments. Citations in 1 and 2 Clement of an unknown source include the word δίψυχος which means that James may also be drawing on this source, as Bauckham and Allison argue. See Richard Bauckham, "The Spirit of God in Us Loathes Envy: James 4:5," in *The Jewish World Around the New Testament: Collected Essays I* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 431–32; and Dale C. Allison, "Eldad and Modad," *JSP* 21, no. 2 (2011): 99–131. Both Bauckham and Allison suggest the unknown source is the Apocryphal tale of Eldad and Modad.

<sup>951</sup> See, e.g., Psalm 12:3 which speaks of a double heart (בְּלֵב וְלֵב ; ἐν καρδία καὶ ἐν καρδία). Sir 1:28 also speaks against prayer (approaching God) with a double heart (ἐν καρδία δισσῆ).
952 Allison, James, 187.

<sup>953</sup> See also 2 Chron 30:12 where God gives the people 'one heart' to obey the king and thus also God's commands. Curiously, the LXX describes this as 'a peaceful soul' (ἐν ψυχῆ εἰρηνικῆ).

to give them one heart but also 'one way' (זְדֶרֶךְ שֶּׁחָד; MT Jer 32:39) which, as we will see below, contrasts with the δίψυχος who has many ways (Jas 1:8). Moreover, God will do good to them with his whole heart and whole soul (בְּבֶל־לָבֶי וּבְבֶל־לַבֶּי וּבְבֶל־לַבֶּי ; Jer 32:41). Together these verses provide an apposite picture of the dynamics James has in mind through this whole section. The picture of a 'whole-hearted' and 'whole-souled' God who does good to his people and gives them 'one heart' and 'one way' is very much in line with the ideal James depicts of God's character and how his people should respond to him, and in complete contrast to the δίψυχος who wavers in commitment to God. 955

The double-souled person is further described as 'unstable in all his ways' (ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ). This is also the mark of the untamed tongue (3:8)<sup>956</sup> which only the perfect can control (3:2), and moreover, wisdom from below which is 'unspiritual' (ψυχική) leads to ἀκαταστασία (3:15-16) so that the contrast with the perfect and wise could not be starker. The person's whole lifestyle and actions are in view, <sup>957</sup> so that this is not just an occasional stumble. The composite picture of the wavering double-souled person then, is not of someone who has doubts from time to time, but of the one whose very life and actions are

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<sup>954</sup> In Ezek 11:21, on those who go after abominations, God 'requites their ways on their heads' (τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτῶν εἰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν δέδωκα).

<sup>955</sup> Ji Hoe Kim, "Minding the Gap: Linking the Thematic Relationship between Δίψυχος (Jas 1:8 and 4:8) and the Shema (Deut 6:4-5) through Hos 10:2," in Dvorak and Dawson, eds, *Epistle of James*, 100–126, makes the case that James draws on the *Shema* mediated through Hosea 10:1-2 although this does not seem convincing. The only link is the divided hearts (ἐμέρισεν καρδίας αὐτῶν) of the Israelites who have gone astray.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>956</sup> The word ἀχατάστατος occurs only in these two verses in the NT.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>957</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 83. He suggests that in the LXX this is a "fixed expression" meaning the whole life. However, 5x of its 6 occurrences refer to God's ways that the people should walk in (Deut 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 30:16; Ps 144:17 [145:17]). Only 1 Sam 18:14 refers directly to a person's way of life. However, walking in God's ways is to be obedient to his commands, which would affect the whole lifestyle of a person.

also unstable. 958 As Moo suggests, this person has 'a basic division in the soul that leads to thinking, speaking, and acting that contradicts one's claim to belong to God. 959

It is this divided allegiance, which James later calls 'friendship with the world' (4:4), that disqualifies the double-souled not only from answered prayer but also from participating in the mission of God. As we have already seen, God's people must be obedient and faithful to him, thus becoming an attractional light to those around them. The double-souled in contrast are divided, vacillating between the world and God. Their unstable actions and lives prevent them receiving the wisdom which would serve to attract others to God. The focus here has been on the individual but in the next section, we will see how the same dynamics play out both positively and negatively in the community. Wisdom from above increases missional attraction, while wisdom from below has the opposite effect.

# WISDOM FROM ABOVE OR BELOW? (3:13-18)

This section makes wisdom the centrepiece of community dynamics, not so much defining it, but rather focusing on the kind of life it produces in relationship with others. It also prepares the way for what follows immediately in 4:1-10<sup>960</sup> which, as I have already noted, many authors take together with 3:13-18 as one section. However, to keep the argument manageable I will treat them separately, here focusing on 3:13-18, the centrepiece of the epistle. I argued above that wisdom has a key element of missional attraction and in this passage, James draws on a

958 Kim, "Minding the Gap," 111, shows well how the διακρινόμενος and the δίψυχος are related through a Semantic Chain and Participant chain and both have metaphorical descriptions that are "expressions of instability" - the κλύδωνι θαλάσσης and ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις. This composite picture confirms that the former is more than someone who simply doubts. Foster, *Exemplars*, 186, suggests they are like the people of Israel in the days of Elijah who 'limp between two opinions' (1 Kgs 18:21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>959</sup> Moo, *The Letter of James*, 63. Less appropriate is his designation of this as "spiritual schizophrenia."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>960</sup> Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 87–88; cf. Varner, "Main Theme," 120.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>961</sup> See fn. 905 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>962</sup> Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 116; cf. Taylor and Guthrie, "The Structure of James," 687. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Varner, "Main Theme", takes this as the thematic peak of the letter; cf. Varner, *New Perspective*, 134–36.

key text from Deuteronomy that further emphasizes the missional nature of wisdom. We will see that this is generated through the attributes and effects of wisdom from above, and that the emphasis on community behaviour builds on what we have already discussed about the missional nature of wisdom.

The section opens with a rhetorical question followed by a third person singular imperative, a common pattern in the letter, to introduce the topic of wisdom which continues until 3:18.963 The material divides into the following two subsections that will form the basis of my investigation. The first is 3:13-14 which Batten takes as the thematic statement for the whole argument setting up the contrast with living a life of wisdom as opposed to jealousy.964 Then in 3:15-18, James contrasts the wisdom from below and the wisdom from above, concluding with the climactic description of the latter and its accompanying virtues.965 The passage progresses from the individual as 'wise' to a community of the wise, so we begin with the former.

# Wisdom on Display (3:13-14)

In this initial section, James links wisdom to behaviour and it is this visible aspect of wisdom that lends itself to a missional investigation. This is brought to the fore by understanding the OT tradition behind James' question. We will also see that the key aspect of wisdom which should be on display is meekness, a virtue that would further enhance the attractional nature of the audience. I will first examine in more detail the OT background to James' question before looking at the role of meekness within the community and then how the opposite vices destroy community dynamics and deny the very truth of the gospel.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>963</sup> See, for example, the table in Varner, *New Perspective*, 35 for a summary of discourse markers that James favours

<sup>964</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 151.

<sup>965</sup> McKnight, James, 299.

*The Wise and Understanding (3:13)* 

James begins with the question 'Who is wise and understanding among you?' (Τίς σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν;). The phrase σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων is unique in the NT and in this exact form is only found in the OT in Deuteronomy 4:6.966 This is set in the context of showing to the nations that Israel is a wise people through their life of obedience (Deut 4:5-8) which resonates with James' concern here. Given this probable allusion, it seems worthwhile to consider this passage briefly.

The main concern here is that Israel shows before all the nations its wisdom  $(\sigma \circ \phi i\alpha)$  through their adherence to the Law and right behaviour, so that the nations say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning  $(\sigma \circ \phi \circ \varsigma \times \alpha i \dot{\epsilon} \pi \iota \sigma \tau \eta \mu \omega v)$  people" (LXX Deut 4:6). This aligns with a major focus of Deuteronomy which is 'to shape Israel to be a display community living in the sight of the nations.'967 This will be enhanced by their status as a 'great nation'  $(\xi \theta v \circ \varsigma \omega \dot{\epsilon} \gamma \alpha)$ , repeated three times in these verses (4:6, 7, 8), harking back to God's promises to Abraham to bless him and make him an  $\xi \theta v \circ \varsigma \omega \dot{\epsilon} \gamma \alpha$  and bless the nations through him (Gen 12:1-3). In these verses, as Martin Salter states, 'The interplay between particularism and universalism – election for mission – come together.' He goes on to say that they give 'a more specific form to the call to bless the nations, and be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation... In addition to the centripetal nature of Israel's witness there is an implicit centrifugality to their vocation, and it is enacted through living out YHWH's Torah.'968 Israel's wisdom also points to the greatness of God which is on display through Israel. Thus 'the role of Yahweh as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>966</sup> It is also combined in the plural in Deut 1:13, 15 referring to the leaders Moses appointed and both adjectives appear together to describe Daniel although not in this exact form (Dan 1:4; 5:11). Nonetheless, these add to the importance of this combination for God's people.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>967</sup> Mark Glanville, "A Missional Reading of Deuteronomy," in Goheen, ed, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 127; cf. Wright, *The Mission of God*, 379, who notes that "faithful or unfaithful, the people of God are an open book to the world, and the world asks questions and draws conclusions."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>968</sup> Salter, Mission in Action, 43–44.

expressed in Israel will become relevant to the world at large. <sup>969</sup> In sum, as with the individual wisdom of Solomon, there is an attractional element to this community wisdom shown by obedience to the Torah that draws in the nations as the community's reputation for being a just and fair society moves outwards (Deut 4:8).

This lines up with what James goes on to say about anyone claiming to be wise: such a person must 'show his works through his good conduct' (δειξάτω ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, 3:13b). This may be something of an 'awkward'<sup>970</sup> sentence but it seems to indicate that just as faith is 'shown' by works (2:18), so also wisdom is shown by good conduct, which is in effect the person's whole way of life.<sup>971</sup> The emphasis is on what can be seen, whether that is good conduct or deeds.<sup>972</sup> This surely has a missional component to it, as with the people of Israel in Deuteronomy, even if not the main focus of James' exhortation. What can be seen provides a visible demonstration of God's presence (cf. Deut 4:7) and justice that will draw in outsiders.<sup>973</sup> In a similar way, good conduct (ἀναστροφή) is an essential component not only of community life but also community witness, as is made more explicit in 1 Peter.<sup>974</sup> In this sense, then, James reinforces the need for conduct and deeds to match faith, something that will take centre stage in the second half of James 2.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>969</sup> McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 163; cf. Wright, *The Mission of God*, 379. He points out that the "force of the rhetorical questions is to *invite comparison*, but in the confident expectation that nothing will invalidate the claims being made" (italics original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>970</sup> Allison, *James*, 569.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>971</sup> Hartin, *James*, 191.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>972</sup> This may relate to Jesus' teaching that 'wisdom is justified by her deeds' (ἐδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς, Mt 11:19) which is set in the context of the religious leaders' disapproval of both Jesus and John the Baptist, despite their contrasting lifestyles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>973</sup> Cf. the good works (τὰ καλὰ ἔργα) of Mt 5:14-16 which point to God, as we saw in the previous chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>974</sup> ἀναστροφή is a key term in this letter, occurring 6 out of 11x in the NT (1 Pet 2:12, 3:1-2, 15-16). From the evidence of authors after the time of the NT, Hvalvik, "In Word and Deed," 284–85, concludes that the conduct of the early Christians was one of the main components of the growth of the church.

James further qualifies the deeds that show wisdom. They must be done in the meekness that comes from wisdom (ἐν πραΰτητι σοφίας). 975 The hearers have already been told to receive the 'implanted word' that can save their souls 'with meekness' (ἐν πραΰτητι, 1:21) so that this obviously is a crucial virtue for God's people, as it is elsewhere in Scripture. Moses is paradigmatic as meeker than anyone else on earth (πραϋς, LXX Num 12:3), while the meek are the ones who will be guided and taught by God (LXX Ps 24:9 [25:9]) and who will inherit the earth (LXX Ps 36:11 [37:11]; cf. Mt 5:5). The restored messianic community will also be a 'meek people' (λαὸν πραϋν, Zeph 3:12) with a messianic king characterised by meekness (Zech 9:9). Significantly, Jesus both teaches its importance (Mt 5:5) <sup>976</sup> and claims this attribute (Mt 11:29: πραΰς εἰμι), <sup>977</sup> which is also then expected of his followers. <sup>978</sup> Moreover, in the early church Fathers, meekness was one of the qualities that leaders should have (Ign. *Eph.* 10. 2; Did. 15.1). <sup>979</sup>

While meekness was important in the OT and a central identity marker for Christ-followers, it is debated whether meekness was valued or despised in the wider Graeco-Roman society. Some commentators suggest that it was decried as weakness<sup>980</sup> but Batten notes that it was a virtue at least to some since it was 'associated with "gentleness" and "friendliness" as opposed to roughness or anger.'981 Wisdom, demonstrated through deeds and meekness then,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>975</sup> Σοφίας is best taken as a genitive of source. See Varner, *James*, 251. Johnson, *Letter of James*, 270, points to the "striking parallel" in Sir 3:17 which has "Child in meekness (ἐν πραΰτητι) do your works (τὰ ἔργα σου)"; cf. Aymer, *First Pure, Then Peaceable*, 71.

<sup>976</sup> Esler convincingly shows that the Beatitudes are not (only) entrance requirements or eschatological characteristics but are social identity markers for Christ-followers in Matthew. See Philip F. Esler, "Social Identity, Group Conflict and the Matthean Beatitudes: A New Reading of Matt 5:3-12," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 147–72.
977 Matthew also applies Zech 9:9 to Jesus (Mt 21:5) and Paul appeals to the Corinthians by the 'meekness and gentleness of Christ' (παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ).

 $<sup>^{978}</sup>$  Meekness (πραΰτης) towards one another is seen in Gal 6:1; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 2 Tim 2:25 and to outsiders in Tit 3:2; 1 Pet 3:16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>979</sup> This is not without precedent in the NT which uses the close synonym ἐπιεικής as a quality for leaders (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 3:2). James uses this in 3:17 to describe wisdom from above.

<sup>980</sup> So Blomberg and Kamell, James, loc 4759; Laws, Epistle of James, 159-60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>981</sup> She notes that Aristotle regarded it as a virtue. See Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 150. See further examples in Allison, *James*, 310 fn. 153.

shows missional elements that would enhance the attractional nature of the community. This is only reinforced by the fact that meekness is a key scriptural virtue and is exemplified in the two key figures of Judean and Christian identity, namely Moses and Jesus. The very clear contrast to this in the next verse compromises the community's internal cohesion and external witness.

# Jealousy and Strife (3:14)

Although aspects of this verse may apply specifically to those who have both jealousy of, and ambitions towards, leadership,  $^{982}$  what follows is clearly a community-wide problem so there is no need to restrict this only to the teachers of 3:1. $^{983}$  The author now suggests that in the community there may be those who have the destructive qualities of 'bitter envy'  $(\zeta \tilde{\eta} \lambda o \nu \pi \iota \kappa \rho \delta \nu)$  and 'selfish ambition'  $(\dot{\epsilon} \rho \iota \theta \epsilon i \alpha \nu)$ . $^{984}$  The combination of  $\zeta \tilde{\eta} \lambda o \varsigma$  with  $\dot{\epsilon} \rho \iota \theta \epsilon i \alpha$ , which James mentions again in 3:16, appears also in Pauline vice lists and is clearly a warning against 'partisanship and a divided community.' $^{986}$  Hartin notes that in ancient society operating under the concept of 'limited good,' the only way to advance one's own standing was at the expense of others. In this context,  $\dot{\epsilon} \rho \iota \theta \epsilon i \alpha$  implies using 'unworthy means to overcome rivals and promote oneself.' $^{987}$ 

This statement is presented as a conditional sentence ( $\varepsilon i \delta \varepsilon$ ), <sup>988</sup> but it is plain that the author thinks this is a real problem given that he continues with an exhortation. <sup>989</sup> Since such

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>982</sup> Hort, St. James, 83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>983</sup> Contra McKnight, *James*, 304–5. Although this is especially applicable to church leadership, it is not limited to this, as the wider general statements of 3:17-18 and 4:1-10 show.

<sup>984</sup> Although ζῆλος can be positive if it is towards the divine realm, here, modified as it is by 'bitter,' there is no doubt James has negative jealousy or perhaps even misguided zeal in mind. See further Ropes, St. James, 245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>985</sup> Hort provides a lengthy discussion of this term. It developed in the context of political manoeuvring to gain power. See Hort, *St. James*, 81–83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>986</sup> Allison, *James*, 573. See 2 Cor 12:20 and Gal 5:20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>987</sup> Hartin, *James*, 208–9.

<sup>988</sup> James uses this expression 6x, five of which introduce a hypothetical but likely negative condition he believes some in the audience may be guilty of (1:5; 2:9, 11; 4:11), the first of which is of course the lack of wisdom. As we will see later, the other use of the expression in 3:3, which is not negative, could perhaps be a textual error and should instead be ἴδε or ἰδού. See the discussion in chapter eight.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>989</sup> This is instead of an indicative apodosis. So McKnight, *James*, 305.

people have these vices in their heart (ἐν τῆ καρδία ὑμῶν), the seat of emotions, as well as the intellect and understanding in Scripture,  $^{990}$  the remedy that James later proposes will be for such people to 'purify their hearts' (4:8). However, he first admonishes them not to 'claim honour and lie against the truth' (μὴ κατακαυχᾶσθε<sup>991</sup> καὶ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας). Presumably the honour-claim is to be wise  $^{992}$  but this cannot be true if there is envy and strife rather than meekness. McKnight argues that since James uses ἀληθεία quite broadly in his letter (cf. 1:18; 5:19) such behaviour denies the truth of the gospel. As he states, 'the gospel is both proclaimed and performed (see Matt 7:15-27). Proclamation without performance... severs the truthfulness and fidelity of the gospel from its own anchors.' This has obvious missional repercussions, but even if such a broad view of truth is not in view, we still have here the beginnings of the description of the conflict that negates the missional attraction of a wise community marked by meekness and good deeds. James will expand on this conflict in 4:1-6 but first he will contrast the two kinds of wisdom that he sees at play in the community, one which is from God, one whose source is none other than the devil.

# The Two Wisdoms (3:15-18)

According to Batten, since James introduces his topic with a contrast between wisdom and jealousy in 3:13-14, his audience would then expect a series of arguments to 'support the call to live a life of wisdom and to avoid a life of jealousy and selfishness,'994 which is what we now see in 3:15-18. The first supporting argument in this section contrasts the two wisdoms,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>990</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 271; cf. Allison, *James*, 573. In addition to the OT scriptures they provide, it is also notable that this is carried on in the NT. For example, in Matthew's gospel, the καρδία is where people think evil thoughts (Mt 9:4), understand so as to repent (Mt 13:15) and it is also from where all kinds of evil originate (Mt 15:18-19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>991</sup> On the idea of 'honour-claim' for κατακαυχάομαι rather than 'boast' see fn. 618 on καυχάομαι in the previous chapter and the next chapter on Jas 1:9-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>992</sup> Laws, Epistle of James, 160.

<sup>993</sup> McKnight, James, 305.

<sup>994</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 151.

one from below (which is perhaps not even a kind of wisdom) and one from above. Everything James says here amplifies either the negative effect of the wrong kind of wisdom or the attractive effect of the right kind of wisdom that we have already seen.

### The (Pseudo-)Wisdom from Below (3:15-16)

James makes clear that the pseudo-wisdom on display by the jealous is not from God since it does not 'come down from above' (ἄνωθεν κατερχομένη) but has its origin elsewhere (3:15). In fact, it is 'earthly, unspiritual and demonic' (ἐπίγειος, ψυχική, δαιμονιώδης), which all contradict an origin from above and therefore from God. Earthly wisdom by definition has no divine influence, and 'soulish' suggests the opposite of spiritual given the contrast in the rest of the NT. <sup>995</sup> The final term of the triad is the strongest and shows that the underlying source of envy and ambition is demonic influence. <sup>996</sup>

Having described the source of such wisdom, James then returns to its characteristics – jealousy (ζῆλος) and selfish ambition (ἐριθεία) – which he has just denounced (3:14) because they are divisive to the community (3:16). He uses the phrase 'where...there' (ὅπου... ἐκεῖ) to generalise his indictment of the community, a construction typical of Jesus logia. <sup>997</sup> In this case, where there is jealousy and selfish ambition there is also 'disorder' (ἀκαταστασία). We have already seen that the ἀνὴρ δίψυχος is ἀκατάστατος (1:8) and so James begins to make the same connections that marked his introduction on wisdom and prepare his audience for the call to repentance that is soon to be given to the δίψυχοι (4:8). <sup>998</sup> Further, there is also 'every kind of evil deed' (πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα) which once again emphasises the actions of the community.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>995</sup> See, e.g., 1 Cor 2:14; 15:44, 46; Jude 19. According to Ropes, *St. James*, 248, it could also simply refer to the natural life shared by humans and animals and so perhaps here indicates base instinct.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>996</sup> δαιμονιώδης is a hapax legomenon for the Greek Bible. Taken in context, it suggests source rather than just similarity. See Davids, *Epistle of James*, 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>997</sup> Allison, *James*, 578. See Mt 6:21//Lk 12:34; Mt 24:28//Lk 17:37; Mk 6:10; Jn 12:26. This expression occurs nowhere else in the NT apart from James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>998</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 153.

What is on display is the opposite of what should be seen, since the deeds are evil and instigated by the devil. 999 James thus denounces in the strongest terms the presence of pseudo-wisdom in the community, which not only divides and weakens the community, but also reduces any missional impact they might have.

Turning from these negative community dynamics inspired by demonic wisdom, James then gives a climactic description of the wisdom from above, and to this we now turn.

## The Wisdom From Above (3:17-18)

James concludes with a rhetorically crafted statement 1000 that balances the preceding negative aspects of wisdom from below, not so much to define what wisdom from above  $(\dot{\eta}...\, \mathring{\alpha}\nu\omega\theta\epsilon\nu\sigma\phi\phi(\alpha))$  is, but rather to describe how it behaves, and therefore how his hearers should behave. First, wisdom is pure  $(\dot{\alpha}\gamma\nu\dot{\eta})$ , 1001 free from 'moral pollution' 1002 and any fault, including those just mentioned. 1003 It is also peaceable  $(\epsilon i\rho\eta\nu i\kappa\dot{\eta})$ , gentle  $(\dot{\epsilon}\pi i\epsilon i\kappa\dot{\eta}\varsigma)$  and willing to yield  $(\epsilon\dot{\nu}\pi\epsilon i\theta\dot{\eta}\varsigma)$  which are essential virtues for a harmonious community. 1004 To be peaceable demonstrates true wisdom (Prov 3:17), contrasts with the envy and strife of false wisdom and is the defining value of righteousness in the next verse. The other two adjectives just mentioned describe a person who is 'non-combative' and who 'gladly submits to true teaching and listens to the other instead of attacking him.' 1005 In combination they define the  $\pi\rho\alpha\ddot{\nu}\tau\eta\varsigma$  that is central to wisdom in the previous section. 1006 Wisdom is also 'full of mercy and good fruit'  $(\mu\epsilon\sigma\tau\dot{\gamma})$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>999</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1000</sup> See Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, 503–4.

 $<sup>^{1001}</sup>$  According to BDAG, 630, πρῶτον μὲν... ἔπειτα is a standard introduction to a list so may not indicate that purity is more important than the others. This is the case in its only other occurrence (Heb 7:2). However, purity is obviously a key concept for James since it is essential to true piety (1:27). See further Davids, *Epistle of James*, 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1002</sup> Lockett, Purity and Worldview, 128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1003</sup> Ropes, St. James, 248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1004</sup> These three adjectives are joined by alliteration and assonance to give a rhetorical effect. So Hartin, *James*, 194.

<sup>1005</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1006</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 274.

έλέους καὶ καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν), the first reflecting God's character (5:11) and the second true faith (2:13-26). The final pair of adjectives further promote unity since wisdom is impartial (ἀδιάκριτος) and sincere (ἀνυπόκριτος). 1008

The whole paragraph taken together is a persuasive discourse on wisdom from above, which, in Witherington's opinion, comes across well as an aural performance. The alliteration, rhythm and assonance combine so that the 'rhetorical form reinforces the content and is intended to make the discourse more compelling and persuasive.' Commentators also note the similarities between these verses and Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23), so that Martin calls this the 'fruit of wisdom.' There are also similarities with Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13, so that, 'without using the word, James asks for love.' James, then, very skilfully makes community cohesion and unity of utmost importance, as elsewhere in the NT.

Verse 18 provides a fitting conclusion to this section, giving prominence to peace (εἰρήνη) as a crowning virtue of righteousness, possibly using a proverbial saying. <sup>1012</sup> The fruit of righteousness (καρπὸς δικαιοσύνης) <sup>1013</sup> in context seems to be the fruit which is characterised by righteous behaviour and must include the 'fruit' that has just been enumerated in the previous verse. <sup>1014</sup> This is sown in peace (σπείρεται ἐν εἰρήνη), <sup>1015</sup> in other words with peaceful behaviour, by those who 'make peace' (τοῖς ποιοῦσιν εἰρήνην) in the community. As Davids admits, there is an element of tautology in what James says, but he argues that this produces an

<sup>1007</sup> Moo, The Letter of James, 176.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1008</sup> These are also linked by alliteration and assonance. See Johnson, *Letter of James*, 275.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1009</sup> Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, 503. He adds that since it is a description of 'heavenly wisdom, it ought to sound heavenly in the ancient rhetorical way of thinking.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1010</sup> Martin, *James*, 133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1011</sup> Allison, *James*, 579.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1012</sup> Dibelius, James, 208; Davids, Epistle of James, 155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1013</sup> The phrase appears in the LXX in Prov 3:9; 11:30; 13:2 and Amos 6:12, and in the NT in Phil 1:11; Heb 12:11.

<sup>1014</sup> Moo, The Letter of James, 178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1015</sup> As McCartney rightly notes, it would be pedantic to insist that it is not fruit that is sown but rather seed. See McCartney, *James*, 202.

emphatic rhetorical effect, <sup>1016</sup> that focuses not on some kind of individual inner tranquillity or even peace with God but rather 'peace and wholeness within the community.' <sup>1017</sup>

Unsurprisingly, many see a link here to Jesus' statement "Blessed are the peacemakers" (οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, Mt 5:9). This active effort to bring about peace should be a characteristic of God's people and this requires the seeking out of enemies and/or the estranged. This kind of 'costly "peace-making"... involves overcoming the natural desire for advantage and/or retribution... '1019 which is in line with God's character who makes peace (ποιῶν εἰρήνην, Eph 2:14). There is no doubt here that this would be viewed as a counter-cultural norm. Batten points out that by associating righteousness with peacemaking rather than competition, as would be typical in ancient society, James here shows that 'living according to the wisdom from above... is diametrically opposed to the "normal" workings of the world.' 1020

In this climactic ode to wisdom then, James has effectively called on the community to be a community of peace that displays the virtues of wisdom from above: purity, gentleness, willingness to yield, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. These are the fruits of a righteousness that adorns the wisdom from above with striking qualities. There can be no doubt that a community of such wisdom would fulfil the scriptural mandate for unity among God's people but also the mandate to be a counter-cultural, missionally attractive people. Having painted such a powerful portrait of what his hearers should be, as we come to the final section we will see how James confronts head on the reality of dissension and a community at war with itself.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1016</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 155.

<sup>1017</sup> McCartney, James, 203.

<sup>1018</sup> Note the similarities with LXX Psalm 34:14 [33:15]: ζήτησον εἰρήνην καὶ δίωξον αὐτήν)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1019</sup> France, *Matthew*, 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1020</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 155.

#### **COMMNUNITY STRIFE AND REPENTANCE (4:1-10)**

James is not afraid to challenge his audience and call them to repentance. In fact, it is conspicuous that in this section James switches his usual address for the hearers as  $\dot{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi$ of to three extremely pejorative vocatives: adulteresses ( $\mu$ o $\chi\alpha\lambda$ i $\delta\epsilon\xi$ ), sinners ( $\dot{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\omega\lambda$ of) and double-souled ( $\delta$ i $\psi$ u $\chi$ ot). In what follows we will see that James presents a picture of a community that has followed the wisdom from below and has allowed desire and envy to bring strife and conflict. James addresses their unfaithfulness in the strongest terms, confronting them with the vocatives noted above. Their covenantal relationship with God has been broken and as friends of the world they are in opposition to God and his purposes, and so have lost their missional identity. However, we will also see that James' goal is their repentance and so he finishes with a call for his readers to humble themselves, and thus once again be positioned to be used by God, which also demonstrates his missional concern for the audience.

For ease of analysis I will break this into three sections, <sup>1022</sup> first considering 4:1-3 which gives the root causes of community strife, then 4:4-6 which has the first vocative directly challenging the unfaithfulness of the audience, and finally 4:7-10 which is the climax of the section with its call to repentance. <sup>1023</sup>

## The Origin of Community Strife (4:1-3)

The section begins with a rhetorical question asking where wars and fights within the community come from (Πόθεν πόλεμοι καὶ πόθεν μάχαι ἐν ὑμῖν;, 4:1). The emphasis at this point

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1021</sup> Runge, "Redundancy," 447. Runge states that these represent a "recharacterization of the audience" that reveal how the author "views the audience." These would come as something of a shock to the audience; cf. Edgar, *Social Setting*, 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1022</sup> It could also be divided in two with 4:1-6 taken as a unit. See Hartin, *James*, 207; cf. Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 149. She titles 4:1-6 as the argument proper but further breaks this up into three sections: 4:1-3 Opposite; 4:4 Maxim; 4:5-6 Citation (Authority). Both Batten and Hartin begin the argument in 3:13, treating 3:13-4:10 as one main section. Notably, rhetorical questions help tie the whole section together (3:13; 4:1, 4). <sup>1023</sup> Some commentators such as Davids, *Epistle of James*, 155–56, include 4:11-12 in this section. However, as I already noted in my initial outline, 4:11-12 plays a transitional role and fits well with the theme of speech so I will include it in chapter eight. See also Taylor and Guthrie, "The Structure of James," 687; and Cheung, *Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics*, 83, for its transitional role.

is not on the individual (although individuals cause the problems) but on a community at war metaphorically 1024 with itself since the fights are 'among you' (ἐν ὑμῖν). 1025 The origin is given in the form of another question 'Is it not from here...' (οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν...;) 1026 which James effectively answers: conflict arises out of the desires which war among the members (ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν). Thus the root of community conflict is found in those individuals who allow their desires to control their lives. 1027

This language is close to NT expressions of the individual believer's battles with sin, such as 1 Peter 2:11 where 'fleshly desires' (τῶν σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν) 'wage war against the soul' (στρατεύονται κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς), an idea also common in contemporary Hellenistic literature. <sup>1028</sup> As we have already seen, desire is the root of sin (Jas 1:13-15), but here in 4:1-10 the focus is on the negative effect it has in the community, not just the individual. Thus Laws concludes rightly that, for James, 'pleasure, and the desire for it, create division in man, and from this internal division comes external strife.' <sup>1029</sup> It may also be that the desires James speaks of are mainly for power and position within the community which would very naturally lead to conflict. <sup>1030</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1024</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 156.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1025</sup> This is James' normal use. See 3:13; 5:13, 14, 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1026</sup> Vlachos, James: Exegetical Guide, 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1027</sup> "Members" here refers to the battle within an individual's own self rather than between individuals in the community. See Moo, *The Letter of James*, 181. For the alternative see Martin, *James*, 144. However, he interprets the whole passage in light of the presence of "former Zealots" in the church for whom murder may well have been an option in the case of disagreements. But this seems unlikely and a metaphorical use of most of the terms in this passage is preferable.

Laws, *Epistle of James*, 168–69, notes Rom 7:5, 21-23 and similar concepts in 1QS. She also cites Philo (*Decal*. 151-53), Lucian and Cicero.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1029</sup> Laws, Epistle of James, 169.

<sup>1030</sup> McKnight, James, 323.

The next verse provides something of a conundrum as to how to punctuate it. 1031 It seems preferable to view it as having two parallel sentences, each with a cause and effect reflected in the structure below: 1032

4:2α ἐπιθυμεῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε φονεύετε

4:2b καὶ ζηλοῦτε καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε

4:2c οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ὑμᾶς

The NRSV helpfully smooths this out as: 'You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And 1033 you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have because you do not ask.'

This reading also provides an expanded explanation on the origin of community conflict. In 4:2a, desiring (ἐπιθυμέω) is equivalent to the ἡδονή of 4:1, reminding the readers of the deadly role of ἐπιθυμία in 1:14-15. Similarly, here, those who can't have what they desire end up murdering others metaphorically. In the parallel, in 4:2b the results of frustrated jealousy are fighting (μάχομαι) and warring (πολεμέω), which form an inclusio with the πόλεμοι and μάχαι of 4:1. In the parallel is a similar to the ἡδονή of 4:1. In the parallel is a similar to the hard to the

A new explanatory angle on the community conflict, faulty prayer, is begun in 4:2c and further explained in 4:3. Those who are causing this conflict through wrong desire have forgotten that God is the source of all gifts (1:17, cf. 1:5) and so they do not have because they

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<sup>1031</sup> The NA28 is as follows: ἐπιθυμεῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε, φονεύετε καὶ ζηλοῦτε καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν, μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε, οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ὑμᾶς. This seems to respect the use of the second καί, although one would also expect καί before the final οὐκ ἔχετε so even with the alternative punctuation there are abrupt transitions.

<sup>1032</sup> Commentators that agree with this punctuation are, inter alia, Hort, St. James, 89; Mayor, The Epistle of James, 136; Ropes, St. James, 254–55; Laws, Epistle of James, 169; Johnson, Letter of James, 277; Moo, The Letter of James, 182–83; Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 157; McKnight, James, 325–26. Among those who prefer the punctuation that is now in the NA28 are Davids, Epistle of James, 157–58; Allison, James, 602–3, although he can only make sense of the verse by following a poorly attested emendation of φονεύετε to φθονείτε (see fn. 70); and Varner, James, 276.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1033</sup> The second καί is less natural in this construction but is either conjunctive or "perhaps pleonastic." See Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1034</sup> Just as the "wars and fights" of 4:1 are metaphorical for community disorder, so is the murder. See Davids, *Epistle of James*, 159. This may reflect the Jesus tradition which defines hatred in terms of murder (Mt 5:21-22). See also 1 John 3:15.

<sup>1035</sup> McKnight, James, 328.

do not ask God in prayer, and even when they do ask (αἰτεῖτε), 1036 they do not receive (οὐ λαμβάνετε) because they ask wrongly – or with evil intent – (κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε) to spend on their passions (ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε). This brings us back to the origin of the conflict, which is none other than ἡδονή again, although combined with δαπανάω here, James has expanded his concern to include any wrongful pursuit of pleasure. 1037 As Johnson puts it, 'The gift-giving God is here manipulated as a kind of vending machine precisely for purposes of self-gratification...' 1038

Thus the outworking of the pseudo-wisdom described in 3:14-16 is a community torn by fights, wars and hatred (murder). Desire for position and pleasure is unchecked and instead of being a counter-cultural attractional community of the wise, they have become unrecognisable as the people of God and no longer live up to their missional identity. Having outlined their defective prayer and desires, James then shows that this leads to a stark evaluation in terms of their relationship with God, and to that I now turn.

## Friendship with God or the World (4:4-6)

James turns up the rhetorical heat on his hearers in this section, challenging them with their unfaithfulness to God and presenting them with a stark contrast between friendship with God and the world. The language James uses undoubtedly recalls the covenant language of the OT and reminds James' readers of their inherited purpose as God's people. As I will show here and in the final section, all this draws James' audience back to their role as God's people engaged in God's mission. But here, the focus is on his hearer's unfaithfulness.

 $^{1036}$  The switch to the active form of the verb recalls Jas 1:5 and Mt 7:7 which, as we have seen, is behind the former. Note also the use of  $\lambda \alpha \mu \beta \dot{\alpha} \nu \omega$  in both these references and Jas 4:3. There is no significant difference otherwise between the active and middle of  $\alpha i \tau \dot{\omega}$ . See *AGGSNT*, 301. Cf. Allison, *James*, 605.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1037</sup> Pheme Perkins, "James 3:16-4:3," *Int* 36, no. 3 (July 1, 1982): 285. She notes that "pleasure was widely held to be the cause of war and fighting..."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1038</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 278.

# A Maxim on Friendship

This is stated dramatically with the vocative 'adulteresses' (μοιχαλίδες), which as Edgar notes, is based on the OT tradition of Israel as a faithless wife in relation to God, particularly in the prophetic literature. <sup>1039</sup> In Hosea 3:1, the prophet is told to go and love again an 'adulteress, (LXX: μοιχαλίν) just as God loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods…' <sup>1040</sup> However, the most striking example is found in Ezekiel 23 where the two sisters, Oholah and Oholibah, Israel and Judah respectively, are called adulteresses (LXX 23:45: μοιχαλίδες) because of their unfaithfulness to God. <sup>1041</sup> These two passages seem to best explain James' thought, <sup>1042</sup> although Jesus' condemnation of his listeners as a 'wicked and adulterous (μοιχαλίς) generation' (Mt 12:39) may also be in the background. <sup>1043</sup> Thus, James drives home the unfaithfulness of his hearers to God, in effect saying, you are 'renegades to your vows.' <sup>1044</sup> He has, as Davids notes, 'broken off analysis and is now preaching repentance.' <sup>1045</sup>

A second rhetorical question in 4:4a draws on what James assumes is common knowledge (οὐκ οἴδατε...;), namely that friendship with the world (ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου) is enmity with God (ἔχθρα τοῦ θεοῦ). Johnson queries how James' readers would know this since there is no obvious parallel in the OT, Hellenistic Jewish writings or even Greco-Roman moral

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1039</sup> Edgar, *Social Setting*, 102–3. The majority of commentators agree with Edgar. Uniquely, Schmitt argues that LXX Proverbs 30:20 is the source of this imagery. See John J. Schmitt, "You Adulteresses: The Image in James 4:4," *NovT* 28, no. 4 (October 1, 1986): 327–37. However, he bases this on the fact that Israel is a masculine entity and so cannot be referred to as an adulteress. Yet this clearly misses the point of the metaphor and is rightly rejected by Edgar.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1040</sup> For further connections with Hosea, see Jobes, "Greek Minor Prophets," 154–55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1041</sup> They chase after 'lovers' in the form of the Assyrians (23:5-10) and the Babylonians (23:11-21).

<sup>1042</sup> Both Edgar and Jobes suggest that Malachi 3:5 is in the background here because of thematic parallels with James, such as a concern for the widow and orphan (Jas 1:27) and the day-labourer (5:6). Jobes also points out that the LXX has the feminine plural μοιχαλίδας where the MT has the masculine plural adulterers (מְנָאֵפָּיִם). See Edgar, Social Setting, 103; and Jobes, "Greek Minor Prophets," 155–56. However, the relevance of this to James 4:4 is doubtful. In Malachi, the adulterers (male or female) are not metaphorical but real, as are all the other kinds of people in the verse facing judgment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1043</sup> Martin, *James*, 148. See also Mt 16:4 and Mark 8:38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1044</sup> Ropes, St. James, 260.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1045</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 160.

literature. However, noting the similar language in 1 John 2:15 (but with love instead of friendship), he supposes the existence of a shared Christian tradition.  $^{1046}$  Yet there is a clear expectation in Scripture for God's people to display loyalty to him as over against the surrounding cultural norms and order (here the  $\kappa \delta \sigma \mu \sigma \varsigma$ ),  $^{1047}$  and the use of friendship language portrays this powerfully. As Batten notes, 'friends were expected to bear unparalleled loyalty for one another; they should be of "one soul" instead of "double-souled"; they should share all things and even die for one another.  $^{1048}$  Further, they have already been reminded that a key exemplar for them, Abraham, was called a friend of God ( $\phi i \lambda \sigma \varsigma \theta \epsilon \sigma i$ , 2:23). The same sentiment is then repeated in a conditional statement (4:4b), which Hartin describes as 'the pulsating heart of the letter'  $^{1049}$  and which Batten designates a maxim which adds to its force.  $^{1050}$  This contrast then is critical to the life of the community.

In this way James presents a stark choice to the audience: will they be friends with God or the world? Friendship with God or the world will ultimately determine their identity and way of living, which we have already seen is a pertinent challenge to diaspora existence. A choice has to made since the two are incompatible, which may echo Jesus' contrast between loving God and mammon. However, it is important to note that, as we saw in chapter four, friendship with the world is not being used as an impermeable boundary marker to isolate the community. James is not suggesting that his audience must live as a sectarian community apart

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1046</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 279; Batten suggests that this is another example of the re-working of the Jesus tradition, this time the logion in Mt 6:24 where Jesus states that it is impossible to serve two masters. She appeals to 2 Clement which links serving two masters to friendship with the world. See Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 161–65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1047</sup> Κόσμος appears 5x in Jas (1:27; 2:5; 3:6; 4:4x2). See Darian R. Lockett, "Strong and Weak Lines: Permeable Boundaries between Church and Culture in the Letter of James," *RevExp* 108, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 395, who defines this as "the entire cultural value system or world order."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1048</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 175.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1049</sup> Hartin, *James*, 212.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1050</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 154–55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1051</sup> Mt 6:24//Lk 16:13. See Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 161–65. Both are strong contrasts and as she notes, love of mammon is very much part of the world system for James. Moreover, 2 Clement combines these two sayings (2 Clem 6:1-5).

from the rest of society, but rather must not allow the values that were prevalent in society (i.e. the  $\kappa \delta \sigma \mu \sigma \varsigma$ ) to govern their behaviour. In the immediate context these are indicated by the vices of wisdom 'from below' (3:15-16) and the community strife displayed in fights and wars produced by envy and rivalry (4:1-3). 1052

I will return to the missional implications of the two opposing friendships but first I will explore how James underlines this important point through two citations from 'Scripture.' The first, introduced through  $\dot{\eta}$  γραφ $\dot{\eta}$  λέγει (4:5), is still an intractable conundrum for scholars, <sup>1053</sup> partly because of the grammatical ambiguity of the text but also because it is unrecognisable as a direct quote from any OT Scripture or existing apocryphon. <sup>1054</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to go into all the different solutions to the source and grammatical issues, <sup>1055</sup> so I shall briefly explain why I tentatively follow Allison's solution on source and meaning. <sup>1056</sup>

# Proof from 'Scripture'

Most commentators accept that the actual citation is πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὁ κατώκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν<sup>1057</sup> which is not found anywhere else in the Greek Bible. A fairly large number accept that the 'Scripture' cited is from a lost source, and a reasonably strong case has been

<sup>1053</sup> Popkes admits "sheer despair" over this verse. See Wiard Popkes, "James and Scripture: An Exercise in Intertextuality," *NTS* 45, no. 02 (1999): 227.

Allison, "Eldad and Modad"; cf. Bauckham, "Spirit of God," 2008, who proposes the same solution for the source but not the final meaning.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1052</sup> Lockett, Purity and Worldview, 117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1054</sup> This has led some to posit that 4:5 in fact contains no citation but two rhetorical questions. So Sophie Laws, "Does Scripture Speak in Vain: A Reconsideration of James Iv. 5," NTS 20, no. 2 (1974): 210–15; cf. Laws, Epistle of James, 174–78. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, Brother of Jesus, Friend of God: Studies in the Letter of James (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 282. However,  $\dot{\eta}$  γραφ $\dot{\eta}$  +  $\dot{\lambda}$ έγω introduces a recognised citation in Jas 2:23 and always elsewhere in the NT, so this solution is not followed by many. It also lacks the normal particle  $\mu\dot{\eta}$  for questions expecting a negative answer. See Davids, Epistle of James, 162.

There are several full-length articles on this verse. See Laws, "Does Scripture Speak in Vain"; Lewis J. Prockter, "James 4:4-6: Midrash on Noah," *NTS* 35, no. 4 (October 1, 1989): 625–27; Craig B. Carpenter, "James 4.5 Reconsidered," *NTS* 47, no. 02 (2001): 189–205; Bauckham, "Spirit of God," 2008; Allison, "Eldad and Modad"; J. William Johnston, "James 4:5 and the Jealous Spirit," *BibSac* 170, no. 679 (July 1, 2013): 344–60. lose Allison, "Eldad and Modad"; cf. Bauckham, "Spirit of God," 2008, who proposes the same solution for the

 $<sup>^{1057}</sup>$  The NA28 extends the citation to include 4:6a μείζονα δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν; but see the SBL GNT for the above text as the citation. Either way, it does not significantly alter the flow of the argument or help to determine the citation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1058</sup> For a list of scriptures posited by others and the difficulties with them that seem to rule them out, see Allison, *James*, 615–17. Most popular are LXX Ps 41:2 and Gen 6:3, 5. For the latter, see Prockter, "Midrash on Noah."

made by Bauckham, <sup>1059</sup> and subsequently Allison, that this source is the lost apocryphon, *Eldad and Modad*. <sup>1060</sup> This work is named after the two characters in Numbers 11:24-29 who do not go with the seventy elders to the tabernacle with Moses to take on leadership, but God still puts some of Moses' spirit on them and they prophesy. Joshua, out of jealousy for Moses asks him to stop them and Moses' reply could possibly have led to such a citation (Num 11:29). <sup>1061</sup> Several known works testify to the development of traditions around this narrative. Notably, the Shepherd of Hermas contains a citation from *Eldad and Modad* (Herm. Vis. 2.3.4) and elsewhere contains remarkably similar language to part of the citation in James. <sup>1062</sup> While it is, of course, impossible to prove the link, there are other strong circumstantial indications that such a work contains the lost passage cited by James. <sup>1063</sup>

However, this does not solve the grammatical problems as is evident since Bauckham and Allison reach different conclusions as to what the text means. The main grammatical questions surrounding the verse are essentially to do with determining the subject and object of  $\dot{\epsilon}\pi i\pi o\theta \epsilon \tilde{\imath}$  and their referents. Difficulties arise because  $\tau \delta \pi \nu \epsilon \tilde{\imath} \mu \alpha$  can either be the subject or object and can refer to either the human spirit or God's Spirit, while  $\pi \rho \delta \varsigma \varphi \theta \delta \nu \sigma \nu$  can be taken adverbially or can indicate a goal. Thus, God is the implied subject who longs jealously for the spirit/Spirit which he made to dwell in us, or the subject is the spirit/Spirit which he [God] made to dwell in us and desires enviously or is opposed to/abhors envy. 1064

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1059</sup> Bauckham, "Spirit of God," 2008. This originally appears in 2004 as Richard Bauckham, "The Spirit of God in Us Loathes Envy: James 4:5," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honour of James D. G. Dunn*, ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker, and Stephen C. Barton (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 270–81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1060</sup> Allison notes that this idea originated with Friedrich Spitta, 1896. Cited in Allison, "Eldad and Modad," 113. <sup>1061</sup> See Allison, "Eldad and Modad," 124–25.

<sup>1062</sup> Herm. Mand. 3:1 has the phrase τὸ πνεῦμα, ὁ ὁ Θεὸς κατώκισεν ἐν τῆ σαρκὶ ταύτη. This connection is strengthened by the fact that κατοικίζω is a hapax in the NT. See Bauckham, "Spirit of God," 2008, 431.

<sup>1063</sup> Allison, "Eldad and Modad," 120–26. The circumstantial evidence includes the following: the Numbers narrative occurs at the burial site of those who had craved (Num 11:34) which matches Jas 4:1-3; Eldad and Modad were held up as examples of humility and subsequent exaltation in the rabbinic tradition and moreover in the patristic tradition they were recipients of "grace" as in Jas 4:6; other early Christian writers use φθόνος not ζηλος to refer to Joshua.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1064</sup> Each of these options have been proposed. See Allison, *James*, 613–15.

Problems arise with each interpretation, including as to how they fit within the overall argument of the passage. The main difficulty with the first option is that this requires God to experience φθόνος a wholly negative quality always. <sup>1065</sup> In the LXX, God's zeal is always referred to with ζῆλος and cognates and so such a meaning is highly unlikely. <sup>1066</sup> However, ἐπιποθέω generally designates a strong positive emotion, nearly always describing the intense longing of a person for someone or something else, including for God. <sup>1067</sup> As Fricker puts it, 'The phrase πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ ultimately forms an association of contradictory terms... The formulation is inherently ambiguous.' <sup>1068</sup>

We are left then with relying on the context and flow of the argument to provide a solution. Whatever James cites here must provide 'scriptural' support for the previous thought(s), especially the danger of being a friend of the world. It must also contrast with 4:6a ('But he gives greater grace') and in some way cohere with the next quotation from Proverbs 3:34. 1069 Since we have seen that envy is central to friendship with the world, the citation may simply provide a warning against the envy that the human spirit experiences left to its own devices. 1070 Human envy would also provide the expected contrast to God's greater grace, so that Allison's translation for 4:5 seems to fit well: 'Or do you think that to no purpose the Scripture says: "the [human] spirit which [God] caused to dwell in us desires strongly towards

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1065</sup> It is rarely used in the LXX and is always negative, as is the case with Hellenistic writings. See Johnson, *Brother of Jesus*, 189–95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1066</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1067</sup> See, e.g., LXX Ps 41:2 cf. Ps 83:3; 118:20, 131, 174. In the NT see Rom 1:11; 2 Cor 5:2; 9:14; Phil 1:8; 2:26; 1 Thess 3:6; 2 Tim 1:4; 1 Pet 2:2. It is also used of God's longing or care for Israel (LXX Deut 32:11; Jeremiah 13:14) although in the latter he refuses to do so. The only place the context suggests this might be a negative desire is in Ps 61:11 and in Sir 25.21, although it is the context itself that determines this.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1068</sup> 'Le syntagme πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ forme en définitive une association de termes contradictoires ... La formulation est en soi ambiguë' (my translation). See Denis Fricker, "La Priere de Demande et Le Desir de Dieu Dans L'Epitre de Jacques," in *Cahier de La Revue Des Sciences Religieuses*, 2012, 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1069</sup> Allison notes that in Rabbinic tradition, Eldad and Modad were rewarded for their humility, which was the reason that they didn't go up to the Tabernacle. This of course fits well with what follows. See Allison, "Eldad and Modad," 120–21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1070</sup> This coheres with the possible development of Num 11:29 in Eldad and Modad in which Moses scolds Joshua for showing jealousy on his behalf. As Allison also points out, the context of the story is one of strong cravings (Num 11:4, 34) which aroused God's anger so that many died. See Allison, "Eldad and Modad," 121–22, 126.

envy"?'<sup>1071</sup> In other words, James argues, as humans our natural tendency to envy puts us at enmity with God, and therefore requires the greater grace which God gives (μείζονα δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν). Thus, if James' audience recognise their envy, the grace to overcome it is available to them.<sup>1072</sup>

James follows this with the quotation from Proverbs 3:34, <sup>1073</sup> introduced by διὸ λέγει, concluding his argument in one section and also grounding what follows with a 'kind of Hebrew climactic parallel' since James holds back the condition which is needed to receive God's grace, namely humility, until the end of the verse and this then becomes central to the next section. <sup>1074</sup> The citation encapsulates two common and often conjoined themes in Scripture, that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν). <sup>1075</sup> A further parallelism pervades this section as a whole, matching friendship with the world with human envy (4:5) and pride (4:6b), and its implicit opposite with God's greater grace (4:6a) which is given to the humble (4:6c).

In this section then, we have seen that James challenges his audience to consider their covenantal relationship with God in prophetic language. Through unchecked desire and envy, the hearers have in effect become adulteresses who have broken commitment to God and have become friends of the world. The dangers of this are exposed through an appeal to 'scriptures' that warn against envy and divided loyalties but at the same time, there is the possibility of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1071</sup> Allison, *James*, 622; cf. Jackson-McCabe who follows a similar argument but translates 4:5-6a as follows: "Or do you think that the Scripture speaks in vain? The spirit which he [i.e. God] made to dwell in us longs to the point of envy... but he [i.e. God] gives a greater gift. Therefore it says..." See Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 206. <sup>1072</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 164.

<sup>1073</sup> James follows the LXX (only changing κύριος to θέος) rather than the MT. See Dibelius, *James*, 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1074</sup> McKnight, *James*, 340–41. Interestingly, McKnight arrives at the same translation for Jas 4:5 as above but views it as a paraphrase of Prov 3:34. However, one wonders why James would paraphrase the verse in such a confusing way before citing it.

<sup>1075</sup> God's resistance to the proud is commonplace. As well as enemies of God's people, such as Pharaoh (Ex 15:6-10; cf. 3 Macc 6:4) and Haman (LXX Esther 13:12), the arrogant in general are also said to be humbled throughout the Psalms (11x), frequently in Sirach, and in Isaiah (x4). See, e.g., Isa 1:25 – ὑπερηφάνους ταπεινώσω). Likewise, the raising up of the humble is frequent. I will explore this more in the next section. but obvious examples include Gideon (Judg 6:15) and David (1 Sam 18:23). See also Ps 33:19; 101:18. For both themes together as in Prov 3:34, see Ps 17:28; 137:6; Mt 23:13; 1 Pet 5:5-6, cf. 1 Clem 30:2.

receiving God's grace. Since this is reserved for the humble, the ground is laid for the call to repentance in the final section. However, before I consider this, I will explore the missional importance of the friendships that James contrasts here in his maxim.

#### A Missional Perspective on Friendship

From a missional perspective, James continues the theme already begun with the contrast between wisdom from above and wisdom from below. Friendship with God reinforces missional identity, precisely because friendship requires being one in purpose with God. As we have already seen, God's people shaped by God's laws are to be a 'contrast community that lives in the sight of the nations.' Friendship with the world puts this missional identity in jeopardy because it leads to community strife and blurs the difference in nature with the rest of society and therefore reduces the potential for attraction and witness to faith. All that is symptomatic of envy and pride is antithetical to friendship with God and therefore God's grace is provided as the antidote.

The need for grace is repeated twice in one verse, so is significant for James. As Allison notes, 'at least rhetorically, James has not given up on those here addressed.' James models his own missional concern for his audience (that is amplified further in the next section) and builds on the picture with which he started his discussion about wisdom. God is the generous giving God who provides what is needed to fulfil his calling, whether wisdom from above or grace. With this platform, James launches his appeal for repentance, emphasising humility and submission to God and thus brings the community back in line with its missional purpose.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1076</sup> Glanville, "A Missional Reading of Deuteronomy," 138.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1077</sup> The inevitable failure of Israel to be this "clouded" their witness, as Granville notes. See Glanville, "A Missional Reading of Deuteronomy," 144. He refers to Deut 9:6 but this is even clearer in Deut 31:16-21, 27-29. <sup>1078</sup> Allison, *James*, 622.

#### The Call to Repentance (4:7-10)

Varner describes this section as the hortatory peak of the letter with its dramatic and dense use of imperatives. 1079 The ten imperatives that follow in 'staccato fashion' 1080 can be grouped together helpfully to see the flow of James' appeal to repentance and to provide an outline for what follows. 1081 The first imperative forms a thematic *inclusio* of submissive humility to God with the last imperative (4:7, 10), but this requires certain responses that are laid out in the intervening exhortations. The second and third exhortations follow closely on from the first, contrasting one another but also are accompanied by promises and so together can be treated as one section (4:7-8a). The fourth and fifth imperatives (4:8b-c) are linked since both are accompanied by vocatives and use well-known metaphors for repentance, and this is accompanied by the mourning that is urged in 4:9 (using three imperatives all in quick succession and a third person imperative) to give the next section (4:8b-9). The final verse (4:10) concludes the passage and leads to more direct missional reflection as to how this restores the missional identity of the hearers.

#### Submitting to God and Resisting the Devil (4:7-8a)

This section contains two exhortations relating to God which sandwich one concerning the devil. These follow on from, and are inferred from (οὖν), what James has previously stated. Since God resists the proud, James' hearers should submit (themselves) to God (ὑποτάγητε<sup>1082</sup> οὖν τῷ θεῷ). This means to live in line with an established order, which here 'is the order of God, the sovereign creator, covenant God, and redeemer in Christ.' The corollary to this is to 'resist the devil and he will flee from you' (ἀντίστητε δὲ τῷ διαβόλω καὶ φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1079</sup> Varner, New Perspective, 156.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1080</sup> Martin, *James*, 152. He also suggests that the use of aorist imperatives stresses the "urgency of the message."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1081</sup> I am following Varner here although modifying slightly his grouping. See Varner, *New Perspective*, 155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1082</sup> The imperative is an aorist passive but may have a middle sense, so "submit yourselves" (NRSV). See Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 142.

<sup>1083</sup> McKnight, James, 346.

which draws on military terminology. <sup>1084</sup> This portrays the exhortation as a cosmic battle with evil forces, a common theme in other related texts. <sup>1085</sup> A brief consideration of some of this literature will be fruitful for missional reflection.

In the NT, 1 Peter 5:5-10 is particularly close to our text with a similar call to be humble based on Proverbs 3:34 (1 Pet 5:5) <sup>1086</sup> and the promise of exaltation through God's grace (5:10), as well as the imperative to resist (ἀντίστητε) the devil (5:9). The elaboration in 1 Peter of the destructive power of the devil, only hinted at in James, may point to the devil's role in community strife which divides and causes some to fall away from the faith and become enemies of God, the equivalent of being 'devoured' by the devil (1 Pet 5:8-9). <sup>1087</sup> The life of the community, and its place in God's mission, is dependent on resistance to the devil, not giving in to his temptations, or submitting to his 'order' rather than God's.

The promise that the devil φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν is unique to James in the NT, <sup>1088</sup> but notable parallels are found in the Shepherd of Hermas <sup>1089</sup> and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. <sup>1090</sup> Particularly close is T. Naph. 8:4 which likewise has ὁ διάβολος φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν. It is intriguing that there is a strong connection in this document between resisting the devil and God being glorified among the nations through those being addressed (καὶ θεὸς δοξασθήσεται δι' ὑμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι), part of a fundamental trajectory of God's mission to the nations. Through seeing God's glory, the nations come to know God and worship him, the very reason why God makes himself known. <sup>1091</sup> Significantly, in the above verse, the devil will flee

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1084</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 283, cf. LSJ, 140.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1085</sup> McKnight, *James*, 348. He notes Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Wis 2:24.

<sup>1086</sup> This is identical to James' citation, following the LXX rather than the MT and substituting ὁ θεός for κύριος.
1087 Davids. Epistle of James, 166.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1088</sup> See the previous chapter for the connections here with the book of Job and the Testament of Job.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1089</sup> Herm. Mand. 12.2.4; 12.4.7; 12.5.2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1090</sup> See T. Iss. 7:7; T. Naph. 8:4; T. Dan 5:1; T. Benj. 5:2. DeSilva, *Jewish Teachers*, 249, notes that the concept is also present in the Testament of Job (see the previous chapter). Apart from the Testament of Naphtali, the other references prefer the synonym Beliar to the devil or speak of unclean spirits.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1091</sup> Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 37; Wright, *The Mission of God*, 129. This, according to Wright, "is the mainspring of our mission to make him known."

if the hearers do good (ἐὰν ἐργάσησθε τὸ καλόν). <sup>1092</sup> In James, we have seen in the previous section how good deeds are the demonstration of wisdom and integral to the community's missional identity (cf. Mt 5:14-16). Doing good naturally relates to submitting to God but the additional element of resisting the devil through doing good adds a layer to the missional significance of this cosmic battle.

In the Shepherd of Hermas there are also close parallels that seem to be a development of the thought in James. <sup>1093</sup> In the Mandates, Hermas is told to not fear the devil and to resist him (ἀντισταθῆτε) with the result that the devil 'will flee from you' (φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν, Herm. Mand. 12.4.7; 12.5.2). Moreover, evil desire (ἡ ἐπιθυμία ἡ πονηρά), a daughter of the devil, will also flee (φεύξεται ἀπὸ σοῦ) if it is resisted (ἀνθίστημι, Herm. Mand. 12.2.2-4). This again points to the devilish origin of evil desire and thus of community conflict and all its concomitant results which mar its attractional nature.

There may also be a case that James is dependent here on the temptation narrative in the Gospels, which ends with the devil leaving Jesus (Mt 4:1-22//Lk 4:1-13).<sup>1094</sup> M. John-Patrick O'Connor notes that in these accounts, Jesus resists the temptations of the devil who, as a direct result, abruptly departs.<sup>1095</sup> We have already seen that James' use of πειρασμός would recall to Christ-followers Jesus' endurance in his testing and his successful resistance to the devil's temptation.<sup>1096</sup> This would further confirm this link and remind the audience that resisting the devil is integral to the successful fulfilment of their commission to faithfully live for God, just as Jesus did.

 $<sup>^{1092}</sup>$  A similar connection is made in T. Benj. 5:2 although it is the 'unclean spirits' that will flee (ἐὰν ἦτε ἀγαθοποιοῦντες, καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα πνεύματα φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν).

<sup>1093</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 284.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1094</sup> M. John-Patrick O'Connor, "The Devil Will Flee: James 4:7, the Jesus Tradition, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *JBL* 138, no. 4 (2019): 883–97. He suggests that in fact Jesus' temptation tradition may be the common source behind all the other literature.

<sup>1095</sup> O'Connor, "Devil Will Flee," 895.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1096</sup> See the previous chapter of this study.

In the literature reviewed here then, a common theme is that the devil is exposed as the one who opposes God's purposes and plans and always attempts to cause God's people to deviate from those purposes. Resistance to the devil is thus essential to maintaining a missional identity and purpose and so the cosmic battle that James alludes to here is not just about individual salvation but rather the mission of God is at stake.

Returning to our text, the next imperative (ἐγγίσατε τῷ θεῷ) is also accompanied by a promise that highlights the nearness of God to his people (καὶ ἐγγιεῖ ὑμῖν, 4:8a),  $^{1097}$  a distinctive of the relationship God has with his people. We have already seen how in Deuteronomy 4 Israel's wisdom was to display God's greatness to the nations, but it also demonstrated his nearness to them in contrast with the other nations (Deut 4:7).  $^{1098}$  Moreover, this recalls the 'prophetic summons' to return to God and '[re]-establish their covenant relationship with him,'  $^{1099}$  something particularly apt for James' audience at this point, who have just been called 'adulteresses' (4:4). Thus James calls them back to another distinctive characteristic of God's people that directly bears upon the attractional qualities they are to show.

# Repentance and Mourning (4:8b-9)

Having exhorted his audience to draw near to God, James then makes it clear that this requires repentance and mourning. The next two vocatives are particularly stark. The recipients are 'sinners' ( $\dot{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\omega\lambda o\dot{i}$ ) and 'double-souled' ( $\delta\dot{i}\psi\nu\chi\sigma i$ ). The first would be particularly shocking

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1097</sup> This forms an inclusio with 4:7a so is better taken with 4:7 than 4:8b. See the structure in Varner, *New Perspective*, 155.

<sup>1098</sup> This states, "For what sort of great nation has a god for itself so near to them (ἐγγίζων αὐτοῖς) as the Lord our God is in everything whenever we invoke him?" Cf. Jer 23:23. See also Wright, *The Mission of God*, 379. He notes that "Israel would have an intimacy with God and a quality of social justice that no other nation could match." These combined would enhance their reputation among the surrounding nations. If God's nearness is in view here, in the next chapter we will see that James very much emphasises social justice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1099</sup> McKnight, *James*, 349–50. See, e.g., Hosea 12:7; Zeph 3:2 (here the city of Jerusalem is remonstrated for not coming near to God).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1100</sup> "A reproach meant to startle and sting." See Ropes, St. James, 269.

for James' audience, <sup>1101</sup> since it categorises them as those who had gone astray (cf. 5:19), even 'separated from God and outside his eschatological order.' <sup>1102</sup> To then be called  $\delta i \psi \nu \chi \sigma i$  recalls the wavering commitment of those with divided hearts (1:8). Such people want to be friends with God and friends with the world, something James has ruled out (4:4). <sup>1103</sup> Together, these vocatives leave the audience in no doubt as to their need to repent.

The appropriate response then, is to cleanse their hands (καθαρίσατε χεῖρας) and purify their hearts (ἀγνίσατε καρδίας), terms that draw on 'the language of purity and of the cult'<sup>1104</sup> but are intended here with a moral sense. <sup>1105</sup> The pairing of hands with hearts is reminiscent of Psalm 24:4 and covers external behaviour and internal attitude. 'In this way James is addressing both the inward disposition and the outward moral and social concern.' <sup>1106</sup> In fact, if we include the response of weeping (4:9), Edgar points out that 'the author invokes activity in all three zones of human personality: purposeful interaction, symbolized by the hands, emotion-fused thought, symbolized by the heart, and self-expressive speech, symbolized by the mouth (here, weeping).' <sup>1107</sup> In other words, a whole-person response is required of the δίψυχοι. <sup>1108</sup>

This is quickly followed by three imperatives that together describe an appropriate response to God's judgment (4:9). The hearers are to 'lament, mourn and weep'

<sup>1101</sup> According to E. P. Sanders, behind ἀμαρτωλοί stands the Hebrew השעים, which refers to the 'wicked' who 'betrayed the God who redeemed Israel and gave them his law.' See Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, 177–78. See further K.H. Rengstorf, 'ἀμαρτωλός' *TDNT*, I, 317-33. Note, for example, Luke 7:37 and see also France's comments on Mt 9:10, its first use in the NT, in France, *Matthew*, 353.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1102</sup> Edgar, Social Setting, 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1103</sup> Martin, *James*, 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1104</sup> Hartin, *James*, 215. See, e.g., Ex 19:10; 30:19-21; Num 8:21; Jos 3:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1105</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 166–67. See, e.g., Is 1:16; Jer 4:14; Job 22:30; Ps 18:20, 24; Ps 26:6.

<sup>1106</sup> Lockett, Purity and Worldview, 136.

<sup>1107</sup> Edgar, Social Setting, 195. He bases this on Malina's model which he explains earlier (166-167). See further Bruce J. Malina, The New Testament World: Insights From Cultural Anthropology, Rev. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 73–77. He describes three zones that "comprise the nonintrospective makeup of human beings." These "are used to describe human behaviour throughout the Bible..." These zones are the zone of "emotion-fused thought" which encompasses the eyes and the heart; the zone of "self expressive speech" described in terms of mouth and ears; and, the zone of "purposeful action" which is described most commonly in terms of hands, arms and feet.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1108</sup> Edgar, Social Setting, 167.

(ταλαιπωρήσατε καὶ πενθήσατε καὶ κλαύσατε). In the LXX, ταλαιπωρέω<sup>1109</sup> generally expresses the hardship or even destruction Israel experienced because of God's judgment, which is often accompanied by mourning.<sup>1110</sup> As a pair, πενθέω and κλαίω express deep distress, such as David for Absalom (2 Sam 19:2) and Nehemiah over the state of Jerusalem (Neh 1:4).

James continues to pile up the repentance language, calling for their laughter to be turned into mourning (ὁ γέλως ὑμῶν εἰς πένθος μετατραπήτω) and for their joy to be turned to dejection (ἡ χαρὰ εἰς κατήφειαν). The first element calls to mind the warnings in the OT of feasts being turned into mourning. Laughter in this case may call to mind the foolish who have 'declared their independence from God (Prov 10:23; Sir 21:20; 27:13) that may also draw on Jesus' stark warning to the rich and satisfied: 'Woe to you who laugh (οἱ γελῶντες) now, for you will mourn and weep' (πενθήσετε καὶ κλαύσετε; Lk 6:25). Our author sees mourning and weeping as the indications of true humility and the prerequisite for God's restoration.

The second element of joy to gloom  $(\kappa \alpha \tau \eta \varphi \epsilon i \alpha)^{1115}$  is illustrated well by its use in the commentaries of Josephus and Philo on the story of Joseph. Both speak of the  $\kappa \alpha \tau \eta \varphi \epsilon i \alpha$  that Joseph's brothers felt at their ill treatment of him and their subsequent repentance and recognition that God was punishing them justly (Josephus A.J. 2.108 and Philo Ios. 170). Joy to gloom, then, is the appropriate response for the  $\dot{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\omega\lambda o \dot{i}$  and the  $\delta \dot{i}\psi\nu\chi o i$  as the full enormity

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1109</sup> This is another NT hapax legomenon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1110</sup> Ps 38:6; Jer 9:18-20; Joel 1:10; Mic 2:4; Zech 11:1-3.

<sup>1111</sup> Allison, James, 631. See Amos 8:10; 1 Macc 1:39-40; Tob 2:6. Interestingly, the reference in Tobit is a quotation of the prophet Amos but shows more similarity with James. Where Amos speaks of their songs being turned into lamentation (πάσας τὰς ἀδὰς ὑμῶν εἰς θρῆνον), Tobit has "merriments turned into lamentation" (πᾶσαι αἱ εὐφροσύναι ὑμῶν εἰς θρῆνον). This ends with Tobit weeping (ἔκλαυσα), the response that James has called for.

1112 Davids, Epistle of James, 168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1113</sup> Allison, *James*, 631. Since James will shortly attack the rich (4:13-5:6) the dependence here is quite likely.

<sup>1114</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 286, also thinks James has the Lukan beatitude in mind in Lk 6:21: 'Blessed are you who weep now for you will laugh' (μακάριοι οἱ κλαίοντες νῦν ὅτι γελάσετε), but this is not as clear.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1115</sup> This is a biblical hapax legomenon but is occurs commonly in other literature. See BDAG, 533. It occurs 14x in Josephus and 15x in Philo.

of their wrong-doing sinks in.<sup>1116</sup> This response is fully in accord with an understanding of God's mission to redeem the world and effectively realigns James' hearers to this purpose.

#### Humiliation and Exaltation (4:10)

James draws together the call to repentance, and indeed the whole section, with a final exhortation for his hearers to humble themselves before God (ταπεινώθητε ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου) with the promise that he will exalt them (ὑψώσει ὑμᾶς). This recalls that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the ταπεινός (4:6) – and would also remind of their exaltation in 1:9 – so James brings his audience full circle. God will lift up the humble who repent, not the proud and envious who divide the community.

Scriptural tradition is certainly behind this exhortation (as I noted above)<sup>1117</sup> and points to the very nature of God, who is 'the one who sets on high the lowly' (LXX: τὸν ποιοῦντα ταπεινοὺς εἰς ὕψος, Job 5:11) and the one who both 'brings low the high tree and makes high the low tree' (ὁ ταπεινῶν ξύλον ὑψηλὸν καὶ ὑψῶν ξύλον ταπεινόν, Ezek 17:24).<sup>1118</sup> It is in fact the lowly that God often chooses to carry out his purposes. For example, Israel is chosen as 'the smallest of all nations' (Deut 7:7) and Gideon, who is from the least clan of his tribe (ταπεινοτέρα, Judg 6:15), is chosen to redeem Israel from the Midianites. David acknowledges that he is an ἀνὴρ ταπεινός (1 Sam 18:23) yet is the one chosen for kingship. Hannah, the barren and despised wife, was raised up by God to be the mother of Samuel and praises him as the one who 'brings low and also exalts' (ταπεινοῖ καὶ ἀνυψοῖ, 1 Sam 2:7). Further examples might be adduced but these suffice to show this pattern.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1116</sup> This should not be seen as a permanent state but as an appropriately repentant response. Ropes over does it when he suggests that James is calling for "sober earnestness as the proper mood of a Christian... The writer was a sober man... in a word, a Puritan." Ropes, *St. James*, 272.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1117</sup> See the comments on 4:6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1118</sup> The 'trees' here represent the nations. See also Job 22:29; Ps 149:4.

This theme is continued in the NT, beginning with God looking favourably on the lowliness of Mary (τὴν ταπείνωσιν, Lk 1:48) who praises God because he has scattered the proud (ὑπερηφάνους) and lifted up the lowly (ὕψωσεν ταπεινούς, Lk 1:51-52). Particularly resonant is Jesus' teaching that 'all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted (πᾶς ὁ ὑψῶν ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται, καὶ ὁ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται, 14:11//Mt 23:12; Lk 18:14). And perhaps most emblematical of all is Jesus' own example, which is at the centre of the divine plan of redemption and results in his supreme exaltation (Phil 2:6-11). In fact, this ties in closely to Jesus' exemplarity as 'humble in heart' (ταπεινὸς τῆ καρδία, Mt 11:29) and linked with his meekness explored above.

A clear missional theme emerges from God's exaltation of those who humble themselves. While it reflects God's own gracious character, it also clearly demonstrates the power and greatness of God compared to human power and compared to other gods. This is seen for example in the Exodus narrative which is not just about the redemption of Israel but also about God's will to be known in the sight of the nations as the one true God who redeems. Because God does such a mighty act with such a weak nation, humbling a 'superpower' in the process, it truly points to his greatness and reveals who he is to the watching world. Paul makes this same point to the Corinthians, reminding his readers that in fact God

<sup>1119</sup> Notably, this passage is set in the context of community strife (ἐριθεία) and provides the basis for Paul's call for humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη) among the church (2:3). See further Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 186–87, who notes that Christ shows the opposite "mindset" to those acting for selfish purposes.

Notably, then, Jesus in Matthew epitomises and teaches two key traits emphasised in James: meek ( $\pi \rho \alpha \ddot{\upsilon} \varsigma$ , Mt 11:29; 5:5; 21:5) and lowly ( $\tau \alpha \pi \epsilon \iota \nu \dot{\varsigma} \varsigma$ , Mt 11:29; 23:12). These two themes appear in James in 1:21; 3:13 and 1:9-10; 4:6, 10 respectively, with the audience encouraged to take on these attributes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1121</sup> Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known*, 30, 41; Wright, *The Mission of God*, 75–77. Wright points out the progression from Pharaoh not knowing YHWH (Exod 5:2) to Israel knowing Yahweh through his deliverance (6:6-8) to all the surrounding nations trembling at Yahweh's redemptive power (15:14-16) because he has defeated the gods of Egypt (12:12).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1122</sup> Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known*, 54–55. As he remarks, "there is no hint in the poem that Israel contributed to the Lord's victory" and as he points out, even the Egyptians recognise that God is the one who fights for Israel (Exod 14:25).

chooses the weak, low and despised in order to take away any grounds for human claims to wisdom, power or glory which are exclusively his (1 Cor 1:26-29).

In the following chapter we will again encounter this theme of reversal, particularly in regard to the rich and poor (Jas 1:9-11), but the point here is that those who are humble are the ones who are positioned to be used by God in his redemptive purposes, and that these purposes include his will to be known and his name to be praised because of his incomparable wisdom and might. This is demonstrated through his choice and exaltation of the humble so that James' rebuke, which the whole section has been leading up to, is meant to lead to repentance and realign his audience with God's purposes.

#### **Summary**

In this chapter, I have focused on the importance James places on his audience receiving wisdom. In the first section we saw how God is a generous giver and so can be approached with faith to ask for wisdom. As a gift from God, wisdom is not just given to enhance the life of its recipients but has an attractional nature that draws in others to seek God. In contrast, those who dispute and are double-souled not only do not receive anything from God but also vacillate in their commitment to God and deny the faith they profess so that they affect detrimentally their missional identity.

In the second section we saw in more detail the way wisdom from above is attractive through the fruit it displays and that, in contrast, wisdom from below brings nothing but strife and jealousy. In fact, the fruit of this pseudo-wisdom is disorder and evil deeds, the antithesis of what should be on display. A key aspect of the wisdom from above is that it works for peace, even seeking out those estranged to bring restoration. In a world of competition for honour, this was a counter-cultural value, as indeed it is today.

Finally, I have shown how James deals with community strife, first by revealing its origin in personal desire and jealousy which are the marks of wisdom from below. He then challenges the audience in the strongest terms possible that they are guilty of unfaithfulness to God and need to realign themselves and to repent. If they heed his call and humble themselves, they will once more be positioned to serve God in his mission.

In the next chapter, I will consider how James deals with the poor and the rich in the epistle, the theme that follows on from wisdom and doubleness in his introduction (1:9-11). As I have already begun to explore above, God works through the reversal of human expectations and status, and this will become very apparent in James teaching on destitution and wealth.

#### **CHAPTER 7: THE DESTITUTE AND THE RICH**

The poor, or more precisely the destitute, <sup>1123</sup> and the rich feature prominently in James, often in binary opposition, not only in sections that are exclusively about them but also within the larger discourse, as I will delineate below. <sup>1124</sup> This is reflected in the relatively high number of studies focusing on them, <sup>1125</sup> or closely related topics in Jacobean literature. <sup>1126</sup> In the last several decades, poverty (and to a lesser extent wealth) has also been tackled within missiology, either through a focus on social justice as mission, or through incorporating social justice issues alongside traditional concepts of mission, such as evangelism, under the umbrella of holistic mission. <sup>1127</sup> A simple definition of holistic mission is provided by Brian Woolnough as 'that mission which addresses the body, mind and spirit in human beings. <sup>1128</sup> He goes on to note

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1123</sup> I will elaborate more on this designation later.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1124</sup> Davids reckons that 47 of 108 verses (roughly 45%) deal with economic themes. See Peter H. Davids, "The Test of Wealth," in Chilton and Evans, eds, *James, Peter, and Paul*, 355–84. I would revise this down to 36 verses since Davids includes 2:14-26 which do not really have an economic theme apart from vv. 15-16. Even so this is still a third of James.

<sup>1125</sup> Monographs on this include: Edgar, Social Setting; Tamez, Scandalous Message; Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, Poverty and Wealth in James (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), (originally published by Orbis, 1987); Morales, Poor and Rich. Articles and book chapters include: Néstor O. Míguez, "Ricos y Pobres: Relaciones Clientelares de la Carta de Santiago," RIBLA 31 (1998): 86–98; Duane Warden, "The Rich and Poor in James: Implications for Institutionalized Partiality," JETS 43, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 247–57; Alicia J. Batten, "The Degraded Poor and the Greedy Rich: Exploring the Language of Poverty and Wealth in the Letter of James," in The Social Sciences and Biblical Translation, ed. Dietmar Neufield (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 65–77; John S. Kloppenborg, "Poverty and Piety in Matthew, James and the Didache," in Matthew, James and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings, ed. Huub van de Sandt and Jürgen K. Zangenberg, SymS 45 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008); Mariam J. Kamell, "The Economics of Humility: The Rich and the Humble in James," in Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker and Kelly D. Liebengood (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 157–75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1126</sup> See Mongstad-Kvammen, *Postcolonial Reading*. Studies from the perspective of ancient patronage systems often relate to poverty and wealth. See, inter alia, Nancy J. Vyhmeister, "The Rich Man in James 2: Does Ancient Patronage Illumine the Text?," *AUSS* 33, no. 2 (1995): 265–83; Kloppenborg, "Patronage Avoidance"; Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1127</sup> For a detailed examination, see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 368–510, (especially pp. 400-420). See also Brian E. Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma, eds., *Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1128</sup> Brian Woolnough, "Good News for the Poor - Setting the Scene," in *Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People*, ed. Brian E. Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 4.

that in viewing not only individual but also community problems, holistic mission proposes 'a way of restoring our relationship with God, but also to mend individual psyches, to bring justice and peace to the political systems between peoples, and to heal our relationship with God's created environment.' With this definition in mind we will study the relevant passages in James and show that our author draws on the biblical narrative of God's concern for the poor and vulnerable in concord with the social concerns of holistic mission. While these obligations are evident in the early church as reflected elsewhere in the NT, 1131 James goes further than any other NT epistle and echoes the prophetic tradition and elements of the Jesus tradition in his denunciation of the exploitative rich.

James' teaching on the poor and the rich begins with his introduction to the theme in 1:9-11. This is followed by a strong reprimand to his audience for showing partiality in their treatment of the rich and poor (2:1-13). He directs further attention to the rich, warning first those who seek to make ungodly profit (4:13-17) and then the wealthy exploiters of the poor (5:1-6). A concern for the poor is also evident as an essential element to proper worship of God (1:27) and as evidence for genuine faith (2:15-16). As we will see, faith and deeds and how these relate to the treatment of the poor are linked in James but for the sake of clarity my main focus in this chapter will be on the poor and the rich in the main sections that I have just outlined, and I will return in the next chapter to faith and deeds.

Before I begin my analysis, it is worth noting that care is needed not to read back in anachronisms from modern economics. Economics itself was not a separate category in ancient

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1129</sup> Woolnough, "Good News," 7. In this definition Woolnough rightly extends holistic mission to environmental concerns but these are beyond the scope of my study. However, Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 201–3, briefly considers some implications although not particularly based on James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1130</sup> Scot McKnight, "Poverty, Riches, and God's Blessings: James in the Context of the Biblical Story," in Mason and Lockett, eds, *Epistle of James*, 161–75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1131</sup> Hays, "Provision for the Poor," 583, who argues that care for the "socially marginalized, quintessentially the poor, is integral to a NT conception of mission."

Davids, "The Test of Wealth," 357.

times and was integrally related to broader dimensions of society, so that to speak of poverty and wealth carried with it moral and social implications alongside the economic element. Although some helpful categorisations have been made with regard to levels of wealth and poverty such as that by Stephen Friesen, 1134 it is beyond the scope here to reach definitive conclusions regarding the exact economic level of James' recipients. However, given the refinements to Friesen's model by Bruce Longenecker and the evidence from archaeology that supports the existence of a modest sized 'middling group' (although such a group would be closer to poverty than extreme wealth), there is no need to insist on the simplistic binary model with only the extremely wealthy or the desperately poor. Rather, since James expects the audience to help the destitute, it seems reasonable to assume that the majority of James' audience fit somewhere in this middling group. 1138

Further, the concept of 'limited good' meant that since goods were viewed as finite and usually insufficient, a gain in wealth or status or honour by one person meant someone else's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1133</sup> Bruce J. Malina, "Wealth and Poverty in the New Testament and Its World," *Int* 41, no. 4 (October 1987): 357; Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth*, 14; Batten, "Degraded Poor," 66.

<sup>1134</sup> Stephen Friesen, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus," *JSNT* 26, no. 3 (2004): 341–47. Friesen suggests seven levels on a Poverty Scale with corresponding percentages of the population as follows: PS1 - Imperial elites (0.04%); PS2 - Regional or elites (1.00%); PS3 - Municipal elites; PS4 - Moderate surplus (7%); PS5 - Stable near subsistence (20%); PS6 - At subsistence level (40%); PS7 - Below subsistence level (28%).

<sup>1135</sup> For helpful critiques of Friesen's model, see John M. G. Barclay, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: A Response to Steven Friesen," *JSNT* 26, no. 3 (2004): 363–66; and Peter Oakes, "Constructing Poverty Scales for Graeco-Roman Society: A Response to Steven Friesen's 'Poverty in Pauline Studies," *JSNT* 26, no. 3 (2004): 367–71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1136</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker, "Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Urban Christianity," *JSNT* 31, no. 3 (2009): 243–78. Longenecker changes Friesen's Poverty Scale to an Economic Scale. He has the same seven categories but revises upwards significantly the percentages of people in the middle groups (ES4 and ES5) to 17% and 25%.

Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 162–85, who adduces evidence from associations of a "significant middling group" (p. 184). Archaeological evidence may support this. So Dirk Jongkind, "Corinth in the First Century AD: The Search for Another Class," *TynBul* 52, no. 1 (2001): 139–48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1138</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 103; Alicia J. Batten, "Ideological Strategies in the Letter of James," in Webb and Kloppenborg, eds, *Reading James*, 12; cf. Allison, *James*, 376; and Roland Deines, "God or Mammon: The Danger of Wealth in the Jesus Tradition and in the Epistle of James," in *Anthropologie und Ethik im Frühjudentum und im Neuen Testament*, ed. Matthias Konradt and Esther Schläpfer, WUNT 322 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 342.

loss, 1139 which in turn led to competitive rivalry and emotions such as envy and spite. 1140 This also meant that, as Malina asserts, the rich (οἱ πλούσιοι) in general were considered "avaricious, greedy."1141 They could only amass wealth by depriving others and so the 'essential wickedness of the wealthy who chose to serve Greed rather than God' was assumed. 1142 Thus an equal temptation to resist is to treat the 'rich' as equivalent to a particular economic class today. The overwhelmingly negative language identifies them as those who blaspheme God, drag the poor to court, withhold wages from their workers and live with excessive wealth, profiting from and exploiting others. Indeed, as we examine the latter sections of the letter, it will become obvious that for James the rich are, by definition, outside of the community. 1143

If modern economics is not an appropriate lens to read James, there are also problems with a tendency to 'spiritualise' the poor. Dibelius and other commentators situate James' treatment of the poor within the concept of the 'pious poor', where the pious categorise themselves as poor 'because poverty had become a religious concept.' This has been challenged by several scholars, 1145 and recently, in a detailed study on the OT and secondary literature Kloppenborg concludes: 'Poverty is nowhere treated as a state to be sought and those in the state of poverty were not thought to be privileged by virtue of their poverty... and this term [the poor] should not be robbed of its social and economic aspects and turned into a cipher

<sup>1139</sup> Malina, New Testament World, 103-7; cf. Philip F. Esler, The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation (London: Routledge, 1994), 34–35.

<sup>1140</sup> Batten, "Degraded Poor," 68-69.

<sup>1141</sup> Malina, "Wealth and Poverty," 355.

<sup>1142</sup> Malina, "Wealth and Poverty," 355–57.
1143 So Batten, "Degraded Poor," 72; Laws, *Epistle of James*, 64; Warden, "Rich and Poor in James," 239; and Davids, "The Test of Wealth," 357.

<sup>1144</sup> Dibelius, James, 39–45, 137–38. The citation is on p. 40 (italics original). Cf. Davids, Epistle of James, 41– 47, 111-12; Wachob, Voice of Jesus, 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1145</sup> See, for example Edgar, Social Setting, 111. He draws on L. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, Jesus and the Hope of the Poor (Maryknoll; Orbis Books, 1986) and L.E. Keck, "The Poor among the Saints in the New Testament", ZNW 56 (1965), and "The Poor among the Saints in Jewish Christianity and Qumran", ZNW 57. See also Tamez, Scandalous Message, 36.

for "the pious".'<sup>1146</sup> James uses the term  $\pi\tau\omega\chi\delta\varsigma$  to speak of the poor, which in the NT context generally indicates someone who is destitute and even a beggar. <sup>1147</sup> As will be confirmed in our study, Alicia Batten's designation of the rich and poor as the 'greedy rich' and the 'degraded poor' reflects the realities of the letter. <sup>1148</sup> With these considerations in mind, I will begin by looking at the great reversal presented in 1:9-11. <sup>1149</sup>

### THE GREAT REVERSAL (1:9-11)

James presents a completely counter-cultural understanding of social norms by declaring a reversal of status of the lowly and the rich, turning on its head the accepted basis for 'honour-claims' 1150 by drawing on the OT and Jesus' teaching. He reminds his audience of the dangers of wealth and sets the stage for his demands for just and caring treatment for the poor that will follow in the rest of the letter. In this section we will see that this great reversal fits well within a missional framework of God's redemptive purposes.

Verses 9-11 appear somewhat disconnected from the preceding sections but the connective  $\delta \acute{\epsilon}$  (1:9) suggests a transition to a new but related topic. A connection possibly follows because it is a test of faith for the lowly brother or sister ( $\acute{\delta}$   $\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta\varsigma$   $\acute{\delta}$   $\tau\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\nu\delta\varsigma$ ) who must trust God for the promised exaltation. This member of the community is contrasted with

<sup>1146</sup> Kloppenborg, "Poverty and Piety," 201–16. Kloppenborg uses the German term *Armenfrommigkeit* throughout. For the citation see p. 216; cf. Davids, "The Test of Wealth," 373, who notes that "James does not romanticize the poor."

 $<sup>^{1147}</sup>$  Πτωχός is used 34x and nearly always refers to people who are in need of material help from others. Exceptions are: (possibly) the Matthean beatitude (5:3); Gal 4:9 (referring to the 'spirits'); 2 Cor 6:10 (as part of the uniquely apostolic identity); and Rev 3:17 where it is used metaphorically to describe the spiritual state of the church in Laodicea. See Bammel, *TDNT*, VI, 886; BDAG, 896.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1148</sup> Batten, "Degraded Poor," 76.

<sup>1149</sup> cf. Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth*, 38, for the same title.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1150</sup> See Mark T. Finney, *Honour and Conflict in the Ancient World: 1 Corinthians in Its Greco-Roman Social Setting*, LNTS 460 (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 15. He notes that boasting should not be thought of 'with its modern individualistic connotations' since 'it actually contains the nuance of making a public claim to honour, something entirely acceptable within Greco-Roman culture.' Cf. Philip F. Esler, *2 Corinthians: A Social Identity Commentary*, SICNTS (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2021), for his similar comments on 2 Cor 1:12 (not yet published).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1151</sup> Davids, *Épistle of James*, 75.

a rich person ( $\delta \pi \lambda o \psi \sigma \iota o \varsigma$ ) indicating an economic element to the person's lowly status, but equally a contrast in attitude before God. I will examine the passage in two parts, first looking at the humble brother (1:9) and then the rich person and the fate that awaits him or her, before considering the missional connections that arise from this passage.

#### **Honour for the Humble (1:9)**

The person who is ταπεινός in Scripture generally depicts someone who is humble in disposition (cf. 4:8) and expresses full confidence in God, but can also refer to someone of low status. In fact, there is no need (or perhaps even clear way) to distinguish between the two meanings here since both fit well. The brother or sister who is ταπεινός then, is someone who is in a low state, but someone who should also embrace the corresponding virtue and thus become an example to the whole community, much as those who are undergoing trials are to rejoice (1:2). This, for James, means that the lowly person should surprisingly make an 'honour-claim' in their exalted position before God (καυχάσθω... ἐν τῷ ΰψει αὐτοῦ). 1154

To understand this statement it is helpful to situate it not only in its NT context but also the OT usage and contemporary Greco-Roman norms about honour-claims. Although generally boasting is viewed negatively in the OT, according to Watson, 'theocentric' boasting is appropriate since it is in God's deeds and his salvific activity and has 'its basis in an intimate relationship with and knowledge of God.' This understanding is continued in non-biblical Jewish literature so that 'legitimate boasting' must be 'rooted only in God and God's work in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1152</sup> Edgar, *Social Setting*, 147. See LXX Ps 17:28; 33:19; Prov 16:2; Sir 3:20; 10:15; Isa 14:32; 49:13; 66:2; Zeph 2:3; 3:12. See also W. Grundmann, *TDNT*, VIII, 1-26 (especially p. 6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1153</sup> Allison, James, 201.

<sup>1154</sup> The expression ἐν τῷ ὕψει is very rare in secular Greek. See Allison, *James*, 202. It occurs 4x in the LXX (Isa 38:10; Ezek 31:2, 7, 14) to speak of a person's (or nation's) exalted position.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1155</sup> Duane F. Watson, "Paul and Boasting," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J. Paul Sampley, Revised, vol. 1 (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 94. In the LXX see Jer 9:24 cf. 1 Sam 2:10; 1 Chr 16:35; Ps 5:12; Ps 31:11; 149:5.

the community of faith.'<sup>1156</sup> The NT usage of καυχάομαι and cognates largely seems to follow this pattern. Notably, the only occurrences outside of the Pauline corpus, bar one, are in James. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate Paul's use of honour language, it is striking that most often he makes an honour-claim based on either God's salvation or his own weakness (a sign of God's power at work in him), much like the lowly brother or sister is to do in James. In Greco-Roman society, for honour-claims to be acceptable, they should be based on an appropriate reason<sup>1158</sup> and when made about one's self, should only be used to defend one's honour. Thus, while Paul frequently makes honour-claims in self-defence, both he and James break the norms in that their honour-claims are grounded on weakness and lowliness rather than accomplishments.

Both, however, conform to the OT pattern to make an honour-claim in relationship to God's work on behalf of his people, and both appeal to a narrative of honour for those who suffer and are normally despised. As Finney notes, 'Paul's claim to honour centres on his weakness, humiliations and sufferings, since they are to him the surest marks of his commendation by the suffering Messiah.' While James makes no such explicit claim, the

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<sup>1161</sup> Finney, *Honour and Conflict*, 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1156</sup> Watson, "Greco-Roman World," 94. See Sir 17:9; 50:20. Cf. Sol 17.1.

<sup>1157</sup> Καυχάομαι and cognates (καύχημα, καύχησις, κατακαυχάομαι, ἐγκαυκάομαι, αὐχέω) appear 65x in the NT. Of these, 58 are in the Pauline corpus, the vast majority being in Romans (10x), 1 Cor (10x) and 2 Cor (29x). Surprisingly, James (6x) is second only to 2 Corinthians in frequency per word. The only occurrence of this lexeme outside of Paul or James is in Heb 3:6 (καύχημα). For appropriate honour-claims in Paul, see, e.g., Rom 5:2, 11; 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17 (citing LXX Jer 9:24); Phil 3:3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1158</sup> See the comments on 2 Cor 1:12 in Esler, 2 Corinthians (forthcoming).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1159</sup> Watson, "Greco-Roman World," 91–92. Boasting could be used in self-defence and to praise others but should not be used for self-praise generally.

<sup>1160</sup> On Paul's boasting in 2 Corinthians see the discussion in Watson, "Greco-Roman World," 97–108. See also Finney, *Honour and Conflict*, 107, who notes that Paul's boasting in 1 Cor 4:9 uses an image that could "hardly [be] more antithetical to the cultural perception of the wise, strong and honoured of Greco-Roman society." Robert J. Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 353, speaks of "Paul's extraordinary effort to detach boasting from any arena of human accomplishment."

context of trials and the treatment that the destitute receive from the rich throughout the letter suggest that James is not far from Paul here. 1162

In fact, just as Paul draws on Jeremiah 9:23-24, <sup>1163</sup> it is quite likely that James does also, since this passage castigates the rich for claiming honour in wealth. <sup>1164</sup> Instead, honour-claims should be made on knowing God, whose character is defined by 'mercy, justice and righteousness' all themes which are important for James. The lowly brother or sister can make an honour-claim because their very lowliness places them in an exalted position before God and thus such a person has no need to feel shame over their low status. In effect, as we will see in a moment, there is a reversal of status with the rich person. Because this honour-claim appeals to God's character they can also be certain that God will act on their behalf in their current circumstances, but also, on another level, they are guaranteed a future eschatological exaltation, probably the main emphasis here. <sup>1165</sup>

### **Humiliation for the Rich (1:10-11)**

In contrast, the future for the rich person ( $\delta \pi \lambda o \upsilon \sigma \iota o \varsigma$ ) is bleak. The parallelism of verses 9 and 10 raise the question of whether the rich is also a brother or sister, yet while the verb καυχάομαι is clearly elided, this seems less likely for ἀδελφός, given the stark progression of terms used to describe their end. <sup>1166</sup> As I have noted above,  $\delta \tau \alpha \pi \epsilon \iota \nu \delta \varsigma$  is contrasted with  $\delta \pi \lambda o \upsilon \sigma \iota o \varsigma$  which confirms an economic element to his lowliness. Yet the contrast works both ways. The rich person is also opposite to  $\delta \tau \alpha \pi \epsilon \iota \nu \delta \varsigma$  and so is not just wealthy but also arrogant which suggests that they are unlikely to be a brother or sister.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1162</sup> Note also the ambiguous reference to the murder of 'the righteous one' (5:6) which could point to Christ's suffering and death.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1163</sup> See 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17 (in the LXX it is Jer 9:22-23).

<sup>1164</sup> H. H. Drake Williams III, "Of Rags and Riches: The Benefits of Hearing Jeremiah 9:23-24 within James 1:9-11," *TynBul* 53, no. 2 (2002): 273–82. He points out that the combination of δ πλούσιος + καυχάομαι is only here and citations of this in LXX 1 Sam 2:10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1165</sup> Martin, *James*, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1166</sup> Batten, "Ideological Strategies," 17. Allison, *James*, 206, calls the rich person's fate a "preordained story."

Such a person (1:10) is to claim honour in their humiliation (ἐν τῆ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ) because like the flower of the field, they will disappear (παρελεύσεται) which clearly has an 'ironic' sense, a point noted as far back at least as the Venerable Bede. 1167 It thus serves as an encouragement to the poor who have been oppressed by the rich by reminding them of what awaits the rich, but also warns those in the audience who may desire wealth or rely on the rich rather than on God. Again a comparison to Paul's response to the Corinthian community provides a useful parallel. Finney notes that in his sarcastic commendation of the Corinthians as 'being rich' (1 Cor 4:8-10) Paul engages in mockery which plays the social function of making the individual or group concerned lose standing before the wider community and thus shames them. 1168 James' irony also appears to mock the fleeting nature of the rich, thus shaming those seeking to be rich and instead causing 'emulation, in a positive sense, of the highest ideals of the community, 1169 here encapsulated as being ταπεινός.

This is also rooted in biblical tradition by an allusion to Isaiah 40:6-7. In James particularises the  $\pi \tilde{\alpha} \sigma \alpha \sigma \dot{\alpha} \rho \xi$  of Isaiah 40:6 to the rich in and expands on their fate to drive the point home. They are as transient as a flower of the field ( $\tilde{\alpha}\nu\theta o \zeta \chi \dot{\phi}\rho\tau o \nu$ ) that dries up in the heat of the sun and/or the scorching wind ( $\kappa \alpha \dot{\nu} \sigma \omega \nu$ ) so that the flower falls (1:11). In James further elaborates with the graphic image of the beauty ( $\epsilon \dot{\nu} \pi \rho \dot{\epsilon} \pi \epsilon \iota \alpha$ ) of the flowers being destroyed ( $\dot{\alpha} \pi \dot{\omega} \lambda \epsilon \tau o$ ) before reiterating his application to the rich person. He will finally fade away

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1167</sup> Cited in Dibelius, *James*, 84–85. This is in contrast to an "heroic" boast in which the rich person recognises the fleeting nature of wealth and "boasts" in its eventual loss. The difficulty with this interpretation is that it is not the riches which are said to be lost here but the rich man himself.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1168</sup> Finney, *Honour and Conflict*, 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1169</sup> Finney, *Honour and Conflict*, 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1170</sup> The Isaiah allusion is widely recognised. See, e.g., Morales, *Poor and Rich*, 84–96; Allison, *James*, 197–99. Davids, *Epistle of James*, 77, also suggests influence from LXX Ps 102:15-16.

Morales, *Poor and Rich*, 91, notes that Tg. Isa. 40:6-8 similarly limits the woe to "the wicked". In 4Q185 these verses are used as "an oracle of doom spoken against the wicked oppressors of Israel." See Donald J. Verseput, "Wisdom, 4Q185, and the Epistle of James," *JBL* 117, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 697.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1172</sup> The sun as the cause of the field drying up is added by James. Καύσων can refer to either the sun's heat or the hot desert wind (e.g. Mt 20:12; Lk 12:55). In the LXX it is more commonly used for the latter which seems most likely here. So Allison, *James*, 208–9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1173</sup> Å NT hapax.

(μαρανθήσεται) in the midst of his pursuits (ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ)<sup>1174</sup> possibly suggesting a sudden end, but certainly his abasement in the final judgment. It also reminds James' readers of the ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, who is unstable ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ, a further negative association. <sup>1175</sup> Thus, in these verses, the poor and rich swap status, the poor being able to claim honour before God because they will be lifted up, but the rich having to acknowledge their coming abasement.

#### The Missional Nature of the Great Reversal

The reversal of fortunes for the lowly and rich draws on several key missional themes. I have already discussed the choice by God of the lowly to participate in his mission, so will not elaborate more here. As we have seen, James draws upon several texts that tie into this theme of reversal. The reversal reflects God's plan to restore his order to the world, which is evident from the context of Isaiah 40:6, and moreover means a realignment of expectations of who will be exalted in God's kingdom (cf. Luke 14:11). A series of surprising reversals are also seen in Matthew 19:23-20:28. The rich are no longer first and the great must serve and give their lives rather than oppressing the lives of others and lording it over them. The reversal in James, then, reflects the kingdom message proclaimed by Jesus and indeed fits within the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1174</sup> While some commentators take this to be a reference to the travelling merchants of 4:13-17, I agree with Davids that this is too much of a stretch, particularly as it is a common expression for "way of life". See Davids, *Epistle of James*, 78; cf. BDAG, 853 which gives reasons for both options.

<sup>1175</sup> The fact that James cites Jer 9:22-23 does not require that the rich be a brother, contra Williams III, "Rags and Riches." This fails to take into account the negative way James speaks of the rich throughout the letter. Similar language is applied to the wicked in Ps 37:2. See Davids, "The Test of Wealth," 375. Verseput, "Wisdom, 4Q185," 704, also concludes that the rich are wicked given the use of Isa 40 in 4Q185.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1176</sup> See the previous chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1177</sup> In Isaiah 40:1-11, God's people are restored from captivity and good news is declared to Jerusalem and there are obvious missional overtones to verse 5 with the whole world seeing God's glory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1178</sup> I have already considered this in reference to Jas 4:6 in the previous chapter. See the references there.

<sup>1179</sup> These include the difficulty for the rich to enter God's kingdom and the repeated summary that the first will be last and the last first (19:30; 20:16). The reversal theme culminates with Jesus privately sharing his own upcoming death and subsequent exaltation. Cf. Penner, *James and Eschatology*, 162.

<sup>1180</sup> In the face of the ambition of his own disciples, Jesus contrasts his leadership and mission with the rulers of the Gentiles who 'lord it over them' (κατακυριεύουσιν) and are tyrants over them (κατεξουσιάζουσιν, 20:25) much like the rich in James who oppress the audience (καταδυναστεύουσιν, Jas 2:6b). In contrast, Jesus came to serve (διακονῆσαι, Mt 20:28).

wider framework of redemption within the biblical narrative. <sup>1181</sup> James captures the essence of this upside-down kingdom where the lowly brother can claim honour. As we will see in more detail in the final section, a missional reading of James challenges the church's complacency where it tends to validate power structures that follow the cultural patterns of the day, particularly with regards to honouring the rich rather than the poor.

In drawing on Jeremiah 9:23-24, James also prompts his own audience to emulate the character and purposes of God in their treatment of the poor, although the practical outworking of this will come to the fore in the next section. Appropriate boasting is based on a true knowledge of the God who 'act[s] with steadfast love (מָשֶׁבֶּע), justice (מַשְּׁבֶּע) and righteousness' (מְשֶׁבֶּע), justice (מַשְּׁבֶּע) and righteousness' (אַבְּדְקָה), justice (מַשְׁבַּע) and righteousness' of God, 1182 with שברקה and שברקה presented as a pair that govern God's actions in the world. As J. A. Thompson notes, these qualities are also expected of God's people, in line not with social norms but 'the character and will of the God of the covenant.' In fact, it is the disappointment that God's people do not display them that often prompts prophetic judgment and hope of a restored king/kingdom characterised by these. Thompson, 'Yahweh's ultimate purpose was that his "righteousness" should prevail over the whole earth among his own people and among the peoples of the world as well' where שברקה loyalty manifested in the concrete relationships of... the covenant community.' Il87

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1181</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 275.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1182</sup> Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 319–21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1183</sup> Ps 33:5; 36:6; 99:4; 103:6; Job 37:23; Isa 5:16; 28:17; 33:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1184</sup> Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 321. Cf. Gen 18:19; 2 Sam 8:15//1 Chron 18:14; 1 Kgs 10:9//2 Chron 9:8; Ps 106:3; Prov 21:3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1185</sup> Isa 5:7; 58:2; 59:9, 14; Jer 22:15; Amos 5:7; 6:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1186</sup> Isa 1:27; 32:16; 56:1; Jer 22:3; Amos 5:24.

<sup>1187</sup> Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 321. This aspect of loyalty also appears to be a nuance of "doing mercy" + עשׁה + ἐλεος. See for example Gen 24:14, 49 (and 44 in the LXX); Judg 8:35; 1 Sam 20:14; 2 Sam 2:5.

For James, as we will see shortly, his audience fails to show this loyalty, treating the poor with partiality instead of honour (2:1-4) and not meeting the needs of the destitute brother and sister (2:15-16) and thus fail 'to do mercy' ( $\pi o \iota \acute{\epsilon} \omega + \acute{\epsilon} \lambda \epsilon o \varsigma$ , 2:13). Significantly too, James chooses Abraham and Rahab as exemplars whose loyal behaviour to Yahweh leads to their justification as righteous ( $\delta \iota \kappa \alpha \iota \acute{\epsilon} \omega$  in 2:21, 25). In other words, James is concerned with his own hearers' behaviour which should match the character of God as revealed through his love, justice and righteousness.

In sum, James locates his readers within the story of God's counter-cultural kingdom that is defined by the great reversal of status between the high and the lowly and engages in missional formation challenging his audience to have the right reason for honour-claims and to act in accordance with God's character, showing mercy, justice and righteousness. From this foundational viewpoint established in 1:9-11, James will challenge his audience to live out the reality of this reversal by the just and merciful treatment of the poor, to which we now turn.

# FAITH AND JUSTICE (2:1-13, 1:27 & 2:15-16)

James continues his teaching on the right treatment of the poor and draws on the clear stipulations in the OT Law for the care of the poor and the denunciation of God's people for failing to do just that. Furthermore, James, like Jesus, also makes the love command (Lev 19:18) the heart of the Law. In this section we will see how James interweaves these traditions to challenge his audience to treat the poor justly and with loving care. From this we will see that at the heart of the church's mission should be a similar emphasis on concern for the poor which demonstrates true piety and a living faith. I will begin by considering James' teaching on

<sup>1188</sup> In LXX Jer 9:23 the Lord is the one who 'does mercy' ( $\pi$ οιῶν ἔλεος). The LXX often translates שוח with ἔλεος (over 200x), but as used here with the construction  $\pi$ οιέω + ἔλεος to translate חסד only 34x and with matching participles only 6x, two of which are in Jeremiah (9:23; 32:18).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1189</sup> Cf. Gen 18:19 – here Abraham and his descendants are 'to keep the way of the Lord by doing מִשְׁפָּט.' In fact, Abraham's blessing is dependent on this as we will see in the next chapter.

partiality (2:1-13) before looking at two examples of the way James expects his audience to care for the poor, exploring the missional implications throughout.

### Partiality and Faith in Christ (2:1-13)

Dwayne Watson has convincingly demonstrated that the pattern of James' argument in 2:1-13 follows typical Greco-Roman rhetorical patterns. 1190 I will give his broad outline first 1191 before examining the passage in more detail. The main thesis statement (propositio) concerning partiality is set forth in 2:1 which is followed by the *ratio* or proof of the statement (vv. 2-4), here a proof from example in the form of a rhetorical question that reasons 'from the particular to the universal'. 1192 The ratio is then corroborated by additional arguments (the confirmatio), again using rhetorical questions to emphasise the point being made (2:5-7). Having established the argument, further confirmation (exornatio) is provided with an appeal to an authoritative text that demonstrates the true nature of lawful behaviour (2:8-11). Finally, James gives a brief conclusion (conplexio or conclusio) in 2:12-13 that draws the arguments together. <sup>1194</sup> In what follows I will use Watson's division of the passage to examine it further.

#### Partiality Contradicts Faith (2:1)

A new section is marked here with the use of the vocative ἀδελφοί μου but unusually this begins the sentence, perhaps indicating that this is the beginning of the letter body. 1195 Although the rest of verse 1 has several difficulties which we need to examine briefly, James essentially tells

<sup>1190</sup> Watson, "James 2."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1191</sup> For what follows see Watson, "James 2," 102–8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1192</sup> Watson, "James 2," 103. <sup>1193</sup> Watson, "James 2," 105–7.

<sup>1194</sup> Watson, "James 2," 107-8. See also the helpful summary diagram in Mongstad-Kvammen, Postcolonial Reading, 104. A very similar outline is given by Wesley Wachob who views the passage as an "elaboration of a complete argument." The main difference with his analysis is to make the probatio from 2:5-11 with 2:5-7 as an "argument from example" and 2:8-11 an "argument from judgment, based on the written law." See Wachob, Voice of Jesus, 63–71. He summarises the structure on p. 63. <sup>1195</sup> Varner, *James*, 129.

his audience that 'partiality is inconsistent with faith in Jesus Christ.' The phrase μὴ ἐν προσωπολημψίαις ἔχετε is best taken as an imperatival phrase, since this is typically how James begins major sections. This denunciation of partiality, an entirely negative sentiment in the NT, the NT, the properties of Leviticus 19:15, which prohibits both partiality in judging the poor and showing favour to the powerful (οὐ λήμψη πρόσωπον πτωχοῦ οὐδὲ θαυμάσεις πρόσωπον δυνάστου). However, it is also a common theme in the OT that Israel should judge without partiality because God himself is an impartial judge. The NT also picks up this latter theme, although only in Ephesians 6:9 is an implication for human relationships explicit, where God's impartiality requires that masters should treat their slaves fairly. However, James is much more direct and argues that partiality is incompatible with genuine faith and indeed that it is a form of law-breaking (2:9). Significantly, there is a clear difference with Greco-Roman societal norms where partiality was expected and was 'both the normative and the normal behaviour. Roman etiquette was synonymous with partial treatment according to rank and status.' 1204

For James partiality is incompatible with having 'faith in 1205 our Lord Jesus Christ of glory' (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης). Due to the awkwardness of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1196</sup> Watson, "James 2," 102.

<sup>1197</sup> Vlachos, James: Exegetical Guide, 67. The use of ἐν + dative 'designates action accompanying the verb.'

 $<sup>^{1198}</sup>$  Προσωπολημψία is a NT word derived from the LXX expression λαμβάνω πρόσωπον which expresses the idea of showing favour to someone. This translates the Hebrew נשא 'to lift up the face.' See BDAG, 887. It is also used in Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25. However, Luke 20:21 uses the LXX idiom as does Paul in Gal 2:6. See also Baurer, TDNT, VI, 779.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1199</sup> Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 160. The use of the plural in James perhaps signifies repeated "acts of favoritism." So Johnson, *Letter of James*, 221; Allison, *James*, 379–80, suggests the Hebrew might be the reason for the plural but this seems unlikely given it is only used as a singular elsewhere in the NT (Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1200</sup> As Johnson, "Leviticus 19," 393, notes, this is all the more likely since James cites Lev 19:18 shortly afterwards (Jas 2:8); cf. Allison, *James*, 381.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1201</sup> Deut 16:18-20; 24:17; Ps 82:2; Sir 4:22, 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1202</sup> Deut 10:17-18; 2 Chr 19:7; Sir 35:12-13 (15-16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1203</sup> See the references in fn. 1199 and Acts 10:34; 1 Pet 1:17 cf. Gal 2:6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1204</sup> Mongstad-Kvammen, *Postcolonial Reading*, 99.

<sup>1205</sup> Given the use of ἔχω + πίστις in the rest of the chapter and elsewhere in the NT (e.g., Mt 17:20; 21:21; Acts 14:9; 1 Cor 13:2) the objective genitive seems preferable here since faith in the glorious Lord Jesus Christ would

genitive expression, some recent commentators have reverted to an old theory of interpolation due to 'title creep' and posit that the phrase ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ has been added. 1206 However, most commentators reject this since there is no manuscript evidence to support such a conjecture. 1207 Moreover, Ryan Wettlaufer has convincingly argued against the likelihood of this being the case here 1208 and although Allison acknowledges Wettlaufer's arguments in his commentary he does little to rebut them. 1209 Moreover, as Wettlaufer points out, although the expression τοῦ κυρίου τῆς δόξης is found elsewhere, 1210 faith is never joined to it so that even with the suggested emendation, we are still left with a highly unusual construction. 1211 Rather, the unusual grammar reflects the author's style, particularly his use of genitives of quality, 1212 and suggests a deliberate conflation of the two titles to express the author's Judean identity and his identity as a follower of Jesus. Wettlaufer concludes that 'the awkwardness of the construction would cause readers to slow down and notice the change: the new Lord of Glory was Our Jesus Christ. 1213

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be natural here - see especially Mk 11:22 & Philemon 5. Moreover, this seems implied in Jas 1:5. See Wally V. Cirafesi, "Έχειν Πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek and Its Contribution to the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate," *BAGL* 1 (2012): 5–37; McKnight, *James*, 176–77; cf. Grasso, "Linguistic Analysis", for an alternative third view which could also fit well here. He suggests "Christ-faith" as faith that has Christ as its content.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1206</sup> See, e.g., Allison, "Fiction of James," 540–43; cf. Allison, *James*, 382–84; and Kloppenborg, "Judaeans," 127–31, who largely follows Allison's arguments.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1207</sup> So, inter alia, Davids, Epistle of James, 106; Johnson, Letter of James, 220; and McKnight, James, 177–78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1208</sup> Ryan Donald Wettlaufer, *No Longer Written: The Use of Conjectural Emendation in the Restoration of the Text of the New Testament, the Epistle of James as a Case Study*, NTTSD 44 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 173–77. Particularly telling is that title creep is most common in manuscripts after the 4th and 5th centuries, and is uncommon in Vaticanus, our oldest witness to the entire letter. Further, it rarely occurs in the middle of a title or adds substantive changes as it would here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1209</sup> Allison, *James*, 384, can only point to L1440 and L1367 (14th and 15th C mss) for similar additions to the title in 5:7 and 8, but these serve to confirm Wettlaufer's point since they are both late and the interpolations are at the end of the sentences.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1210</sup> Cf. Kloppenborg, "Judaeans", who notes that "God of glory" is common in the OT. However, "Lord of glory" never occurs in the LXX, only occurring in 1 Enoch 3x and 1x in 1 Cor 2:8, referring to Jesus. See also Allison, *James*, 129–31, who only notes that it is attested in Jewish and Christian literature and also includes references to "God of glory."

<sup>1211</sup> Wettlaufer, No Longer Written, 178. This would give ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου τῆς δόξης.

<sup>1212</sup> Wettlaufer, No Longer Written, 179, notes genitives of quality in 1:12, 18, 25; 2:4, 12; 3:6.

Wettlaufer, *No Longer Written*, 179–80; cf. Davids, *Epistle of James*, 106; Moo, *The Letter of James*, 100–101; Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 133–34, (who provides a list of Jewish parallels); McKnight, *James*, 177–78.

This also ties in to James' double identity in the greeting (slave of both God and the Lord Jesus Christ) and suggests that even though the letter has an apologetic function, he was unwilling to compromise on either his own identity or the identity of Jesus.  $^{1214}$  Attributing glory to Jesus draws on the LXX use of  $\delta \delta \xi \alpha$  to translate which refers to the 'glory or honour ascribed to someone.'  $^{1215}$  In the OT this is often with reference to God,  $^{1216}$  but it is also promised to those who are approved by God, especially the Messiah,  $^{1217}$  which may be why James uses it here. It is also portrayed in the OT as 'a means by which people shall know the Lord... and anticipates a day when all men would actually know him.'  $^{1218}$  This is certainly in accord with the glory that is ascribed to Jesus elsewhere in the NT as the coming Son of Man and when referring to his post-Easter glorification.  $^{1219}$  The overall sense then would be that James uses glory adjectivally (our glorious Lord Jesus Christ) and thus 'designates Jesus as an authority-figure of universal importance, within the theocentric Jewish framework of understanding.'  $^{1220}$  This underscores 'the utter incompatibility of faith in Jesus Christ and favouritism toward the rich at the expense of the poor.'  $^{1221}$  The latter is a denial of the former, since God is without partiality.

Honouring the Rich and Humiliating the Poor – An Example of Partiality (2:2-4)

James' illustration of the unfair treatment of the poorer of two men entering a gathering to make his point is easily grasped yet also has generated significant discussions over possible scenarios

<sup>1214</sup> See chapter one on the Audience.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1215</sup> Gerhard von Rad, TDNT, II, 233-253, definition cited on p. 243.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1216</sup> E.g., Ex 15:11; 16:7, 10; 33:19-20, 22; Lev 9: 6, 23; Num 12:8; Num 14:21; Deut 5:24; 1 Ki 8:11; 1 Chr 16:27-29; Neh 9:5; Ps 24:7-10; 29:1-3; 57:7, 11; 108:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1217</sup> E.g., Ex 28:40; 34:29-30; Num 27:20; 1 Sam 2:8; 1 Ki 3:13; 1 Chr 29:12; 2 Chr 1:11-12; Prov 3:35; Hos 4:7 (negatively); Mic 5:4; Isa 6:1, 3; Isa 22:22, 23. See, e.g., Isa 33:17; Dan 7:14 for the glory of the Messiah.

<sup>1218</sup> J. G. McConville, "God's 'Name' and God's 'Glory," *TynBul* 30 (1979): 156.

<sup>1219</sup> Edgar, Social Setting, 61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1220</sup> Edgar, *Social Setting*, 61. For the coming Son of Man see Mk 8:38; 13:26; Mt 19:28; 25:31. For Jesus' glory post resurrection see Acts 7:55; Rom 6:4; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 1:11, 21; 4:11, 13; 5:4.

<sup>1221</sup> McKnight, *James*, 180.

that it might represent. I will outline these after a brief examination of the scene which James portrays.

Two men are described with contrasting parallelism (see below), which emphasises the partiality just decried, as part of a hypothetical scenario that begins with a conditional statement (ἐὰν γὰρ...). The protasis describes how both enter (εἰσέλθη) into the synagogue or gathering (εἰς συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν), the first an obviously wealthy man with a gold ring (ἀνὴρ χρυσοδακτύλιος 1222) and dressed in fine clothes (ἐν ἐσθῆτι λαμπρᾶ), the second a πτωχός in filthy clothes (ἐν ῥυπαρᾶ ἐσθῆτι) who, given the description, is a destitute beggar. The well-dressed man is accorded a seat of honour (σὺ κάθου ὧδε καλῶς) while the destitute man is humiliated and told to stand or sit by a footstool (σὺ στῆθι ἢ κάθου ἐκεῖ ὑπὸ τὸ ὑποπόδιόν μου). The different treatment afforded the two men based on their appearance and status provides a clear example of partiality.

# James 2:2-3

2α ἐὰν γὰρ

εἰσέλθη εἰς συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν

2b ανήρ χρυσοδακτύλιος

έν έσθητι λαμπρᾶ

3α ἐπιβλέψητε δὲ ἐπὶ

τὸν φοροῦντα τὴν ἐσθῆτα τὴν λαμπρὰν

3b καὶ εἴπητε

σὺ κάθου ὧδε καλῶς

2c εἰσέλθη δὲ

καὶ πτωχὸς

έν ρυπαρᾶ ἐσθῆτι

3c καὶ τῷ πτωχῷ

εἴπητε

σὺ στῆθι ἢ κάθου ἐκεῖ ὑπὸ τὸ ὑποπόδιόν μου

Two main options present themselves as to how to interpret this picture of discrimination. Ray Ward has brought to modern attention the possible judicial setting for the exemplum, drawing on rabbinic sources containing similar descriptors to James when describing a gathering in the synagogue to judge between parties. 1223 Although judicial

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1222</sup> Another biblical hapax possibly coined by James. See Allison, *James*, 388.

<sup>1223</sup> These sources mention the same kind of contrast between rich and poor using clothing to describe them, and then prohibit preferential seating for the better clothed. Either they must both stand or both sit. See Roy Bowen Ward, "Partiality in the Assembly: James 2:2-4," HTR 62, no. 1 (January 1, 1969): 87-97; cf. Allison, James, 370-71. He notes that this interpretation was already popular in earlier centuries.

language is used throughout the rest of the passage (2:4, 6, 8-12), the difficulty with this interpretation is that it stretches credibility to imagine that a rich person would enter a diaspora Judean gathering and submit to its judgment.<sup>1224</sup> Donald Verseput also argues that the use of judicial language in describing seating conventions was normal in Greco-Roman literature and therefore the situation described should not be thought of as more than 'the most general communal setting.' Further, for Ward's argument to work both men must be part of the community, yet he acknowledges that in James the rich are clearly not so. To deal with this contradiction he can only offer the argument that the first man is never directly identified as rich, <sup>1226</sup> yet the one thing not in doubt is this man's wealth. <sup>1227</sup>

A second interpretation is to take this as the normal gathering for worship in which two people, either outsiders or members of the congregation enter the  $\sigma\nu\nu\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\dot{\eta}^{1228}$  and are shown where to sit, at which point the partial treatment occurs. In this scenario, the rich person is probably a patron of members of the community and so enters to show that he is treating his clients well and to bolster his own political ambitions. Such a person would be 'exhibiting' their 'superior status' and expect to be treated with respect and honour.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1224</sup> Mongstad-Kvammen, Postcolonial Reading, 139.

<sup>1225</sup> Donald J. Verseput, "Plutarch of Chaeronea and the Epistle of James on Communal Behaviour," NTS 47, no. 04 (2001): 515.

<sup>1226</sup> Ward, "Partiality in the Assembly," 95–97.

Mongstad-Kvammen, *Postcolonial Reading*, 126–28, 141–43, argues that the rich person is of the Roman equestrian class, equating the toga candida of political appointees with the ἐσθης λαμπρά; cf. Laws, *Epistle of James*, 98–99. However, Davids, *Epistle of James*, 108, points out that the terms had begun to lose their specific reference and could refer to the typical and ostentatious dress style of the rich.

<sup>1228</sup> See the excursus on the term συναγωγή in Dibelius, *James*, 132–34. It was used of Christian gatherings in early Christian writings (e.g., Herm. Mand. 11.9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1229</sup> So Painter and DeSilva, *James and Jude*, 91; McCartney, *James*, 139–40; Moo, *The Letter of James*, 104. Note also the suggestion by Peter-Ben Smit, "A Symposiastic Background to James?," *NTS* 58, no. 01 (2012): 105–22, that such a worship gathering would also include a meal which would account well for the discriminatory nature of the seating arrangements.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1230</sup> Mongstad-Kvammen, *Postcolonial Reading*, 141–43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1231</sup> Kloppenborg, "Patronage Avoidance," 765.

<sup>1232</sup> Vyhmeister, "Rich Man in James 2," 280.

The scenario of the rich patron does not, however, offer any explanation as to why a beggar, and therefore the complete opposite of the rich, would also enter. It seems likely then, that this is an example exaggerated for effect, similar to standard rhetorical tropes on the rich and poor in Greco-Roman literature that often engaged in satire. 1233 Thus, as Kloppenborg asserts, 'the exaggeration is for the purpose of caricature, to set in sharpest relief actions that James finds problematic. 1234 This removes the need to give a concrete identity to either the rich or destitute person. More important is the contrast in wealth and status, expressed through the vivid description of their respective clothing. 1236 James is primarily concerned with his audience's behaviour and so uses an exaggerated contrast to highlight the partiality that his audience show in accordance with the norms of society rather than of Scripture. 1237

The *ratio* is concluded with a rhetorical question in verse 4 that expects a positive answer (οὐ) and forms the apodosis of the conditional statement in 2:2-3.<sup>1238</sup> Here James outlines strikingly the consequences of such partial treatment of rich and poor, confirming that his main concern is with his audience. Those who act in this way make distinctions (διεκρίθητε), contradicting the simplicity and wholeness encouraged earlier (1:4-6) and acting like the double-minded. Moreover, they become judges with 'evil thoughts' (διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν)<sup>1240</sup> which shows the seriousness with which James views the sin of partiality.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1233</sup> Kloppenborg, "Poverty and Piety," 228–31; cf. McKnight, *James*, 186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1234</sup> Kloppenborg, "Patronage Avoidance," 768.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1235</sup> Some commentators such as McCartney, *James*, 138, suggest that for the example to have rhetorical force it should be realistic. However, this fails to acknowledge the rhetorical force of exaggeration that Kloppenborg notes was prevalent. One could perhaps envisage a modern preacher attempting to illustrate the need for equal treatment of guests by giving the example of a member of the royal family and a homeless person entering the gathering. The fact that neither is likely to happen does not negate the example.

<sup>1236</sup> Vyhmeister, "Rich Man in James 2," 277; Kloppenborg, "Poverty and Piety," 227–28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1237</sup> Mongstad-Kvammen, *Postcolonial Reading*, 135–36. See also Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 83; Batten, "Degraded Poor," 74.

<sup>1238</sup> Dibelius, James, 136.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1239</sup> Martin, *James*, 63.

 $<sup>^{1240}</sup>$  This is a genitive of quality. So Johnson, *Letter of James*, 221–22. He translates it more forcefully as "judges with evil intentions" since διαλογισμός is always negative in the NT; cf. Martin, *James* who translates the phrase as "criminally minded judges."

The scenario painted here has suggested to some that the community is not closed off to outsiders. For Joubert, meeting in a  $\sigma u v \alpha \gamma \omega \gamma \eta'$  'implies a public space accessible to visitors from outside the community as well.' This 'missional visibility' goes beyond what one would expect from house gatherings. Since James challenges any partial treatment based on status, he is forming a 'collective new identity marker' that is distinct from the world around it. Although Joubert perhaps claims too much by suggesting this is the emphasis of 2:1-13, there is certainly a counter-cultural element at play in the rejection of patronage and reciprocity as noted above. This would have a missional impact, being particularly attractive to those who were kept in poverty by the inequality of the system. 1243

Honouring the Rich and Humiliating the Poor – An Absurdity (2:5-7)

In this phase of the argument, the *confirmatio*, James again uses rhetorical questions to confirm and amplify the truth of the main premise (that partiality is incompatible with faith) and moreover that the audience's behaviour is absurd. After the stinging question of the previous verse, James softens his tone in verse 5 using the now familiar vocative and adds 'beloved' (ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί), 1244 but then immediately gives a strong appeal. The imperative 'Listen!'(ἀκούσατε) reminds of the OT call to God's people to pay attention, requiring understanding and obedience. 1245

The absurdity of partiality is demonstrated by the fact that 'God chose the poor in the world' (ὁ θεὸς ἐξελέξατο τοὺς πτωχούς), the very ones that James' hearers have dishonoured (ὑμεῖς δὲ ἠτιμάσατε τὸν πτωχόν, 2:6a), highlighting that they have acted in direct contrast to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1241</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 393.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1242</sup> Joubert, "Homo Reciprocus," 393.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1243</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 78; Batten, "Degraded Poor," 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1244</sup> Coker, Nativist Discourse, 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1245</sup> McKnight, *James*, 192. The most famous of these is of course the Shema of Deut 6:4 (MT: שְׁמֵע יִשְׂרָאֵל; LXX Ἄκουε, Ισραηλ). See also, e.g., Num 12:6; Deut 4:1; 6:3; 9:1; Josh 3:9; Isa 7:13; 21:10; 28:14; 46:3; 51:1; Jer 2:4; 5:21; 7:2; 10:1; 35:7; Hos 4:1; Mic 1:2; 6:1; Joel 1:2.

God<sup>1246</sup> and the honour he has attributed to the poor through choosing them.<sup>1247</sup> As Mongstad-Kvammen states, 'By dishonouring the beggar, the assembly is ultimately dishonouring God.'<sup>1248</sup> This may seem to imply that God shows partiality to the poor, but as Kloppenborg notes, 'partiality on God's part ceases to be so once "impartiality" is understood as an explicit effort to challenge and negate prevailing arrangements of power and status.'<sup>1249</sup>

God's election of the poor 'in the world'  $(\tau \tilde{\varphi} \times \delta \sigma \mu \varphi)$  indicates that in the judgment of society such people are poor, which suggests poverty and social exclusion. Yet James also expects that there is a corresponding internal and eschatological reality indicated by the two following qualifications: the poor are 'rich in faith'  $(\pi \lambda o \upsilon \sigma (o \upsilon \varsigma \dot{e} \upsilon \pi i \sigma \tau e))$  and 'inheritors of the kingdom'  $(\kappa \lambda \eta \rho o \upsilon \delta \mu o \upsilon \varsigma \tau \eta \varsigma \beta \alpha \sigma \iota \lambda e i \alpha \varsigma)$ . Being rich in faith points to their deep trust in and commitment to God, which is reinforced since the kingdom is 'promised to those who love him'  $(\dot{e}\pi \eta \gamma \gamma e i \lambda \alpha \tau \sigma \tau \sigma \tilde{\varsigma} \dot{a} \gamma \alpha \pi \tilde{\omega} \sigma \iota \upsilon \alpha \dot{\upsilon} \tau \dot{\sigma} \upsilon)$ , a phrase that indicates a strong covenantal commitment and reminds of the need for endurance (1:12). In other words, James accepts the reality of poverty but does not equate it with piety unless there is the requisite faith and love for God.

If treating the poor, the ones whom God has chosen, unjustly is absurd, worse still is the preferential treatment of the rich (οἱ πλούσιοι) in 2:6b, the very people oppressing James' auditors (καταδυναστεύουσιν ὑμῶν) and dragging them to court (ἕλκουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς κριτήρια),

<sup>1246</sup> The ὑμεῖς is emphatic in contrast to ὁ θεὸς. So Martin, *James*, 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1247</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 225. Such behaviour is also decried in the OT wisdom tradition (Prov 14:21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1248</sup> Mongstad-Kvammen, *Postcolonial Reading*, 165.

Kloppenborg, "Patronage Avoidance," 765; cf. Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 192, who similarly states: "God 'chooses' the poor in order to remedy the injustice done to them by the rich."

<sup>1250</sup> Edgar, Social Setting, 112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1251</sup> See Edgar, *Social Setting*, 113, and fn. 943 in this thesis. Cf. Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), 39, who finds that for  $\pi$ ίστις "the vast majority of its uses... in pagan and Jewish literature, relates to relational fidelity."

<sup>1252</sup> The phrase τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν with με is used this way in LXX Ex 20:6; Deut 5:10; 7:9 and with αὐτόν in Neh 1:5. See also Hartin, *James*, 90.

again placing the rich in the category of the impious and even as enemies of God's people. <sup>1253</sup> The final and strongest of the charges is that they also blaspheme (βλασφημοῦσιν) 'the good name' (τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα), which would in all likelihood refer to Jesus, given that he is the one in whom they are to have faith. <sup>1254</sup> This name is 'called over' the community (τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς), a common expression in the LXX to show identity and belonging. <sup>1255</sup> Since they therefore belong to God and exist to honour him, it is intolerable that they would instead honour the very ones bringing dishonour to Jesus' name. Thus James clearly elaborates his initial premise that partiality is incompatible with faith in Jesus and shows beyond doubt that it is indeed absurd.

From a missional perspective, the language of election is significant, <sup>1256</sup> and here, according to McKnight, 'emerges from a deep, identity-forming tradition in the Hebrew Scriptures.' <sup>1257</sup> The election of individuals and Israel as a people <sup>1258</sup> continues with a similar trajectory in the NT, where the church (and individuals within it) are God's elect. <sup>1259</sup> Specifically, God's election of the poor resonates with the teaching of Jesus in the beatitudes. James 2:5 is close to Mt 5:3//Lk 6:20 where the poor (oi  $\pi\tau\omega\chi$ oi) receive the kingdom ( $\dot{\eta}$   $\beta\alpha\sigma$ t $\lambda$ ei $\alpha$ ), <sup>1260</sup> a thought that is only found here in the NT and early Christian literature. <sup>1261</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1253</sup> E.g., Ex 1:13: Deut 24:7: Jer 22:3: Ezek 18:12, 16: 22:7, 9: Amos 4:1: 8:4: Mic 2:2: Hab 1:4: Mal 3:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1254</sup> So Johnson, *Letter of James*, 226. Martin, *James*, 67, notes a possible baptism formula here. For the alternative that it refers to God, see Allison, *James*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1255</sup> Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1913), 88–89. The Greek expression is common in the LXX. God's name is 'called' on his people – Deut 28:10; 2 Chr 7:14; Isa 63:19; Jer 14:9; Dan 9:18; Bar 2:15; on his house–3 Kgdms 8:43; 2 Chr 6:33; Jer 7:10-11, 14, 30; 39:34; 41:15; Bar 2:26; 1 Macc 7:37; on his servants – Jer 15:16; on his city/place – Deut 12:5, 11, 21; Dan 9:18, 19; and on the ark of the covenant – 2 Kgdms 6:2//1 Chr 13:6.

 <sup>1256</sup> God chooses (ἐκλέγω/ἐκλέγομαι) people and they are also referred to as 'chosen' (ἐκλέκτος). See, e.g., LXX 1
 Chr 16:13; Esth 16:21; Ps 88:4; 104:6, 43; 105:5; Wis 3:9; 4:15; Zech 11:16; Isa 42:1; Mk 13:20; Lk 6:13.
 1257 McKnight, James, 193.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1258</sup> See, e.g., Deut 4:37; 7:7; 10:15; 14:2; Num 11:28; Sir 46:1; Ps 88:20-21.

<sup>1259</sup> McKnight, *James*, 193–94. Jesus is God's ἐκλέκτος (Lk 9:35; 23:35; 1 Pet 2:4,6) as are the disciples (e.g., Lk 6:13; Jn 6:70; 15:16, 19; Acts 1:2) and the church in general (Rom 8:33; Col 3:12). Individuals such as Peter and Paul are also chosen - Acts 15:7 and 9:15.

 $<sup>^{1260}</sup>$  Mt 5:3 has poor "in spirit" (τῷ πνεύματι). This saying also appears in Gos. Thom. 54 and Pol. *Phil.* 2.3. See the comparison in Wachob, *Voice of Jesus*, 138.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1261</sup> Deppe, "Sayings of Jesus," 90. This is true for the OT, intertestamental literature and the Talmud.

Moreover, James links his form of the saying to his own beatitude in 1:12 (μακάριος) with the repetition of ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν. There is also some overlap with the wider Matthean beatitudes with the meek inheriting (κληρονομήσουσιν) the kingdom (Mt 5:5 cf. κληρονόμους Jas 2:5).

Whether there is direct dependence or not is not important for my purposes, <sup>1262</sup> but what seems probable is that James has reworked and combined elements of the Jesus tradition to suit his argument here and to convince his audience of their inappropriate behaviour. <sup>1263</sup> This shows that James places his readers not just in the OT story but in the continuing story of the glorious Lord Jesus Christ (2:1) and expects them to act in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. In particular, to claim faith in Jesus and then show partiality 'would counter Jesus's own mission' who shares the 'embrace of those whom God esteems' so that here, the 'christological affirmation serves James's rhetorical appeal to ethical comportment. <sup>1264</sup> Impartiality should be an identity marker of the community that reflects God's character and the Jesus of the Gospels.

Further, from the passages noted above on election, God chooses his people in order to fulfil his purposes. In other words, election is a choice for mission. <sup>1265</sup> However, James is unique in applying God's election directly to the poor, so that it is worth asking how this relates to mission. Generally, God's 'preferential option for the poor,' a phrase derived from this concept, tends to be interpreted as a call for the church to treat the poor with care and work for social justice. <sup>1266</sup> For example, God's choice of Israel in Deuteronomy 10:15-18, a passage we

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1262</sup> For dependence on Matthew, see Dale C. Allison, "The Audience of James and the Sayings of Jesus," in Batten and Kloppenborg, eds. *James, 1 & 2 Peter,* 65–66. For Q as the source, see Kloppenborg, "Reception," 60. For dependence on Q<sup>Matt</sup> 5:3, see Wachob, *Voice of Jesus,* 150–55; Hartin, "Jesus Tradition," 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1263</sup> Foster, "Q and James," 26–27, describes this as a "morphing' of tradition for sermonic or exhortatory reasons"; cf. Alkema, *Pillars and the Cornerstone*, 69–70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1264</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 202–3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1265</sup> This is elaborated in great depth in Wright, *The Mission of God*, 191–221, 222–64; cf. Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 27–54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1266</sup> See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 435–38, for the origins of this phrase in Latin American Catholic circles; cf. Peskett and Ramachandra, *Message of Mission*, 112.

will return to in the next section, is combined with the impartial nature of God and his care for the widow and orphan, implying that Israel should also care for them. God's choice of the poor, then, requires 'a counter-cultural community' that not only cares for but also honours the poor, 'treating the poor in the way the world treats the rich.' Thus, as Bauckham concludes, 'Solidarity with the poor is expressed in the social and economic relationships of the community.' 1268

While this is an important element of what it means for God to choose the poor, it is essential to recognise that the poor have a role to play in mission itself. Paolo Suess puts it well:

Jesus' project is for those who are poor, depressed, captive, blind, hungry, hated, foreign-looking, ill and excluded. They are both the addressees and promoters of this project. God accepts the human touch of the poor and the dregs of society. They are divine revelation and sacrament in the world. They are the historic exponents of *missio Dei*. <sup>1269</sup>

Paul's use of similar language in 1 Cor 1:26-27 (ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός x3) coheres with this since the objects of God's choice are the foolish, the weak, the low and the despised. <sup>1270</sup> God dignifies the poor by choosing them to participate in his mission, as Suess also goes on to argue: 'When those who are poor are not just at the receiving end of the gospel but commissioned as its bearers, then this church will be able to claim that it has taken the *missio Dei* to heart and is truly a missionary church.' <sup>1271</sup> Hence, the involvement of the poor in mission is suggested in God's choice of the poor. <sup>1272</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1267</sup> Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1268</sup> Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1269</sup> Paolo Suess, "*Missio Dei* and the Project of Jesus: The Poor and the 'Other' as Mediators of the Kingdom of God and Protagonists of the Churches," *IRM* 92, no. 367 (2003): 557.

<sup>1270</sup> Notably, the first three groups are also with reference to the world (τοῦ κόσμου) cf. Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 191. The similarities are strengthened by the theme of reversal dependent on Jeremiah 9:24 that I have noted above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1271</sup> Suess, "Missio Dei and the Project of Jesus," 558.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1272</sup> For a similar perspective, see Justo L. González, "A Latino Perspective," in *Methods for Luke*, ed. Joel B. Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 129.

The calling of God's name over someone or something also has missional nuances. As we have seen above, James' audience are identified as those who are called by God's/Jesus' name using a common LXX phrase (the passive of ἐπικαλέω + ὄνομα) that follows the Hebrew closely. 1273 In the OT this not only implies God's ownership of his people but also their service of him in his purposes. In Deuteronomy 28:10, for example, Israel's holiness and obedience to God's commands would show the nations that 'God's name was called over you' (τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου ἐπικέκληταί σοι), which, as McConville states, is part of 'the Deuteronomic theme of Israel as a witness to the nations by reason of Yahweh's blessing and their keeping his commands...' Similarly, the temple over which God's name is called, also plays a role before the nations, to cause the foreigner to know God's name when his prayers offered there are answered (1 Kgs 8:41-43). As Wright notes, this prayer of Solomon is full of missiological assumptions that show the universal vision God has for his people and 'the mission of God to be known to all peoples', which is then explicitly linked to the obedience of Israel (1 Kgs 8:60-61). Thus, the phrase in question here, linked with James' insistence on love for and commitment to God provides hints of the missional concern for God's name to be known to those outside the community of faith. 1275 In sum, we have seen that God's election of the poor and the invoking of his name provide rich missional themes.

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<sup>1273</sup> See fn. 1255 above and the list of references. A representative example is 2 Chr 7:14 in which Israel is called ὁ λαός μου, ἐφ' οὓς τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπικέκληται ἐπ' αὐτούς.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1274</sup> McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 404–5.

<sup>1275</sup> The only other use of this construction in the NT is in Acts 15:16-18. Here, James the brother of Jesus cites Amos 9:11-12. The LXX and Acts form of the prophecy (which are not identical) show a universal purpose not present in the MT such that even the Gentiles have God's name called over them. For a full discussion see Jostein Ådna, "James' Position at the Summit Meeting of the Apostles and the Elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15)," in Ådna and Kvalbein, eds, *Mission of the Early Church*, 125–61; cf. Michael A. Braun, "James' Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council: Steps Toward a Possible Solution of the Textual and Theological Problems (Acts 15)," *JETS* 20, no. 2 (June 1, 1977): 113–21.

Partiality Breaks the Royal Law (2:8-11)

In 2:8-11, the *exornatio*, James further confirms his initial premise that partiality is not compatible with faith in Jesus by appealing to the royal law (νόμον βασιλικόν) and citing the second half of Leviticus 19:18 – 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself' (ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν). <sup>1276</sup> This command was considered central to Jewish law and prioritised in Jesus' teaching as the second of the two greatest commandments, <sup>1277</sup> and thus was an appeal to a proposition from authoritative text. As the royal law, this was a summary of the law of the kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus <sup>1278</sup> which should govern the community, as James will make clear.

James sets forth a series of conditional statements to lead his audience to the inevitable conclusion that they have broken all of the law by breaking one law. In the first conditional statement (2:8), he commends his audience that if they perfect or complete ( $\tau$ ελεῖτε) the royal law, they 'do well' ( $\kappa$ αλῶς  $\pi$ οιεῖτε), reminding them of the overarching theme of perfection. The second conditional statement (2:9) is in antithetical parallelism with the first. It they show partiality (εἰ δὲ προσωπολημπτεῖτε), then they commit sin (ἀμαρτίαν ἐργάζεσθε), the opposite of keeping the royal law and doing well. Thus, since the audience is guilty of the former, they cannot be keeping the royal law and so are convicted by the law itself as 'transgressors' ( $\pi$ αραβάται).

The next two conditional statements provide the grounds ( $\gamma \acute{a} \rho$ , 2:10-11) for the general principle he maintains and a specific example of this principle from the law, and in fact provides

<sup>1276</sup> This follows the LXX Lev 19:18 exactly which is itself a close translation of the MT (אָהָבָתָ לְרֵעֵדְּ בְּמוֹדָּ).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1277</sup> Mt 22:39-40//Mk 12:29//Lk 10:27 cf. Mt 19:19. For their centrality to Jewish law, see Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 164–68; Serge Ruzer, "The Epistle of James as a Witness to Broader Patterns of Jewish Exegetical Discourse," *JJMJS* 1 (2014): 73–74. Wachob, *Voice of Jesus*, 119, views the love command as playing a summary role in Lev 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1278</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 114. The importance of this law is also seen elsewhere in the NT and early Christian teaching. See Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; and Did 1:2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1279</sup> Coker, *Nativist Discourse*, 133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1280</sup> Pierre Keith, "La Citation de Lv 19,18b en Jc 2,1-13," in Schlosser, ed, *Catholic Epistles*, 243.

the basis for the whole argument. Working up from this base, since  $(\gamma \dot{\alpha} \rho)$  God is the one who speaks every command ( $\dot{\delta}$   $\gamma \dot{\alpha} \rho$  εἶπεν καί...)<sup>1281</sup> – here prohibitions against adultery and murder – if a person doesn't commit adultery but murders, he is a transgressor of the law  $(\pi \alpha \rho \alpha \beta \dot{\alpha} \tau \eta \varsigma \nu \dot{\delta} \mu \sigma \upsilon)$ . This then provides the grounds for the general principle in verse 10 that if anyone keeps the whole law but stumbles in one he is guilty of all of them  $(\gamma \dot{\epsilon} \gamma \sigma \nu \sigma \nu \tau \dot{\alpha} \nu \tau \omega \nu \dot{\epsilon} \nu \sigma \chi \sigma \varsigma)$ , the basis for the original assertion in 2:9. Further, it is impossible to show partiality and still fulfil the royal law because the love command is a summary of the whole law, so that  $\kappa \alpha \lambda \tilde{\omega} \varsigma \tau \sigma \iota \tilde{\epsilon} \tau \tilde{\epsilon}$  becomes ironical as in 2:18.  $^{1282}$ 

By demonstrating that partiality violates the royal law, James has penetrated to the heart of the missional identity of the people of God. Since the church's mission depends on God's prior mission and this is defined by love (cf. Jn 3:16), 1283 any failure to love one's neighbour is a failure to participate in God's mission. The centrality of the love command in the OT and the NT noted above reflects this concern and combines it with the need to do good. 1284 The parable of the Good Samaritan is illustrative of the kind of love that should be shown (Lk 10:29-37). Green points out that 'neighbourly love has been concretized in care for one who is, in this parable, self-evidently a social outcast,' so that Jesus redefines the questions about 'Who is my neighbour?' to 'Who acted as a neighbour?' 1285 The answer, as the teacher of the law reluctantly admits, is the one who 'did mercy' (ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος), a key concern that James will use to conclude this section. Moreover, in James' hypothetical example that opened the section, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1281</sup> In Jas 4:12 God is the lawgiver (ὁ νομοθέτης).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1282</sup> See Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 174–75. However, it does not follow that this requires vv. 8-9 to contain two "simultaneous rather than formally opposite conditions." Rather, because the love command is the royal law, breaking one (partiality) means breaking the royal law. This is the position of most commentators. See, e.g., Wachob, *Voice of Jesus*, 101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1283</sup> Flemming, Recovering the Full Mission of God, 113–31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1284</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, "Love of Neighbor in the New Testament," *JRE* 10, no. 2 (October 1, 1982): 330.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1285</sup> Green, *Luke*, 432; cf. Philip F. Esler, "Jesus and the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict: The Parable of the Good Samaritan in the Light of Social Identity Theory," *BibInt* 8, no. 4 (2000): 348–49, who notes, "Jesus transforms the whole concept of 'neighbour' from the recipient of compassion to the agent of such compassion."

audience breaks the love command by showing partiality, <sup>1286</sup> failing to be a 'neighbour' to the destitute beggar.

According to Paul, love serves as the fulfilment of the law because 'love does no wrong to a neighbour' (Rom 13:10) and, although not explicit here, the corollary that love does good to others is more than made clear elsewhere. As Furnish notes, the love command is 'an eminently practicable commandment for readers who are presumed to understand themselves as members of a community called and empowered by God to be a new people. Thus, James' concern for just, fair and caring treatment of the poor as an expression of the love command situates the audience within God's mission, something I will develop further in the next section.

## Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment (2:12-13)

The conclusion (*conplexio* or *conclusio*) to this section draws together the argument and at the same time looks forward to the emphasis on works as the proof of faith (2:14-26). <sup>1289</sup> Verse 12 opens with an emphatic double οὕτως paired with the imperatives 'speak' ( $\lambda\alpha\lambda\epsilon$ ῖτε) and 'do' ( $\piοιε$ ῖτε) which together encompass 'everything a human does.' <sup>1290</sup> James thus exhorts the readers to live their whole life as those who will be judged ( $\mu$ έ $\lambda\lambda$ οντες <sup>1291</sup>  $\mu$ ρίνεσθαι) by the law of freedom ( $\nu$ ό $\mu$ ου ἐ $\lambda$ ε $\nu$ θερίας). This unique expression to James moreover relates to the perfect law (1:25) so that, combined with the royal law in 2:8, suggests the *Torah* but now interpreted through Jesus' teaching. <sup>1292</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1286</sup> Furnish, "Love of Neighbor," 328–29, 331.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1287</sup> For example, Rom 12:9-21; 13:8; 1 John 3:11-18.

<sup>1288</sup> Furnish, "Love of Neighbor," 333.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1289</sup> Watson, "James 2," 107–8; Johnson, Letter of James, 236.

<sup>1290</sup> McKnight, James, 219.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1291</sup> According to Davids, *Epistle of James*, 118, the participle here suggests not the nearness of judgment but the certainty of it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1292</sup> Martin, *James*, 71. I have briefly touched on this in the previous chapter and will elaborate further in the next chapter, as well as on what it means to do and speak rightly.

James finishes in verse 13 with what may be the main goal for this section, that the audience should not just be impartial but be merciful (cf. 3:17). 1293 First, he reminds them with a proverbial saying 1294 that judgment will be merciless (ἀνέλεος) to those who do not 'do' mercy (μὴ ποιήσαντι ἔλεος), a clear reference back to the οὕτως ποιεῖτε of 1:12. 1295 Being merciful also provides a conceptual link to the beatitudes (Mt 5:7) 1296 and the Jesus tradition, particularly in Matthew. 1297 As I have noted previously, Esler points out that in the beatitudes Jesus is laying down identity markers for his followers, something James must surely also be doing here for his hearers. 1298 They are to be those known for doing acts of mercy, an identity marker that coheres with the attractional nature of a wise community.

The final rhetorical flourish, that 'mercy triumphs over judgment' (κατακαυχᾶται ἔλεος κρίσεως), recalls the grounds for honour-claims in the first section. If his auditors want to enjoy the coming eschatological exaltation, they must show mercy to the poor who desperately need it rather than partiality to the rich. The stark alternative is merciless judgment, so the passage confronts a deep-rooted societal norm because eschatological salvation is at stake. In fact this statement in my opinion is one of the richest in the letter in terms of reflecting the *missio Dei*. The triumph of mercy over judgment encapsulates God's own treatment of humanity, and as McKnight notes is both paradoxical and 'breathtaking.' 1299

In conclusion, throughout this rhetorically formulated argument, James forms his readers through applying the OT and the Jesus tradition, aligning his readers with God's own

<sup>1293</sup> McKnight, *James*, 221–22. As we saw in the last chapter, this is a key characteristic of wisdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1294</sup> Hartin, *James*, 138.

<sup>1295</sup> This points back to the actions accompanying true piety (1:27) and true faith (2:15-16). It also brings to mind LXX Jer 9:23 where the Lord calls himself the one who 'does' mercy (ἐγώ εἰμι κύριος ποιῶν ἔλεος). See further the discussion above of these verses.

<sup>1296</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 234. The text is μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1297</sup> Mt 9:13; 12:7; 18:33; 23:23. The first two references are citations of Hos 6:6 which Matthew uniquely uses to conclude pericopes in the Synoptics (see Mk 2:14-17//Luke 5:27-31 and Mk 2:23-28//Lk 6:1-5). Similarly, mercy occurs in the Matthean woe (Mt 23:33) but not in the Lukan parallel (Lk 11:42).

<sup>1298</sup> Esler, "Matthean Beatitudes," 155, 168–70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1299</sup> McKnight, James, 223.

character and purposes. The alternative is the prospect of God's judgment on them, something James hopes will cause his readers to challenge the unjust patronage system within their own community. Through just and fair treatment and applying the royal law, James' audience will fulfil their missional calling and be a contrast community and a light to others. Given that James has transitioned from the censure of the negative behaviour of the community to calling for his hearers to 'do mercy,' we now turn to specific examples of the destitute that need mercy.

### **True Piety and Living Faith (1:27 & 2:15-16)**

For James, the destitute have a face: they are the widow and orphan (1:27) and the destitute brother or sister (2:15-16). Here we will see that the treatment of such people defines true piety and living faith. First, I will briefly investigate the challenging definition of true piety in 1:27 and then the hypothetical scenario that demonstrates the exact opposite of true faith in 2:15-16, both passages pointing to the need for holistic mission.

*True Piety – Care for the Orphan and Widow (1:27)* 

James 1:27 is a summary statement (together with v. 26) of the first chapter and transitions to what follows <sup>1302</sup> as the author outlines what acceptable 'piety' (θρησκεία) <sup>1303</sup> involves. Surprisingly, most prominent is 'to visit orphans and widows in their affliction' (ἐπισκέπτεσθαι ὀρφανοὺς καὶ χήρας ἐν τῆ θλίψει αὐτῶν), in other words to care for them. <sup>1304</sup> Poverty is not only a test for those experiencing it, *it is also a test for those observing it* – will they step in and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1300</sup> cf. Kloppenborg, "Poverty and Piety," 232. He suggests that James is not likely to affect any real change on society because patronage was too fully entrenched and so is simply hoping to encourage increased benefaction for the poor. However, it seems likely that James would expect his own audience to also break with patronage at least among their own members.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1301</sup> I will deal with the context of these verses in more detail in the following chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1302</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1303</sup> On this term as "piety" see the next chapter. See also Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 10–19; René Krüger, "Una Definición Muy Peculiar de Religión Según Santiago 1:27," *CuadT* 22 (2003): 82–83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1304</sup> As Johnson, *Letter of James*, 212 observes, ἐπισκέπτεσθαι in the LXX is frequently associated with God "visiting" his people to rescue them.

help? In James' overall desire to move his readers to perfection, vitally important is their response to the needs of the destitute. Although care for the widow was a concern for the early church as evidenced elsewhere in the NT, what is surprising is that James alone joins this with care for the orphan. This would certainly reflect the social realities of James' hearers given that those without fathers were considered orphans and so together, the widow and the orphan could refer to a fatherless family which, unless the widow had some means to survive, could lead to destitution in the absence of other family help. Moreover such a scenario was not rare in Greco-Roman society. When the survive is the perfection, without survive in the survive is the perfection.

It seems likely though that this also points to James' dependence on the OT, which designates the orphan and widow (alongside the 'alien') as those to be cared for, <sup>1309</sup> particularly in the Law and the prophets. <sup>1310</sup> The Deuteronomic law presents a corporate responsibility to care for them and to include them in the cultic life of the community <sup>1311</sup> and this is rooted in the 'nature of God.' <sup>1312</sup> Particularly close to the thought in James is Deuteronomy 10:17-19

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1305</sup> Krüger, "Religión Según Santiago," 84. See Acts 6:1-6; 9:36-41; 1 Tim 5:3-16. Care for widows and orphans is also found in the Apostolic Fathers (often linked to ἐπισκέπτεσθαι). See, e.g., Pol. *Phil.* 6.1; Herm. Vis. 3.9.2; Mand. 8.10; Sim. 1.8; Ign. *Smyrn*. 6.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1306</sup> Mark Golden, "Oedipal Complexities," in *Growing Up Fatherless in Antiquity*, ed. Sabine R. Hübner and David M. Ratzan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 41–42, 51. He notes that in Roman society, widows and orphans were a separate census class.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1307</sup> Sabine R. Hübner, "Callirhoe's Dilemma: Remarriage and Stepfathers in the Greco-Roman East," in Hübner and Ratzan, eds, *Growing Up Fatherless*, 63–73. In the case of remarriage, the orphan(s) could lose their inheritance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1308</sup> Golden, "Oedipal Complexities," 55–59.

<sup>1309</sup> David L. Baker, *Tight Fists or Open Hands? Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 189, notes that "In the patriarchal societies of the ancient Near East, women and children who lost the head of their family were in a particularly vulnerable position." See also Marcus Sigismund, "Without Father, without Mother, without Genealogy': Fatherlessness in the Old and New Testaments," in Hübner and Ratzan, eds, *Growing Up Fatherless*, 86–87, who points out that such children would be considered orphans, so that the widow and orphan(s) could be a fatherless family, just as in Greco-Roman society (see above).

<sup>1310</sup> As a pair (יְתוֹם וְאֵלְמְנָה) they appear 19x (11x in the Law, 6x in the Prophets and 2x in the Psalms). The order is reversed in Ex 22:21, Zech 7:10 and Mal 3:5. Sigismund, "Fatherlessness," 87–90, notes that this was a "duty rooted in the Law of Israel" (p. 89).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1311</sup> The pair occurs 10x in Deuteronomy (10:17-19; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19-21 (x3); 26:12-13 (x2); 27:19). Unjust treatment of them is also prohibited (Ex 22:22; Deut 24:17-18; 27:19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1312</sup> Baker, *Tight Fists or Open Hands?*, 193. See also Ex 22:23-24; Ps 68:5; 146:9.

which also connects this theme with God's impartiality. <sup>1313</sup> As this text makes clear, God actively works for justice on behalf of the orphan and widow, providing them with what they need, which ought to be emulated by his people. Peskett and Ramachandra argue that the gods of the surrounding nations dispensed their power through the established (usually male) authority figures, but in contrast, 'in Israel's rival vision, it is "the orphan, the widow and the stranger" with whom Yahweh takes his stand' so that Israel should 'communicate a unique vision of God to the rest of the world.' <sup>1314</sup> This needs qualifying somewhat since other ANE societies also had laws to protect the vulnerable and their rulers in some cases were expected to ensure care for them. <sup>1315</sup> However, the theological motivation is at least more pronounced in the OT, <sup>1316</sup> so that Peter Vogt is right to say 'care for the marginalized groups and the poor... [is] an important measure of how the people of Israel were doing at being the people of Yahweh.' <sup>1317</sup> As Salter aptly states, 'Israel in turn execute the *missio Dei* by way of the *imitatio Dei* as they love and care for the vulnerable.' <sup>1318</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1313</sup> Kamell, "Economics of Humility," 162, 165. Jas 1:27 is immediately followed by the teaching against partiality in 2:1-13.

<sup>1314</sup> Peskett and Ramachandra, Message of Mission, 113; cf. Kamell, "Economics of Humility," 163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1315</sup> Baker, *Tight Fists or Open Hands?*, 189–91; cf. Sabine R. Hübner and David M. Ratzan, "Fatherless Antiquity? Perspectives on Fatherlessness in the Ancient Mediterranean," in Hübner and Ratzan, eds, *Growing Up Fatherless*, 14–15. They also note the presence of legislation for the care of orphans in Roman law but that this often failed and would rarely help the poor.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1316</sup> Baker, Tight Fists or Open Hands?, 193.

<sup>1317</sup> Peter T. Vogt, "Social Justice and the Vision of Deuteronomy," JETS 51, no. 1 (2008): 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1318</sup> Salter, Mission in Action, 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1319</sup> Peskett and Ramachandra, *Message of Mission*, 113. See Is 1:17, 10:2; Jer 7:5-7; 22:3; 49:11; Ezek 22:7; Zech 7:9-14; Mal 3:5; cf. Baker, *Tight Fists or Open Hands*?, 193–94.

Care for the orphan and widow suggests the care for all those who are vulnerable, something central to holistic mission, but the fact that James fails to mention 'the stranger,' who is frequently mentioned alongside the orphan and widow as an equally vulnerable member of the community, 1320 may seem to indicate a reticence towards outsiders. However, in the Deuteronomic law, the stranger (τι; προσήλυτος) is a resident alien who has assimilated into much of the communal and cultic life of Israel although without full status. 1321 For James' audience as diaspora Judeans, they themselves are the stranger and not in a position to receive a resident-alien in this way. 1322 Further, as I have already noted above, the gathering shows at least an openness to the 'other' who may join the community. Where this is a poor person, there is surely also an implicit burden of care so that they should also be shown mercy. This, evidenced in care for those in need, will always triumph, whether shown to a brother or sister or an outsider.

Although keeping oneself unstained from the world (ἄσπιλον ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου)<sup>1323</sup> is the second half of James' description of piety, it may be seen by some as the more important element of what is acceptable to God.<sup>1324</sup> Yet here, James carefully balances both social care and purity.<sup>1325</sup> As Kamell rightly states, 'Moral purity cannot exist independently of an active concern for the poor' and so it is not a question of either/or but both/and; both are necessary components of pleasing God.<sup>1326</sup> Thus James makes it abundantly plain to his audience that their treatment of the destitute is indispensable to true piety.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1320</sup> This is true for the majority of the references footnoted above in Deuteronomy and also in Jer 7:5-7, Zech 7:9-14 and Mal 3:5.

 $<sup>^{1321}</sup>$  Kuhn, TDNT, VI, 729-30. Προσήλυτος does not have the full sense of later times as someone who has been circumcised and taken on Judean identity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1322</sup> Krüger, "Religión Según Santiago," 85–86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1323</sup> I will examine this in more detail in the next chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1324</sup> Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today*, 233, notes this tendency among some contemporary churches and missionary organisations.

<sup>1325</sup> This is suggested by the two parallel infinitive constructions that modify 'pure and undefiled piety.'

<sup>1326</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 20.

*True Faith - Meeting the Needs of a Destitute Brother or Sister (2:15-16)* 

The hypothetical example that James places in his argument on faith and works makes equally clear that true faith is expressed in addressing the needs of the destitute. In this brief drama, the audience is presented with a brother and sister  $(\dot{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\delta_{\varsigma}\,\mathring{\eta}\,\dot{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\varphi\mathring{\eta})^{1327}$  who are poorly clothed, or even naked  $(\gamma \nu \mu \nu o i)$ ,  $^{1328}$  and lacking daily food  $(\lambda\epsilon i\pi\delta\mu\epsilon\nu o i\,\mathring{\omega}\sigma i\nu\,\tau\mathring{\eta}\varsigma\,\dot{\epsilon}\varphi\eta\mu\dot{\epsilon}\rho o \nu\,\tau\rho o\varphi\mathring{\eta}\varsigma)$ , in other words the basic necessities of life. James makes it clear that kind words are not enough, and if unaccompanied by actions are empty of meaning. For someone from the community  $(\tau i\varsigma\,\dot{\epsilon}\xi\,\dot{\nu}\mu\tilde{\omega}\nu)$  to send them away with a blessing of peace  $(\epsilon i\pi\eta\,\delta\dot{\epsilon}\,...\,\alpha\dot{\nu}\tau o i\varsigma...\,\dot{\nu}\pi\dot{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\tau\epsilon\,\dot{\epsilon}\nu\,\epsilon i\rho\dot{\eta}\nu\eta)$ , and a wish for them to be clothed and fed  $(\theta\epsilon\rho\mu\alpha\dot{\nu}\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon\,\kappa\alpha\dot{\lambda}\,\chi o\rho\tau\dot{\alpha}\dot{\zeta}\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon)$  without providing what is needed is 'mere mockery.' As Allison puts it, 'One cannot eat or wear words.'  $^{1330}$ 

The responsibility to give them what they need to survive daily (τὰ ἐπιτήδεια τοῦ σώματος) is of the whole community (μὴ δῶτε δὲ αὐτοῖς), and failure to do so becomes another example of discrimination. The repetition of the rhetorical question Τί τὸ ὄφελος links this back to 2:14 which makes it clear that this is an example of faith that is unable to save (σῶσαι). For James, true and living faith must result in action on behalf of those in need, demonstrating the centrality of care for the vulnerable and needy in the epistle. The survival sur

If a faith that fails to look after the needs of others is defective, dead even, then mission that does not encompass this practical care is also defective. One may further argue with Peskett and Ramachandra, that where there are disparities between the rich and poor and a lack

The plurals following two singular nouns connected by  $\ddot{\eta}$  is considered an exception by BDF, 75, note 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1328</sup> BDAG, 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1329</sup> Mayor, The Epistle of James, 97.

<sup>1330</sup> Allison, *James*, 466.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1331</sup> Wall, Community of the Wise, 135.

<sup>1332</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 122. Subsequently, such faith is dead (vv. 17, 25) and therefore cannot perfect (v. 22) or justify a person (v. 24).

<sup>1333</sup> A similar emphasis is in 1 John 3:17-18 cf. Prov 3:17-18.

<sup>1334</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 288.

of concern by the former for the latter, this fails to accurately reflect God so that 'Christian witness to the character and purposes of Yahweh/Christ necessarily includes social and political action on behalf of the poor.' Although it would be beyond the scope here to explore further the implications for holistic mission, a missional reading of James shows that in order to be true to the mission of God, the church in her mission must also incorporate care for the most vulnerable in society and among the community. Unfortunately, some ML, by neglecting James and its striking emphasis on caring for the destitute as a mark of genuine piety and faith also neglects such concerns as part of mission. 1337

In conclusion to this section, I am not suggesting that a missional reading of James brings a new understanding of mission as holistic. As I noted earlier the need for holistic mission has been recognised for many years. What James does bring to the table is an oft-neglected NT voice to what is sometimes seen (and therefore often marginalised) as an OT concern, or as a concern in the gospels that can be spiritualised away. James resists such a reading and lends force to an understanding of mission as holistic. In the words of Jean-Paul Heldt,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1335</sup> Peskett and Ramachandra, Message of Mission, 113.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1336</sup> By this I am not saying every mission activity of the church must be holistic. See the helpful discussion in Wright, *The Mission of God*, 321–22; cf. Ronald Sider, "What If We Defined the Gospel the Way Jesus Did?," in *Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People*, ed. Brian E. Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (Oxford, UK: Regnum, 2010), 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1337</sup> For example, as we saw in the survey on ML, Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, ignore James and also downplay holistic mission as we will see later. Peskett and Ramachandra, *Message of Mission*, 112–14, do consider social justice issues but surprisingly neglect James. This is also the case for Wright, *The Mission of God*, 265–88, 289–323, who has extended discussions in this area but only mentions James in a passing comment on speech (p. 321); cf. Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God*, 176–78, who looks at holistic mission but only as demonstrated by Paul's collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1338</sup> See the note on Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, above; Woolnough and Ma, *Holistic Mission*. In addition, see Wright, *The Mission of God*, 429–41; Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today*, 227–63; Senior and Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 149–51, 338–39. Holistic mission is called for in such declarations as the 2010 Cape Town Commitment (from the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization) and the Catholic *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church).

<sup>1339</sup> The treatment of Luke 4 by Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation*, 117 is representative of this. They reduce the poor to "the eschatological community, the suffering exiles or faithful in Israel who have been spiritually oppressed"; cf. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 210–11. In contrast, Hays, "Provision for the Poor," 571–73, shows that care for the poor is an unavoidable conclusion from reading the (synoptic) Gospels.

Mission is, by definition, "holistic," and therefore "holistic mission" is, *de facto*, mission. Proclamation alone, apart from any social concern, may be perceived as a distortion, a truncated version of the true gospel, a parody and travesty of the good news, lacking relevance for the real problems of real people living in the real world. On the other end of the spectrum, exclusive focus on transformation and advocacy may just result in social and humanitarian activism, void of any spiritual dimension. Both approaches are unbiblical: they deny the wholeness of human nature of human beings created in the image of God. Since we are created "whole," and since the Fall affects our total humanity in all its dimensions, then redemption, restoration, and mission can, by definition, only be "holistic." 1340

By privileging the poor as the chosen of God and making the treatment of the vulnerable and needy a test of true faith, the voice of James adds strength to such a conclusion. <sup>1341</sup> In fact, as we will go on to see, James speaks not just *for* the poor and vulnerable but *against* injustice and inequality and those who perpetrate it.

## **WARNINGS AGAINST GREED AND WEALTH (4:13-5:6)**

James is often called the Amos of the NT, <sup>1342</sup> largely due to the denunciation of the greedy rich (to continue using Batten's terminology) in rather strong terms found in this passage, much like the prophet of old. <sup>1343</sup> In this final section dealing with wealth and poverty, our author takes to task profiteering merchants (4:13-17) and then wealthy landowners who exploit their workers (5:1-6), although as Maynard-Reid points out, the activities represented were often 'different functions of the same individual.' <sup>1344</sup> The merchant able to travel for extended periods and make a profit would likely be an elite rich rather than a local merchant, and thus would also be a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1340</sup> Jean-Paul Heldt, "Revisiting the 'Whole Gospel': Toward a Biblical Model of Holistic Mission in the 21st Century," *Missiology* 32 (2004): 166.

<sup>1341</sup> cf. Hays, "Provision for the Poor."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1342</sup> Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, 20, cites A. M. Hunter, Introducing the NT (1945), 98, approvingly; William M. Tillman Jr., "Social Justice in the Epistle of James: A New Testament Amos?," *RevExp* 108, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 417–27; cf. Jobes, "Greek Minor Prophets," 153, who cites Adamson but argues that Hosea (which has influenced Amos) is closer to James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1343</sup> See for example Amos 4:1-2; 5:11-15, 24; 6:1-8.

<sup>1344</sup> Maynard-Reid, Poverty and Wealth, 69.

landowner. Both sections are further united and marked clearly by the use of  $\alpha \gamma \epsilon^{1346} \nu \tilde{\nu} \nu +$  plural subject so together form a larger denunciation of the exploitative rich who are outside the community, a conclusion that will be reinforced as we proceed. 1348

Although James' purported location as a leader in the church at Jerusalem gives him authority from the centre in terms of communities of Christ-followers, he has no influence over the rich he speaks against. Since they are untouched by this rhetoric, the passage serves two purposes. First it is a warning to anyone in the community who might be tempted to seek the patronage of the rich or to copy their ways, and secondly, it is an encouragement for those suffering such exploitation that there is coming a day of reckoning and reversal. In what follows I will first examine the two sections separately before drawing together a missional application from the passage as a whole.

## A Warning Against Greedy Merchants (4:13-17)

James denounces merchants who are motivated by profit rather than doing God's will and claim honour based on the profit they make. This is far from 'a friendly challenge to industrious business people who are planning their future operations' as will become apparent as the passage unfolds. Although James does not call them 'rich' per se, it is quite clear from the repetition of key language from earlier in the letter and the intended links to what follows that the message is far from neutral. Because the material is so closely related to the next section, I will save missional reflection until both passages have been considered.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1345</sup> Laws, Epistle of James, 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1346</sup> This is classified as a 'frozen imperative' and is not found elsewhere in the NT. See BDF, 80. Since it is 'frozen' it can function like an interjection and be used with plural subjects as in 4:13 and 5:1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1347</sup> The plural nominatives function as vocatives here. See Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 151.

<sup>1348</sup> Notably there is no use of ἀδελφοί here (which only resumes in 5:7). So also Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth*, 69; Edgar, *Social Setting*, 198–99; Laws, *Epistle of James*, 190.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1349</sup> Coker, Nativist Discourse, 71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1350</sup> Edgar, *Social Setting*, 200, 203–5. The comfort and encouragement is made explicit in 5:7ff as we have already seen.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1351</sup> Contra Mark E. Gaskins, "Looking to the Future: James 4:13-5:11," *RevExp* 97, no. 2 (March 1, 2000): 239.

The section begins with the phrase 'Come now' ('Αγε νῦν), 'a somewhat brusque address.' The author addresses the merchants as 'those who say' (οἱ λέγοντες) suggesting that what follows will be a corrective, since several times James uses the diatribe style to forcefully criticise imaginary interlocuters whose speech reveals 'the orientation of the heart.' Although this is also found frequently as a prophetic denunciation of the people of Israel, it is also used against the surrounding nations so there is no reason to see these merchants as part of the community based on the direct address. 1355

What is revealed by their speech is arrogance and a desire for gain with no reference to God's will, which Wall appropriately calls a 'functional atheism.' Their arrogance, in particular, is shown by the future tense indicative verbs throughout verse 13: they claim they will travel (πορευσόμεθα) whenever they want, to whatever city they choose and stay (ποιήσομεν) however long they want, which suggests that they think they are masters of their own destiny, even to the point of being certain about trading and making a profit (ἐμπορευσόμεθα καὶ κερδήσομεν).

Although some commentators suggest that James is not condemning the profit motive itself but only the lack of deference to God's will, 1359 it seems more likely that here profit represents both desire for and the inordinate storing up of wealth, something condemned in Greco-Roman culture. 1360 Esler notes that honourable persons sought to maintain their

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1352</sup> Ropes, St. James, 276.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1353</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 295. See Jas 1:13; 2:3 (x2), 14, 16, 18; 4:15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1354</sup> Hartin, *James*, 223. Examples include Isa 47:8 (against Babylon), Mic 4:11 (against the nations surrounding Jerusalem), and Zeph 2:15 (against Nineveh).

<sup>1355</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 189. The suggestion in Coker, *Nativist Discourse*, 263–73, that James is criticising Paul's itinerant travel throughout the Mediterranean to win ( $\kappa$ ερδαίνω) converts is untenable.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1356</sup> Wall, Community of the Wise, 222.

<sup>1357</sup> Ποιέω + acc of time (here ἐνιουτόν 'a year') can be translated 'stay.' See BDAG, 841, 5c.

<sup>1358</sup> cf. Allison, James, 655.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1359</sup> See, e.g., Gaskins, "Looking to the Future," 239; Moo, *The Letter of James*, 202.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1360</sup> See further Malina, "Wealth and Poverty," 363, who notes that a such a person is seen as "inherently demented, vicious, evil"; cf. Batten, "Degraded Poor," 69–71, who concurs but finds that self-sufficiency and the normal growth of wealth through agriculture to sustain a household were approved. See also Dirk G. van der Merwe,

possessions, not amass more which 'explains the very negative attitude to trade which one often observes in this culture.' <sup>1361</sup> In the OT, although wealth could be viewed as a blessing *from* God, it was not to be pursued as an end in itself and was to be used to help others. <sup>1362</sup> Its accumulation was prohibited, for example, even for the king (Deut 17:14-20), a quite radical restriction on kingship in the ANE and not adhered to by the kings of Israel and Judah. <sup>1363</sup> The condemnation of greed for more riches is repeated in the prophets, <sup>1364</sup> something that we will see further in the next section, and is also continued on in the Jesus tradition and the NT, where wealth is seen as a snare to true faith. <sup>1365</sup> The parable of the rich fool in Luke 12 is often equated with James' thought here, since the landowner, who has accumulated wealth for his own ease and pleasure, falsely believes he is in control of the future (as do the merchants in James) but meets a sudden end, matching the warning that follows in the next few verses of our passage. <sup>1366</sup> Moreover, if the business and resulting profit is based on exploitation, as is often the case (cf. 5:1-6), then this further emphasises the negative nature of their enterprise. <sup>1367</sup>

The irony of such arrogance comes through in James' next statement (4:14) that those (οἵτινες)<sup>1368</sup> who claim to be able to travel somewhere for a year do not even know (οὐκ ἐπίστασθε) what tomorrow will bring (τὸ τῆς αὔριον), a universal axiom, <sup>1369</sup> or what their life is

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<sup>&</sup>quot;Rich Man, Poor Man in Jerusalem According to the Letter of James," *APB* 21, no. 1 (2010): 29, who cites Seneca's denunciation of "human craving for excess as the cause of poverty."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1361</sup> Esler, *First Christians*, 35. He gives Sir 27.2 as an example of this: "As a stake is driven firmly into a fissure between stones, so sin is wedged in between selling and buying."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1362</sup> Baker, *Tight Fists or Open Hands?*, 315. See Prov 11:24-25; Deut 8:18; Mal 3:10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1363</sup> McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 283.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1364</sup> Isa 2:6-9; Jer 6:13; 8:10; Ezek 22:12; 28:5-7; 33:31; Hab 2:5-6; cf. Ps 10:3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1365</sup> Mt 6:19-21, 24; 16:26; 19:21; Mk 4:19; Lk 12:15; 1 Tim 6:7-10; 1 Jn 2:16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1366</sup> Brosend, James and Jude, 126–27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1367</sup> Batten, "Degraded Poor," 75; cf. Allison, *James*, 655, who points out that although ἐμπορεύομαι is not necessarily negative, in its only other NT occurrence it means "exploit" (2 Pet 2:3) so that a negative nuance is possible here.

<sup>1368</sup> This is in apposition with οἱ λέγοντες. Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 150.

<sup>1369</sup> Johnson, Letter of James, 296. Very similar is LXX Prov 27:1: "Do not boast (μή καυχῶ) about tomorrow (αὔριον) for you do not know (γινώσκεις) what the next day (ἡ ἐπιοῦσα) will bear."

really like (ποία ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν). <sup>1370</sup> Then, in language evoking 1:10-11, the author makes clear they are a mist or smoke (ἀτμίς) that appears for a short while and then disappears (ἡ πρὸς ὁλίγον φαινομένη, ἔπειτα καὶ ἀφανιζομένη). The transitory nature of the merchant's life parallels the transitory nature of 'earthly treasure' which is consumed (ἀφανίζει x2) by moth and rust (Mt 6:19-21), as also in James 5:2-3. <sup>1371</sup> There may be both prophetic and wisdom traditions behind the thought here, linked to the use of ἀτμίς. <sup>1372</sup> This occurs in Hosea 13:3 to describe the shortness of life, particularly that of the wicked, <sup>1373</sup> but may also be connected to the vanity (πατ) of life in Ecclesiastes. <sup>1374</sup> Thus, as Wall states, 'the merchant's pursuit of economic profit actually bankrupts him in the eternal scheme of things....' <sup>1375</sup>

What the merchants should instead say (ἀντὶ τοῦ λέγειν ὑμᾶς), 1376 and thus show the correct disposition of the heart, is the so called *conditio Jacobaea*, 'if the Lord wills' (ἐάν ὁ κύριος θελήση) before making any plans (4:15), a statement that was common in Greco-Roman literature and used in the NT (Acts 18:21 cf. 21:14). 1377 In contrast to the previous claims, these plans do not include profit but the more modest hope for life and productivity (ζήσομεν καὶ ποιήσομεν τοῦτο ἢ ἐκεῖνο) and thus indirectly apply to the audience. Allison rightly notes that the 'indefinite expression stands for a different way of being in the world: deciding for oneself

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1370</sup> The interrogative pronoun  $\pi$ οία (from  $\pi$ οίος) suggests that this phrase is a rhetorical question. However, the NA28 punctuates it as part of the initial statement despite the grammatical problems this causes. See Varner, *James*, 320–21, who takes it as a rhetorical question but recognises that this does not alter the overall sense.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1371</sup> So Allison, *James*, 659. The suggestion in Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 221, that the appearing refers to the coming of the Son of man tradition (Mt 24:27-30) seems unlikely.

<sup>1372</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 233, posits that an apocryphal citation in 1 Clem. 17:6 (ἐγὼ δέ εἰμι ἀτμὶς ἀπὸ κύθρας) may be the source.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1373</sup> This occurs 11x in the LXX but only Hosea 13:3 uses it metaphorically for the transience of humans. It only occurs elsewhere in the NT in Acts 2:19, a citation of Joel 2:30.

<sup>1374</sup> In some variant manuscripts, this is translated as ἄτμος, a close synonym (LSJ, 271). See Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 220. For מֻבֵּבֶל as vapour or mist, see BDB, 280, and HALOT, 236.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1375</sup> Wall, Community of the Wise, 220.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1376</sup> This expression only occurs here in the NT (see *AGGSNT*, 226). In its only occurrence in the LXX it likewise decries proud speech (Ezek 29:9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1377</sup> See Johnson, *Letter of James*, 296. He provides examples from Greco-Roman literature of "deferring to the will of the gods." It may also be inferred from Jesus' teaching on the will of God and his obedience to this (Mt 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 26:42).

where to go and what to do gives way to acknowledging that God's will, which is not always manifest, is determinative.' And although God's directive will may not be known, as McCartney points out, his 'revealed righteous will' is also meant here, which includes Jesus' teaching, so that riches should not be what anyone arrogantly plans to pursue. 1379

James repeats the νῦν in 4:16, pointing back to 4:13, and castigates the greedy merchants that they 'claim honour in your arrogance' (καυχᾶσθε ἐν ταῖς ἀλαζονείαις 1380 ὑμῶν) and that 'every such honour-claim is evil' (πᾶσα καύχησις τοιαύτη πονηρά ἐστιν). The honour-claim reminds once again of the fate of the rich in 1:10-11 and of the rich fool in Luke 12 who makes similar claims (Lk 12:18-19). Such arrogance (ἀλαζονεία) is associated with wealth in its only other occurrence in the NT and is a characteristic of the κόσμος, in opposition to God (1 John 2:16). The greedy merchants are thus more than simply failing to acknowledge God in their plans, they are actually living in denial of God's sovereignty.

The final summation of this paragraph (4:17) switches tack from the condemnation of the pursuit of profit to the sin of omission, so that Dibelius typically declares, 'the verse does not tie in with either what precedes or what follows...' However, the inferential οῦν suggests an application to the audience based on the condemnation of the greedy merchant. So, James explains, to the one who knows to do good but fails to do it (εἰδότι ... καλὸν ποιεῖν καὶ μὴ ποιοῦντι), it is a sin for him (ἀμαρτία αὐτῷ ἐστιν). The repetition of ποιέω twice here picks up on doing 'this or that' in 4:15 but is more importantly meant to remind the hearers of the need to be doers of mercy (2:13) and a 'doer of the law' (ποιητής νόμου), mentioned as recently as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1378</sup> Allison, *James*, 661.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1379</sup> McCartney, *James*, 228.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1380</sup> The plural perhaps refers back to the plans of v. 13. So Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1381</sup> Varner, *James*, 322–23.

<sup>1382</sup> The NRSV translates ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου as 'the pride in riches.' See also its use in the LXX (and cognates) where it is often associated with the boasting of the wicked (Prov 21:24; Wis 5:8; 17:7; Hab 2:5; 2 Macc 9:8; 15:6)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1383</sup> Dibelius, James, 231.

4:11.<sup>1384</sup> Rather than being motivated by greed they should be motivated by love for their neighbour (2:8). For our author, it is no use nodding in approval at the prophetic denunciation of the greedy rich, if those belonging to the community do not care for those in need, <sup>1385</sup> and which must surely be the good required here.

Hence, verse 17 is a fitting concluding maxim that brings a very direct application to the audience from an otherwise prophetic denunciation of the rich merchants outside the community. Their greed for excessive wealth and arrogance means that a similar fate awaits them as the rich in 1:9-11. Contrastingly, James' hearers should be those who do good to others and help those in need. In the next section, the rhetoric heats up, where, as Batten colourfully states, 'James will save his big blast for last when he rips into the rich...' 1386 Once I have looked at these verses which explicitly address the rich (oi  $\pi\lambda$ oύσιοι), I will then consider the missional implications that arise from these two sections of prophetic denunciation.

### A Denunciation of the Exploitative Rich (5:1-6)

As noted already, the repeated  $\alpha \gamma \epsilon \nu \tilde{\nu} \nu$  links these verses to what precedes as part of a larger castigation of the rich. Again, the rich person remains untouched by this pronouncement, so that James' primary purpose is to rebuke implicitly any of his hearers who might be tempted to pursue wealth or look to the wealthy for patronage. While the language may reflect the satire against the flabby rich of such poets as Aristophanes, it is very much at home in the teaching of Jesus and OT traditions, with 'almost every sentence' close to the OT. 1390

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1384</sup> Hartin, *James*, 226.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1385</sup> As we have already seen above on 1:27 and 2:15-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1386</sup> Batten, "Degraded Poor," 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1387</sup> Penner, James and Eschatology, 173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1388</sup> Cf. Batten, "Ideological Strategies," 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1389</sup> Batten, "Degraded Poor," 76; cf. Alicia J. Batten, "Rotting Riches: Economics in the Letter of James," *Vision* 15, no. 1 (March 1, 2014): 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1390</sup> See Morales, *Poor and Rich*, 174, 190.

This final apostrophe is both the strongest indictment possible of the rich and an encouragement to emulate the righteous sufferer which provides the grounds for the call to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord (5:7). I will examine the passage in two parts, the first of which denounces the greed of the rich (5:1-3), and the second the exploitation of the poor (5:4-6). 1391

## The Rich Store Up Wealth (5:1-3)

Our author begins with a direct rebuke to the rich using the vocabulary 'of the prophetic funeral dirge and mourning cry, '1392 calling on them to 'weep, wailing over your coming miseries' (κλαύσατε ὀλολύζοντες ἐπὶ ταῖς ταλαιπωρίαις ὑμῶν ταῖς ἐπερχομέναις, 5:1). The prophetic overtones are provided by ὀλολύζω, which is used repeatedly in the prophetic literature of the OT, not as a call for repentance but rather as the response to God's judgment on the wicked, or the coming day of judgment, when it is already too late to repent. <sup>1393</sup> Similarly ταλαιπωρία, is often used more strongly in the prophetic literature to signify destruction or desolation. <sup>1394</sup> Although this echoes the call to repentance in 4:9-10 (ταλαιπωρήσατε, κλαύσατε), here it is without the express possibility of this taking place. <sup>1395</sup> As Penner notes, 'This is not the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1391</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 57, suggests that vv. 1-3 are the announcement of judgment and vv. 4-6 the accusation which are the essential elements of a prophetic judgment oracle.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1392</sup> Penner, James and Eschatology, 175.

<sup>1393</sup> This is a NT hapax. In the LXX it occurs 21x, only in the prophetic literature and is particularly common in Isaiah (13x). Hartin notes that it is the "violent grief" pagan nations will experience at God's judgment, citing Isa 13:6 and 14:31. See Patrick J. Hartin, "'Come Now, You Rich, Weep and Wail...' (James 5:1-6)," *JTSA*, no. 84 (September 1, 1993): 59. However, more notable is its use in Amos 8:3 where it prefaces the judgment against the rich oppressors in vv. 4-6. Outside of the LXX it also occurs 1x in the Sibylline Oracles, in the context of the destruction of the world (Sib. Or. 1:161). According to Alicia J. Batten, "The Characterization of the Rich in James," in *To Set At Liberty: Essays on Early Christianity and Its Social World in Honor of John H. Elliott*, ed. Stephen K. Black (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 53–54, this verb may also point to the effeminacy of the rich, who are "howling like distraught women."

<sup>1394</sup> It commonly translates שׁד (x12), which in the prophetic literature generally has the nuance of devastation (HALOT, 1418), and its verbal root שׁדד (x4). See, e.g., Isa 59:7; 60:18; Jer 6:7, 26; 20:8.

Gaskins, "Looking to the Future," 239. This does not mean the rich cannot repent, simply that since they are not part of the community, this is not the focus.

mourning of repentance, but the mourning at a funeral...'1396 and the warning has an eschatological overtone which will be amplified in what follows. 1397

The certainty of the coming destruction is shown in 5:2-3 by the three prophetic perfects 1398 where the wealth (ὁ πλοῦτος) of the rich has rotted (σέσηπεν), their clothes (τὰ ἰμάτια) have become moth-eaten (σητόβρωτα γέγονεν) and their gold and silver have rusted (κατίωται). In other words, the very things that they have worked to gain and give them security and status will in the end fail completely. Moreover, not only will they fail, but the rust (ἰός) of the gold and silver 1399 will be a witness against them (εἰς μαρτύριον ὑμῖν ἔσται), since their wealth should have been used to help the poor rather than stored up for themselves. 1400 Míguez notes the irony: 'Curiously, the first witnesses against the rich are their own riches.' 1401 The corrosion will eat into their flesh like a fire (φάγεται τὰς σάρκας ὑμῶν ὡς πῦρ), an eschatological image that also perhaps refers to the vivid image of jewellery such as rings eating into the pudgy fingers of the greedy rich. 1402 The futility of such behaviour is summed up with the final statement of verse 3, 'you stored up treasure in the last days' (ἐθησαυρίσατε ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις), probably with the sense that the last days have already begun and judgment is imminent (cf. 5:8). 1403

Although James has begun with OT prophetic language, the conflation of moth-eaten garments, rust and storing up treasure adapts Jesus' teaching in Mt 6:19-20, the only other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1396</sup> Penner, James and Eschatology, 175.

<sup>1397</sup> Morales, Poor and Rich, 202.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1398</sup> These depict the certainty of the judgment "rhetorically emphasizing its inescapability" (*AGGSNT*, 332). So also Dibelius, *James*, 236; Davids, *Epistle of James*, 175.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1399</sup> McKnight, *James*, 387, explains this as the rusting of the impurities within such metals (which do not themselves rust).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1400</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 176, takes ὑμῖν as a dative of disadvantage. Along with other commentators he also notes the similarities with Sir 29:9-12; Allison, *James*, 675, regards the whole phrase as a Semitism or Septuagintalism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1401</sup> Míguez, "Ricos y Pobres," 97. "Curiosamente, los primeros testigos en contra de los ricos son sus propias riquezas" (my translation).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1402</sup> Batten, "Degraded Poor," 76; cf. Batten, "Characterization of the Rich," 55, who sees this as further evidence of the effeminacy of the rich. It also reminds of the ἀνὴρ χρυσοδακτύλιος in 2:2-4.
<sup>1403</sup> Allison, James, 677.

biblical text in which all three ideas are found together, albeit with some differences in vocabulary. What has moth  $(\sigma \dot{\eta} \varsigma)$  and rust  $(\beta \rho \tilde{\omega} \sigma \iota \varsigma)$ , which together consume  $(\dot{\alpha} \varphi \alpha \nu i \zeta \epsilon \iota)$  of. Jas 4:14) the possessions and wealth which Jesus warns his hearers not to store  $(\mu \dot{\eta} \theta \eta \sigma \alpha \nu \rho i \zeta \epsilon \tau \epsilon)$  on earth  $(\dot{\epsilon} \pi \dot{\iota} \tau \eta \varsigma \gamma \eta \varsigma \epsilon f$ . Jas 5:5). The emphasis in Matthew is on the right use of possessions to help others, 'a reorientation' away from earthly treasure to heavenly treasure. James, then, in this opening section takes both the teaching of Jesus and the prophetic tradition to denounce the rich, while at the same time reminding his own hearers to take the right action.

# The Rich Deprive and Exploit the Poor (5:4-6)

With the particle ἐδού, James continues in the prophetic style and expands on the way the rich have gained their wealth, namely through exploitation and even murder. Verse 4 consists of two parallel statements concerning the same group of people, the workers also being the harvesters. <sup>1406</sup> James castigates the rich landowners for the 'wage withheld by you' (ὁ μισθὸς... ὁ ἀπεστερημένος ἀφ' ὑμῶν) <sup>1407</sup> of the workers who mow/harvest <sup>1408</sup> their fields (τῶν ἐργατῶν τῶν ἀμησάντων τὰς χώρας ὑμῶν). This is in contravention of the Torah which requires the wage (ὀ μισθός) of the labourer to be paid promptly (Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15) and is also denounced in the prophetic literature with similar sentiments. For example in Malachi 3:5, God will judge those who 'withhold the pay of the hired worker' (ἀποστεροῦντας μισθὸν μισθωτοῦ). <sup>1409</sup> The wage is also personified as crying out (κράζει), linking the passage more closely to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1404</sup> Cf. Batten, "Ideological Strategies," 22. Matthew's σής + βρῶσις may be the basis for James' σητόβρωτα, a NT hapax, and rare elsewhere, only being found in LXX Job 13:28 which has ἱμάτιον σητόβρωτον and in the Pseudepigrapha, in Sib. Or. 23:26 in a fragment. It is not found in Philo or Josephus.

<sup>1405</sup> France, Matthew, 259.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1406</sup> Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 157.

 $<sup>^{1407}</sup>$  Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, 223 suggest that ἀφ' ὑμῶν modifies κράζει as the location from where the cry goes up, but with most commentators it is better to take it in its agential sense of "by you". James has already used ἀπό this way in 1:13. So Dibelius, *James*, 238.

<sup>1408</sup> Άμάω can be either, although the predominant sense in the LXX is 'harvest,' translating קצר (Lev 25:11; Deut 24:19; Mic 6:15; Isa 17:5; 37:30).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1409</sup> Cf. Jer 22:13

Deuteronomy 24:15<sup>1410</sup> but also suggesting to many the tradition of Cain and Abel, where Abel's blood likewise cries out from the ground. Such behaviour is also strongly condemned in the wisdom literature. Notably, in Sirach 34:21 the withholding of wages is likened to the shedding of blood. 1413

In the second parallel statement, the crying out of the wage becomes the cries of the harvesters (αἱ βοαὶ τῶν θερισάντων) which enter 'into the ears of the Lord of Hosts' (εἰς τὰ ὧτα κυρίου σαβαώθ). This appears to draw directly from Isaiah 5:9 which is the only other place in the Greek Bible that has this exact phrase, <sup>1414</sup> a rendering that is substantially different from the MT. <sup>1415</sup> Notably, it is a trait of LXX Isaiah to translate the Lord of Hosts (κρίριος σαβαωθ<sup>1416</sup> (the transliteration of 'hosts') rather than the more common κύριος παντοκράτωρ. <sup>1417</sup> This Isaian turn of phrase, drawing on this woe oracle, thus emphasises that God will 'make the cause of the labourers his own' <sup>1418</sup> and bring judgment on the wicked rich who have oppressed the poor.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1410</sup> Morales sees Deut 24:14-15 behind this text rather than Leviticus 19:13. See Morales, *Poor and Rich*, 195–97. As well as the crying out of the defrauded, he further notes the concern for the widow and orphan in Deut 24:17-21. Yet a choice is perhaps not necessary and James may well have been familiar with both since he has quoted Lev 19:18 in 2:8 and possibly used 19:15 in 2:1. See also Johnson, "Leviticus 19" for the use of Lev 19 in James.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1411</sup> For Byron, "Shadow of Cain", it is not just 5:4 that echoes Gen 4:10, but that the whole section (5:1-6) is based on this tradition as it is developed in later literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1412</sup> See, e.g., Job 24:6. Here the poor reaped (ἐθέρισαν) in the fields and vineyards of the wicked (ἀσεβῶν) and 'worked without pay' (ἀμισθὶ ... ἠργάσαντο), an idea not in the MT. Some of the context also has resonances with this theme in James. The poor are naked and include the widow and orphan and ultimately the rich will disappear (ἀφανὴς ἐγένετο) like a mist (24:20 cf. Jas 4:14) and will wither in the heat (ἐμαράνθη ... ἐν καύματι; 24:24 cf. 1:11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1413</sup> See, e.g., Hartin, "Come Now," 60; Strangely, Osburn, "James, Sirach", links Sir 34:22 to James 2:1-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1414</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 202–3, notes that alongside this unique phrase the title for God (κύριος σαβαωθ) appears 4x in Isa 5 which has a "similarly sustained invective against the rich."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1415</sup> The MT has the prophet say that God swore 'in my ears' (בְּאָזְנִי) whereas in the LXX the previously described injustices 'were heard in the ears of the Lord Sabaoth' (ἠκούσθη γὰρ εἰς τὰ ὧτα κυρίου σαβαωθ).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1416</sup> This only occurs elsewhere in the NT in Rom 9.29 citing Isa 1:9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1417</sup> יְהְוָה צְּבְאוֹת is translated by κύριος παντοκράτωρ 132x in the LXX, 117x in the prophetic literature but never in Isaiah whereas κύριος σαβαωθ is used 62x in the LXX, of which 52x are in Isaiah and only once elsewhere in the prophetic literature. Κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων is also used 24x but never in Isaiah and most commonly in the Psalms (x16). Cf. Laws, Epistle of James, 202.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1418</sup> Ropes, St. James, 289.

In the next verse and a half (5:5-6a), there follows a series of five abrupt accusations presenting the actions as a whole from the perspective of future judgment. The first two denounce the luxurious lifestyle of the rich (ἐτρυφήσατε... ἐσπαταλήσατε). The ironic result is that this fattened their hearts for the day of slaughter (ἐθρέψατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμέρα σφαγῆς), another prophetic reference to the day of judgment (cf. Jer 12:3). The final two accusations accuse the rich of the condemnation and murder of the 'righteous one' (κατεδικάσατε, ἐφονεύσατε τὸν δίκαιον), a person whose identity is much debated. It seems most likely that ὀ δίκαιος is not one specific person but rather representative of the class of persons who are oppressed by the rich. Yet although it is a general class, it is given greater weight by specific examples such as Abel, a prototypical righteous sufferer in the Jesus tradition and early church (Mt 23:35; Heb 11:4). Yet although it is a general class, the greatest exemplar is Christ, who in the early church kerygma was 'righteous/the righteous one' which would be even more prominent with the closing phrase that 'he does not resist you' (οὐκ ἀντιτάσσεται ὑμῦν), 1423 although it would still resonate with OT tradition for diaspora Judeans.

This final phrase reminds of 4:6 where God resists the proud, but the two outcomes are very different. The former is meant to produce repentance and a humble disposition within the community of faith, whereas here, the final indictment of the rich encourages those facing

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1419</sup> Varner, *James*, 347. These are all in the aorist tense.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1420</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 304; cf. Morales, *Poor and Rich*, 200–201, who points out that  $\sigma \phi \alpha \gamma \dot{\eta}$  is used repeatedly for judgment in LXX Jeremiah although only here as the "day of slaughter" (see also 15:3; 19:6; 27:27; 28:40; 31:15; 32:34).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1421</sup> This seems to be supported by the similarities here with Wis 2:10-20. See Johnson, *Letter of James*, 304.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1422</sup> See further Byron, "Shadow of Cain". For a more extensive list of interpretive possibilities, see Allison, *James*, 684–87. As well as the options explored here, they include James himself, drawing on the legend of James of Jerusalem's death, and persecuted Christians; cf. McKnight, *James*, 397–400.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1423</sup> Jesus is δίχαιος (Mt 27:9; Lk 23:47; Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 1 Pet 3:18) and does not resist (Mt 26:63; 27:12-14//Mk 15:5; Lk 23:9). This second aspect is related to the passive response of the righteous suffering servant in Isa 53:1-11 (Isa 53:7 cf. Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 2:22-25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1424</sup> Luis Alonso Schokel, "James 5.5 and 4.6," *Bib* 54, no. 1 (1973): 73–76. Schokel argues that God is the subject in 5:6 as well since the verb is the same but this hardly follows. It would make this a question, implying that God is resisting the rich. Some recent commentators follow this, inter alia, Johnson, *Letter of James*, 305; Edgar, *Social Setting*, 203; Varner, *New Perspective*, 176. However, most keep it as a statement about the righteous one. So, inter alia, Martin, *James*, 181; Moo, *The Letter of James*, 220; Hartin, *James*, 237.

oppression to not resist. Just as Jesus, the ultimate righteous sufferer, did not resist, it is requisite for his followers to show the same non-resistance, trusting that God will vindicate them in the coming judgment (Mt 5:38-48). This provides a compelling basis for the call to 'wait patiently, therefore' (Μακροθυμήσατε οὖν...) for the Lord's coming (5:7) which begins the next section. It is not that God is already acting against the rich oppressors (in which case one wonders why the righteous still suffer), but rather, in conformity to the tradition of the suffering servant exemplified by Christ, they must trust and wait on the coming Lord who will in the end set things right (5:8-11). 1426

Thus James denounces the rich and maintains God's demand for justice and right treatment of the poor and encourages his audience to trust God, waiting for his final judgment on the rich. As a word of warning he also enjoins his hearers not to side with the rich, the very ones who oppress and even murder the righteous. Having examined both sections, it remains to suggest some missional implications that follow from the passage as a whole.

#### A Prophetic Challenge to the Church's Mission

A missional reading of James' robust denunciation of the rich must negotiate some emotive alternatives. On the one hand, writers' such as Tamez have resisted a 'passive' understanding of this passage, 1427 but on the other hand others have inevitably tried to downplay James' condemnation of the rich. 1428 Kloppenborg suggests that both approaches are based on ideological rather than exegetical considerations, 1429 and so just as modern economic categories should not be used uncritically in understanding James' teaching on poverty and riches, James'

<sup>1426</sup> Allison, *James*, 688.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1425</sup> Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth*, 97–98. See also Rom 12:17-20; 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 2:21-23; This non-resistance ties in with perfection in Mt 5:48 and so may also do here. See Hartin, "Come Now," 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1427</sup> Tamez, *Scandalous Message*, 43–46. While Tamez decries a passive and submissive attitude it is not clear what she means by "militant patience" or "resistance."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1428</sup> As Batten, "Rotting Riches," 40 points out.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1429</sup> Kloppenborg, "Poverty and Piety," 203.

rhetoric should not be uncritically applied to a modern context. There is a danger in simply consigning those who are relatively well-off to the 'day of slaughter' and decrying modern economic systems as if the system is of itself responsible for poverty. However, the greater tendency from my own social location is unfortunately to downplay James' castigation of wealth and greed and so the bulk of my missional observations will be directed with that in mind. Certainly while the modern economic category of 'rich' is not the same as the general categorisation of the 'rich' as greedy and therefore inherently evil, James still speaks strongly against profit as a motive and oppressive greed. The passage echoes the scepticism Jesus shows about wealth and surely should be reflected in mission practice today.

Indeed the fact that in so few verses James so thoroughly draws on the OT Law, the wisdom tradition, prophetic material and the Jesus tradition means that it would be remiss to gloss over the seriousness of what he says. Biblically informed mission must pay attention to James' biblically rooted message. Inequalities of wealth are widespread as they were in the Roman empire, and so for Miguez, James provides 'a truly up-to-date hermeneutic that unites the legal, sapiential and prophetic traditions of Israel.' The first contribution of a missional hermeneutic, then, is to take James' reworked tradition denouncing oppression and greed as a voice to be heard in ML and in what follows I will suggest several pertinent challenges for modern mission.

Primarily, James challenges any accommodation to the values of consumerism in the mission of the church. As Hays notes, this 'is, at its core, a modern and perhaps sociologically distinctive expression of greed.' Thus, as he continues, 'once we have framed consumerism

1433 Hays, "Provision for the Poor," 588.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1430</sup> See, e.g., Pimentel, "Ricos y Pobres," 77. Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 109, respectfully questions the belief that replacing one system with another will bring justice, suggesting that modern history shows otherwise.

Malina, "Wealth and Poverty," 355–57. See further the discussion in the introduction and throughout this paper.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1432</sup> Míguez, "Ricos y Pobres," 94. "Santiago hace una verdadera hermenéutica actualizadora que aúna las tradiciones legal, sapiencial y profética de Israel" (my translation).

in terms of accumulation of wealth that fails to love our hungry neighbour, the incompatibility of Christian ethics and capitulating to consumerist patterns becomes clear. 1434 In our passages above this is seen in the profit-seeking merchants and the wealth-accumulating rich. In the case of the merchants Friesen suggests that 'what [James] called arrogant and evil became codified as standard economic practice. 1435 James' critique of such 'economic idolatry' is surely still relevant even though modern society does not operate from a concept of limited good, since all too often the rich still enjoy wealth at the expense of the poor. 1436 The church's mission should therefore work hard to be counter-cultural and not only help those in need, 1437 but also refuse to participate in gain based on exploitation of others. Relevant, too, is Hays critique of the prosperity gospel that in its most extreme forms makes the sum total of the church's mission to become as rich as possible, with some pastors amassing staggering wealth very often at the expense of poor donors, 1438 something that hardly fits with James condemnation of greed and friendship with the world (4:4). 1439

The church has also tended to accommodate itself to culture in its tacit acceptance of unjust and oppressive structures in its missionary endeavours. Peter Cotterell notes that missionaries have sometimes operated from the basis of seeking patronage from oppressive regimes in order to make possible otherwise worthy initiatives. Moreover, mission activity has often been guilty by association with colonial attitudes of racial discrimination and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1434</sup> Hays, "Provision for the Poor," 589.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1435</sup> Cited in Batten, "Rotting Riches," 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1436</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 201–3. Bauckham also extends this to urge for ecological change.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1437</sup> David J. Bosch, "Mission and the Alternative Community," *JTSA*, no. 41 (December 1, 1982): 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1438</sup> Hays, "Provision for the Poor," 589–96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1439</sup> In the previous chapter I noted the connection here with Mt 6:24 argued for by Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 158–65, which would strengthen the challenge to the church regarding consumerism; cf. Dewi A. Hughes, "Understanding and Overcoming Poverty," in *Transforming the World?: The Gospel and Social Responsibility*, ed. Jamie A. Grant and Dewi A. Hughes (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), 178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1440</sup> Peter Cotterell, *The Eleventh Commandment: Church and Mission Today* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 68.

exploitation. 1441 Instead of being at the forefront of bringing God's message of 'social equity and responsibility in a culture that favours the rich,' it rather has sometimes been complicit in validating oppression and injustice. 1442 Padilla rightly suggests that the mission of Jesus as expressed in the SM should inform the church's mission today so that it ought to be 'opting for the power of love rather than the love of power, opting for hunger and thirst for justice instead of the love of money, opting for pleasing God instead of the approval of one's neighbour.' 1443 Our reading of James in this chapter concurs with such sentiment.

Further, it would not be too much to say that James also speaks against systemic injustice of any kind. 1444 Although I have argued above that James does not actually address the rich oppressors because they are not among the audience, the fact that he makes clear such sentiment challenges the church when it does occupy a position of influence (however small) to make its voice heard (or at the very least overheard) and prick the conscience of the powerbrokers in society, and to work towards a more just society. 1445

Although my focus has been on the dangers inherent in a relatively wealthy western church, James also challenges an understanding of mission that advocates for the violent overthrow of those in power. 1446 In James' theology, the righteous sufferer does not resist, and indeed, his audience is encouraged to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord (5:6-7). The mission of the church is not one of violent resistance, however unjust the structures of power

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1441</sup> Esther Mombo, "From Fourfold Mission to Holistic Mission: Towards Edinburgh 2010," in Woolnough and Ma, eds, Holistic Mission, 40. <sup>1442</sup> Kamell, "Mission and Morals," 17–18; cf. Cotterell, *Eleventh Commandment*, who laments about the unfair

treatment of missionary employees, which he describes as perhaps "the greatest blot on the history of missions." 1443 C. René Padilla, "The Biblical Basis for Social Ethics," in Transforming the World?: The Gospel and Social Responsibility, ed. Jamie A. Grant and Dewi A. Hughes (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), 198. 1444 Hartin, "Come Now," 61.

<sup>1445</sup> Osburn, "James, Sirach," 127. Referring to Jas 5:1-6, he states: "This text, properly extended, involves Christians in dealing with economic and social injustices, not merely talking about them."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1446</sup> Bosch looks at some elements of liberation theology that have strayed toward this. See Bosch, *Transforming* Mission, 440–42; See also the nuanced discussion in Newbigin, Open Secret, 91–120.

may be. 1447 Velamkunnel criticizes James because his 'vigorous protests are inhibited by apocalyptic passivism, '1448 yet James' exhortations to his own community to care for the poor can hardly be viewed as passive. The exhortation to his own community to do good (4:17) shows that James encourages an active involvement in bringing change to society. 1449

Finally, by appealing to the example of the righteous sufferer, subtly but nonetheless powerfully, James also points to mission in the way of the cross. Jesus, the paradigmatic δ δίκαιος and exemplar of non-resistance in his death puts the cross at the heart of the church's mission. Wright explicates, 'the cross is the unavoidable center of our mission. All Christian mission flows from the cross – as its source, its power, and as that which defines its scope. 1450 Since Jesus is portrayed as able to resist with devastating effect but does not, it speaks even more powerfully to the church engaged in mission. 1451 The church must follow in Christ's footsteps in what Bosch has called 'vulnerable mission' coming not as 'exemplar' but as 'victim.' 1452 Christ's non-resistance and determination to 'drink the cup' of suffering and die on the cross rather than save himself (Mt 27:38-43) 'reveals the fundamental character of the true God' and lays the pathway for mission in his name. 1453 As Wright concludes tellingly, 'The cross was the unavoidable cost of God's mission' 1454 and so it follows that it is also the unavoidable cost of the church's mission when it is called to become the righteous sufferer. 1455

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1447</sup> Elsa Tamez and Gloria Kinsler, "James: A Circular Letter for Immigrants," *RevExp* 108, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 373; Hartin, "Come Now," 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1448</sup> Velamkunnel, "Social Problems," 241.

<sup>1449</sup> My earlier critique above of Pimentel, "Ricos y Pobres", is mitigated by the fact that much of his study is dedicated to this aspect for his own community.

Wright, The Mission of God, 314; cf. Russell, Realigning with God, 69, who notes that a "missional understanding of the Scripture (sic) recognizes that God's mission advances through the suffering and death of the Messiah."

Habitation 1451 Bosch, "The Vulnerability of Mission," 358. See Mt 26:53-54; Lk 23:34.
 Bosch, "The Vulnerability of Mission," 357-61. Bosch makes the point of Christ's ability to resist on p.358. (cf. Mt 26:53-54; Lk 23:34).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1453</sup> Bosch, "The Vulnerability of Mission," 356–57. Citing William Frazier, Bosch points to the way the cross or crucifix is given in the commissioning of Catholic missionaries, so that '[t]hose who receive it possess not only a symbol of their mission but a handbook on how to carry it out.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1454</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 312 (italics original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1455</sup> It is important to note that this does not deny the responsibility of the church to speak and act *for* the oppressed when it is in the position to do so.

### **Summary**

In looking at James' discussion on poverty and wealth from a missional perspective, we have seen that the letter offers both consolation and challenge; consolation to those who are poor and oppressed because they occupy a special place within God's consideration, but also challenge for Christ-followers to disrupt the cultural norms of the day, whether those of patronage and partiality or those of greed and exploitation. The letter provides a neglected voice to encourage the church to engage in holistic mission that addresses the social needs of society and speaks against and seeks to redress the unjust structures in society where possible.

This is not to say that the global church is not actively engaged in social justice and relief efforts 1456 but rather that the voice of James should be heard in the formulation of what constitutes the mission of the church. To that end, I agree with Batten that James is a 'pointed text, and its insights are useful in prodding us to question and challenge the political and economic shifts that widen the gap between the wealthy and the poor, and to think creatively about how we all might live more equitably together. The text of James should surely challenge those of us in the relative comfort of the West to reconsider whether the mission of the church in our context fully reflects the mission of God, particularly with its powerful vision of mercy, that comes to the fore in reading James. I close with the challenge from the Latin-American theologian, C. René Padilla, which I believe encapsulates the community James seeks to form: 'The question is whether we are prepared to let our lives be moulded not by the idolatrous lies of the empire but by the biblical story – the story of God's dealing with humankind to create a world where people embody justice, mercy and humility before God.' 1458

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1456</sup> Well-known global mission agencies such as Tearfund, Christian Aid, World Vision and Catholic Relief Services are at the forefront of poverty relief and tackling the unjust structures of current society, and to that may be added a host of smaller national agencies that are too many to enumerate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1457</sup> Batten, "Rotting Riches," 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1458</sup> Padilla, "Biblical Basis for Social Ethics," 204.

## **CHAPTER 8: TRUE PIETY, LIVING FAITH AND RIGHT SPEECH**

Vain piety, empty faith and unbridled speech are the opposite of what James believes should be identity markers for the communities to which he writes. These themes all come together in the final section of the first chapter of the epistle (1:19-27) and the latter two are developed further in 2:14-26 and 3:1-12 (cf. 4:11-12; 5:12) as I will explain more fully below. It is no exaggeration to say that the missional identity of James' audience is integrally tied to each of these themes, so that in this chapter, the fitness of the recipients to participate in God's mission is in the balance. This aspect, central to a missional hermeneutic, will necessarily take precedence over the weighty and entangled discussions of exactly how James relates to Pauline theology in the debate on faith and works (2:14-26), for which the secondary literature is enormous, although this cannot be entirely ignored. 1459

Before I begin exploring the texts noted above, I will briefly outline the way James introduces these themes in 1:19-27 and then picks up on them again in the body of the letter. The introductory proverbial saying mandates three key components of appropriate behaviour for the community of faith, namely being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger (1:19). Control of speech begins and closes the section (1:19, 26) and is then developed in 3:1-12 and touched on again in 4:11-12 and 5:12. The importance of hearing and doing is presented in 1:22-25 as an expansion of being 'quick to hear' and is then explored in more depth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1459</sup> As Dale C. Allison, "Jas 2:14-26: Polemic against Paul, Apology for James," in *Ancient Perspectives on Paul*, ed. Tobias Nicklas, Andreas Merkt, and Jozef Verheyden, NTOA/SUNT 102 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 123, rather despairingly states, "...the relevant books, chapters, and articles are as the sands of the sea. Indeed, the secondary literature on Jas 2:14-26 seemingly exceeds that dedicated to the rest of James put together. The exegete here confronts an overgrown, entangled mess beyond sorting."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1460</sup> Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 35–37, treats this verse as programmatic for the body of the letter. While there are definite correspondences, his overall scheme is somewhat forced.

in 2:14-26 with the emphasis on faith needing works to be effective. The final element of the triad, 'slow to anger,' is picked up immediately in verses 20-21 and is also connected to James' more detailed treatment on wisdom and community conflict which I have looked at elsewhere, so will not be considered here beyond how it is presented in 1:19-21. Vain versus true piety summarises the argument of the first section (1:26-27) and also points to the need for faith in action (2:14-26) and the purity that is essential to wisdom (3:17), but again I will not consider this second aspect beyond its presence in 1:27. <sup>1461</sup> In what follows, I will first examine James' introduction of these themes in 1:19-27 and then consider faith and works (2:14-26) before concluding with controlled speech (3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:12).

## PRODUCING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD (1:19-27)

James' continued preview of later sections of the letter is full of significance itself in guiding the community towards living out its identity as God's people. The author draws on themes that have missional significance, some of which function similarly to the attractional nature of living as a wise community that we saw previously. James uses a blend of biblical and Hellenistic concepts and formulates unique expressions such as the 'implanted word' that are open to interpretation, <sup>1462</sup> but would fall within the expectations placed on God's people to follow his law, and for Christ-followers to privilege Jesus' teaching. Several recent studies have argued for the coherence of 1:19-27 by connecting the initial proverbial saying to the rest of the passage in three distinct, but related parts, 1:19-21, 1:22-25 and 1:26-67 and I begin with the first of these. <sup>1463</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1461</sup> I have dealt with wisdom, purity and community conflict in chapter six.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1462</sup> The formulation ἔμφυτος λόγος is unique to James. "Εμφυτος is one of five NT hapax legomena (2 of which are also hapaxes in the Greek Bible) in this section. There are also 5 words used only once elsewhere in the NT. <sup>1463</sup> C. John Collins, "Coherence in James 1:19-27," *JOTT* 10 (1998): 80–88; Verseput, "Plutarch of Chaeronea," 511–16; cf. *idem*, "James 1:19-27: Anger in the Congregation," in *Interpreting the New Testament Text: Introduction to the Art and Science of Exegesis*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Buist M. Fanning (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), 429–40, a slight expansion and reworking of his article. See also Varner, *New Perspective*, 72–79.

## **Receiving The Word Which Saves (1:19-21)**

A Proverbial Saying (1:19)

The final section of the letter introduction begins with a typical imperative plus vocative construction, 'Know this my beloved brothers and sisters' ('Ίστε ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί). <sup>1464</sup> The proverbial saying that follows encapsulates what they are to know or understand: 'Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger' (ἔστω δὲ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ταχὺς εἰς τὸ ἀκοῦσαι, βραδὺς εἰς τὸ λαλῆσαι, βραδὺς εἰς ὀργήν). Many proverbs with similar sentiments from biblical and non-biblical sources exist but not exactly as found here with all three elements, so that perhaps this combination is James' own formulation. <sup>1465</sup> However, the dependence on Jewish wisdom literature is clear with Sirach 5:11 notable for its similarity. <sup>1466</sup>

While the saying certainly has general applicability, there also seems to be a specific application that James proceeds to give to each element. 'Quick to hear' is a very pointed challenge to hear the word rightly – i.e. to receive it with meekness (1:21) and then apply it (1:22-25). Likewise, 'slow to speak' will be defined in the context of true piety and control of the tongue (1:26). Finally, 'slow to anger' is set off from the other two injunctions by the different structure, perhaps being the climax of the saying, and is dealt with in the immediate context (1:20). 1467

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1464</sup> "Ιστε is taken as an imperative by most commentators but may also be taken as an indicative, in which case it most likely refers back to vv. 16-18. For the former, see Davids, *Epistle of James*, 91; for the latter, see Johnson, *Letter of James*, 198–99. There is also a textual variant ἄστε that virtually all commentators reject. See further Davids, 91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1465</sup> Allison, *James*, 297–99, provides extensive examples of the individual elements, sometimes also as pairs, from biblical, Qumranic, Rabbinic and Greco-Roman sources but views James' "triadic injunction" as his own.

<sup>1466</sup> This has 'Βε ταχὺς ἐν ἀκροάσει σου and with μακροθυμία utter a reply.' For 'quick to hear' and/or 'slow to speak' see, e.g., Prov 10:19; 12:19 (LXX); 13:3; 15:1; 17:27; Eccl 5:1; Sir 1:22; 6:33. For 'slow to anger,' see Prov 14:29; 16:32; Eccl 7:9 cf. Dio Chrysostum 32.2. Further, Davids, *Epistle of James*, 92 argues that πᾶς ἄνθρωπος is a Semitism reflecting the Hebrew בל אדם. The LXX translates it thus 7x. It also translates with in this way 4x but this is translated much more frequently as πᾶς ἀνήρ (28x). Allison, *James*, 300-301 additionally points out that the structure of the imperatives has close parallels in rabbinic literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1467</sup> Instead of εἰς τὸ + infinitive, the construction is εἰς + noun. See Johnson, *Letter of James*, 199; cf. Allison, *James*, 302. EVV obscure this since "slow to anger" suggests a third infinitive construction. Surprisingly, Varner, *New Perspective*, 74, speaks of three infinitives here.

Verseput suggests that this is an exhortation to the community to behave appropriately when they gather to hear the scriptures being taught, <sup>1468</sup> although it also has general relevance to any individual or communal setting. <sup>1469</sup> The clear message is that community relationships should be governed by this triad to avoid unseemly arguing and disputing, a common concern in the various assemblies of the time. Verseput explicates that 'so frequently did the problem occur and so sensitive were ancient groups to the shame that a major altercation might cause, that the statues of these various communities often endeavoured to impose penalties on the offenders.' <sup>1470</sup> Already, then we have a problem that affects the attractional nature of the community since this is called into question if it is characterised by disputing and anger.

Anger vs. The Righteousness of God (1:20-21)

The argument continues in verse 20 with the explanatory γάρ providing the reason why 'human anger' (ὀργὴ... ἀνδρός)<sup>1471</sup> should not be entertained; it does not 'produce God's righteousness' (δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ οὐ κατεργάζεται). Although the language of righteousness here appears isolated, it extends thematically throughout this section expressed through the synonymous concerns of obedience (1:22-25) and true piety (1:26-27) and is elaborated further in 2:14-26.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1468</sup> Verseput, "Plutarch of Chaeronea," 513. Collins, "Coherence"; cf. Carl Mosser, "Torah Instruction, Discussion, and Prophecy in First-Century Synagogues," in *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, TENTS 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 533–34, who concludes that typically a synagogue service included the reading of the Torah followed by a leader's explanation and then community discussion on the text. See, e.g., Philo *Spec.* 2.61; *Mos.* 2.215; *Somn.* 2.127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1469</sup> See Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness," 75–77, who notes that James deals with "three interrelated dimensions of human life" (p. 77), the personal, social/communal and cosmological. Although he places this passage as part of the personal or cosmological dimensions, he links this section with others categorised as communal.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1470</sup> Verseput, "Anger in the Congregation," 432. He mentions the regulations of a late Ptolemaic guild of Zeus Hypsistos (69-58BC), the *nomoi* of a guild in the reign of Tiberius, the Qumranic Rule of the Community 1QS v.25-vi.3 and various NT texts (e.g., 1 Cor 14:26-40; 1 Tim 2:8-10). cf. Verseput, "Community Setting," 107–8; Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 154–55, who notes that associations sanctioned those who misbehaved at meetings, including by verbal and physical abuse of other members.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1471</sup> Since ἀνήρ follows the more generic ἄνθρωπος closely (v. 20 cf. 1:8, 11) and is contrasted with the righteousness of God, it is appropriate to translate it here as "human." So Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 53–54.

However, more important is what James means by δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in this particular context. <sup>1472</sup> Here, as Moo notes, it speaks of 'an attribute of God: his moral purity and especially his reliability and faithfulness in carrying out all that he has promised. <sup>1473</sup> But as Moo goes on to argue, since it is governed by the verb 'produce,' it seems unlikely in the context that it carries an imputed or judicial sense that is often assumed in Paul. <sup>1474</sup> Rather it should be taken as the standard which God requires for human attitudes and behaviour so that James' use is similar to that found in the SM (Mt 5:20 cf. 6:1), which provides a helpful comparison. <sup>1475</sup>

The 'greater righteousness' in the SM is explained through a series of antitheses which prioritise adherence to Jesus' interpretation of the Law as the mark of true righteousness (Mt 5:21-48). Significantly, as in James, the first deals with human anger and abusive speech (Mt 5:21-22). Jesus refines the Law to deal not just with murder but with the anger that leads to it and so he states 'everyone who is angry (δ δργιζόμενος) with his brother will be liable to judgment' (5:22). Jesus then prohibits insults, with the strong warning that this makes the offender liable to 'the hell of fire' (εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός), closely resembling James' later

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1472</sup> As Don B. Garlington, "The 'Better Righteousness': Matthew 5:20," *BBR* 20, no. 4 (2010): 487, states, "the scholarship devoted to 'righteousness' has spawned a virtual library of its own..." so it would be impossible to do more than touch briefly on some of the possible nuances of the word.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1473</sup> Moo, The Letter of James, 83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1474</sup> At least as taken by a majority of Protestant interpreters, as noted by Jewett, *Romans*, 141. In his view, this refers to God restoring his righteousness to the world (pp. 142-147). Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, provides a survey of views.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1475</sup> Hartin, *James*, 96; cf. Moo, *The Letter of James*, 84. For righteousness in Matthew, see Garlington, "The 'Better Righteousness," 487–88; Francois P. Viljoen, "Righteousness and Identity Formation in the Sermon on the Mount," *HvTSt* 69, no. 1 (2013): 9. See also Foster, *Community, Law and Mission*, 197–209. He makes the important point that righteousness is not just about human behaviour but also means "allegiance to Jesus" as the "supreme source of authority" which would fit well with James (1:1; 2:1).

<sup>1476</sup> Foster, Community, Law and Mission, 95–96, notes the inclusio formed by the references to δικαιοσύνη (5:20; 6:1) and argues that the antitheses are a "hermeneutical guide" to understand this greater righteousness. Jesus' teaching involves reinterpretation, redefinition and even rejection of certain elements of the law (p. 141). As we will see later, James is in agreement with Jesus' rejection of oaths.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1477</sup> France, *Matthew*, 198–99; Richard B. Hays, "The Gospel of Matthew: Reconfigured Torah," *HvTSt* 61, no. 1 & 2 (2005): 177.

description of the tongue (Jas 3:6). <sup>1478</sup> Thus, anger and wrong speech are antithetical to true righteousness in both Jesus' and James' teaching. <sup>1479</sup>

The path to righteousness, then, is presented in 1:21 with the διό marking the appropriate response that will produce God's righteousness. The audience is to 'put off all sordidness and abundance of evil...' (ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν καὶ περισσείαν κακίας ...). 1480 This exhortation fits within standard NT paraenesis to put off what is morally wrong as a way of saying 'cease from wickedness' 1481 and may be based on an early baptismal formula, yet the context here is certainly not limited to this and there is no corresponding call to 'put on' something or a Christological emphasis. 1482 As most commentators note, 1 Peter 2:1 is the closest parallel since it uses ἀποθέμενοι and an inferential conjunction (οὖν) followed by πᾶσαν κακίας. 1483 There are also contextual parallels in that both follow on reasonably closely from the idea of being born by a λόγος (Jas 1:18; 'of God' - 1 Pet 1:23) and 1 Peter 2:2 exhorts the readers to eagerly desire the 'milk of the word' (τὸ λογικὸν... γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε) leading to salvation (εἰς σωτηρίαν). 1484 The parallels indicate the way a Christ-following community would likely interpret the rest of the verse which is a notorious interpretative crux.

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 $<sup>^{1478}</sup>$  Γέεννα only occurs here in the NT outside of the Gospels and is also a particularly Matthean term (7x) cf. Mark (3x) and Luke (1x).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1479</sup> Cf. Davids, Epistle of James, 47.

<sup>1480</sup> Ρυπαρία is a hapax in the Greek Bible used here metaphorically (BDAG, 908). It is also uncommon elsewhere with no occurrences in Philo, Josephus or the Pseudepigrapha. According to McCartney, *James*, 116, it may draw on the imagery found in Zech 3:3-4 which has the removal of the iμάτια τὰ ῥυπαρά to indicate the cleansing of the High Priest. Other correspondences between Zechariah and James make this a distinct possibility (see Zech 1:6, cf. Jas 1:21; Zech 7:9-10, cf. Jas 1:27; 2:13; Zech 7:11-14, cf. Jas 1:22-25; 1:1; Zech 8:16, cf. Jas 5:12; Zech 10:1, cf. Jas 5:7). See LSJ, 1387, for 'abundance' for περισσεία rather than 'excess' (cf. 2 Cor 8:2).

<sup>1481</sup> Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 110; cf. McCartney, *James*, 116. For references, see Rom 13:12; Eph 4:22, 25; Col 3:8; Heb 12:1; 1 Pet 2:1. See also Allison, *James*, 305–6, who notes that ἀποθέμενοι with an inferential conjunction is found in Eph 4:25; Heb 12:1; 1 Pet 2:1; 1 Clem. 13:1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1482</sup> For a baptism formula, see Johnson, *Letter of James*, 201. It has also been viewed as a reference to cleaning the ears, so Martin, *James*, 48, and even as a metaphor for circumcision. See Allison, *James*, 308. He also notes the lack of corresponding "removal" language and Christological emphasis (p. 306).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1483</sup> Surprisingly, Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 169–87, who asserts that James depends on 1 Peter, ignores this particular parallel.

<sup>1484</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 84. She relates λογικόν back to the λόγος of v. 23.

Receiving the Implanted Word (1:21)

The main clause exhorts the hearers to 'receive meekly the implanted word which is able to save your souls' (ἐν πραΰτητι δέξασθε τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον τὸν δυνάμενον σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν). The prepositional modifier brought forward for emphasis presents the antidote to anger, <sup>1485</sup> with Verseput making the point that the 'contrast between ὀργή and πραΰτης was axiomatic in Greco-Roman moral reflection.' <sup>1486</sup> The main crux is to understand what ἔμφυτον λόγον refers to, which as Kamell notes, has to fit within the contextual uses of λόγος and νόμος in 1:18-27, which are themselves ambiguous. <sup>1487</sup> The ἔμφυτος λόγος is variously interpreted as a technical term for some kind of Stoic 'innate reason,' <sup>1488</sup> or the Torah, or the new covenant of Jeremiah, or the gospel, <sup>1489</sup> and in the latter case ἔμφυτος is usually translated 'implanted,' a good fit with the context. <sup>1490</sup> While the presence of Stoic language in the letter of James is beyond dispute, the contextual uses of λόγος are at odds with understanding it as reason, since being 'doers of reason' (ποιηταὶ λόγου), and for that matter 'hearers of reason' (ἀχροαταὶ [λόγου]), seem unlikely. Moreover, receiving reason makes little sense in contrast to receiving the word, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1485</sup> This modifies the main command. See, e.g., Dibelius, *James*, 112. Varner, *James*, 106, points out this also happens in 2:1. But see McKnight, *James*, 142, who argues that it modifies the preceding clause.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1486</sup> Verseput, "Anger in the Congregation." He provides examples from Arius Didymus, Plutarch of Chaeronea, Philo (*Mos.* 2.279), Josephus (*A.J.* 19.334), Dio Chrysostum 11.126 and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant.* 4.41.4; 7.2.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1487</sup> Mariam J. Kamell, "Incarnating Jeremiah's Promised New Covenant in the 'Law' of James," *EvQ* 83, no. 1 (January 2011): 19. Indeed, Kamell provides at least 6 different interpretations of each term found among modern commentators (pp. 19-22).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1488</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 83–84. Laws suggests James is using a "philosophical tag" without its "full technical meaning." On the possible Stoic background to the term, see Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 242–43. For him the term means "innate reason" which is equivalent to natural law and thus by extension the Torah.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1489</sup> For a list of commentators for each position, see Kamell, "New Covenant," 19–22. Another uncommon interpretation is that of "wisdom." See Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 73.

<sup>1490</sup> BDAG, 326. LSJ, 551. The verbal cognates ἐμφύω and ἐμφυτεύω also suggest implanting cf. Philo's description that God 'plants in the soul... a paradise of virtues and the appropriate actions' (*Plant.* 37) and the 'valuable trees of right instruction' (*Ebr.* 224) leading to happiness. However, the use of ἔμφυτος in Greek literature nearly always signifies 'natural' or 'innate,' including its only other occurrence in the Greek Bible (Wis 12:10 – 'innate evil') and all of its occurrences in Philo (x5) and Josephus (x4). This is unsurprising though, since these references often refer to personal characteristics such as innate hatred (Jos. *A.J.* 16.232; Philo *Spec.* 3.138), cruelty (Jos. *B.J.* 4.647) or weakness (Philo *Virt.* 23; *Praem.* 5) cf. Plato *Phaedrus* 237d 'innate desire' and Arist. *Eud. Eth.* 7.1244b, 'innate appetite for life' (see TLG).

this, as we will see below, fits well with the salvific power of God's word elsewhere. The emphasis on receiving the  $\lambda \delta \gamma \sigma \varsigma$  meekly suggests that this relates to the ongoing proclamation of God's word in some way, as does the overall context of the passage as I noted above.

The verbal element of the phrase fits within the scriptural theme of receiving God's word, particularly words or commands of the law and of instruction. <sup>1492</sup> In Deuteronomy 30:1 (LXX), Moses commands concerning 'these words' (τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα) of blessing and cursing that he has just given, 'you will receive them in your heart (δέξη εἰς τὴν καρδίαν σου). Moreover, this statement is addressed as if Israel were already in exile, <sup>1493</sup> providing a clear parallel with James' audience ἐν τῆ διασπορᾶ. In this setting, as they receive God's word and hear (εἰσακούω) and do (ποιέω, 30:10 cf. ὑπακούω, 30:2) it they will be restored. The call to obedience is shown to be possible, moreover, because 'the word' (τὸ ῥῆμα) is near and 'in your heart (ἐν τῆ καρδία σου) and your hands to do it' (30:14). Thus although there are no exact parallels here with James, the thought and setting are similar, particularly with the insistence on obedience to what has been 'implanted' within them.

In the wisdom literature, receiving words of instruction is common and results in becoming wise or being kept from disaster. For example, in LXX Proverbs 24:22a, the son is commended for guarding the λόγον which keeps him from destruction because 'he received it willingly' (δεχόμενος δὲ ἐδέξατο αὐτόν). Although the prophetic literature offers no direct

<sup>1491</sup> Benjamin Wold, "Universal and Particular Law in the Letter of James and Early Judaism," *JSNT* 41, no. 1 (2018): 97. Wold further criticizes the lack of true parallels to ἔμφυτος λόγος in Jackson-McCabe's study. But see Jackson-McCabe, "James and Hellenistic Philosophy," 63, for a similar idea in Philo to the soul being saved by the λόγος, although to be precise, the soul is saved when "angry passions are under the guidance of reason" (ὑπὸ λόγου, Leg. 3:136-137).

 $<sup>^{1492}</sup>$  Wold, "Universal and Particular Law," 99–104, also finds parallels in Qumranic literature, such as 4QInstruction, 4QMysteries and 1QInstruction, although these are slightly convoluted revolving around the language of "taking" and "gazing" that suggest a possible relationship between the "mystery of existence" ( דהיה) and  $\lambda \delta \gamma o \varsigma / \nu \delta \mu o \varsigma$ .

<sup>1493</sup> They are ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, οὖ ἐάν σε διασκορπίση κύριος ἐκεῖ (Deut 31:1) and ἡ διασπορά (31:4). See chapter four where I explore these passages in relation to diaspora.

<sup>1494</sup> See LXX Prov 1:3; 2:1; 4:10; 10:8; 24:22a; 30:1; Sir 51:16. Cf. Wold, "Universal and Particular Law," 98–99. This does not exist in the MT. Cf. Prov 30:1, which is also a significant departure from the MT, and has the writer tell his son to fear his λόγους and 'having received them, repent' (δεξάμενος αὐτοὺς μετανόει).

parallels, there are calls for Israel to receive God's word in order to be restored and frequent laments over their failure to do so, leading to their destruction or exile. Thus, although the OT provides no exact linguistic parallels to our verse, there are thematic parallels for the reception of God's word leading to life.

In the NT, as Allison points out, δέχομαι + λόγος generally refers to the reception of the gospel. 1497 However, the difficulty with assuming a reference to the gospel here is that James is writing to Christ followers, ἀδελφοί, who have already been born by the λόγος ἀληθείας, so the initial reception of the gospel is surely not in view here. In the parallel passage in 1 Peter noted above, further teaching appears to be in mind as well. The readers have been born through the λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος, which is then precisely identified as 'the word which was announced to you' (τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς), in other words the gospel (1 Pet 1:23-25) but the readers are then exhorted to desire the pure milk (2:2) which must be teaching for those already 'born again.' Thus Cheung is right to say that 'the emphasis is not on receiving the gospel of truth in conversion, but rather on learning and understanding the word of truth.' 1499

In sum, it seems most likely here that James exhorts his community to respond to the ongoing teaching of God's word to them. But this does not clarify why he describes this as 'implanted.' Although there may be Stoic influence here, the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 is preferred by many to explain this concept. <sup>1500</sup> In the future situation of exile, God promises to restore and make a new covenant with Israel and Judah (31:31). The key to this new covenant,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1496</sup> LXX Zeph 3:2, 7; Zech 1:6; Jer 2:30; 5:3; 7:27; 9:20; 17:23. All the references in Jeremiah (except 9:20) speak of the Israelites' refusal to receive instruction (δέχομαι + παιδεία). Notably, LXX Zech 1:6 changes the MT from God's words (of warning) overtaking the people in judgment to a command to receive God's words (πλὴν τοὺς λόγους μου καὶ τὰ νόμιμά μου δέχεσθε).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1497</sup> Allison, *James*, 311. See Lk 8:13; Acts 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1498</sup> Davids, *1 Peter*, 82. Unlike Heb 5:13 this is not basic teaching but is simply a "symbol" for spiritual nourishment. Davids notes several parallels in Qumran and later Christian literature; cf. Duane F. Watson and Terrance Callan, *First and Second Peter*, Paideia (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 44–45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1499</sup> Cheung, Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics, 92.

<sup>1500</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 141; Moo, *The Letter of James*, 32, 87; Whitlark, "Εμφυτος Λόγος"; Kamell, "New Covenant." She also finds links to the same image in Ezek 11 although these are not as close.

in light of the failure of Israel to keep the former covenant, is found in verse 33: 'But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law (πίτ, νόμος) within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' While νόμος is in view here, James connects 'hearer' and 'doer' to λόγος and νόμος (1:22-25) so that the two function in parallel (although not identical) with the law incorporated into the ἔμφυτος λόγος. Thus the 'implanted word' may very well draw to mind the new covenant promises of Jeremiah. The fact that this will cause Israel once more to be God's people is another link to the audience who are designated as the firstfruits (1:18), also suggesting the constituting of a new people.  $^{1503}$ 

Jason Whitlark points out that the Epistle of Barnabas, which uses ἔμφυτος twice, <sup>1504</sup> applies a new covenant interpretation of the term, showing that an early Christian interpreter perhaps took the same route as James. <sup>1505</sup> However, while Whitlark may be right to view the ἔμφυτος λόγος as an 'empowerment motif,' he extrapolates too far by placing James within a Pauline mission framework and insisting that 'James participates in Paul's full-orbed understanding of grace and uniquely articulates the necessity of a gospel-empowered life from beginning to end for the realization of eschatological salvation. <sup>1506</sup> This is problematic not least because for James, grace is something God gives to the humble and repentant (4:6) and is not

<sup>1501</sup> It is perhaps significant that the LXX is slightly more specific since the law is not just 'within them' but 'in their mind (εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1502</sup> Kamell, "New Covenant," 22–23. See also Wold, "Universal and Particular Law," 96, who agrees that the Law is a subset of God's word. Note also in Acts 7:38, Moses "received living oracles" (ἐδέξατο λόγια ζῶντα), an example of the decalogue being referred to with λόγιον rather than νόμος (p. 99).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1503</sup> According to Allison, *James*, 314, the law was often described as implanted within Judean literature. See, e.g., 4Q504 1-2 2.13, which speaks of planting the law in the heart.

<sup>1504</sup> Barn 1:2; 9:9. The second is particularly significant in this regard as it speaks of the one who placed in us τὴν ἔμφυτον δωρεὰν τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ.

<sup>1505</sup> Whitlark, "Έμφυτος Λόγος," 160–61; cf. Kamell, "New Covenant," 24–25. Whitlark also points out that Irenaeus brings together the concepts of implantation, new covenant and freedom. Commenting on Christ's teaching in the SM, Irenaeus says, "he did not teach in order to oppose the law but fulfil the law and implant  $(\dot{\epsilon}\mu\phi\dot{\nu}\omega)$  the righteous requirements of the law within us" (Haer. 4.13.1). The "word" also "set[s] free the soul" (Haer. 4.13.2). This at least shows that a later Christian interpreter has combined new covenant with implanting and with the language of righteousness and Jesus' interpretation of the law.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1506</sup> Whitlark, "Εμφυτος Λόγος," 164–65.

related to eschatological salvation as such, but also because James simply does not make explicit the connection with the gospel and emphasises much more the ongoing obedience to the word/law required of God's people.

What can be said is that, as is typical of James, he has used terminology that could evoke different meanings depending on his audience. For a Christ-follower, passages such as 1 Peter 2:1 mentioned above show that the surrounding language would prompt a reflection on the reception of the gospel and the ongoing teaching of God's word. However, as Nienhuis points out, 'it is the reader who must make this connection on the author's behalf.' In contrast, for a diaspora Judean, it would point to the need for the Torah, which constituted the people of Israel, to be continually received and obeyed, perhaps as the new covenant written on their hearts. And even if, as is possible, the language evoked a Stoic sense of innate reason, the strikingly different language in the immediate context would surely provoke the conclusion that the Mosaic law/teachings of Christ were in mind, and that paying attention to these was the path to salvation.

Thus, James' audience, born by the λόγος ἀληθείας to be God's people, must receive humbly the ἔμφυτος λόγος which will save their souls. In fact this last phrase τὸν δυνάμενον σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν modifying ἔμφυτον λόγον, strengthens the conclusion above that it is not an innate concept but something God plants in his people to work salvation. In 4:12, using the same phrase (ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι) James attributes this to God in his role as lawgiver and judge. God therefore saves through his word/law those who respond appropriately. This also locates the readers in the trajectory I explored previously of creation-Israel-Christ when considering 'firstfruits' (1:18), here culminating with the saved soul which is picked up again in the letter

<sup>1507</sup> Nienhuis, Not by Paul Alone, 186.

conclusion (σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ). 1508 This eschatological concept 1509 orients the audience towards the culmination of God's mission. Simultaneously, James provides the way for the community to live in the light of that mission and to participate in it, namely, by paying attention to the word of God. The correct dynamics to be missionally attractive (in this case slow to anger) are enabled by ridding the community of moral pollution which would otherwise disqualify them, and by paying attention to the implanted word, the teaching of God's word/law. And it is the right reception of the word that James turns to next, requiring it to be heard and obeyed, and to be the measure of the community's life.

## Doing the Word/Law (1:22-25)

The linking  $\delta \dot{\epsilon}$  (1:22) suggests that this new section builds on the previous one, even having a clarifying function, so that being 'quick to hear' applies particularly (but not exclusively) to hearing God's word. Building on the command to receive the word rightly, the author now explains what that entails; hearing must be accompanied by doing. We will see that the missional identity of the audience is closely linked to their obedience to the word and to the perfect law of liberty which suggests the law as interpreted by Jesus.

<sup>1508</sup> Cf. McCartney, *James*, 119, who mentions the connections between 1:21, 4:12 and 5:20. A similar construction (μὴ δύναται ἡ πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν;) appears regarding faith in 2:14 which adds to the connection between these sections. I will say more on this below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1509</sup> Dibelius, James, 113; Moo, The Letter of James, 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1510</sup> Verseput, "Anger in the Congregation," 435.

Be a Hearer-Doer, Not a Hearer-Only<sup>1511</sup>

The opening imperative to 'be doers of the word' (Γίνεσθε δὲ ποιηταὶ λόγου, 1:22)<sup>1512</sup> calls for ongoing application of the word in the community. The idea is rooted in the repeated call in the OT for the people to do the law (πίντη + ψψη), 1514 or more commonly, to do the words of the law, or simply God's word(s). The fact, the second half of the contrast to be not just hearers-only (καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκροαταί), 1516 locates James' thought more specifically in passages such as Deuteronomy 6 with its call to 'hear' and 'observe diligently' (LXX 6:3: 'hear... and be watchful to do' - ἄκουσον... καὶ φύλαξαι ποιεῖν) God's commandments. This of course precedes the *Shema* with its emblematic call to hear (6:4), followed by an emphasis on teaching, remembering and doing God's commands, all in the context of Israel's redemption from Egypt (6:4-25). 1518

Similarly, in the closing of the SM, Jesus gives similar weight to his own teaching which must be heard and put into practice, <sup>1519</sup> using a brief illustration to contrast a hearer-only with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1511</sup> The terms in the heading most accurately represent the contrast James portrays here. It is not between a hearer and a doer, but between someone who hears and does not do (hearer-only) and someone who hears and does (hearer-doer). Cf. Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness," 72, who speaks of "hearing-completed-in-action."

<sup>1512</sup> Ποιητής normally means 'creator/maker' or 'poet' (see, e.g., Acts 17:28). For "doer" see 1 Macc 2:6-7 where Mattathias urges his sons to rally together πάντας τοὺς ποιητὰς τοῦ νόμου. Allison, *James*, 324–25, also points out that γινέσθε is uncommon in secular Greek but common in the Greek Bible (24x in the NT and 14x in the LXX) so the phrase is biblical Greek.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1513</sup> McKnight, *James*, 146 fn. 74. He bases this on the imperfective aspect of the imperative.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1514</sup> See Allison, *James*, 325 and McKnight, *James*, 147, for extensive (and virtually identical) lists of תורה + עשה (doing the Law).

<sup>1515</sup> For ποιεΐν... τὰ ῥήματα/τοὺς λόγους τοῦ νόμου, see LXX Deut 28:58; 29:28; 31:12; 32:46. Allison's list also includes ποιέω plus a range of synonyms for λόγος (e.g., τὰ δικαιώματα). Ποιέω + λόγος referring to God's word(s) adds Deut 1:18; 12:28; 29:8; 2 Chron 34:21; 35:6; Jer 22:4, 5; 49:3.

<sup>1516</sup> An ἀκροατής in classical Greek is someone who comes to hear a public speaker. See LSJ, 56. However, given its pairing with ποιητής as doer (see the note above), it refers to those listening to teaching in the communal setting. So Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 70. cf. McKnight, *James*, 148, who notes close Rabbinic parallels (e.g., m. 'Abot 5:14).

The exhortations to hear and obey are programmatic and require being "loyal to Yahweh alone." So McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 19. See also Deut 12:28; 19:9; 30:12; 31:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1518</sup> James will allude to the *Shema* in the next two sections we consider (2:19 and 4:12). See David Hutchinson Edgar, "The Use of the Love-Command and the SHEMA in the Epistle of James," *PIBA* 23 (2000): 9–22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1519</sup> According to Allison, Matthew presents Jesus as a new Moses. See Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

a hearer-doer. <sup>1520</sup> The wise man is the one who 'hears these words of mine and does them' (ἀκούει μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτούς, Mt 7:24) while the foolish man hears and 'fails to do them' (καὶ μὴ ποιῶν αὐτούς, 7:26). The resultant safety or destruction of the house and the immediate context imply that this refers to eschatological justification. <sup>1521</sup> Thus, James echoes these emblematic traditions from the OT and Jesus' teaching on the need to do the received λόγος, leading to God's promised redemption.

The hearers-only may think they are righteous, but James removes any such illusion by clarifying that they are 'deceiving themselves' (παραλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτούς). James may be blunt here, not to condemn but rather to challenge them to repentance. The hearer-only is in danger of damnation and so an honest assessment is needed to enable such a person to break out of his self-delusion. In that sense, James displays a missional concern for his audience and models what he expects from them (cf. 5:19-20).

To drive the point home the author then gives a short illustration of the hearer-only contrasted by the hearer-doer. The conditional statement in verse 23 presents a hypothetical person in the congregation who is a hearer of the word and not a doer (εἴ τις ἀκροατὴς λόγου ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ ποιητής). This person (οὖτος) is then likened to someone who sees his natural face in a mirror (ἔοικεν ἀνδρὶ 1523 κατανοοῦντι τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐσόπτρω). The thought is completed and explained (γάρ) by verse 24 since the person sees himself

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1520</sup> Alicia J. Batten, "The Jesus Tradition and the Letter of James," *RevExp* 108, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 387, argues that James is building on the Jesus tradition in Q 6:48-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1521</sup> France, *Matthew*, 296. As he states, this "is a make or break choice with eternal consequences."

 $<sup>^{1522}</sup>$  This repeats the terms of the previous verse in a chiasm. (A) Γίνεσθε δὲ ποιηταὶ λόγου (B) καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκροαταὶ... (B¹) εἴ τις ἀκροατὴς λόγου ἐστὶν (A¹) καὶ οὐ ποιητής.

<sup>1523</sup> James uses ἀνήρ generically again perhaps under influence from (the traditions behind) Mt 7:24, 26 (ὁμοιωθήσεται ἀνδρί) since Q 6:48, 49 use ἄνθρωπος. However, as Foster, "Q and James," 26, notes, the connection with the Matthean passage is unclear.

<sup>1524</sup> According to Johnson, *Brother of Jesus*, 172, 176, τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ (the face of his birth) is not just the person's natural appearance but also at a deeper level what that person is really like.

(κατενόησεν... ἑαυτὸν)<sup>1525</sup> and leaves (ἀπελήλυθεν) and immediately forgets what he was like (εὐθέως ἐπελάθετο ὁποῖος ἦν).<sup>1526</sup> This could stand as a simple illustration of forgetful inattentiveness,<sup>1527</sup> but it seems more likely that the author here is drawing on known Greco-Roman philosophical concepts,<sup>1528</sup> which I will return to below once the contrast is complete.

James expands significantly on the hearer-doer, with two parallel descriptions. First, such a person looks and remains (δ δὲ παρακύψας... καὶ παραμείνας), and second, as a consequence, she 'becomes not a forgetful hearer but a doer of a work' (οὐκ ἀκροατὴς ἐπιλησμονῆς γενόμενος ἀλλὰ ποιητὴς ἔργου). Thus the looking, remaining and not forgetting matches exactly the looking, departing and forgetting of the hearer-only. It may also be that here our author chooses ποιητὴς ἔργου rather than ποιητὴς λόγου/νόμου to set up the extensive use of ἔργον in his later expansion of this topic (2:14-26). Is 30

The switch in focus from hearing/doing to seeing/ forgetting is unexpected but sets up the contrast between what the two people look at. The hearer-doer looks at the 'perfect law of freedom' (νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας) which parallels the face in the mirror of the hearer-only. It seems likely then, that as Johnson points out, James deliberately introduces the topos of the mirror because it was commonly used as a 'moral metaphor' that called for 'self-improvement by turning "hearing" into "deeds." Plutarch describes exemplary characters

 $<sup>^{1525}</sup>$  Κατανοέω is certainly not a 'glancing look' (NLT) in supposed contrast to παρακύπτω in v. 25. Rather it is 'to notice, observe' or 'to look at something in a reflective manner, consider, contemplate.' BDAG, 552. For an example where it is used to mean self-consideration (or rather the lack of it), see Mt 7:3//Lk 6:41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1526</sup> It is best to take the three verbs here (before  $\tilde{\eta}\nu$ ) as gnomic. So Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, loc 2069.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1527</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 115–16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1528</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, "The Mirror of Remembrance (James 1:22-25)," *CBQ* 50, no. 4 (October 1988): 632–45. This is also available in Johnson, *Brother of Jesus*, 168–81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1529</sup> Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 143. He also provides the anecdote that H. D. Betz considers παρακύπτω to indicate the posture of reading. In any case, both verbs used for looking suggest looking with intent or observation. See BDAG, 767 and 522.

<sup>1530</sup> McKnight, James, 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1531</sup> Johnson, *Brother of Jesus*, 173–76. He cites various sources that show the use of the mirror as moral metaphor. For example, Seneca states that "Mirrors were invented in order that man may know himself" and explains this in terms of character (*Nat.* 1.17.2-3). Further examples include Seneca *Ira* 2.36.1, *Clem.* 1.1-15, Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.14-17.

as mirrors for people to consider and emulate, which is suggestive considering how James will go on to use Abraham and Rahab as exemplars to emphasize the need for works as evidence of faith. More importantly, the correspondence between the mirror and the perfect law of freedom is at the heart of these similes, but to explore this further we have to briefly consider what James means by the latter.

### The Perfect Law of Freedom

The 'perfect law of freedom' is another unique expression to James that is best explained from the OT and the Jesus tradition. Perfection and freedom are associated with the law in the 'Torah Psalms,' 1533 although the first aspect is more explicitly stated than the second. Psalm 19:7 provides a strong parallel with our text: 'The law of the Lord is perfect (πρωμος) reviving the soul.' Perfection, law and the effect on the soul all converge here as in James. Notably in the LXX, the law is described as ἐπιστρέφων ψυχάς (Ps 18:9), a theme that features in James (5:19-20). Moreover, in Psalm 1 the person who is blessed (μακάριος, 19:1) is the one who delights in the law and spends time in it (19:2), like the hearer-doer of James who remains (παραμείνας) and is μακάριος in his doing. 1536

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1532</sup> Johnson, "Mirror of Remembrance," 175–76. See Plutarch Mor. 14A, 84B-C, 85A-B. Johnson applies this to all four exemplars in James - Abraham, Rahab, Job and Elijah (p.178-181), making much of the language of "seeing" within those pericopes to relate these back to the mirror. However, this is not altogether convincing; cf. Hogan, "Law," 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1533</sup> Psalms 1, 19 and 119 are often called this because of their focus on Torah (usually thought of as instruction rather than only the law of Moses). They may more precisely be classified as "wisdom" or "instructional" Psalms. See, e.g., Nancy Declaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 58, 201, 871.

<sup>1534</sup> This is MT Ps 19:8; LXX Ps 18:8. Although in the LXX the law is ἄμωμος and not τέλειος, this is unsurprising since this is a more common translation of πανα, and the two are close synonyms (L&N, 746, 88.34 and 88.36).
1535 Hartin, *James*, 112; Kamell, "New Covenant," 23.

<sup>1536</sup> As I noted earlier, James follows the language of this wisdom formulation in Ps 1:1 in his own makarism in Jas 1:12. Both begin Μακάριος ἀνήρ δς... (cf. LXX Ps 33:9; Prov 8:34; 28:14; Sir 14:1, 20).

Psalm 119 (LXX 118), an exaltation of the Torah, <sup>1537</sup> presents a similar picture wherein the Torah and its precepts are to be obeyed, providing several parallels to James' thought. <sup>1538</sup> Walking in the law is paralleled with the perfect way (v. 1) and is associated with unlimited perfection (v. 96). The one who observes it walks in liberty (v. 45) and prays to be free from the dominion of sin (v. 133). One of the main concerns of the Psalmist is not to stray from God's path <sup>1539</sup> and not forget God's word/law. <sup>1540</sup> The Psalm closes with the recognition that the author has gone astray (ἐπλανήθην cf. Jas 1:16; 5:19-20) with a prayer for restoration since the Psalmist has not forgotten (οὐκ ἐπελαθόμην) God's commandments (LXX 118:176). In effect the Psalmist is a prime example of someone who looks at God's perfect law and, finding freedom, remains there and is blessed in doing it. <sup>1541</sup> Thus functionally the Torah in Psalm 119 represents well the perfect law of freedom in James. <sup>1542</sup>

Although Allison concludes that the evidence is insufficient to establish a conscious allusion, the parallels do however show that 'a Jewish audience would naturally have associated all that James says with the Torah.' Philo's statement that 'those who live in accordance with the law are free' (ὅσοι δὲ μετὰ νόμου ζῶσιν, ἐλεύθεροι), which according to Jackson-McCabe is rooted in Stoic thought, indicates that James may be borrowing from other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1537</sup> For a study on this, see Freedman, *Psalm 119*; cf. Allen, *Psalms 101 - 150*, 143.

<sup>1538</sup> Allison, James, 339–40. Allison notes the parallels in a helpful table and some of the following relies on this. I have pointed out elsewhere the possible parallel between λόγος ἀληθείας in LXX Ps 118:43 and Jas 1:18. Cf. Kamell, "New Covenant," 23–24. Her rather brief treatment makes the connection too easily, summarising the delight the Psalmist has for the law as implying that "obedience brings freedom and joy to the practitioner." 1539 See vv. 10, 21, 67, 118, 176.

<sup>1540</sup> See vv. 16, 30, 61, 83, 93, 109, 141, 153, 176. The LXX uses ἐπιλανθάνομαι, cf. Jas 1:24-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1541</sup> See vv. 1-2, 11, 14-18, 33, 95, 97, 102, 112. Note especially vv. 1-2 where those who 'walk in the law of the Lord' and who 'keep his decrees' are 'blessed' (μακαριος x2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1543</sup> Allison, *James*, 341.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1544</sup> Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 145.

sources too. Yet Rabbinic literature also developed this tradition, suggesting that it would certainly resonate as a reference to the Torah for a Judean audience. 1545

This background gives context to the terminology James uses, but the uniqueness of the vocabulary prepares the audience for the development that comes in 2:8-13 where the focus is on the perfect *royal* law, the love command, which as we have seen was an essential element to the teaching of Jesus. <sup>1546</sup> Jesus describes his own teaching as an 'easy yoke' and a 'light burden,' in contrast to a yoke of oppression (Mt 11:30)<sup>1547</sup> and characterises himself as 'meek' (πραΰς, 11:29), resonating with James' call to receive the word ἐν πραΰτητι. <sup>1548</sup> Moreover, Jesus promises that by applying his teaching, the audience 'will find rest for your souls' (εὐρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν), <sup>1549</sup> a concept with an eschatological element matching that found in James. <sup>1550</sup> In this sense, Jesus' teaching effectively represents a 'law of freedom' that liberates from oppression and unnecessary burden and brings salvation to its hearers, providing that they also do it, as is made very clear in both Matthew and James. As Wall concludes, the 'nomos basilikos discloses the rule of the coming basileia theou,' and so 'only if the community orders its life by the rule of the coming kingdom (nomos basilikos) will it receive a favorable verdict when dia nomou eleutherias krinesthai... (see 2:12-13). '1551 In this way, attention to the perfect law of freedom brings about a community that prefigures the kingdom of God and points

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1545</sup> For the relevant Rabbinic literature, see Allison, *James*, 337–38; cf. McKnight, *James*, 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1546</sup> James clearly assumes obedience to Torah (2:8-13; 4:11-12) but focuses on the ethical rather than ritual elements although from one letter alone we cannot extrapolate too much about James' interest or not in the ritual law. See McKnight, *James*, 158. As McKnight puts it, "James is Torah-observant in a Jesus kind of way." This also fits with the connection between the righteousness portrayed in both James and Matthew (see earlier).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1547</sup> France, *Matthew*, 2007, 448. See Gen 27:40; Ex 6:6-7; 1 Kgs 12:4-14; Isa 58:6; Jer 28:2-14; 1 Tim 6:1. Further, Jesus condemns the Pharisees and teachers of the law for the heavy burdens they laid on people (Mt 23:2-4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1548</sup> See chapter six for a discussion on meekness in connection with wisdom, where I also make the connection with Jesus' statement in Mt 11:29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1549</sup> As France, *Matthew*, 448, points out, the rabbis developed a similar way of looking at Torah observance. He gives as an example m. 'Abot 3:5: "He who takes upon himself the yoke of the Torah, from him shall be taken away the yoke of the kingdom and the yoke of worldly care; he who throws off the yoke of the Torah, on him will be laid the yoke of the kingdom and the yoke of worldly care."

<sup>1550</sup> France, *Matthew*, 449.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1551</sup> Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 97. However, Wall's argument that the Levitical Jubilee is behind the law of freedom in James is unconvincing (pp. 92-95).

to his eschatological reign and the reign of the 'Lord Jesus Christ of glory' (2:1), which is intrinsic to the *missio Dei*. Thus there is an unmistakeable missional purpose to obeying the law of freedom which both points as a sign and inauguration of Jesus' reign.

#### Perfection Through the Perfect Law

With this as the background to the 'perfect law of freedom' we can return to the contrast between looking at this law and looking at the natural self in the mirror. Johnson notes that the law as a mirror provides 'the better image of what one should become,' 1552 which is precisely why the ideal person continues looking and, not forgetting it, puts it into practice. It is only by looking in the law that a true picture of self emerges and the requisite corrective action needed to please God. 1553 James goes on to say that such a person (οὖτος) is the one who 'will be blessed in his doing' (μακάριος ἐν τῆ ποιήσει αὐτοῦ ἔσται, 1:25). 1554 In this way James links blessing, a present and an eschatological concept, 1555 with the doing of the perfect law of freedom. 1556

The fact that the law is a νόμος τέλειος also connects the readers to the purpose statement of the letter that they might become τέλειοι (1:4) and thus also to God's mission. Its right reception and application will move its hearer-doers toward that goal. <sup>1557</sup> It is another δώρημα τέλειον from God (1:17) given, like wisdom, to equip his people, <sup>1558</sup> and in this sense becomes a tool of its own missional purpose. <sup>1559</sup> As Lockett points out, 'James seems to not only view the law and wisdom as "whole" or "perfect," but also as agents of wholeness for God's people.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1552</sup> Johnson, *Brother of Jesus*, 176.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1553</sup> According to Johnson, *Brother of Jesus*, 177, a similar use of the law as a mirror is found in Philo. See *Contempl*. 78.

<sup>1554</sup> Οὖτος repeated from 1:23 emphasises and closes the comparison with the hearer-only.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1555</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 87–88, feels the author "very probably" would agree with both aspects.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1556</sup> The conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount/Plain has a similar emphasis as noted above and one wonders, given the many correspondences in James with the Sermon, if the mirror of the perfect law does in fact relate to this block of teaching in a very concrete fashion. For a recent comparison, see Alkema, *Pillars and the Cornerstone*, 35.

<sup>1557</sup> Hartin, James, 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1558</sup> Wall, Community of the Wise, 91.

<sup>1559</sup> On this, see chapters three and five. Cf. Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 92–97.

As God's people receive the law and wisdom interpreted through the Jesus tradition, they are enabled to walk in wholeness before God.'1560 Thus, the perfect law functions missionally to perfect those who follow it, much as did the law in the life of Israel which ordered its 'national, liturgical, and moral life' to fulfil her calling to be a blessing to the nations (Gen 12:1-3) and a priesthood on behalf of the nations (Ex 19:3-6). Similarly, the new law of Jesus, the programmatic teaching in the SM, with its call to be perfect as God the Father is perfect, creates a missional people who are 'salt and light' to the world, as I have already explored. Thus, the perfect law of freedom, which should govern community behaviour, strengthens the missional identity and calling of the people of God.

It is this law that James calls his audience to look at and remain in so as not to be 'a forgetful hearer' (ἀκροατὴς ἐπιλησμονῆς, 1:25). 1562 Forgetting the commandments, equivalent to forgetting God, is a typical concern of the OT and other related literature. 1563 This call to not forget (and therefore remember), is explained well by the idea that 'collective memory,' based to a large extent on such traditions, is vital for group identity. 1564 By remembering the traditions in the law and Jesus' teaching, James is working to inculcate an identity that is defined by allegiance to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, presenting the latter as a natural continuation of the former. 1565 Allegiance, of course, implies alignment with the purposes of God and the author makes explicit that this is what leads to the present and eschatological blessing from God as I

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1560</sup> Lockett, "Wholeness in Intertextual Perspective," 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1561</sup> Goheen, "Continuing Steps," 92. I briefly noted both texts in chapter three because of their importance for a missional reading. See also pp. 64-74 for Israel's role and calling.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1562</sup> Ἐπιλησμονῆς is a genitive of quality. See AGGSNT, 241.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1563</sup> McKnight, *James*, 159. He notes Deut 4:23; 6:12; 26:13; Ps 119:16 and several other refs. in footnotes 135 and 136. From the DSS he cites 4Q525. See also 1Q22 f1ii:4; 4Q166 2:3; 4Q167 f15:1. From the rabbinic literature he provides m. 'Abot 3:8 and 5:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1564</sup> Santiago Guijarro, "Cultural Memory and Group Identity in Q," *BTB* 37 (2007): 93. See also Philip F. Esler, "Paul's Contestation of Israel's (Ethnic) Memory of Abraham in Galatians 3," *BTB* 36, no. 1 (February 1, 2006): 28. As Esler puts it, "Judeans of the first century were a mnemonic community... with an unusually large body of historical tradition, read out every sabbath in their synagogues, to sustain and enrich their communal *memoria*." <sup>1565</sup> See chapter four on the 'Missional Identity of the Author and Recipients.'

noted above. In fact, this leads into James' concluding statement concerning the kind of behaviour God requires and to this I now turn.

# True θρησκεία: Speech, Purity and Action (1:26-27)

The summary and transitional functions of 1:26-27 have long been recognised, although as Lockett notes, it is an encapsulation of thought rather than covering all that precedes. <sup>1566</sup> In these two verses, the author sums up what constitutes true  $\theta \rho \eta \sigma \kappa \epsilon i \alpha$  and therefore the characteristics he expects of his audience. All of these are elaborated further elsewhere so in this section I will outline these connections and then consider the two contrasting types of  $\theta \rho \eta \sigma \kappa \epsilon i \alpha$  described here. <sup>1567</sup> The worthless kind with its emphasis on speech recalls the opening proverb to be 'slow to speak' forming an inclusio here, and is further elaborated in 3:1-12 with the unmistakeable connection from the repeated use of  $\chi \alpha \lambda \iota \nu \alpha \gamma \omega \gamma \epsilon \omega$  (3:2) and the emphasis on speech ethics. <sup>1568</sup> True  $\theta \rho \eta \sigma \kappa \epsilon i \alpha$  draws on the strong connection between purity and wholeness/perfection in the letter with 1:27 looking back to 1:2-4<sup>1569</sup> and forward to the purity language used in 3:13-4:10, both of which are sections that I have covered elsewhere so I will not examine these here. I have also already considered the aspect of care for the vulnerable found in this verse, so I will focus on the purity language but first it is necessary to understand what James means by  $\theta \rho \eta \sigma \kappa \epsilon i \alpha$ .

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1566</sup> Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 96–97; cf. Davids, *Epistle of James*, 100–102; and Verseput, "Anger in the Congregation," 436–37.

<sup>1567</sup> See the previous chapter for the latter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1568</sup> On the connection, see Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics*, 99. Χαλιναγωγέω is rare, found only in James in the Greek Bible, once in Philo (*Opif.* 86), never in Josephus or the Pseudepigrapha. Cf. Varner, *New Perspective*, 81. Note also a minor connection through purity language in 1:27 and 3:6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1569</sup> Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 102, 141–44; cf. Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness," 78, who considers that the purity language replicates the perfection language. Lockett prefers to keep perfection as separate from but related to purity.

### Defining θρησκεία

Since these verses centre around the concept of  $\theta\rho\eta\sigma\kappa\epsilon(\alpha,^{1570})$  it is necessary to define this and the adjective  $\theta\rho\eta\sigma\kappa\delta\varsigma$ . Most English versions and commentators translate them as 'religion' and 'religious' respectively (or use these terms to explain them), 1572 but that can lead to an anachronistic understanding since these terms tend to denote a modern concept of religion as separate from other areas of life. 1573 In the ancient world, however, there was no separate category of 'religion,' rather belief in the divine and the associated cultic and ritual practices and obligations were integrally related to the whole of life, including familial and ethnic loyalties. The Generally  $\theta\rho\eta\sigma\kappa\epsilon(\alpha)$  could be used for cultic activities associated with a temple and/or a particular ethnic group but could also be used of the devotion to and worship of deities, frequently with the negative association of being superstitious or excessive. The NT usage fits within this semantic range, speaking of the worship of angels ( $\theta\rho\eta\sigma\kappa\epsilon(\alpha)$   $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ ) in the context of excessive and superstitious practices (Col 2:18; cf. vv. 8-23), 1576 and also of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1570</sup> Used twice here in James and only elsewhere in the NT in Acts 26:5 and Col 2:18. It is also rare in the OT (4x). See further below.

<sup>1571</sup> The adjective is yet another hapax for the Greek Bible and is also unknown in Philo, Josephus, the Pseudepigrapha and the Apostolic Fathers. No instances occur in Perseus online, and Allison, *James*, 355, notes that the earliest secular attestation is (Ps.-?) Aelius Herodianus, *Part*. Ed Boissonade 59:3.

<sup>1572</sup> See, e.g., Verseput, "Anger in the Congregation," 437. His definition is useful apart from the reliance on religion/religious. He states, "The noun θρησκεία was typically used in one of two closely associated senses: (1) of the practice of obligations arising from the veneration of a supernatural being, whether of individual religious rites or of the entire religious system by which the deity was honoured; or (2) of a personal proclivity for the diligent practice of such obligations."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1573</sup> See especially, Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Carlin A. Barton and Daniel Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1574</sup> Nongbri, *Before Religion*, 4; Barton and Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion*, 213–14; cf. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 10–18.

<sup>1575</sup> See Nongbri, Before Religion, 34–38; See also Barton and Boyarin, Imagine No Religion, 124–34, who provide evidence of θρησκεία having negative associations. An outsider may view and describe the devotion to deities and associated customs and rites of other ethnic groups as excessive superstition (θρησκεία) but from within they are viewed as εὐσεβεία. See, e.g., 4 Macc 5:7; 7:6 (pp. 149-151). Later uses, particularly in apologetic writings, begin the separation of θρησκεία from other aspects of society in order to portray it as something compatible with loyalty to the empire (pp. 200-209).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1576</sup> See Scot McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 271–87. The context includes the excessive practices of the Colossian mystics. Cf. Barton and Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion*, 140.

Judean θρησκεία (Acts 26:5). Since James can speak of θρησκεία as either useless or pure and undefiled, the idea of devotion to God or piety is to the fore here, as indeed Barton and Boyarin conclude. For consistency's sake I will use piety for the noun and pious for the adjective henceforth.

# Worthless Piety (1:26)

A hypothetical person is introduced with the conditional statement 'if anyone thinks him/herself to be pious...' (εἴ τις δοκεῖ θρησκὸς εἶναι)<sup>1579</sup> which does not necessarily implicate the audience but nonetheless challenges them to consider if they are like the person described. If this person 'does not bridle their tongue but deceives their heart' (μὴ χαλιναγωγῶν γλῶσσαν αὐτοῦ ἀλλ' ἀπατῶν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ), <sup>1580</sup> then, concludes James, the 'piety of such a one is worthless' (τούτου μάταιος ἡ θρησκεία). Within context this ties in closely with the initial exhortation to be 'slow to speak' and suggests that community cohesion is still to the fore here. <sup>1581</sup> The same missional implications, then, apply here equally as we saw from the many proverbial references when examining the exhortation in 1:19. <sup>1582</sup>

These are further extended by the unique paring of θρησκεία with μάταιος, which echoes the vain worship of idols and other gods prohibited in the law and frequently denounced in the

<sup>1577</sup> This has Paul describe himself as living κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἴρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας. Josephus also speaks of the Judean θρησκεία 5x. See, e.g., A.J. 12.253 where he writes of 'the cultic rites of the Judeans' (τῆ Ἰουδαίων θρησκεία) and of the 'worship/cultic rites with respect to their God' (τὴν περὶ τὸν αὐτῶν θεὸν θρησκείαν). He also describes the Akedah as a test of Abraham's θρησκεία (A.J. 1.223-224) cf. Jas 2:14-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1578</sup> Barton and Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion*, 140; cf. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 10, who uses "piety" or "pious practices." Unfortunately, Nongbri, *Before Religion*, 35, assumes its use as "worship" in Col 2:18 is appropriate here (reflecting his short treatment of NT texts).

<sup>1579</sup> Mitchell, "Document of Paulinism," 90, notes that only here and in 1 Corinthians (x3) is the construction εἴ τις δοκεῖ + εἶναι used in the NT. In her opinion this points to dependence on the latter. However, εἰ τις is extremely common as is δοκέω + εἶναι. It is unsurprising that both writers use the same construction to argue against someone they believe is mistaken.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1580</sup> This sentence poses difficulties. See Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 76, who notes that the second participial phrase seems more appropriate as part of the apodosis. However, most commentators understand self-deception as the state of the person who fails to bridle their tongue. So, e.g., Vlachos, *James: Exegetical Guide*, 62. <sup>1581</sup> Verseput, "Anger in the Congregation," 437.

<sup>1582</sup> Through the theme of self-deception, there is also a link back to the person who hears but does not act (1:22).

prophets. <sup>1583</sup> Texts such as Wisdom 14:27, where the 'worship of idols' (εἰδώλων θρησκεία) is denounced, <sup>1584</sup> and Wisdom 15:8, which describe workmen making a 'futile God' (θεὸν μάταιον) from clay, make this connection explicit. <sup>1585</sup> In other words, the piety of this person is for James as useless as the worship of idols. By linking the unbridled tongue with the language of idolatry, James indicates how serious this problem is. It is not just a failure to control the tongue, it is actually false worship and, from a missional perspective, represents a departure from following God and a lack of true piety, which in a parallel sense to idolatry opposes God's mission to be known as the creator and one God. <sup>1586</sup> Through unbridled speech, the mission of God is jeopardised and the one who engages in it disqualifies himself from participating in it, something that will become even more apparent when we consider James' lengthier treatment on speech (3:1-12).

## *True Piety (1:27)*

By contrast, James describes the right kind of piety as having two essential elements (in addition to controlling the tongue), firstly, care for the vulnerable (which we have already considered), and secondly, being unstained by the world. This latter aspect is included in the opening statement about piety, which should itself be 'pure and undefiled' ( $\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\dot{\alpha}$   $\kappa\alpha\dot{\alpha}$   $\dot{\alpha}\mu\dot{\alpha}\nu\tau\sigma\varsigma$ ), terms that have a rich tradition in the OT.  $K\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\dot{\delta}\varsigma$  is widely used and indicates moral, cultic or

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<sup>1583</sup> McCartney, *James*, 128. In the LXX vain (ματαίος) things are often equivalent to "idols," suggesting that this became another term or colloquial expression for them. See, e.g., Lev 17:7; 3 Kgdms 16:13, 26; 4 Kgdms 17:15; 2 Chr 11:5; Isa 2:20; 44:9; Jer 2:5; 8:19; 10:15; 28:18 (51:18). Sometimes the LXX implies idolatry where this is not the case in the MT. See, e.g., 3 Kgdms 16:2; Isa 30:15; 59:4; Amos 2:4. See also LEH, 385.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1584</sup> The worship is specifically of "unnamed idols" which is "the beginning and the cause and the perfection of all evil." See Barton and Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion*, 141.

<sup>1585</sup> In the NT, Paul calls for the Lystrans to 'turn from these worthless things' (τούτων τῶν ματαίων) referring to the local deities and idols (Acts 14:15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1586</sup> I will develop this further in the next main section when I consider the 'monotheism' of Abraham as exemplar.

material purity,  $^{1587}$  while  $\alpha\mu$  ( $\alpha\nu\tau\sigma\varsigma$  is much less common but is also used similarly.  $^{1588}$  The combination of the two terms is unique to James in the Greek Bible but is found in other Greek sources to give 'a sense of perfect and inviolate purity.  $^{1589}$  Elsewhere in the NT, the predominant sense of the terms is of ethical and moral purity,  $^{1590}$  so that an ethical rather than cultic sense here seems likely.  $^{1591}$  However, in the context of a diaspora Judean audience the lines between these may be blurred so that a more nuanced approach is needed.  $^{1592}$  Purity inherently implies boundary lines that mark separation in certain areas with the surrounding society that would have cultic, ethical and moral implications.  $^{1593}$ 

The use of ἄσπιλος, another quite rare term indicating a pure character, adds to this dynamic. There are two contrasting spheres here: the realms of God and the world. Purity is 'before God, the Father' (παρὰ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί) and the requisite response is 'to keep oneself unstained from the world' (ἄσπιλον ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου). This contrast is present through much of the letter and reaches a peak with the challenge in 4:4. The Further, since from a biblical perspective, the whole of life is lived 'before God,' this is a comprehensive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1587</sup> BDAG, 489.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1588</sup> For καθαρός as cultic purity, see, e.g., Gen 7:2-3; Leviticus *passim*; 1 Sam 20:26; Mal 1:11. With a moral sense, see, e.g., Gen 20:5, 6; Tob 3:14; Ps 23:4; 50:12; Prov 12:27; 20:9; Job *passim*; Hab 1:13. For ἀμίαντος see 2 Macc 14:36 and 15:34 (referring to the temple); Wis 3:13; 4:2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1589</sup> Hauck, TDNT, IV, 647. See further the references in Allison, James, 361. Philo uses the combination 5x, 2x to refer to the 'nature' of a person (Leg. 1.50; Cher. 150), and also of the ψυχή of a wise man (Det. 169). Josephus uses the two terms together, but the first for the city and the second for the temple (B.J. 6.99).

<sup>1590</sup> Again, καθαρός is more common (x27) than ἀμίαντος (x4). The former often has a moral sense such as when combined with καρδία (Mt 5:8; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 2:22; 1 Pet 1:22) while the latter shows an equal distribution in its meaning between the cultic, moral and material (Heb 7:26; 13:4; 1 Pet 1:4). The combination occurs again in Herm. Mand. 2.7 and Sim. 5.7.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1591</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 102–3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1592</sup> See Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 25–65, who decries a simplistic division between "ritual and metaphorical" purity. He finds five aspects to purity language (each with several subcategories): natural, ritual, moral, figurative and ritual (p. 64).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1593</sup> See Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness," 73–75; and in more detail, Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*. Both build on the work of Mary Douglas on purity and pollution but reach somewhat different conclusions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1594</sup> BDAG, 144. It occurs 4x in the NT (1 Tim 6:14; 1 Pet 1:19; 2 Pet 3:14) and never in the LXX, Josephus or Philo. It appears 1x in the Pseudepigrapha (Hist. Rech. 14.4) and 3x in the Apostolic Fathers (2 Clem. 8.6; Herm. Vis. 4.3.5; Sim. 5.6.7). The only occurrence in Perseus online is from John of Damascus (7-8<sup>th</sup> C).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1595</sup> Lockett, Purity and Worldview, 138.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1596</sup> See BDAG, 757, B.2 for 'before God.' Cf. Lk 1:30; Gal 3:11 LXX Ps 33:13; Prov 5:21; 16:2; 17:15; Wis 4:1; 2 Chr 16:9; Jer 23:24; Mt 6:4; Heb 4:13.

statement with all aspects of life in view. In essence, there is a clash of worldviews here, according to Lockett, who states, 'purity language rhetorically marks the "danger" associated with crossing the line between the two worldviews.' In other words, the aim of the purity language here is to instil a concern for right living before God in distinction to the values of the world, but without complete separation from the world.

### Missional Engagement with Culture through True Piety

Indeed this provides the basis for any kind of missional engagement with culture since this requires a balance between separation and involvement. Goheen frames this as the tension between 'syncretism and irrelevance.' Syncretism removes boundaries completely, embedding the gospel and community so thoroughly within surrounding culture that it loses any distinctiveness, compromising on key values. On the other hand irrelevance describes a community that is so sectarian it has little or no engagement with outsiders. However, in one sense, as Bosch notes faith is always embedded in culture, so that 'inculturation' is inevitable. Yet, although this is true, faith can never be 'completely coterminous' with culture and 'will always be a sign of contradiction.'

Thus a balance is required between two extremes, resulting in tension, as John Corrie explains: 'To be sure the church experiences a tension in its identity between being the Body

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1597</sup> Lockett, Purity and Worldview, 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1598</sup> Lockett, *Purity and Worldview*, 181–83; *idem*, "Unstained by the World': Purity and Pollution as an Indicator of Cultural Interaction in the Letter of James," in Webb and Kloppenborg, eds, *Reading James*, 49–74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1599</sup> Goheen, Introducing Christian Mission Today, 269–70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1600</sup> Goheen, Introducing Christian Mission Today, 270.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1601</sup> For a discussion of this, see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 447–57. The term is adapted from the idea in cultural anthropology of "enculturation" but adjusted to reflect missiological concerns. Catholic missiologists and theologians have been to the fore in the development of this concept although it is now widely accepted in missiological circles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1602</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 455; cf. Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement In Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), who speaks of an "indigenizing principle" and a "pilgrim principle." The gospel is both at home in culture and yet out of step with culture, since there are always aspects of culture contrary to the values of the gospel. See also Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 86; Darrell Whiteman, "Contextualization: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge," *IBMR* 21, no. 1 (1997): 2–7.

of Christ, in holy fellowship with Christ and one another, and on the other hand being involved with the world.' It must be distinctive, yet engaging at the same time. As Bosch argues, 'Precisely for the sake of the world the church has to be unique, *in* the world without being *of* the world.' This means that 'the church can be missionary only if its being-in-the-world is, at the same time, a being-different-from-the-world.' 1605

James appears to navigate this balance with his 'ethic of holy non-conformity,'  $^{1606}$  yet without complete separation from the world.  $^{1607}$  He is concerned that many of the recipients are morally impure and socially inactive, becoming so embedded in culture that they have conformed to the  $\kappa \acute{o} \sigma \mu o \varsigma$ . Thus he calls for true piety, with its double emphasis on moral purity and social care. In fact, as the church holds to its identity by living with true piety faithfully before God in 'holiness-wholeness,'  $^{1608}$  it enhances its attractional nature.  $^{1609}$ 

In this first section, then, we have seen that James sets the tone through a proverbial saying that lays out identity markers which reinforce the missional identity of the audience. Being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger are vital for not only community cohesion but also for them to be an attractional contrast community. The final verses with their opposing forms of piety emphasise the need to be distinct but still engage with society. Useless piety is marked by the unbridled tongue, while true piety is both ethical and moral, lived out before God. The development of these themes is what I will investigate next, first considering living faith before taking up again the control of the tongue.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1603</sup> John Corrie, "Creative Tensions in Mission: Bosch 25 Years On," *Missionalia* 44, no. 2 (December 2016): 197–98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1604</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 384.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1605</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 386, citing Berkhof, 1979, 415 (from the Dutch original).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1606</sup> Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness," 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1607</sup> See above and Lockett, "Strong and Weak Lines."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1608</sup> Elliott, "Holiness-Wholeness," 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1609</sup> A good example of this principle is elaborated in Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God*, 238–51. His missional reading of Revelation explores how "holiness is wedded to mission." By resisting the "allure of seductive Babylon" the church provides a window for outsiders to re-evaluate society and perhaps switch allegiances from empire to Christ.

#### **FAITH AND WORKS WORKING TOGETHER (2:14-26)**

As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, this section of James has generated an inordinate amount of debate, although the main thesis of the argument is clear: faith without works is unable to save, useless, and dead (2:14, 17, 20, 26). Although I do not want to be side-tracked by the debate as to the relationship of this section with Paul(inism), some engagement with that is inevitable, so I will introduce this briefly below from a missional perspective and then say more as the passage unfolds. <sup>1610</sup> My focus will be on the missional significance of James' thesis and on the roles of Abraham and Rahab as exemplars, indicative of God's mission in the world and his choice and invitation to those who participate in it.

In my opinion more is gained by keeping James and Paul in 'creative tension' <sup>1611</sup> rather than either an oversimplistic harmonisation or an unnecessarily antagonistic reading. <sup>1612</sup> On the one hand it is impossible to simply brush aside the shared vocabulary and often rare combinations both authors use, <sup>1613</sup> yet on the other hand, the differences in context, the different usage of the same terms and the way each develops his argument cast doubt on a direct literary relationship. <sup>1614</sup> In sum, it seems certain that James reacts to Paul in some way, but most likely to a slogan that comes from a distorted Paulinism that emphasises faith at the expense of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1610</sup> Johnson, *Letter of James*, 111–14, is one of the most forceful in arguing that James should be interpreted on his own terms and this passage only within the context of the letter. He puts down any similarity with Paul to the reliance on common tradition. However, Mitchell, "Document of Paulinism," 75, rightly points out that "to read James on his own terms must include grappling with Paul if Paul was one of those terms." Surprisingly she views James as a document from within Paulinism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1611</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 367 As he puts it, "It is only within the force field of apparent opposites that we shall begin to approximate a way of theologizing for our own time in a meaningful way."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1612</sup> For various perspectives on the relationship between the two as protagonists in early church history, see, e.g., William R. Farmer, "James the Lord's Brother, according to Paul," in Chilton and Evans, eds, *James the Just*, 133–53; John Painter, "Who Was James? Footprints as a Means of Identification," in Chilton and Neusner, eds, *Brother of Jesus*, 10–65; Bruce D. Chilton, "James in Relation to Peter, Paul, and the Remembrance of Jesus," in ibid, 138–60. See Allison, "Polemic against Paul", for an extensive review of the explanations of the similarities between James 2:14-26 and passages in Paul.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1613</sup> See Allison, "Polemic against Paul"; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 174–76, 186–97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1614</sup> Even Allison, *James*, 452, concedes that this is uncertain.

works, <sup>1615</sup> and is encapsulated by the phrase 'faith alone' that James argues against most vehemently (2:17, 24), as will become apparent in what follows.

This also fits well with the proposed audience of the letter as diaspora Judean Christ-followers. James writes to refute this slogan, not just because he views works as an essential part of the identity of God's people, but also because this catchphrase may have been used to promote law-free living among diaspora Judeans (or thought to have been used this way), which would certainly be upsetting to law abiding Judean Christ-followers. <sup>1616</sup> Moreover, this would have an adverse knock-on effect on the way the larger Judean community viewed Christ-followers. As Allison points out, James may also be trying to distance Christ-following communities from such rumours associated with Paul and thereby achieve a 'proper perception of and sympathetic appreciation for the Christian Judaism of James.' <sup>1617</sup> In other words this passage plays an apologetic function for the audience in their relationship with other diaspora Judeans. <sup>1618</sup> This in itself, as I have discussed already, strengthens the missional nature of the letter.

This leads me to a final observation before moving on to consider the text. It is necessary to read each author from their respective contexts, and this eases some of the tension and enables both to be set on equal footing. As Bauckham states, it requires 'understanding the eschatological people of God as consisting both of Jews *as Jews* and of Gentiles *as Gentiles*. The Jewish distinctives of the law need neither be abandoned by Messianic Jews nor observed by Gentile Christians.' Both perspectives are needed for a robust theology of mission. From

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1615</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 180.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1616</sup> This is certainly one of the concerns expressed in Acts 21:20-21. That Paul was misunderstood (at least in his opinion) seems clear even from his own writings. See Laws, *Epistle of James*, 131. See, e.g., Rom 3:8; 6:1-2. <sup>1617</sup> Allison, *James*, 456.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1618</sup> Allison, *James*, 456.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1619</sup> Bauckham, *Wisdom of James*, 149 (italics original); cf. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 177–78, who explains that Paul seeks to include both Judean and non-Judean identity in a "superordinate identity" in which the "subgroup identities are simultaneously permitted to retain their salience."

this position I will now set out the structure of the passage before exploring the text and then conclude by considering how keeping James and Paul in tension enriches a missional reading.

While 2:14-26 is recognised as a separate section (being introduced by the address ἀδελφοί μου which next occurs in 3:1), it clearly builds on 1:22-25, with the need to do the word, and on 2:1-13 which prioritises living out the royal law and the triumph of mercy over judgment. The structure follows patterns of Greco-Roman rhetorical argument and is also 'particularly diatribal,' according to Watson. Dawson explains well why James uses this form here:

[T]he diatribe is implemented ... to allow the writer to reestablish solidarity and power relations, along with behavioral norms, Christian identity, and beliefs in a way that is forthright and forceful, yet does not raise the defenses of the addressees. The use of diatribe... functions to provide James with the linguistic leg-room to kick out those adverse views that were mutually incompatible with the identity of the group, and to reestablish necessary social relations, ... so that James can elicit compliance from his addressees and accomplish social change. 1622

There are several ways to divide up the passage, although most commentators follow the general sections of the introductory thesis and example (2:14-17), the diatribe with the interlocutor (2:18-19) and then proofs from examples (2:20-26). For the sake of balance I will include the first two sections together and then consider Abraham and Rahab separately since both provide rich missional implications.

#### Work-less faith is worthless faith (2:14-19)

*Dead Faith (2:14-17)* 

James begins in verse 14 by asking 'what does it profit if someone says they have faith but do not have works?' (Τί τὸ ὄφελος, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐὰν πίστιν λέγη τις ἔχειν, ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχη;). As I

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1620</sup> Watson, "James 2," 108.

Watson, "James 2," 108–20 (citation on p. 119); cf. Zachary K. Dawson, "The Rules of 'Engagement': Assessing the Function of the Diatribe in James 2:14-26 Using Critical Discourse Analysis," in Dvorak and Dawson, eds, *Epistle of James*, 155–95.

<sup>1622</sup> Dawson, "Rules of Engagement," 190.

noted above, the uselessness of faith without works is the main thesis here and is repeated three more times (2:17, 20, 26).  $^{1623}$  It is presented as a rhetorical question, or according to Dvorak, an open-ended question whose purpose is to draw the audience in to the author's argument.  $^{1624}$  However, the following question expects a negative answer (negated with  $\mu\dot{\eta}$ ) and introduces the seriousness of a workless faith, since it has no salvific power ( $\mu\dot{\eta}$ )  $\delta\dot{\nu}\nu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota$   $\dot{\eta}$   $\pi\dot{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$   $\sigma\ddot{\omega}\sigma\alpha\iota$   $\alpha\dot{\nu}\tau\dot{\tau}\nu$ ;). This is, as Dvorak states, 'the focal point of the sub-unit' serving 'as James's main tool in re-positioning the readers, primarily by creating in the text a moment at which both he and the readers concur that a "deed-less" faith does not and cannot "save."  $^{1625}$ 

The illustration of the brother or sister in need (2:15-16) considered in the previous chapter both proves the point that faith without works has no profit (repeating the opening question) and shows the emphasis of  $\xi \rho \gamma \alpha$  here as good deeds. The gross failure of those who refuse to care for the brother or sister in need drives home James' point. The conclusion in verse 17 (οὕτως καί) turns the opening question into a stronger statement; faith without works is not just profitless but dead (ἡ πίστις, ἐὰν μὴ ἔχῃ ἔργα, νεκρά ἐστιν). It also adds an emphatic 'by itself' (καθ' ἑαυτήν) to make abundantly clear that it is the 'faith alone' formulation that bothers James.

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positions" (p. 213).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1623</sup> Chester and Martin, *Theology*, 22. Chester describes this as "a constant, hammer-like refrain throughout the section...." Moreover, vv. 22 and 24 are also variations on the theme. The point then is made 6x in 13 verses.

<sup>1624</sup> James D. Dvorak, "Ask and Ye Shall Position the Readers: James's Use of Questions to (Re-)Align His Readers," in Dvorak and Dawson, eds. *Epistle of James*, 223. He engages in an evaluation based on discourse analysis. Technically, he calls this a τ-question because it begins with an interrogative pronoun. Functionally it is open because it "generate[s] among the interrogated person(s) some sort of engagement with other people or value

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1625</sup> Dvorak, "Ask and Ye Shall Position," 224, 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1626</sup> I have considered this example in the previous chapter. Good deeds are not in mind exclusively as we will see from the exemplars of Abraham and Rahab. Whether James is interested or not in works of the law such as circumcision is simply not made explicit here, but the primary focus appears to be works that will demonstrate a righteous life (cf.  $\tau \dot{\alpha} \, \kappa \alpha \lambda \dot{\alpha} \, \xi \rho \gamma \alpha$ , Mt 5:16).

Orthodoxy requires Orthopraxy (2:18-19)

In verse 18 the rhetorical structure of the introductory phrase 'But someone will say...' (Άλλ' ἐρεῖ τις) undoubtedly expects an opposing voice to enter the discussion, yet what follows seems to support James' position. <sup>1627</sup> The interlocutor states 'you have faith and I have works' (σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις, κὰγὼ ἔργα ἔχω) which we would expect to hear from James. Multiple explanations have been put forward, <sup>1628</sup> but the least problematic and one that fits with the overall argument is that the personal pronouns do not refer directly to the parties involved but should be taken more generally as 'someone has faith and someone else has works.' <sup>1629</sup> In other words, the opponent tries to separate the inseparable, and insists that it is possible to have a genuine faith without any need for works. This leads to James' robust response calling for the opponent to 'show me your faith without works and I will show you faith by my works' (δεῖξόν μοι τὴν πίστιν σου χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων, κἀγώ σοι δείξω ἐκ τῶν ἔργων μου τὴν πίστιν). <sup>1630</sup> For James, as the repeated reminders of the main thesis show, faith and works are inextricable if faith is genuine. <sup>1631</sup> This also fits in with the scenario suggested above that James is responding to someone advocating law-free living for Judean Christ-followers based on the 'by faith alone' slogan misappropriated from Paul. <sup>1632</sup> For the interlocutor, faith is all that is needed, and so if

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1627</sup> McKnight, *James*, 235, notes that "the debates are legion" and admits that no one theory will solve all the problems; Allison, *James*, 468, calls the verse a "stumbling block."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1628</sup> McCartney, *James*, 158–60, outlines eight possible solutions, which summarised are: i) emend the text; ii) the interlocuter is an ally; iii) the first phrase only is a question from the interlocuter; iv) all of 2:18-19 is a Paulinist opponent; v) the interlocuter is a Jewish opponent criticising "Christian reliance of faith" vi) the interlocuter speaking in all of vv. 18-19 argues that you cannot show faith, which is internal, by works which are external; vii) James muddles his statement and there is no grammatical solution; viii) the personal pronouns should be taken more generally as "One person says this, another that."

This interpretation is held by the following commentators, inter alia: McKnight, *James*, 238; McCartney, *James*, 160; Laws, *Epistle of James*, 124, who notes that "this solution is adopted because it seems to make the best sense in context, not because it is entirely satisfactory"; Dibelius, *James*, 156; Ropes, *St. James*, 31; Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 54, although not all follow the same interpretation for the rest of vv. 18-19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1630</sup> Most commentators agree that James responds from v. 18b onwards. See, e.g., Johnson, *Letter of James*, 240; McKnight, *James*, 239; Dawson, "Rules of Engagement," 185.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1631</sup> McCartney, James, 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1632</sup> Cf. Jane Heath, "The Righteous Gentile Interjects (James 2:18-19 and Romans 2:14-15)," *NovT* 55, no. 3 (January 1, 2013): 272–95. She argues that James alludes to Paul but does not want to cite Paul explicitly. However, her overall thesis that the interlocutor is a Pauline righteous Gentile requires a very complex intertextual reading of Rom 1-4 with Jas 1-2 and requires the interlocutor to first mock James' position and then agree with the rest of the argument, something that seems unlikely.

some have works and others have faith (only), and choose not to follow the law, there should be no problem.<sup>1633</sup>

The fact that at this point James now sarcastically commends ( $\kappa\alpha\lambda\tilde{\omega}\varsigma$  ποιεῖς)<sup>1634</sup> his opponent for adhering to the *Shema* (εἶς ἐστιν ὁ θεός),<sup>1635</sup> a creedal statement common also for early Christ-followers, fits this reading. <sup>1636</sup> The irony is only apparent with the cutting statement that follows: 'Even the demons believe and shudder!' ( $\kappa\alpha$ ὶ τὰ δαιμόνια πιστεύουσιν  $\kappa\alpha$ ὶ φρίσσουσιν). <sup>1637</sup> Orthodoxy without orthopraxy, as James has shown repeatedly, is worthless. <sup>1638</sup> This is of course not to minimise the importance of the *Shema*, but rather, since it is such a central confession for both faiths, <sup>1639</sup> the impact of the statement is all the stronger. <sup>1640</sup> To cite the *Shema* but have no works puts the interlocutor on the level of the demons, or even lower, because they at least respond appropriately! Thus James for the sake of argument concedes that there can be a kind of faith that holds correct knowledge but fails to act. Yet throughout the argument this is characterised as dead and useless, so in effect genuine faith (which is the kind of faith he assumes elsewhere) <sup>1641</sup> is accompanied by works. <sup>1642</sup> This

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1633</sup> Cf. McKnight, *James*, 238 fn. 58. For Christopher D. Land, "Torah Observance without Faith: The Interlocuter of James 2:18 as a Critic of Jesus-Faith," in Dvorak and Dawson, eds, *Epistle of James*, 76, the main problem is the kind of faith that a person has. The interlocuter has Torah-faith and rejects James' Jesus-faith with its honouring of the poor, but this ignores the rest of the emphasis on faith and works.

<sup>1634</sup> Hartin, *James*, 152.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1635</sup> Citing an abbreviated form of Deut 6:4. The *Shema* may have been used in stages. On this, see Paul Foster, "Why Did Matthew Get the *Shema* Wrong? A Study of Matthew 22:37," *JBL* 122, no. 2 (2003): 322–23. This first stage was likely "utilized to emphasize the monotheistic form of Jewish faith" (p. 323). See also Edgar, "Love-Command"; Kim Huat Tan, "The Shema and Earliest Christianity," *TynBul* 59, no. 2 (2008): 197–98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1636</sup> Mt 22:37; Mk 12:29-30 (the only reference to include Deut 6:4 as here); Lk 10:27; Rom 3:30; Gal 2:20. Faith is defined here in terms of the *Shema* but in the context of James 2 could also be assumed to refer to the faith in Jesus Christ of 2:1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1637</sup> Watson, "James 2," 113.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1638</sup> Timo Laato, "Justification According to James: A Comparison with Paul," *TJ* 18, no. 1 (March 1, 1997): 67. <sup>1639</sup> Whether as Tan, "Shema," 181–82, and Verseput, "Jewish Morning Prayers", affirm, the *Shema* was recited twice daily as part of a Jewish confessional in this period, or not, is beyond the scope of my research. For the view that there is no evidence for widespread liturgical use, see Foster, "Study of Matthew 22:37," 321–31. However, even if not used as liturgy, it was still seen as an important text. Cf. Sarit Kattan Gribetz, "The Shema in the Second Temple Period: A Reconsideration," *JAJ* 6 (2015): 58–84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1640</sup> Tan, "Shema," 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1641</sup> Jas 1:3, 6; 2:1; 5:15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1642</sup> Robert H. Stein, "Saved by Faith [Alone]' in Paul Versus 'Not Saved by Faith Alone' in James," *SBJT* 4, no. 3 (2000): 4–5.

principle also extends to the need for holistic mission as we saw in the previous chapter. A faith that claims to save but does not work to save and help others denies its own veracity. Chris De Wet describes this as the 'fundamental tension of missionality – the need for congruency between proclamation and practice.' Someone who proclaims the *Shema* and faith in Christ must show deeds that evidence the claim.

### Proof by Exemplar (2:20-25)

Abraham the Father of Faith and Works (2:20-24)

In 2:20, James now asks the interlocutor if he wants to know or be shown (Θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι...;) the truth of the main thesis,  $^{1644}$  as if surprised that he needs further proof, and thus indignantly addresses the interlocutor with rhetorically strong language: 'O empty person' (ὧ ἄνθρωπε κενέ).  $^{1645}$  The main thesis is expressed again, this time with a play on words to express the uselessness of faith without works – it is workless (ἀργή), in other words useless.  $^{1646}$  From this starting point, James first turns to Abraham and then Rahab as exemplars of faith and works.  $^{1647}$  James establishes Abraham as an exemplar or prototype calling him the father of the community (Åβραὰμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν), so that he can further his argument based on shared knowledge about Abraham.  $^{1648}$  Importantly, 'group prototypes will often represent possible "selves" that group

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1643</sup> Chris L. De Wet, "No Small Counsel about Self-Control': *Enkrateia* and the Virtuous Body as Missional Performance in 2 Clement," in Kok et al. eds, *Sensitivity Towards Outsiders*, 449. He notes the problem described in 2 Clement 13:3-4 if practice does not match proclamation - "For when the pagans hear from our mouths the oracles of God, they marvel at their beauty and greatness. But when they discover that our actions are not worthy of the words we speak, they turn from wonder to blasphemy, saying that it is a myth and delusion."

<sup>1644</sup> Donald J. Verseput, "Reworking the Puzzle of Faith and Deeds in James 2.14 - 26," NTS 43, no. 1 (1997): 113. The singular verb forms θέλεις and βλέπεις in vv. 20, 22 suggest the argument with the interlocutor continues until v. 23. James reengages directly with his audience in v. 24 with the plural ὁρᾶτε.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1645</sup> Watson, "James 2," 113–14. The strong address expresses indignation and is not an insult aimed at a real person although some see Paul as the target.

 $<sup>^{1646}</sup>$  From combining the α- privative with ἔργον. See BDAG, 128. Note the similar language in Wis  $14:5-\theta$  έλεις δὲ μὴ ἀργὰ εἶναι τὰ τῆς σοφίας σου ἔργα.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1647</sup> Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora*, 128, describes this as "rhetorical jujitsu" since James uses the audience's "own beliefs to persuade them to accept his belief..."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1648</sup> See further Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 171–94, for the importance of exemplars and prototypes in maintaining group identity. An exemplar is a real person, while a prototype is more of a legendary construct although from an emic (internal) perspective may be considered real. Esler prefers to use the term prototype for Abraham as a legendary figure from the past who is "maximally representative of the shared social identity and consensual

members may be urged to manifest in their own lives.' 1649 Thus, not only does he (and Rahab later) serve as a proof of a position (faith without works is dead), he also serves as a prototype to be emulated with several other salient characteristics that are suggested by the context and the narrative that James draws on. Of primary importance for James is that Abraham lived a life of faithful obedience to God doing 'works' that proved his faith. In addition, he had the reputation of someone who obeyed the law (Sir 44:20), making him an ideal person for James to use as exemplar in his argument, particularly as there is a 'contested identity' over the nature of what it means to be a Judean Christ-follower. 1650 What is true for Abraham must be true for them. Thus James can ask if Abraham was justified by works (οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη...;) expecting a positive answer and his audience to agree with him and thus that the claim to be justified by 'faith alone' is vacuous. 1651

Although the plural 'works' is used, <sup>1652</sup> the 'work' referred to here is the *Akedah*, the offering up of Isaac, Abraham's son, on the altar (Genesis 22). I have already explored the significance of this event as proving Abraham's faithfulness under trial, <sup>1653</sup> but the important point here is that Abraham's obedience to God's command is the 'work' James draws upon. Twice in the Genesis account Abraham's obedience is highlighted, first with reference to his

position of the group" and has "represented the group identity to the maximum extent" (p. 173). Cf. Philip F. Esler, "Prototypes, Antitypes and Social Identity in First Clement: Outlining a New Interpretative Model," *ASE* 24, no. 1 (January 2007): 128–29. I will use exemplar generally in deference to the undoubted emic evaluation of Abraham as the forefather of the Judeans, although given the legendary nature of the 2nd Temple literature that James also appears to draw on, the range of salient features fits well with Abraham as a prototype.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1649</sup> Esler, "Prototypes, Antitypes and Social Identity in First Clement," 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1650</sup> See Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 175–84, for how Paul makes use of this "contested identity" in his argument in Romans 4. cf. Esler, "Paul's Contestation", which looks at this in Galatians.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1651</sup> Although it may seem at first that James is countering this with 'works alone,' Abraham's faith is assumed here and made explicit as the argument continues.

<sup>1652</sup> As I have pointed out in chapter five, Abraham's trials, including the *Akedah*, are routinely referred to as his "works" (ἔργα). This would probably also evoke his hospitality, but not refer to this only, contra Ward, "Works of Abraham," 288–89; See further Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 140–41. The plural may simply be maintained for stylistic reasons since it is also used of Rahab. In that case, "works" is equivalent to "conduct." So Dibelius, *James*, 162; Robert V. Rakestraw, "James 2:14-26: Does James Contradict the Pauline Soteriology," *CTR* 4, no. 1 (1986): 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1653</sup> See the discussion in chapter five.

own blessing (Gen 22:16) and then with reference to the blessing of the nations (Gen 22:18). In the second of these, God promises to bless the nations through Abraham '... because you have obeyed my voice.' Abraham hears a word from God and obeys it, and so to use Jacobean terminology, is the ultimate ποιητής λόγου which adds to his exemplarity for James.

Since the blessing of the nations is directly linked to Abraham's obedience, or in other words to his works, this adds a missional dimension to the discussion. 1654 Abraham is fit for purpose, not only as an exemplar of works, but also as an exemplar of what it means to be committed to God's mission. And this includes his offspring since it is through them that the nations will be blessed (Gen 22:18). Thus, for all those claiming to have Abraham as father, there is a missional responsibility placed on them. <sup>1655</sup> As Wright notes, 'God's intention to bless is combined with human commitment to a quality of obedience that enables us to be the agent of that blessing. '1656

As the passage continues, it is plain that James is not suggesting Abraham was justified by works alone. Still addressing the interlocutor (βλέπεις ὅτι..., 2:22), he clarifies that 'faith was working together with his works and by works faith was perfected' (ἡ πίστις συνήργει τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἡ πίστις ἐτελειώθη),  $^{1657}$  a continuous process throughout Abraham's pilgrimage with God. 1658 As Popkes notes, 'James argues for the right combination of the two elements, not simply in favour of works contra faith.'1659 In other words it is not that faith justifies and works are a secondary confirmation of faith, nor is it that works are primary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1654</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 205.

<sup>1655</sup> Sirach describes Abraham as the 'father of many nations... who kept the law of the Most High' and that 'nations would be blessed by his seed' (ἐνευλογηθῆναι ἔθνη ἐν σπέρματι αὐτοῦ, Sir 44:20-21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1656</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 207.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1657</sup> John G. Lodge, "James and Paul at Cross-Purposes: Jas 2:22," Bib 62, no. 2 (January 1, 1981): 196, rightly draws attention to this verse as James' "most original contribution to the discussion."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1658</sup> Witherington, Letters and Homilies, 477, classifies this as an iterative imperfect, which "implies that faith was working along with works at the same time side by side; it implies that these two things coexisted in Abraham's life over a period of time"; cf. Lodge, "Cross-Purposes," 201. The present tense highlights the "durative aspect." See *AGGSNT*, 306-317.

<sup>1659</sup> Wiard Popkes, "Two Interpretations of 'Justification' in the New Testament: Reflections on Galatians 2:15-21 and James 2:21-25," ST 59, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 139.

and faith only an assistant to them. Rather, 'together,' McKnight explicates, 'they produce a working faith that saves.' That faith saves is not in doubt, considering the opening question in verse 14, it is rather that for faith to save, it must be genuine, it must be perfected by works. This very obviously picks up on the opening theme of the letter which joins faith, work and perfection. <sup>1661</sup>

In this way James links the *Akedah* to Genesis 15:6. As Lodge puts it, this verse 'forms a centerpiece welding the two crucial moments of Abraham's life together (i.e. the sacrifice of Isaac and the promise of Isaac's birth).' <sup>1662</sup> The weld is then strengthened as James states that through the former, the scripture was fulfilled (ἐπληρώθη ἡ γραφή, 2:23). <sup>1663</sup> Thus, through Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, what God considered to be true in Genesis 15:6 was now shown to be true. <sup>1664</sup> As noted earlier, this exegetical move was not original to James, <sup>1665</sup> but he may also find a hint of this in the biblical text, since God's blessing is a response to obedience and not faith at this juncture (Gen 22:17) as we saw above. It lends an element of conditionality to the earlier promise and suggests that faith linked to obedience brings the surety of the fulfilment as James proposes. <sup>1666</sup> This explicit link between doing God's word/law and being blessed is axiomatic for James (1:25), as we have already seen. It seems likely as well that for James, the phrase 'it was reckoned to him as righteousness' (ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς

<sup>1660</sup> McKnight, James, 244.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1661</sup> Foster, Exemplars, 95–96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1662</sup> Lodge, "Cross-Purposes," 196.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1663</sup> This may confirm his point, but in some sense James must surely see the *Akedah* as a fulfilment of God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness in Genesis 15. So McKnight, *James*, 254; contra Davids, *Epistle of James*, 129.

 $<sup>^{1664}</sup>$  Interestingly, Jub 18:16 adds to the biblical account, 'And I have shown to all that thou art faithful unto me in all that I have said unto thee.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1665</sup> See Ellis, Hermeneutics of Divine Testing, 202–5, for relevant literature including rabbinic sources. The closest parallels are 1 Macc 2:52 and Sir 44:19-21. In both these references the emphasis is not on Abraham's faith but his faithfulness, with  $\pi$ l $\sigma$ τος used instead of  $\pi$ l $\sigma$ τις. Jub 23:10 also links Abraham's righteousness to his deeds; cf. Foster, Exemplars, 65–75.

<sup>1666</sup> Obedience and blessing are also linked in Gen 18:17-19, where the expectation is on Abraham 'to do righteousness (לְּעֲשׁוֹת צָּדְקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט; ποιεῖν δικαιοσύνην καὶ κρίσιν). This further supports James' use of this root to describe what is expected of humans rather than a judicial verdict about their status before God.

δικαιοσύνην, 2:23) is not be taken as meaning that Abraham was not already living righteously, so that righteousness was imputed to Abraham by God. Rather, since Abraham has already followed God's commands and committed himself to him in trust, God considered him to be righteous and faithful. In this sense, justification is approval by God, a declaration in recognition of a life of faith and works as James will conclude next.

James also adds to the citation a phrase that would be familiar to his audience, that Abraham 'was called a friend of God' (καὶ φίλος θεοῦ ἐκλήθη), an epithet commonly linked to this event. He was as we earlier, friendship implies total loyalty and is 'intimately connected with faith, faithfulness and trust' so that this designation for Abraham is certainly appropriate. Batten also notes that Philo's citation of Genesis 18:17 has Abraham as 'my friend' (φίλου μου) rather than the  $\pi$ αιδός μου of the LXX, thus linking Abraham's status as God's friend to his famed hospitality (Gen 18:1-8), a theme perhaps suggested already by Jas 2:15-16 and picked up again in the example of Rahab in 2:25, where I will consider this further. He was a suggested already by Jas 2:15-16 and picked up again in the example of Rahab in 2:25, where I will consider this

Having dispensed with the objection of the interlocutor, James once more addresses his audience directly with the expectation that they have followed his argument and reached the same conclusion (2:24): 'You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone'

1667 Dibelius, *James*, 162. In contrast, in Romans 4 the repeated use of λογίζομαι (11x) suggests a change in status for Abraham from unrighteous to righteous.

<sup>1669</sup> Rakestraw, "James 2:14-26," 41. As he points out, by the time of Gen 15, Abraham is already on a journey of faith and obedience to God, having left his family and nation and made sacrifices to God in response to God appearing to him (Gen 12:1-9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1668</sup> Cf. 1 Macc 2:52.

<sup>1670</sup> Ellis, Hermeneutics of Divine Testing, 205–6. As well as the OT references in LXX 2 Chr 20:7, Isa 41:8 and Theodotian's Greek text of Daniel 3:25, the appellation was widespread. See, e.g., Sib. Or. 2:245, T. Ab. passim, 1 Clem. 10:1; 17:2. See also Irving Jacobs, "Midrashic Background for James 2:21-3," NTS 22, no. 4 (July 1, 1976): 458–59, who points out that traditional retellings changed Abraham from a "God-fearer" (Gen 22:12) to a "God-lover."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1671</sup> Popkes, "Justification," 136–37. See further the discussion in chapter six. For an exhaustive study on Friendship in Antiquity, see Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 9–55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1672</sup> Batten, *Friendship and Benefaction*, 141. See Philo *Sobr*. 56. The MT simply has "Abraham" with no modifier; cf. Ward, "Works of Abraham," 285, although as Batten points out and I note above, Ward is wrong to take this as the main "work" James refers to.

(ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον). <sup>1673</sup> It is not that James is positing justification by works alone, he is contradicting the 'faith alone' statement, as I argued above, that comes from misinterpreting Paul. <sup>1674</sup> Faith is assumed and, hand in hand with works, justifies a person. Again, here δικαιόω is a declarative recognition of the righteousness of a person who has faith that is perfected by works, not a judicial change of status based on a creedal statement. As Rakestraw clarifies, 'James' point is certainly not that orthodox belief is wrong, but that such faith must be active in the tangible experience of life in order for God or anyone else to declare its owner truly a righteous person. <sup>1675</sup>

#### Abraham's Worship of the One God

One final salient feature of Abraham would likely also be in view here and that is his monotheism since this provides a foil to the deedless monotheist of 2:19, and is a notion that was frequently associated with Abraham in non-biblical literature. Foster points out that in the retelling of the Abraham narrative in Jubilees this aspect is heightened to the point that he reacts against idolatry at an early age, something all the more surprising because according to this account his own father had some kind of priestly role in the idol worship of the community

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1673</sup> Verseput, "Puzzle of Faith and Deeds," 113.

<sup>1674</sup> As Rakestraw, "James 2:14-26," 35, points out, the phrase ἐκ πίστεως μόνον is not actually a Pauline statement. However, it could be viewed as a logical extension of his argument. The closeness to Galatians 2:16 leads McKnight, *James*, 255, to argue that "here we are justified in hearing James responding either to Paul or to someone around Paul." It could be argued from Gal 2:16 that a common position for early Judean Christ-followers was that works of the Law only justify alongside faith in Christ. See Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), 148–50; A. Andrew Das, "Another Look at Ἑὰν Μή in Galatians 2:16," *JBL* 119, no. 3 (2000): 529–39. This is based on taking ἐαν μή concessively (its normal meaning) rather than adversatively.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1675</sup> Rakestraw, "James 2:14-26," 46. He further notes that "the central element in the Jewish concept of righteousness was that of active, visible, and practical deeds" which fits with James as a "thoroughly Jewish writer."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1676</sup> According to Sharyn E. Dowd, "Faith That Works: James 2:14-26," *RevExp* 97, no. 2 (March 1, 2000): 201, in Jewish tradition, Abraham was the first monotheist. Although there are debates over what this meant for Israel, these are beyond the scope of this investigation. As noted above, for the audience of James, the God of the OT was the one true God. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity*, 2008, 60–94, points out that for Israel, God occupied a "*sui generis* position as compared with other [gods]" which is a "monotheizing" move regardless of motivation (p. 94). See further Michael S. Heiser, "Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism? Toward an Assessment of Divine Plurality in the Hebrew Bible," *BBR* 18, no. 1 (2008): 1–30.

(Jub 12:6-8a). His disquiet and battle with idolatry continues and ultimately leads to the departure from Ur and later Haran, resulting in the divine revelation to him in Genesis 12. However embellished this account is, this heightened monotheism would be part of the exemplarity of Abraham for James' audience.

The significance for a missional reading is captured neatly by Wright who sees three consequences of monotheism for mission which I will briefly outline here. Firstly, since God wills to be known as the one true God of Israel and even the nations, a recurring theme throughout scripture, God takes the initiative to make himself known. As Bauckham explicates, the good of God's human creatures requires that he be known to them as God. This is of course demonstrated in the life of Abraham, but God making himself known to Abraham was, as we have seen repeatedly, not just for Abraham's benefit but for the blessing of the nations, which is most fully realised as they come to know the God of Abraham. Thus God's choice of Abraham always had universal significance, a missional pattern repeated in the overarching biblical narrative and supremely seen in the incarnation.

Secondly, there is a missional dimension to the 'constant struggle in which biblical monotheism has always engaged and continues to be engaged today.' Just as biblical monotheism was not evident to the nations (or even to Israel at many points) and the Lordship of Christ is not obvious to the world, Wright argues that 'it was precisely the [se] truths to which

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1677</sup> Foster, *Exemplars*, 65–66. Abraham in fact goes on to burn the idol house which perhaps precipitates the departure from Ur. While in Haran, Abraham prays to 'God Most High, the creator of all things' and asks to be kept from going astray, and questions whether to return to Ur or not. It is in response to this prayer that God appears to him in Genesis 12:1-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1678</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 126. For a summary of biblical evidence, see further p. 127 and for a more extensive OT survey see pp. 75-104. Cf. Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1679</sup> Bauckham, Bible and Mission, 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1680</sup> Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 27–54. As we saw in chapter three, God's choice of the particular is always for universal blessing. Bauckham states, "The movement of God's purpose always starts from the particular on its way to the universal. God always singles out some for the sake of all." See also Wright, *The Mission of God*, 222–64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1681</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 130–31.

Israel was called to bear witness, and which Christian mission declares to the world.' The missional nature of biblical monotheism is thus evident: 'it is a truth to which we are constantly called to bear witness.' This is a struggle that James himself subtly engages in with his audience in that he points to the *Shema* at the heart of his argument and also sets this within the broader context of having faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory (2:1).

Thirdly, Wright suggests that biblical monotheism leads to worship and praise of God as the one true God, and that at least in the present age, this is missional because it ultimately points others ('the nations' in the OT) to God, encapsulated in the vision of the consummation of God's mission with people from every tribe and tongue worshipping him (Rev 7:1-10). 1684 In an unrepeatable way, the *Akedah* was an act of worship as Abraham's total allegiance to God was demonstrated by his willingness to offer Isaac to God. 1685 Abraham's unwavering commitment to God (unlike the ἀνὴρ δίψυχος) defines the essence of true worship or piety. This points the audience to live with both commitment to and friendship with God, inherently missional concepts, providing a witness to those outside the community of faith, who are invited to join God's people in worship. Thus, the monotheism of Abraham holds within it an implicit call to acknowledge and proclaim the God of Abraham as the only God so that he might be known by those who do not yet know him.

#### *Rahab the Prostitute (2:25)*

If Abraham is an unsurprising and indeed almost necessary exemplar to draw on, the same cannot be said for Rahab. 1686 Various reasons have been proposed to explain her inclusion in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1682</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1683</sup> Wright, The Mission of God, 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1684</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 126, 132–34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1685</sup> This raises ethical questions but those are beyond the scope of this study and in any case would not be foremost for the author of James or his audience.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1686</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 166, ponders, "One might ask why he mentions Rahab at all."

the argument and indeed her juxtaposition with Abraham. <sup>1687</sup> That she is meant to be read alongside and on equal footing to Abraham is indicated by the phrase 'in the same way' (ὁμοίως δὲ καί) and the repetition of the same question as in 1:21 (οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη...;). <sup>1688</sup> Further, the placement of the two names are paralleled exactly (᾿Αβραὰμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν// Ῥαὰβ ἡ πόρνη) so that it seems reasonable to conclude that James has not just picked her randomly from the OT. There is a deliberate comparison he wants to bring out between the father of the nation and a Canaanite prostitute, an identity that is never hidden in Scripture in contrast to some later rabbinic tradition which tended to sanitise her memory. <sup>1689</sup> However, it is worth considering in what way Rahab is a suitable exemplar in her own right, given that the rest of the OT and intertestamental literature is silent about her. <sup>1690</sup> By doing so it will become evident why James chooses her and sets her side by side with Abraham, and that, just as with Abraham, her faithworks are to be emulated by the audience.

In the biblical narrative, somewhat surprisingly, the spies enter the house of a prostitute (Josh 2:1), although it is possible that it was also an inn at which travellers would lodge since one could often be associated with the other. Regardless of the spies' motivation, James focuses on and summarises Rahab's actions as 'receiving the messengers' (ὑποδεξαμένη τοὺς

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1687</sup> For a summary of reasons posited, see Xiaxia E. Xue, "An Analysis of James 2:14-26 with Special Reference to the Intertextual Reading of Abraham and Rahab," in Dvorak and Dawson, *Epistle of James*, 142–43; Foster, *Exemplars*, 104.

Robert W. Wall, "The Intertextuality of Scripture: The Example of Rahab (James 2:25)," in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation*, ed. Peter W. Flint and Tae Hun Kim, SDSS (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 227; Foster, *Exemplars*, 114.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1689</sup> She is referred to as the prostitute 4x in Joshua (2:1; 6:17, 22, 25). She is also called "Rahab ἡ πόρνη" in Heb 11:31. Foster, *Exemplars*, 108–11, notes that the later Jewish tradition tended either to enhance her memory turning her into the wife of Joshua and mother of a line of prophets and prophetesses (including Jeremiah), or reduce her role in the original story, as does Josephus (see below). See also Ronald Charles, "Rahab: A Righteous Whore in James," *Neot* 45, no. 2 (January 1, 2011): 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1690</sup> Foster, *Exemplars*, 104–5. She only appears in Josh 2 and 6 (discounting the unconnected use of the same name for Egypt and a sea monster of primordial chaos). In the NT she only appears here, in Heb 11:31 and the Matthean genealogy of Jesus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1691</sup> D. J. Wiseman, "Rahab of Jericho," *TynBul* 14 (1968): 8–11, provides linguistic and historical grounds for this. Additionally, see the sources cited in Charles, "Rahab." Note also Josephus, who says the spies went to an inn (καταγώγιον) to eat that was kept by Rahab (*A.J.* 5:7-8).

ἀγγέλους) and 'sending them out by a different way' (ἑτέρα ὁδῷ ἐκβαλοῦσα, 2:25 cf. Josh 2:15-21). The escape of the spies and her own eventual salvation are all thus signalled by James as dependent on her works which show her to be righteous.

Although James is silent on her faith, this had become an established part of the tradition, <sup>1693</sup> and more tellingly this is assumed in the next verse. <sup>1694</sup> However, it is clearly evidenced in the original narrative, which as Foster notes, places the only mention of Yahweh in the text on the lips of Rahab (Josh 2:11-12). <sup>1695</sup> Her declaration is particularly significant because her words cite almost exactly those in Deuteronomy 4:39, Moses' 'magisterial confession' of God's sovereignty over heaven and earth. <sup>1696</sup> This creedal like confession is close to the *Shema* since for Yahweh to be described this way is tantamount to stating he is the only God. <sup>1697</sup> With this as the basis for Rahab's famed faith, she is also an excellent exemplar for James. She does not just declare her belief in the God of Israel, she acts out of that conviction to save the spies and her own life and that of her family. As Kamell concludes, 'by her active faith, the Gentile prostitute became a Jewish heroine.' <sup>1698</sup>

This last comment in fact leads to another salient identity marker of Rahab. Her confession of faith in the God of Israel and her subsequent deeds, all as an inhabitant of Jericho,

building on what precedes through the explanatory  $\gamma \acute{a} \rho$ , shows that Rahab's faith has been in view all along. <sup>1695</sup> Foster, *Exemplars*, 106.

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<sup>1692</sup> For ἐκβάλλω as 'send away,' see BDAG, 299, 2 (cf. Mt 7:4//Lk 6:42; 9:38//Lk 10:2; 12:35; 13:52; Acts 16:37).
LXX Josh 2:21 has καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν αὐτούς.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1693</sup> See Heb 11:31; 1 Clem 12:1 and later rabbinical writings. Even Wall, "Example of Rahab," 230–31, who argues that her faith is deliberately suppressed to focus on her showing and appealing for mercy, acknowledges that it was well-known. It seems more likely that her faith is simply part of the shared knowledge about Rahab. <sup>1694</sup> Rightly Davids, *Epistle of James*, 133, points out that the explicit mention of faith in v. 26, with the argument

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1696</sup> Wall, "Example of Rahab," 230. The confession from Rahab identifies "Yahweh your God" as "God in heaven above and earth below" and compared with Deut 4:39 only lacks the final phrase "there is no other."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1697</sup> Craigie, *NICOT-26*, 143–44. Verse 39 itself echoes v. 35, a statement of Israel's monotheistic faith. As Craigie notes, they were of course aware of other gods but the warning served to distinguish the Lord as the only "true and living God."

<sup>1698</sup> Mariam J. Kamell, "Reexamining Faith: A Study of Hebrews 10:19-12:14 and James 1-2," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham *et al.* (St. Andrews Conference on Scripture and Theology, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 430. She also suggests the people of Jericho react like the demons of Jas 2:19. They knew what Rahab knew but did nothing because 'the dread of you has fallen on us' (LXX Josh 2:9: ἐπιπέπτωκεν γὰρ ὁ φόβος ὑμῶν ἐφ ἡμᾶς). The correspondence is weakened, however, because the confession of faith appears to be Rahab's and not the rest of the city's and they only express fear of Israel.

mark a definitive change in allegiance. She had, in James' words, become a friend of God and enemy of the world (4:4) and had 'completely and irrevocably committed herself to the God of Israel' so that her faith and works demonstrate 'total trust in, and commitment to, God.' <sup>1699</sup> In this sense she is also on equal footing with Abraham, who likewise committed himself to the God of Israel from a context of idolatry as we have seen above. For both, the change in allegiance led to a perceived betrayal of familial loyalties and distancing from family and social groups. That Rahab is later incorporated into the genealogy of Jesus found in Matthew suggests that it was thought that she integrated into Israel <sup>1700</sup> and, from a NT perspective, indicates her inclusion in God's greater plan of redemption. <sup>1701</sup>

A further important connection between the OT narrative and our passage is pointed out by Wall. 1702 Rahab reminds the spies that she has shown mercy to them (ποιῶ ὑμῖν ἔλεος) and based on this, requests mercy from them (ποιήσετε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔλεος, LXX Josh 2:12). This is granted (based on certain stipulations) and she and her family are saved from destruction (Josh 6:22-25). This clearly provides a strong connection to James 2:13, a transitional verse for this section. Judgment without mercy is shown to those who do not 'do mercy' (μὴ ποιήσαντι ἔλεος). Although the remainder of Wall's intertextual reading does not convince, 1703 this connection is strengthened by one further thought. According to an angelic commandment, the whole city was to be devoted to destruction (Josh 6:17a), so by sparing Rahab, the people of Israel showed mercy in the face of destruction, and at least in Rahab's life, it can be said that mercy triumphed

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1699</sup> Foster, Exemplars, 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1700</sup> A not so rosy picture is painted in the LXX, as Foster, *Exemplars*, 125, points out. In the aftermath of the destruction of Jericho she is "placed outside the camp of Israel" (Josh 6:23).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1701</sup> See Richard Bauckham, "Tamar's Ancestry and Rahab's Marriage: Two Problems in the Matthean Genealogy," *NovT* 37, no. 4 (October 1995): 313–29. See also the rabbinic tradition noted earlier. <sup>1702</sup> Wall, "Example of Rahab," 231.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1703</sup> Wall, "Example of Rahab," 231–32. He links Josh 2:13b to Jas 5:20 and then states "[Rahab] becomes then an exemplar of a practical wisdom, whose vocation is to bring back those who wander in the spiritual diaspora, and whose souls are now rescued from eschatological death by merciful deeds." And since Rahab's family is spared, by practicing hospitality, James' readers can "secure" a reward.

over judgment (Jas 2:13b). However, it must be stated here that conquest as a model of mission is to be rejected, <sup>1704</sup> and instead, the triumph of mercy is an apposite bottom line for all missional encounters with the outsider. <sup>1705</sup>

The final salient identity marker that James seems to draw on here is of course Rahab's hospitality. This is linked to her 'receiving' (ὑποδεξαμένη) the messengers so that for 1 Clement, Rahab was 'saved by her faith and hospitality' (Διὰ πίστιν καὶ φιλοξενίαν ἐσώθη, 12:1). 1706 James does not follow the LXX in describing the spies as 'young men' (νεανίσκους) but rather calls them 'messengers' (ἀγγέλοι) which may deliberately recall Abraham receiving ἀγγέλοι in his house in Gen 18, thus strengthening the emphasis on hospitality. 1707 In this case, Abraham's exemplary hospitality serves to challenge his audience to do the same and thus 'to encourage more benefaction for the needy. 1708 Indeed, the hospitality of both characters was legendary and it would no doubt be evoked in the minds of the audience and so I will briefly explore this aspect before moving on to the final verse.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1704</sup> There is of course a great danger in appropriating the story of conquest as a kind of metaphor for mission. Western mission has sometimes had a triumphalist approach that assumes Western cultural superiority, with other places as battlefields to be conquered. See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 298–313, for a description of the unfortunate linking of mission and ideological concepts such as that of "Manifest Destiny." In this a nation believes it is a "chosen people" with a "unique charisma" that then seeps into the missionary enterprise from this nation (p. 299). I have noted elsewhere the much-needed corrective provided by Bosch's concept of vulnerable mission. See, e.g., *idem*, "The Vulnerability of Mission."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1705</sup> Cf. Erhard S. Gerstenberger, "Sensitivity Towards Outsiders in Old Testament Theologies," in Kok *et al*, eds, *Sensitivity Towards Outsiders*, 39–40.

<sup>1706</sup> Many commentators, noting the similarities here and elsewhere, suggest 1 Clement is dependent on James. So inter alia Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, lxx–lxi; Johnson, *Letter of James*, 72–75. Notably, Clement argues that it was not Rahab's "faith alone" (οὐ μόνον πίστις) that was important (12:7-8). Cf. Benjamin W. Bacon, "The Doctrine of Faith in Hebrews, James, and Clement of Rome," *JBL* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 1900): 12–21, who argues for a chain of dependency from Paul to Hebrews to James to 1 Clement.

אפר e.g., Wall, Community of the Wise, 153, and the discussion above. Although it is possible James calls them  $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\dot{\epsilon}\lambda$ סנ influenced by the MT's use of 'messengers' (מַלְּאָכִים') in Josh 6:17, 25, as I noted above, the collective weight of the two exemplars together and the epithet "friend of God" for Abraham lend strength to this theory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1708</sup> Batten, Friendship and Benefaction, 138–39. I will focus more on this when I discuss Rahab, below.

Divine Hospitality – an expression of the missio Dei

Hospitality is an important biblical value, 1709 and constitutes a crucial aspect of mission. 1710 Glanville points out that the Deuteronomic law required care and inclusion of the stranger so that 'vulnerable and displaced persons might live and thrive and belong within a people' which meant that showing hospitality to the outsider became normative for God's people. 1711 In the NT, this expectation is continued. One of the salvific acts of the 'sheep' (who are defined by their good works, not their ethnicity) in Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats is that of hospitality to the stranger (Mt 25:35). Esler argues persuasively that table fellowship is a 'vital arch' in Luke's symbolic universe, one that he uses for 'the legitimation of complete fellowship between Jew and Gentiles in the Christian community...'1712 Commenting on this, Salter suggests that 'if table fellowship is an arch, that which it supports is mission. Jesus' table practices ... are an example of his mission to cross boundaries in welcoming outsiders.'1713 As Salter goes on to conclude, 'hospitality is about more than food; it is about an ethic of inclusivity.'1714

More fundamentally, God's salvation is in a sense an expression of hospitality as 'God's gracious extension of welcome and friendship into his family.'1715 Joshua Jipp points out that the culmination of the missio Dei is often portrayed as a banquet feast, the ultimate act of hospitality extended to all peoples and thus a challenge to human xenophobia. 1716 This has

<sup>1709</sup> See, e.g., Rom 12:13 (τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες); Heb 13:2 (which alludes to Gen 18). It is also an important qualification in leadership (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1710</sup> On this see Joshua W. Jipp, Saved by Faith and Hospitality (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017); cf. Glanville,

<sup>&</sup>quot;A Missional Reading of Deuteronomy," 138–41; Salter, *Mission in Action*, 188–89.

1711 Glanville, "A Missional Reading of Deuteronomy," 139–41. He notes that Deut 1:16; 16:11, 14; 26:11 all legislate on behalf of the stranger and also points out that Moab and Ammon are judged for their "lack of hospitality to Israel (23:3-4)." Glanville goes on to extrapolate this kind of ethic to argue that Western nations have a responsibility "to offer hospitality to the world's refugee populations..."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1712</sup> Philip F. Esler, Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 96, 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1713</sup> Salter, Mission in Action, 188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1714</sup> Salter, Mission in Action, 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1715</sup> Jipp, Faith and Hospitality, 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1716</sup> Jipp, Faith and Hospitality, 19. See, e.g., Isa 25:6-9; Mt 8:10-12; Lk 13:22-30; 14:15-24; cf. Kenneth E. Bailey, Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels (London: SPCK, 2008), 310-11, who notes

implications for God's people, since divine hospitality 'elicits human hospitality' so that it becomes an 'inextricable component of the identity of the church and its vocation.' Overall then the challenge to show hospitality is evident in the Bible 1718 and is vitally linked to God's redemptive mission and hence the church's mission.

Hospitality also fits within James' insistence on doing the royal law and acting with mercy. <sup>1719</sup> By placing a premium on hospitality with both exemplars in our passage, James may even be challenging the largely Judean audience, whose reluctance to such interaction with non-Judeans was notorious, <sup>1720</sup> to live in accordance with the example of Jesus (who ate with the outsiders and the unclean) and Jesus' own teaching. As Jipp points out, many of the recipients of hospitality, particularly in Luke's gospel, are often the marginalised and the outcasts, <sup>1721</sup> much like James' exemplar Rahab and those he says are 'chosen by God' (2:5). Thus the church's mission is 'stunted' if it does not receive in hospitality the least of society, the outsider and the 'other.' <sup>1722</sup>

Thus Rahab is a more than apposite exemplar and can take her place alongside Abraham as one 'saved by faith and hospitality.' However, it is also important to note that, as Blomberg and Kamell put it, 'Rahab differs in almost every way from Abraham,' the latter

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that the Isaianic vision of the nations banqueting in Isa 25 was often reinterpreted to either exclude or destroy them, such as in the Isaiah Targum, 1 Enoch 62:1-11; 1QSa 2:11-22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1717</sup> Jipp, Faith and Hospitality, 17.

<sup>1718</sup> As well as the references above, Jipp, *Faith and Hospitality*, 6–29, draws attention to Mt 25:31-46, 2 Pet 2:9; Isa 55:1-2 and Lk 9:10-17. Slightly less convincing is his suggestion to read Luke 4:19 as "to proclaim the year of the Lord's welcome (δεκτόν)" (p. 21) and argue that this sets an agenda of hospitality in the gospel.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1719</sup> Joubert, "*Homo Reciprocus*," 396, also suggests that Jas 2:2-4 models "extending hospitality to strangers, irrespective of their social status or expected response," although this seems to stretch the meaning of the illustration. See also Smit, "Symposiastic Background."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1720</sup> See Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 73–86, for the evidence for Judean antipathy to eating with Gentiles, which of course is a part of showing or receiving hospitality.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1721</sup> Jipp, Faith and Hospitality, 38–39.

Jipp, *Faith and Hospitality*, 39–41. See also his chapters on "Hospitality and the World: Overcoming Tribalism" (99-122) and "Hospitality and the Immigrant: Overcoming Xenophobia" (123-146) for pertinent challenges to the church today.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1723</sup> See Jipp, *Faith and Hospitality*, 4–5. This is stated of Rahab (10:1) but Abraham also receives a son by "faith and hospitality" (10:7) and Lot is commended for his "piety and hospitality" (11:1); cf. Esler, "Prototypes, Antitypes and Social Identity in First Clement," 139, who notes that Rahab and Lot are prototypical "in relation to hospitality."

being a wealthy, moral, (male) patriarch of the nation, while she is of dubious repute and morals, a female and in the end an outcast from her own nation.<sup>1724</sup> Thus Abraham and Rahab, at opposite ends of the spectrum, but both being justified by faith and works, show the universality of James' thinking here.<sup>1725</sup> Although there is no other way to be saved than to have living faith, faith that is perfected by works, setting Abraham and Rahab side by side opens the scope to anyone, rich, poor, Judean or otherwise, male or female. The bottom line for James is not status or ethnicity but allegiance to Christ and a living faith.<sup>1726</sup> Wall helpfully concludes, 'In this sense, the merism envisages a truism: the community favored by God is constituted by hospitable believers, forging as a result a sociology of compassion.' Encapsulated here is the heart of God's mission and invitation to salvation, as he extends his divine hospitality towards humanity and calls those who have faith to do the same.<sup>1728</sup>

# James, Paul and the Spirit-less body (2:26)

James concludes this section with a final analogy: 'For just as the body without the spirit is dead, thus also faith without works is dead' (ὥσπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα χωρὶς πνεύματος νεκρόν ἐστιν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ πίστις χωρὶς ἔργων νεκρά ἐστιν). As Dibelius states, the main point 'needs no further explanation.' In one way or another, James has been saying this since verse 14. <sup>1729</sup> The analogy of body and spirit is simple and does not necessitate prioritising one over the other. <sup>1730</sup> A body needs the spirit and vice versa. Davids concludes well, 'Neither soul nor body is desirable alone;

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1724</sup> Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, loc 175.

Wall, Community of the Wise, 143–44. Xue, "Analysis of James 2:14-26," 150–51, suggests that aligning Abraham with Rahab would encourage the audience to "identify with the marginalized social class" but this seems to miss the point of the inclusivity that both exemplars together encourage. It may be that the inclusion of Rahab would encourage those of such a class to realize they too can be justified by the same faith Rahab showed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1726</sup> Cf. Shillington, *Politics of Identity*, 92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1727</sup> Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 144. The merism is "a metaphor of inclusion which makes equal the most extreme members of a whole and therefore all other members who fall in between."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1728</sup> Jipp, Faith and Hospitality, 177.

Dibelius, *James*, 167. Returning to faith as νεκρά without works forms an inclusio with v. 17 and brings the argument to a suitable close.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1730</sup> McKnight, *James*, 258–59. He points to texts such as Gen 2:7; 6:17; Ps 31:5; Ezek 37:8-10 behind the "anthropology" here.

a body without its life-force is simply a rotting corpse.' <sup>1731</sup> In the same way, faith and works cannot be separated.

This returns us to my initial discussion of James and Paul in tension. Is James, in the words of Dibelius, simply a Christian who has failed to grasp 'the full titanic power of the Pauline slogan "apart from works, through faith"?<sup>1732</sup> Or does James have something essential to offer that has been overshadowed by a 'faith-alone' slogan?<sup>1733</sup> From a missional perspective, the answer to this second question is yes, which I believe is apparent from the arguments above. Moreover, in the words of Wall, a 'myopic appeal to Paul... results in something other than a robust articulation and incarnation of the Rule of Faith. '1734 In comparing and contrasting the two, Wall argues that holding both together and admitting their 'individual distinctiveness' rather than engaging in a 'critical reductionism' allows, from a canonical perspective, 'two different kerygmata [to] form two discrete yet integral parts of a biblical whole.' 1735 He also posits that faith working with works 'captures the moral inclination of the entire [Catholic Epistles] collection and sounds a cautionary note that any reductionist reading of the Pauline corpus may well degenerate into a *sola fideism*.' 1736 Whether the first part is correct or not is beyond the scope of this investigation, but the point I want to make here is that James' language forces a re-evaluation of Paul even if in the end it is possible to reduce the tension through

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1731</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1732</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 180. Dibelius' somewhat biased perspective is evident when he suggests that James is associated with a kind of humdrum Christianization of society through "good conduct which was religiously motivated." So he suggests it is better to recognise this than to be "one who hoists him [James] up into direct proximity with the greatest apostle." James apparently does not have the same perspective as Paul because he found God without the "shaking of the soul" that formed Paul's faith.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1733</sup> See Elian Cuvillier, "'Jacques' et 'Paul' En Debat. L'epitre de Jacques et La Tradition Paulinienne (Jc 2:14-26//Ep 2:8-10, 2 Tm 1:9 et Tt 3:5.8b)," *NovT* 53 (2011): 283, who notes that the problem occurs when "the slogan takes the place of authentic experience."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1734</sup> Robert W. Wall, "The Priority of James," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 160. He states this in relation to the Catholic Epistles as a collection, not just James but the point is still valid. <sup>1735</sup> Wall, "Example of Rahab," 234–35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1736</sup> Wall, "The Priority of James," 17. Some authors go as far as to smooth out all differences. See, e.g., Laato, "Justification According to James". As McKnight, *James*, 246, wryly points out, the "irony of this piece" (referring to Laato) "is that it concludes that James's understanding of justification is actually Lutheran" (see fn. 92).

contextualising their arguments and contrasting how they use terms.<sup>1737</sup> It does not allow a slide into comfortable orthodoxy with no orthopraxy that could be derived (wrongly) from Paul<sup>1738</sup> but challenges those who profess faith in Christ to a discipleship that has works. Wall again puts this well: 'Clearly the redemptive calculus of James raises the moral stakes of Christian discipleship to a redemptive level and provides a critical incentive for the believer's performance of God's will.'<sup>1739</sup>

It is particularly this last sentence that I believe is important for mission. A missional reading of James challenges any kind of complacency with professions of faith that do not lead to obedience to Jesus' teaching and purity from world systems that are antithetical to that teaching, 1740 and to the kind of transformational caring for others that has been evident throughout the letter of James. 1741 Thus keeping James and Paul in creative tension is worth the struggle, since this keeps orthopraxy centre stage alongside orthodoxy, illustrating Corrie's point that such tension is 'built into the identity of the church as missional' and from it a 'creative new missionary identity' can develop. 1742

Thus far we have explored the faith-works challenge that builds on the introductory concept of 'being quick to listen' and 'doing the word.' What remains then is for us to consider the second of the proverbial triad, 'slow to speak,' as it is presented in in 3:1-12, as well as 4:11-12 and 5:12.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1737</sup> Dowd, "Faith That Works", rather nicely explains it this way - "James is using Paul's vocabulary, but not his dictionary."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1738</sup> See the beginning of this section.

<sup>1739</sup> Wall, "Example of Rahab," 235.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1740</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 381–82, rightly criticises the so called "Church Growth" movement for its emphasis on numerical growth. He also cites the critique by Orlando Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 80, of a shallow Christianity that has as its goal "a happy, comfortable, and successful life, obtainable through the forgiveness of an abstract sinfulness by faith in an unhistorical Christ."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1741</sup> For a balanced reading of the need for both moral purity and social action, see Kamell, "Mission and Morals." See chapter two for a brief evaluation of her article.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1742</sup> Corrie, "Creative Tensions in Mission," 198.

#### SLOW TO SPEAK (3:1-12, 4:11-12 & 5:12)

In James 2:12, the author warns the audience to speak and act as those about to be judged. As we have just seen, 2:14-26 has largely dealt with how they act, and now, in this section, James tackles how the audience speaks. As noted above, this theme reaches back to the definition of true piety through bridling ( $\chi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\omega\nu$ ) the tongue (1:26) with the repeated  $\chi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\dot{\epsilon}\omega$  in 3:2.<sup>1743</sup> The first unit (3:1-12) follows Greco-Roman rhetorical patterns, <sup>1744</sup> although I will divide it thematically and consider it in two main sections, the first looking at the description of the tongue as an unruly and unholy member of the body (3:1-8), and the second looking at how this plays out in the way the community speaks to and about others (3:9-12). This leads into relating speech to judgment which is tackled in 4:11-12 and 5:12 which I will consider at the end.

It will be obvious again that James draws on the OT and Jesus' teaching and that this fits within the wider cultural emphasis on controlled speech, although also goes beyond this. 1745 Johnson, noting that taciturnity and brevity are a sign of moral control, states that 'much of what James says about speech fits comfortably within the conventions of Hellenistic wisdom. 1746 This persuasive blend challenges the audience to control the tongue since otherwise the individual and the community will fail to progress to perfection and will be in opposition to God's purposes. Right or wrong speech is 'an immediate indication' of friendship with God or the world 1747 and thus crucial to the missional identity of the community.

 $<sup>^{1743}</sup>$  In 3:3 James also uses the related χαλινός.

<sup>1744</sup> Watson, "Rhetoric"; Hartin, *James*, 181–88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1745</sup> See William R. Baker, "'Above All Else': Contexts of the Call for Verbal Integrity in James 5:12," *JSNT*, no. 54 (June 1, 1994): 59–70; and Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics* in chapters 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1746</sup> Johnson, *Brother of Jesus*, 157–64, (citation on p. 164); cf. J. L. P. Wolmarans, "The Tongue Guiding the Body: The Anthropological Presuppositions of James 3:1-12," *Neot* 26, no. 2 (1992): 525–28, who describes this passage as a "creative" understanding of Stoic teaching. Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 224–30, relates this section to Philo's argument that control of the tongue puts the "whole soul" at rest.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1747</sup> Leif E. Vaage, "Cuídate la Boca: La Palabra Indicada, una Subjetividad Alternativa y la Formación Social de los Primeros Cristianos Según Santiago 3,1-4,17," *RIBLA* 31 (1998): 111.

# The Untameable Tongue (3:1-8)

James describes both the power and the destructive nature of the tongue despite its relatively small size. Throughout this section, James draws on common illustrations that would be familiar to his audience. We will see how this applies to the community, although James begins with an admonition to those wanting to be teachers and who would thus hold a position of authority and guide others through their speech. Structurally, the focus is on the relative power of the tongue until 3:5a but after this is rhetorically described as wholly negative, so I will divide this section there.<sup>1748</sup>

### *The Power of the Tongue (3:1-5a)*

The opening admonition is again a negative prohibition with ἀδελφοί μου indicating the start of a new section. James tells the audience that 'not many should become teachers' (Μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε) and grounds this in an appeal to common knowledge, 'knowing that we will receive greater judgment' (εἰδότες ὅτι μεῖζον κρίμα λημψόμεθα). Perhaps, as Davids argues, some wanted the position and influence of being called a teacher, without having learned to control the tongue. This prohibition seems somewhat disconnected to what follows, which focuses more on the power of the tongue to control the body, the it is unnecessary to construe the whole passage as only concerning teachers, since all that is said is broadly applicable. Certainly teachers have the most influence through speech, and therefore need to be particularly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1748</sup> Watson, "Rhetoric," 58–59; cf. Cargal, Restoring the Diaspora, 143, 145.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1749</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 136.

<sup>1750</sup> See the proposal of Wettlaufer, No Longer Written, 94–99. He argues for a textual emendation to μὴ πολύλαλοι διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε ('do not be garrulous teachers') with the current reading due to haplography. Thus, "Rather than trying to limit new unworthy teachers, this text simply instructs existing teachers to be worthy" (p. 99). Allison, James, 520, at least finds this solution "more tempting" than other proposals. Johnson, Letter of James, 255, notes that Mussner, 159, reads "polla adverbially" to achieve a similar thought - "do not teach at great length."

1751 Contra McKnight, James, 267.

careful.<sup>1752</sup> It is also for their own good since, in the case of failure to speak aright, they are more strictly judged, or scrutinised.<sup>1753</sup>

In 3:2a James provides a further reason for the prohibition: 'for we all stumble a lot' (πολλὰ γὰρ πταίομεν ἄπαντες), which means the teacher is more liable to judgment. However, in 3:2b he presents the ideal to strive for: 'If anyone does not stumble in word' (εἴ τις ἐν λόγφ οὐ πταίει) then he/she is a 'perfect person' (τέλειος ἀνήρ), 1754 and by extension 'is able to bridle the whole body' (δυνατὸς χαλιναγωγῆσαι καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα). As noted earlier, χαλιναγωγέω deliberately recalls 1:26, setting the conversation in the context of true piety and the use of τέλειος reminds the audience of the goal of the letter, their perfection, although these do not need further elaboration here.

It is not that control of the tongue leads to perfection by itself, rather, one of the signs of the perfect person is the control of the tongue. And if they can control the tongue, a small but evil member as James will soon point out, then they can also control the body. That this is an ideal and something to aim for rather than a reality is clear from the fact that James has just admitted that everyone, including himself, stumbles frequently. However, it throws into sharp relief the necessity for the audience to learn to control the tongue, teachers or not, given the power it holds. This power is in all disproportion to its size, as the next two examples, common in Greco-Roman literature, show.<sup>1755</sup>

<sup>2 3 5</sup> 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1752</sup> Moo, The Letter of James, 150.

 $<sup>^{1753}</sup>$  Κρίμα can have the sense of scrutiny or punishment. Hartin, *James*, 173, suggests that both senses are intended here.

<sup>1754</sup> Hartin, James, 173–74, translates ἀνήρ as "person" noting that it is used "in a way that evokes an example with universal application" (cf. 1:12). See alternatively, Johnson, Brother of Jesus, 223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1755</sup> For references, see Johnson, *Letter of James*, 257–58; and Watson, "Rhetoric," 58. Hartin, *James*, 174, points out that the charioteer and the helmsman appear together in Plutarch and Philo (*Opif*. 88).

The first illustration refers to the way horses are controlled with a bit  $(\chi\alpha\lambda\iota\nu\delta\varsigma)$  in the mouth, which as in 3:2 controls ὅλον τὸ σῶμα (3:3). The second illustration is that of a pilot directing a boat, where large boats  $(\tau \dot{\alpha} \pi \lambda o \tilde{\alpha} \tau \eta \lambda \iota \kappa a \tilde{\upsilon} \tau a)$  needing strong winds to move them are controlled by a small rudder  $(\dot{\upsilon}\pi\dot{\sigma})$  ἐλαχίστου  $\pi \eta \delta \alpha \lambda i$ ου, 3:4). Both illustrations highlight that although the tongue is small it can direct a much larger body. Yet the second also indicates that the rudder itself is subject to control and is moved where the will  $(\dot{\eta} \dot{\delta} \rho \mu \dot{\eta})$  of the pilot wishes  $(\beta o \dot{\upsilon} \lambda \epsilon \tau \alpha \iota)$ , implying that the tongue should be (and can be) controlled. This reinforces 3:1-2 and provides an important caveat to the pessimism regarding the tongue in the next few verses.

The conclusion in 3:5a from these first two illustrations, indicated by οὕτως καί, <sup>1759</sup> already begins to reveal the negative nature of the tongue, since as a 'small member... it makes great honour-claims' (μικρὸν μέλος... μεγάλα αὐχεῖ), <sup>1760</sup> revelling 'in its own dominion' and victory over others rather than in God's honour and saving work. <sup>1761</sup> James shares with Jesus' teaching the conviction that the tongue reveals the heart (3:11-12 cf. Mt 12:34) and so the honour-claims of the tongue reveal self-exaltation rather than a heart in line with God's purposes. A controlled tongue should instead be expressing humility before God (4:10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1756</sup> This is introduced as a conditional statement ( $\varepsilon i \delta \dot{\varepsilon}$ ) but the textual variant  $i\delta \varepsilon$  ('Look!') would make good sense. All three examples in this section would then be preceded by such an expression (see also v. 5b). See Varner, *James*, 219–20, 406–10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1757</sup> Moo, *The Letter of James*, 154, notes the same comparison in Aristotle [*Mech.* 5].

 $<sup>^{1758}</sup>$  Even the first illustration is indicative of the possibility of controlling the tongue – if the bit which controls the horse represents the tongue, then the rider is the one who controls both.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1759</sup> Baker, Personal Speech-Ethics, 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1760</sup> Witherington, Letters and Homilies, 494, notes the "rhetorical flourish" provided here by the alliteration.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1761</sup> Vaage, "Cuídate la Boca," 117. More fully, he states that "the problem... resides in the social system that such practice has served to support and express: exalting in its own dominion, or that of winning by whatever means."

*The Destructive Nature of the Tongue (3:5b-8)* 

From this platform, James develops further the negative imagery, employing another common metaphor of the tongue as a fire, which is frequently found alongside the first two examples <sup>1762</sup> and shows its destructive power. With a clever use of alliteration and assonance, James introduces this third illustration, stating, 'see how great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire' (ἰδοὺ ἡλίκον πῦρ ἡλίκην ὕλην ἀνάπτει, 3:5b). <sup>1763</sup> He then succinctly concludes, 'and the tongue [is] a fire' (καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα πῦρ, 3:6a), in keeping with OT passages that describe the tongue or speech as fire, <sup>1764</sup> usually as a negative destructive force. <sup>1765</sup>

The rest of verse 6 is a pessimistic evaluation of the tongue, although the syntax is obtuse. <sup>1766</sup> Whether ὁ κόσμος τῆς ἀδικίας is in apposition to the previous phrase ('the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness') or, as most commentators take it, is the predicate nominative of the following phrase – 'the tongue is placed among our members as a world of unrighteousness' (ὁ κόσμος τῆς ἀδικίας ἡ γλῶσσα καθίσταται ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν)<sup>1767</sup> – the point is that the tongue, if given free reign, spews forth unrighteous speech. As Baker summarises, 'by its nature [the tongue] is a most dangerous agency of evil.' <sup>1768</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>1762</sup> Philo, Leg. 3.224, likens the mind (ὁ νοῦς) to a charioteer (ἡνίοχος) or a ship's pilot (κυβερνήτης) and then goes on to say that if irrational sense (ἡ ἄλογος αἴσθησις) takes control then the mind is set fire to and is ablaze (ἐμπίπραται φλεγόμενος ὁ νοῦς). Although the language is similar, for James it is the tongue, not the irrational sense that is the problem.

Watson, "Rhetoric," 99, explains the use of ἡλικος for both "how small" and "how great" as rhetorical "transplacement and reflexio" citing Quintilian.

See, e.g., Prov 16:27; Isa 5:24; 30:27. Indirectly the tongue is also linked to fire in Ps 38:4. In the LXX see also Ps Sol 12:2 - "the words of the tongue (γλώσσης) of the wicked man" are "like fire ( $\pi$ ῦρ) among a people burning (ἀνάπτον) up its beauty." Also close is Sir 28:13-14; 18-22 which McKnight, *James*, 282, refers to.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1765</sup> This is particularly evident in LXX Prov 16:27 and the surrounding verses. These vary considerably from the MT with more emphasis on evil speech, although the passage uses 'lips' and 'mouth' rather than tongue (Prov 16:26-30). Note, the chapter ends with the extolling of the person who is 'slow to anger' (v. 32).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1766</sup> Commentators are almost as pessimistic about this verse as James is about the tongue! See, e.g., Ropes, *St. James*, 233–34; Dibelius, *James*, 193–94; Allison, *James*, 535, who all think the text is corrupt. Laws, *Epistle of James*, 148–49, regards the verse as "extraordinarily difficult."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1767</sup> For detailed explanations, see the commentators in the previous footnote. An alternative reading is found in the Peshitta which has "Now the tongue is a fire, and the world of sin is like a forest." A direct equivalence is thus drawn with v. 5b. This option is followed by Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 118 fn. 1; and Adamson, *Epistle of James*, 158–59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1768</sup> Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics*, 126; cf. Allison, *James*, 536, who equates "the tongue of unrighteousness" in Ps 109:2, Prov 6:17 and 12:19 with the "world of unrighteousness" in James.

McKnight points out that as a 'world of unrighteousness,' the tongue speaks out in opposition 'to God's designs.' 1769

This is elaborated further with three adjectival participle phrases modifying  $\dot{\eta}$   $\gamma\lambda\tilde{\omega}\sigma\sigma\alpha$ . The first picks up again on the pollution language of 1:27 since the tongue 'stains the whole body' ( $\dot{\eta}$   $\sigma\pi\iota\lambda\circ\tilde{\upsilon}\sigma\alpha$   $\delta\lambda\circ\nu$   $\tau\dot{\upsilon}$   $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ ). It seems likely that James has in mind more than an individual application so that the audience should realise that the stain affecting  $\delta\lambda\circ\nu$   $\tau\dot{\upsilon}$   $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$  refers to the community as well. A stained body is first and foremost displeasing to God, but also, as I have discussed above, affects the missional identity of the community who thus fall short of their calling to be God's people.

The next two participles return to the fire metaphor with the tongue 'setting on fire the whole course of life and being set on fire by Gehenna' (καὶ φλογίζουσα τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως καὶ φλογίζομένη ὑπὸ τῆς γεέννης). 1770 As Dibelius notes, the fact that the tongue burns the 'cycle of nature' indicates that it affects 'the whole of existence.' 1771 The third participial phrase seems to indicate that the source of the tongue's evil is in fact hell, and even by extension the devil. 1772 However, Bauckham sees here an instance of the 'eschatological *lex talionis*' with the two participles neatly matched and a word play between γενέσεως and γεέννης. 1773 Gehenna was taken as a place of judgment (usually by fire) and therefore the punishment here matches the crime: the tongue, which sets on fire everything, will itself be set on fire in Gehenna at the eschatological judgment. 1774 As I noted earlier, in Jesus' teaching, insults make one liable to

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<sup>1769</sup> McKnight, James, 283.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1770</sup> Vaage, "Cuídate la Boca," 115. As he puts it, "With the tongue,... one is literally playing with fire... and so consequently there is a good chance of being burned." (Con la lengua... se está jugando literalmente con fuego... y, por consiguiente, son muchas las probabilidades de resultar quemado').

<sup>1771</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 195–98, has a detailed explanation of the origins of the phrase "τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως" in the Orphic and Pythagorean circles, but explains that by the time of James it had become "a familiar expression for the ups and downs of life."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1772</sup> As Moo, *The Letter of James*, 160, puts it, "the power of Satan himself, the chief denizen of hell, gives to the tongue its great destructive potential."; cf. Davids, *Epistle of James*, 143.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1773</sup> Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 120–23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1774</sup> See the works cited in Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 123–27. Notably, Pss. Sol. 12:1-4 prays for God to "destroy the slanderous tongue in flaming fire..." (p. 127). This text may allude to Ps 120:3-4 which was associated

Gehenna (Mt 5:22), so that James draws on eschatological judgment linked to the Jesus tradition as a strong note of warning.

This leads to his next observation in 3:7-8a, that the tongue is destructive and seemingly uncontrollable. All species of animal' (πᾶσα... φύσις θηρίων) 'are tamed and have been tamed' (δαμάζεται καὶ δεδάμασται) 'by the human species' (τῆ φύσει τῆ ἀνθρωπίνη), a neat chiasm. With the fourfold classification 'beasts and birds' and 'reptiles and sea creatures' (θηρίων τε καὶ πετεινῶν, ἐρπετῶν τε καὶ ἐναλίων), James' audience would undoubtedly recognise an allusion to the fourfold list of species in the creation account (Gen 1:26, 28), 1776 even though the order and some of the elements are different. 1777

In contrast, the reality is that 'no human is able to tame the tongue' (τὴν δὲ γλῶσσαν οὐδεὶς δαμάσαι δύναται ἀνθρώπων). The irony is biting – humans can tame everything in nature but the human tongue. As Baker states: 'there is an incontrovertible paradox in the created world in that mankind can and does subdue the wildest and most powerful animals, but the individual cannot do anything to deter the wanton destructiveness of his own tongue, a relatively small and unpretentious part of his body.' Moreover, James then says, the tongue is 'a restless evil, full of deadly poison' (ἀκατάστατον κακόν, μεστὴ ἰοῦ θανατηφόρου, 3:8b). The Its restlessness recalls the conduct of the ἀνὴρ δίψυχος but also previews the divided strife riven

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in Rabbinic literature with the punishment of slanderers in Gehenna (p. 126); Allison, *James*, 541, agrees with Bauckham, noting that here the present participle has a future sense.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1775</sup> As Watson, "Rhetoric," 60, the argument continues with the explanatory  $\gamma \acute{\alpha} \rho$ .

<sup>1776</sup> McKnight, James, 287.

<sup>1777</sup> Gen 1:26, 28 have ἰχθυῶν, πετεινῶν, κτηνῶν and ἑρπετῶν. Similar lists occur 13x in the LXX and 2x in the NT. See Allison Jr., *James*, 543. Although James' order is unique, the first three elements are most often found in the position he places it and are identical to Gk. LAE 29:11 which only has three elements. Cf. Kloppenborg, "Linguistic Register," 110–14, who adds a few other occasions where there is only a threefold classification (e.g., Gen 1:30; Hos 2:14, 20). Ἐνάλιος is a hapax in the Greek Bible and only appears 1x in Philo and 3x in the Pseudepigrapha (all in the Sibylline Oracles). Kloppenborg shows that the term is common in epic literature and poetry.

 $<sup>^{1778}</sup>$  McKnight, *James*, 289, unusually understands ἀνθρώπων to modify γλῶσσαν, although most commentators connect it to οὐδείς and view it as emphatic. See, e.g., Davids, *Epistle of James*, 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1779</sup> Baker, Personal Speech-Ethics, 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1780</sup> BDF, 137.3 treats the phrase as a solecism since it is in apposition to the accusative τὴν... γλῶσσαν. Cf. Vlachos, *Exegetical Guide*, 114.

community that follows the earthly and demonic wisdom from below (3:15-16),<sup>1781</sup> which as we saw fails to live in an attractional way.

The poisonous death-dealing power of the tongue has resonances in the wisdom tradition but it also seems likely that James continues his echoing of creation language (which continues into 3:9). There the poisonous words of the serpent brought death, so that 'the human tongue recapitulates the work of the serpent's tongue in Eden: it brings death. Once again James draws on creation language, this time to locate the tongue within the narrative of the fall and thus persuasively warn his readers to strive to control the tongue lest they align themselves with Satan's purposes rather than God's.

Thus far then, James presents the tongue as a member of the body that uncontrolled will actively work to undermine the community and its cohesion. As we saw in the first section, this also undermines the attractional nature of the community, so that the control of the tongue or lack thereof will either contribute to, or take away from, the missional identity of the recipients. Moreover, because the unbridled and deceptive tongue was at the centre of the fall, it continues to work against God's redemptive purposes. This is reflected in speech towards others, which James considers next.

### **Speaking to the Image of God (3:9-12)**

The focus now turns to the application of everything James has said about the tongue to practical speech ethics both within the community and towards outsiders. Up until this point the tongue has been treated as hopelessly evil, but this has likely been a degree of hyperbole to make the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1781</sup> See the discussion in chapter six.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1782</sup> See Ps 58:3-4; 140:3; Prov 18:21; Job 20:16; Sir 28:18, 21. Cf. Did. 2:4 ('Do not be double-minded (διγνώμων) nor double-tongued (δίγλωσσος) for the double-tongue is a deadly snare (παγὶς γὰρ θανάτου ἡ διγλωσσία)

Allison, *James*, 547–48. He notes that the serpent was often thought of as poisonous and the poison of the devil was also a common idea. He further points out the similar connection made in Midr Ps 58.2 between Ps 58:3-4 and Genesis 3.

point.<sup>1784</sup> The application to the community directs the hearer to think how they use the tongue, which implies that they can control the tongue and indeed must control it if they are truly God's people. The creation motif is made more explicit through referring to humans as the 'likeness of God,' and James also draws on traditional illustrations from nature to strengthen his argument.

# The Contradiction of Blessing and Cursing

Now rather than simply only evil, the tongue can play a double role, both blessing God and cursing people. In 3:9 there are two balanced phrases each beginning with ἐν αὐτῆ creating a 'rhetorical contrast: the highest use of the tongue – praising God – vs. the lowest use of the tongue – cursing others.' The return to the first person plural again suggests that this is an admonition for the whole community with the present tenses suggesting ongoing practices. The community gathers to praise the Lord and Father (εὐλογοῦμεν τὸν κύριον καὶ πατέρα) 1787 but also at other moments is guilty of cursing men who are made in the likeness of God (καταρώμεθα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς καθ' ὁμοίωσιν θεοῦ γεγονότας). This contrast is then reiterated in 3:10a: 'Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing' (ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ στόματος ἐξέρχεται εὐλογία καὶ κατάρα).

The prohibition on cursing is clearly rooted in the creation account where men are made according to the likeness ( $\kappa\alpha\theta$ '  $\delta\mu\omega(\omega\sigma\nu)$ ) of God (Gen 1:26). Since men are in the 'likeness of God' it would be an 'intolerable inconsistency' to curse them. There is no sense here that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1784</sup> Allison, *James*, 549.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1785</sup> Allison, *James*, 549.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1786</sup> Martin, *James*, 120.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1787</sup> Blessing God is common in the OT, especially in the Psalms (at least 20x). There are no exact parallels to "Lord and Father" but both occur together in 1 Chron 29:10; Isa 63:16; Sir 23:1, 4. See further Esther L. Yue Ng, "Father God Language and Old Testament Allusions in James," *TynBul* 54, no. 2 (2003): 51. In the NT, Jesus addresses God as πατερ, κύριε (Mt 11:25//Lk 10:21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1788</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 146. As we have just seen this verse also contains the first fourfold categorisation of animals that James adapts in 3:7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1789</sup> McCartney, James, 192.

this is limited to people within the community.<sup>1790</sup> Rather it is a creation principle that applies to everyone.<sup>1791</sup> James makes his final point (3:10b), appealing directly to the audience (ἀδελφοί μου) emphatically that 'these things ought not to be so' (οὐ χρή... ταῦτα οὕτως γίνεσθαι)<sup>1792</sup> and then proves how unacceptable this is with illustrations from nature (3:11-12). He begins by asking (3:11), 'Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both sweet and bitter [water]? (μήτι ἡ πηγὴ ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς ὀπῆς βρύει τὸ γλυκὸ καὶ τὸ πικρόν;). The μήτι here demands an emphatic 'no'<sup>1793</sup> and the ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς ὀπῆς recalls the previous verse thus emphasising the incongruity of blessing and cursing proceeding ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ στόματος.<sup>1794</sup> 'The picture,' as Davids states, 'condemns the evil speech while illustrating it.'<sup>1795</sup>

The final agricultural images provide examples of the natural order of things that contrast with this unnatural use of the tongue, the repeated ἀδελφοί μου making these especially emphatic. James again asks a question (3:12), 'Is a fig tree able to produce olives or a vine figs?' (μὴ δύναται... συκῆ ἐλαίας ποιῆσαι ἢ ἄμπελος σῦκα;). The conclusion brings the audience back to where they started with the impossibility of saltwater producing sweet water (οὔτε ἀλυκὸν γλυκὸ ποιῆσαι ὕδωρ). The reliance on these agricultural truisms, while drawing on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1790</sup> Dale C. Allison, "Blessing God and Cursing People: James 3:9-10," *JBL* 130, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 397–405, makes the case that the context to this is the use of the Birkat ha-minim (the curse on heretics) found in the Eighteen Benedictions. James is admonishing Judeans not to treat Christ-followers this way. However, the evidence is circumstantial and there are many uncertainties about the use of the curse on heretics. On the Eighteen Benedictions, see further D. Instone-Brewer, "The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim before 70 CE," *JTS* 54, no. 1 (April 1, 2003): 25–44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1791</sup> This probably draws on the Jesus tradition found in Luke 6:28 (cf. Rom 12:14) although James does not make explicit the positive requirement to bless others found there. See McKnight, *James*, 293.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1792</sup> Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, 124, states that  $\chi \rho \dot{\eta}$ , a NT hapax, denotes what "must be" not what "ought to be." <sup>1793</sup> BDAG, 649.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1794</sup> Baker, Personal Speech-Ethics, 133–34.

<sup>1795</sup> Davids, Epistle of James, 148. As he notes, ἀλυκος (which James has in his conclusion in v. 12) is more normal than πικρός in this context. For that reason I am using "sweet" and "bitter" for γλυκύ and πικρόν rather than the more natural "fresh" and "brackish" of the NRSV. This also maintains the connection with the "bitter envy" of 3:14 which leads to the sin of lying against the truth.

typical imagery<sup>1796</sup> also recalls Jesus' teaching in the Gospels.<sup>1797</sup> Thus, most emphatically, the same mouth should not produce blessing and cursing and by implication, the audience should control the tongue and use it appropriately for God's purposes.

As James will go on to say, the recipients should live in line with the wisdom from above with its corresponding fruit which is directly in contrast to the natural destructive power of the tongue (3:13-18), both for the individual and the community.<sup>1798</sup>

# Blessing Not Cursing: Engagement with Others

As I noted earlier this has direct relevance for the missional nature of the community, particularly given the importance on control of speech. Further, since the prohibition of cursing is a creation principle, this precludes imprecations against those outside the community. Although James does not call for the explicitly missional 'blessing of enemies' present in the Jesus tradition that may be behind James' argument (Lk 6:28), it seems reasonable that the audience would be prompted to extend the argument further. <sup>1799</sup> If cursing is prohibited, then blessing is expected since this coheres with the identity of being a Christ-follower who also called on his followers to 'do to others as you would have them do to you' (Lk 6:31 cf. Jas 2:8) even in the face of opposition (cf. Rom 12:14; 1 Pet 2:23).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1796</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 204–5, finds similarities with Stoic literature. However, in the literature he cites, there does not appear to be an attempt to change people's behaviour through the comparisons, unlike in the Jesus tradition and here in James. Rather the opposite is in play in that no one should be surprised by or try to change this natural order.

<sup>1797</sup> Hartin, *James*, 180, links this to Mt 7:16//Lk 6:44 (although the contrast is grapes-thorns and figs-thistles). Martin, *James*, prefers Mt 15:10-11. Also relevant is Mt 12:33-35. The intertextual reading of Wall, *Community of the Wise*, linking this to OT passages that have sweet/bitter water (Ex 15:23-26; 2 Kgs 2:19-22; Ezek 47:7-11) which provide topoi of judgment and salvation is unconvincing although there are some similarities with Ex 15:23-26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1798</sup> Hartin, *James*, 189; Vaage, "Cuídate la Boca," 15. See also chapter six.

<sup>1799</sup> See the comments on v. 9 above and the connection to Luke 6:28 (fn. 1791). Paul in Rom 12:14 seems to interpret this saying of Jesus to include a prohibition on cursing: 'Bless (εὐλογεῖτε) those who persecute you, bless (εὐλογεῖτε) and do not curse (μὴ καταρᾶσθε).

This presents a pertinent challenge to approach 'the other' in mission from the stance of blessing rather than cursing. 1800 James' prohibition of cursing those made in the image of God extends to engagement with those of other faiths and suggests approaches that are based on dialogue rather than the demonisation of the other (faith). 1801 As Bosch notes, it is crucial that the 'other' is approached with respect and humility without denying one's own faith commitment. 1802 Stott argues that 'dialogue is a token of genuine Christian love, because it indicates our resolve to rid our minds of prejudices and caricatures which we may maintain about other people... '1803 and it is these that tend to influence our speech for the worse. The kind of verbal approach to others that James demands fits well with Bosch's conclusion on mission as dialogue. 1804 In what he calls an approach of 'bold humility' we profess our faith, but 'we do this... not as judges or lawyers, but as witnesses; not as soldiers, but as envoys of peace; not as high-pressure salespersons, but as ambassadors of the Servant Lord. 1805 Perhaps this would resonate with our author since he prohibits anyone in his audience to take the place of the one true judge, or to be untruthful and thus liable to judgment, concepts that we look at next.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1800</sup> See Wright, *The Mission of God*, 321, who laments the situation in his own 'highly evangelized' country of Northern Ireland where 'it was (and sadly still is) possible to hear all the language of evangelistic zeal and all the language of hatred, bigotry, and violence come from the same mouths.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1801</sup> On mission as dialogue, see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 483–89; cf. David J. Bosch, "The Church in Dialogue: From Self-Delusion to Vulnerability," *Missiology* 16, no. 2 (April 1, 1988): 131–47; Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today*, 364–67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1802</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 484.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1803</sup> Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World, 81.

This "wisdom" teaching on the tongue is an example of its more universal application and for some authors means that James is particularly suitable for constructive dialogue with people of other faiths. See, e.g., Christopher Church, "James' Theocentric Christianity: An Opportunity for Christian-Muslim Conversation?," *RevExp* 108, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 429–36; Orsmond and Botha, "Missionary Perspectives," 271.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1805</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 489.

# **Speech and Judgment (4:11-12; 5:12)**

Both passages that I will consider here are somewhat isolated from their immediate context but play a role in the overall unity of the composition. They also both link inappropriate speech to judgment and as we will see, amplify the missional nature of James' overall teaching on speech ethics. I will begin with 4:11-12 and then conclude with 5:12.

### *The Danger of Slander and Judging (4:11-12)*

These two verses draw together several themes that we have considered in this chapter. After some rather hard words to his audience, James begins a new section addressing them as ἀδελφοί followed by the prohibition to 'speak against/evil of one another' (μὴ καταλαλεῖτε ἀλλήλων, 4:11a). This is linked to judging others with both activities deemed inappropriate because 'the one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother (ὁ καταλαλῶν ἀδελφοῦ ἢ κρίνων τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ), also 'speaks against the law and judges the law' (καταλαλεῖ νόμου καὶ κρίνει νόμον, 4:11b). 1808 It would seem then that one implies the other, with the latter describing 'the thought process behind the speech.' 1809 Very pointedly, James uses the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular for his next step of the argument: 'If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law (ποιητὴς νόμου) but a judge (κριτής, 4:11c). Thus instead of being a hearer-doer of the law, such a person considers themselves above the law, not only breaking the prohibition against slander (Lev

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1806</sup> Taylor, Discourse Structure, 65, 71, 88–89; cf. Cheung, Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics, 83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1807</sup> Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics*, 178, helpfully defines καταλαλέω as "the array of disparaging things one can say to, about or which affect another"; cf. Laws, *Epistle of James*, who based on context, sees the word as encompassing "criticism or accusation." It occurs 3x in this verse of the 5x it is used in the NT (see 1 Pet 2:12; 3:16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1808</sup> There is an elegant grammatical parallelism in James' statement up to this point:

ό καταλαλῶν ἀδελφοῦ ἢ κρίνων τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ 'speaking against' + brother (gen) & 'judging' + brother (acc) καταλαλεῖ νόμου καὶ κρίνει νόμον 'speaks against' + law (gen) & 'judges' + law (acc)

Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics*, 178. However, the two are joined by 'or'  $(\mathring{\eta})$  so it could imply that the latter may happen without the former.

19:16)<sup>1810</sup> but also ignoring Jesus' command in the SM against judging (Mt 7:1//Lk 6:27) and indirectly violating the royal law.<sup>1811</sup>

Moreover, verse 12 makes clear that this person is treading on dangerous ground since 'there is one lawgiver and judge' (εἶς ἐστιν ὁ νομοθέτης καὶ κριτής). 1812 This likely allusion to the *Shema* again 1813 reminds the audience that only God is judge and that therefore to judge others usurps the role of God, and so is tantamount to blasphemy. 1814 God is also 'the one who is able to save and to destroy' (ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι), a clearly eschatological statement that points forwards to his final redemption and judgment, 1815 probably influenced by the Jesus logion of Matthew 10:28. 1816 Once again the hearers are challenged by a blend of authoritative OT and dominical tradition to recognise their place and role within God's purposes, not as judges but as brothers and sisters.

The statement also serves to complete a trilogy of declarations about who/what is able to save, all found within the passages we have looked at in this chapter. The implanted word (1:21), faith with works (2:14) and God are 'able to save,' and so the audience comes full circle – they receive the word from God, live it out in faith, and finally entrust themselves to God's power to save when they appear before him as judge (cf. 5:9). James' final question, building from this, packs a punch: 'So who are you to judge your neighbour?' ( $\sigma v$ )  $\delta v$   $\tau v$ )  $\tau v$   $\tau v$ 

<sup>1810</sup> See Johnson, "Leviticus 19," 395–96. Despite the lack of close verbal resemblance with LXX Lev 19:16 he argues that the context of "judging a neighbour" links the two passages and notes similarities in LXX Ps 100:5; Wis 1:11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1811</sup> Laws, *Epistle of James*, 187, argues that the transition from ἀδελφός to πλησίον in v. 12 shows that James has the royal law in mind from Lev 19:18 cited in Jas 2:8; cf. Allison, *James*, 636. Matthew 7:1-5 is Jesus' reinterpretation of Leviticus 19:15-18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1812</sup> Although Moses is frequently considered the lawgiver in 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple literature, in the LXX νομοθέτης (a NT hapax) refers to God in Ps 83:7 and possibly Ps 9:21. The related verb νομοθετέω is used of God in Ex 24:12; Ps 24:8, 12; 26:11; 118:33, 102, 104; 2 Macc 3:15; 4 Macc 5:25. See also *TDNT*, IV, Gutbrod, 1090.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1813</sup> Edgar, "Love-Command," 16; Tan, "Shema," 198; Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 145.

<sup>1814</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 170. Note also 5:9 which prohibits grumbling "against one another" (κατ ἀλλήλων) because ὀ κριτής (God) is standing at the door.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1815</sup> Penner, James and Eschatology, 171.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1816</sup> Moo, The Letter of James, 199.

community. 1817 The audience is not in a position to judge anyone else, whether part of the community or not. Only God can do this, which is a helpful reminder for interaction with outsiders, since, as Bosch explains, it is an admission that as in all theology we have to 'live within the framework of penultimate knowledge' and thus are not able to be 'judges.' 1818 As James would say, there is only one Judge.

# The Importance of Verbal Integrity (5:12)

The final verse considered here begins with 'Above all...' ( $\Pi\rho\delta$   $\pi\acute{a}\nu\tau\omega\nu$   $\delta\acute{e}$ ,...), seemingly introducing what follows as the most important element of the letter. However, it is better translated as 'Finally...' or some such other concluding phrase since it often serves as a closing formula in Hellenistic epistolography. As we have already seen, throughout the letter verses on speech play a transitional role, and here this statement 'moves the discourse towards an appropriate conclusion.' 1821

The prohibition of oaths itself (μὴ ὀμνύετε) obviously draws on the Jesus tradition in Matthew 5:33-37 although with less elaboration. <sup>1822</sup> Discussions about which is the earlier form of the saying need not detain us here and attempts to mitigate the strength of the prohibition to fall in line with OT texts that allow oaths in the name of God should also be resisted. James not only prohibits oaths 'by heaven or by earth' (circumlocutions for the divine name) but also 'any

<sup>1819</sup> Baker, "Above All Else", sees this as the high point of James' teaching on speech ethics that runs through the letter and therefore takes πρὸ πάντων literally but does not explain why this statement is placed here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1817</sup> See the section on the Love-command in the previous chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1818</sup> Bosch, Transforming Mission, 489.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1820</sup> On this see Francis, "Form and Function". However, Andrew Bowden, "Sincerely James: Reconsidering Frederick Francis's Proposed Health Wish Formula," *JSNT* 38, no. 2 (December 2015): 241–57, has shown that some of his analogies and conclusions are unwarranted since 5:12 is not an "oath formula" and what follows is not at all similar to the standard health wish formula in other letters. But the translation for  $\pi\rho\delta$   $\pi\acute{a}\nu\tau\omega\nu$  as "finally" still holds. So McKnight, *James*, 425; Hartin, *James*, 258.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1821</sup> Taylor, *Discourse Structure*, 90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1822</sup> John S. Kloppenborg, "The Reception of the Jesus Tradition in James," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 78, describes this verse as "the clearest point of contact with M tradition." Helpful comparisons are found in Davids, *Epistle of James*, 189; and Allison, *James*, 728.

other oath' (μήτε ἄλλον τινὰ ὅρκον). <sup>1823</sup> These no doubt include the oaths of daily speech that were expressed to impress claims to truthfulness. <sup>1824</sup> The excessive practice of this was generally frowned upon as a sign of a lack of honesty, <sup>1825</sup> and for the Essenes, (at least according to Josephus), they viewed this as worse than perjury since 'he who cannot be believed without [swearing by] God, is already condemned. '1826 However, they did not prohibit oath taking in their own literature and to join the sect one had to take oaths. <sup>1827</sup> It seems then, that James like Jesus takes things one step further with his uncompromising prohibition.

The emphasis in this passage, however, is found in the positive restatement of the prohibition, namely the demand for truthful speech: 'Let your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no so that you may not fall under condemnation' (ἤτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὂ οὄ ἴνα μὴ ὑπὸ κρίσιν πέσητε), 1828 which continues to paraphrase Jesus' teaching (Mt 5:37). There going beyond an honest 'yes' or 'no' comes 'from the evil one' (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐστιν), matching James assessment of the untamed tongue (3:8) and perhaps giving the reason for condemnation. On an individual level, truthful speech represents the integrity and wholeness of a person and this of course plays out in how members of the community speak to one another (Jas 3:9-12). The added warning of judgment if those in the community are untruthful shows that much is at

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1823</sup> McKnight, *James*, 428; cf. Foster, *Community, Law and Mission*, 121, for Mt 5:33-37 as "an abrogation of Torah legislation."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1824</sup> Davids, *Epistle of James*, 190; Note also Jonathan Klawans, "The Prohibition of Oaths and Contra-Scriptural Halakhot: A Response to John P. Meier," *JSHJ* 6, no. 1 (2008): 33–58, who argues that there is less of a contradiction with OT law than is sometimes posited and shows evidence of similar prohibitions in Jewish literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1825</sup> Baker, "Above All Else," 69–70; cf. Allison, *James*, 732–33. Examples include Philo in *Sacr*. 93 and *Decal*. 84; Sir 23:9-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1826</sup> Josephus, B.J. 2.135.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1827</sup> Baker, "Above All Else," 69; cf. Klawans, "Prohibition of Oaths," 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1828</sup> Note the saying is found in 2 Cor 1:17 in the same form as James. See David Wenham, "2 Corinthians 1:17, 18: Echo of a Dominical Logion," *NovT* 28, no. 3 (1986): 271–79, for a thorough comparison of the three texts; cf. Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 198, who agrees with Wenham that the three sayings reflect a Jesus logion.

stake (cf. Jas 2:12). Notably, truthful speech and refraining from perjury are marks of the restored people of God (Zech 8:13-16), an important ethic for the early church. 1829

This is significant when considering the role that the church as a truth speaking community plays in the world. Baker makes a strong case that verbal integrity was a highly valued ethic across the ancient world. Sames 5:12 not only works at the individual level but functions to place the community in a positive light to outsiders with a reputation for truth-telling (perhaps similarly to the reputation of the Essenes). In Zechariah 8, noted above, truthful speech within the community is part of the missional identity of restored Israel (8:16-17) since this is one factor in the nations coming to Israel to seek God's favour (8:20-23). Half Hence, there is an attractional element to this aspect of God's people that draws others in to seek God even without proclamation of the gospel. This attractional aspect of the community is of course dependent on the individuals within the community growing towards perfection and becoming those who can control the tongue (3:2). Thus James' speech ethics summed up in this final call to verbal integrity require the missional formation of the recipients towards perfection and amplifies the attractional nature of the audience.

#### **Summary**

In this chapter we have seen that the missional markers of the community are being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. In the first section I explored how these themes were developed in 1:19-27 before looking in more detail at the way James challenged his audience to be 'quick to listen' through having true faith-with-works (2:14-26) and finally how the speech ethics of 'slow to speak' were elaborated in the teaching on the tongue (3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:12).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1829</sup> Acts 5:1-11; Eph 4:15, 25; Col 3:9; 1 Tim 4:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1830</sup> Baker, Personal Speech-Ethics, 285.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1831</sup> This also includes the prohibition of a 'false oath,' so is not entirely in line with James. However, see the list of correspondences with Zechariah noted earlier in this chapter (fn. 1480).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1832</sup> As Paul urges in 2 Cor 2:17; 4:2.

All throughout we have seen a blend of OT and Jesus tradition behind James' teaching, sometimes with terms or analogies familiar to Stoicism, that would persuasively challenge the audience to change their behaviour and identity to align with God's own purposes for his people. The missional attraction of the community is vitally linked to being 'slow to speak,' a strong cultural and biblical value, as was the avoidance of conflict through 'slow to anger.' The need for faith-works as the true faith that saves located James' hearers within God's missional purposes. The use of Abraham and Rahab as exemplars individually and jointly expressed aspects of God's mission that inform the church's mission, particularly in terms of faith and obedience to the one God and the expression of hospitality and welcome to the outsider. In James' speech ethics, control of the tongue is exemplified through blessing others which should be the hallmark of engagement with one's neighbour. Where this involves a missional encounter with another faith, dialogue is essential to this process. Similarly, the attractional nature of the audience is enhanced through both a refusal to speak against those within the community and honest speech in interactions with society in general.

This brings to a fitting conclusion my investigation into the letter of James, so that all that remains in the final chapter is to draw together some conclusions from this missional exploration and suggest areas for further research.

#### CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION – HEARING THE VOICE OF JAMES IN MISSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to introduce the much-neglected voice of James into mission theology. This has been achieved through the application of a missional hermeneutic to the letter, and so to conclude my thesis I will summarise the content and draw together some final reflections that emerge from such a reading of James and its contribution scholarship. Finally, I will suggest some areas for further research.

# **Summary of the Thesis: A Missional Reading of James**

I began my thesis by explaining that the development of the field of missional hermeneutics has meant that texts previously ignored in mission theology can now be explored and their voices incorporated to give a fuller understanding of biblical mission. However, in order to investigate James in this way, it was first necessary to review some of the recent findings in Jacobean scholarship around introductory issues that would facilitate my own investigation of the letter. I began by looking at the issue of authorship, noting the advances in understanding since Dibelius' landmark commentary, but suggesting that there was still no real consensus here, other than that the letter is associated with James the brother of Jesus, as a direct composition from him or as a later work compiled from his own material, or as a much later pseudonymous composition. However, in considering the audience, there does seem to be an emerging consensus that the letter recipients are Christ-followers in the Judean diaspora, although there may well have been an apologetic intention in relation to a wider Judean diaspora audience behind the letter, as I argued in chapter four.

In the first chapter I also looked at the genre and structure of James and used recent studies on the latter to develop a framework for approaching the letter. I agreed with the view that James 1 forms a kind of introduction to the letter, introducing the themes to be developed in greater detail as the letter unfolds, although not in linear fashion nor with any grand chiastic structure as proposed by some authors. This led me to a more thematic exploration of the letter, but one that also respected its main sections as far as possible, although at times the lines were blurred between sections.

In chapters two and three I set out to answer the question of whether such a missional approach to James is even justified. Chapter two provided a survey of mission literature past and present, noting the general absence of the voice of James other than as an incidental footnote, or as an occasional proof-text with little concern for exegesis of the text or the context of such references. However, I also found that the last few years have seen several chapter length investigations into James, two of which explicitly incorporated elements of a missional hermeneutic. Since neither of these could engage in sufficient detail with the letter nor with the full depth of scholarship on missional hermeneutics, I concluded that there was scope for an extended investigation.

Chapter three provided the basis for my own reading with an investigation of the development and methodology of a missional hermeneutic. This locates the mission of the church within the prior mission of God (*missio Dei*) and recognises that Scripture itself arises in missional contexts for missional purposes so that to explore a text from this perspective is certainly justified. I then outlined the four 'streams' of a missional hermeneutic, explaining my decision to focus on the first, second and fourth as interwoven strands, namely the way the text speaks from and to the grand narrative of the Bible, the way the text forms its audience (then and now) to participate in the *missio Dei* and the way the author draws on tradition and reinterprets and applies it to a new context for the people of God engaged in God's mission. I

concluded that the third stream proposed by Barram which focuses on the missional 'locatedness' of the current reading community would be beyond the scope of this thesis, although very occasionally I have pointed out where my reading of James might challenge the mission of the church today (one result of this thesis should be that such located readings can be done more faithfully). Since James does not contain the overt call to be witnesses that is present elsewhere in the NT, it was also necessary to nuance my approach to focus more on the attractional nature of the audience, whereby its distinctive characteristics and identity markers would reflect the nature of God and draw in outsiders, and the way James often draws on the *missio Dei* implicitly rather than explicitly. In the case of the use of tradition, I noted that this incorporates not only the OT but also intertestamental elaborations of OT narratives and the Jesus tradition, particularly as found in the Sermon on the Mount.

Having established the rationale and method for my reading of James, I then began my own reading of James in chapter four by examining the missional identity of both author and recipients. To do this I focused on the biblical underpinnings of the author's identity as the 'servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ' (1:1), particularly the resonances with the Servant tradition in Isaiah. The missional identity of the recipients was closely linked with the metaphorical significance of the judgment and restoration motifs bound up in their designation as the 'twelve tribes in the diaspora.' The implications of judgment in diaspora suggested a failure in missional identity but with the hope of restoration, strengthened by the twelve-tribe motif that finds its fulfilment in the narrative of God's redemption of his people. Since this has some correlation with James' concern to restore 'the wanderer' (5:19-20), the theme with which he closes his letter, I also examined this 'missional' statement here, and how it is the responsibility of the church to engage in this process. I also pointed out the probable apologetic nature of James to the wider Judean diaspora audience, which in itself adds to its missional purpose, and provides a model for engagement with other faiths today which, while not

compromising on essential elements, looks to engage with others by highlighting areas of agreement.

In chapter five I began my exploration of the theme of perfection and trials in James that frames the body of the letter (1:2-4; 5:7-18) and runs through the whole epistle in one form or another. The perfection of the recipients was found to be a deeply missional purpose for the letter that draws on OT testing traditions and resonates with Jesus' teaching. Endurance was fundamental to this process, having both a present reward of moving towards wholeness but also an eschatological reward of the 'crown of life' (1:12), thus setting the letter within God's redemptive mission. The slight change in nuance to discuss the need to avoid temptation and desire (1:13-15) was rooted in the creation and fall narratives and led to James' teaching on the nature of God as fundamentally good and as one who redeems his people and invites them to participate in the trajectory of redemption from creation to new creation (1:16-18). Such a community of firstfruits (1:18) should respond with patience and endurance to the trials experienced as followers of Christ (5:7-11). We saw further how the author drew on the examples of the prophets and Job which are rich in missional significance, and again tapped into eschatological hopes, this time the return of the Lord in judgment. The author then outlined the appropriate response to the various daily trials of life, including sickness and sin which needed a whole community response of restoring the sick through prayer (5:7-18) and realigning the community with God's purposes, as Elijah did of old. Such a response not only expresses God's mission of redemption, it also models to the world the distinctive nature of that mission to include and aid those normally excluded from society.

The next theme that James tackles in his introduction is wisdom and so in chapter six I looked at how this is first presented (1:5-8) and then developed in 3:13-4:10. Wisdom is presented in binary opposition to those who are double-souled, who are unstable themselves and at the heart of community strife. In these passages, the attractional nature of wisdom was

central to a missional reading and so I explored how the author tapped into such expectations placed on God's people in Deuteronomy 4 and demonstrated through biblical characters such as Solomon. Wisdom from above with its attractional fruit was placed in stark contrast to the community at war with itself and seeking friendship with the world rather than with God. The missional identity of the audience is intricately tied to friendship with God so that the only appropriate reaction from the hearers was to repent and humble themselves before God, both themes providing opportunity for further missional reflection.

In chapter seven, I examined the need for holistic mission as presented by James in his dealing with the destitute and the rich, introduced in the letter as part of the great reversal that God will bring in as part of his kingdom (1:9-11), an important missional theme. In this the rich will fade away while the lowly will be exalted. This was further emphasised in the refusal to allow partiality or wrong treatment of the poor whom God has chosen (2:1-13) and in the prophetic denunciations of the greedy merchants and the exploitative rich (4:13-5:6). The author also introduced the importance of the royal law and the underlying idea of this as a kingdom law, pointing to the centrality of Jesus' teaching for the audience, albeit in a way that still would allow for traditional interpretations. James' summary statement that 'mercy triumphs over judgment' (2:13) sums up the character of God's mission and the interaction his people should have with those inside and outside of the community. This section was rich in imagery that highlighted the need for holistic mission, particularly in the treatment of the destitute beggar who enters the gathering (2:2-4), the brother and sister who lack daily necessities (2:15-16) and the widow and orphan (1:27). These all point to the need to act in accordance with God's justice for and compassionate treatment of the poor as seen in the OT law and prophets, and thus add a strong NT voice to the call for holistic mission. James' rhetorical denunciation of the rich implies that the church has a responsibility not to align itself with power and wealth which will all be destroyed, but with the righteous who do not resist.

The final chapter of my reading looked at the dual themes of controlling the tongue and putting faith into action. These themes (alongside purity) were interwoven in the final section of James 1 (vv. 19-27) and then developed separately, the latter in the classic argument of the need for faith and works (2:14-26) and the former in James' emblematic treatment of the tongue. The first section dealt with the thorny problems of understanding the 'implanted word' and the 'perfect law of freedom,' ideas perhaps drawing on philosophical thought found in Stoicism, but also definitely rooted in OT understandings of Torah and new covenant, as well as Jesus' reinterpretation of the law. This persuasive blend of tradition challenged the audience to live in accordance with the implanted word and thus live out their missional calling. The call to demonstrate true piety deepened the requirements on the audience in this regard, since the purity language used showed the need for a missional engagement with culture that was relevant yet not syncretistic.

In this chapter, I also dealt with the interaction between James and Paul found in 2:14-26, finding that the emphasis on faith and works as inextricably linked together demonstrated what living faith is and kept James and Paul in creative tension. This showed that a response is required to God's mission, one that includes a change of allegiance as well as deeds that express the gracious nature of God. These latter elements were most visible in James' choice of exemplars, drawing on Abraham's offering of Isaac and surprisingly Rahab's reception of the spies at Jericho. Both together bring out the full extent of God's grace and provide models of costly allegiance to God as the only true God, as well as examples of hospitality and gracious welcome to the 'other,' a challenge for the church's interaction with the world today.

The final aspect I considered in chapter eight was James' teaching on speech and the control of the tongue. There I argued that James not only reflects the concerns of ancient society for controlled speech but went beyond that to the creation principle of treating others as made in God's image. The incongruity of speech that blesses God on the one hand but curses those

made in God's image on the other hand has profound implications for the message of the church to those outside the community of faith. The graphic images of the untameable nature of the tongue and its potential to bring destruction also pointed to the need for the community to align itself with divine as opposed to demonic speech ethics. Also included here were the several seemingly isolated verses in the letter on speech that added to the importance of right speech (4:11-12; 5:12). These further emphasised the way the community should interact with one another and outsiders, with the refusal to take the place of God by verbally condemning others and the command to be truthful and not resort to oaths. Such speech-ethics would enhance community cohesion and its reputation with outsiders and thus its attractional nature to wider society, enabling the audience to fulfil its missional calling.

### The Contribution to Scholarship

An exploration of a whole letter such as this thesis could not hope to cover every verse in depth. However, this is a theological reading from the perspective of mission that has attempted to integrate recent scholarship on James, to which it is greatly indebted, as it is also to other scholars in the field of missional hermeneutics. I noted in chapter three that hermeneutical approaches are often likened to providing a map for biblical interpretation. No map can fully represent every aspect of the terrain, but my hope is that this thesis has helped to fill in some previously missed details from a missional perspective that enrich the overall understanding of the text.

This thesis adds to the growing corpus of missional readings of Scripture, and thereby provides further evidence for the importance of this hermeneutical dimension to biblical scholarship. It contributes in several ways to mission theology, as we have hopefully seen throughout the thesis and in the summary above. Wall has argued that the letter has a 'distinctive theological conception, which often expands the horizons of a thoughtful readership: it makes

an important contribution to a holistic biblical theology.'1833 This is, I believe, especially true of mission theology. James provides a particularly strong NT voice in several areas that I will briefly summarise here.

The first is that mission is tied to identity. Because the letter does not focus on any kind of gospel proclamation or explicit Christological reflection, the reader of James is forced to look elsewhere to understand mission. One of the principal messages of James is that commitment to God and faith in Jesus are demonstrated through the endurance of trials (which may include opposition), leading to the perfection and wholeness of those who endure. If the perfection of the audience was of such fundamental importance for James, then the church's mission should likewise prioritise this and not settle for an anaemic concept of salvation as only pertaining to the eschatological judgment. Moreover, the author provides a model of a community that lives out an attractional identity as the people of God. This is seen in their response to trials ('with joy') and the overall move towards perfection (1:2-4), the living out and demonstration of wisdom that is 'first of all pure and then peaceable...' (3:17), the requirement for godly speech ethics and the care for the vulnerable.

Secondly, (and in development of this last aspect of an attractional identity) James provides a challenge to those who claim to have faith in Christ to show this in how they treat the poor and vulnerable. The contribution to holistic mission is most obvious in chapter seven of this thesis but, as we saw there, permeates the letter since James often presents examples of its importance elsewhere in the epistle, including in his summary of true piety (1:26-27). Care for and advocacy on behalf of the destitute, the vulnerable and the outcasts of society are undeniable messages of James that should inform the church's mission today. The fact that this is a NT voice should also rule out any marginalisation of the message in favour of a purely

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1833</sup> Wall, Community of the Wise, 3.

'gospel-proclamation' model of mission. Moreover, perhaps the deeper challenge of James for the social location from which I write is to evaluate how comfortable we are with existing structures of inequality and injustice because they benefit us. The fact that James offers a rather biting critique of wealth and profit as the ultimate motivation seems to imply that we should not be drawn into similar pursuits nor should we be silent in the face of injustice where we have a voice in society. Not that James advocates revolution. As he puts it, δ δίκαιος οὐκ ἀντιτάσσεται (5:6), and so the audience must rather follow the example of the prophets and Job in trusting themselves to the coming of the Lord when he will bring about his merciful purposes (5:7-11). However, for those who have perhaps too closely aligned themselves with structures in the world, a recognition of the coming reversal should lead to taking the anticipatory step of humbling oneself before God in repentance (4:6-10).

Thirdly, the letter also shows that true faith entails deep commitment to becoming doers and not just hearers of the word, which involves allegiance to God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the expression of that faith through deeds. Mission that fails to give due priority to this fails to be fully biblical. Thus, as diaspora dwellers the church must live out of step with the world and in step with a generous God moving towards perfection and wholeness through doing the word, not just hearing it. Green summarises well: 'The faithful are God's restored people, awaiting restoration... Their homes and gatherings are missional outposts; insofar as they practice the word (and not just listen to it), their deepest allegiances and dispositions counter what matters most in the world within which they live.'1834 This surely provides a missional challenge to the church today as well.

At a broader level, seeing a missional purpose behind the letter both in its formation of the recipients as Christ-followers in the diaspora and in its attempted broader appeal to a Judean

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1834</sup> Green, "Reading James Missionally," 205.

diaspora audience help to locate James as a document within early Christianity that is not deficient in its Christology so much as muted for a specific purpose. While this does not provide a specific *Sitz im Leben* for James, it at least points to the reality that some diaspora groups continued to view themselves as Judean even as they sought to follow Jesus faithfully as their Messiah and Lord while navigating the challenges of living within a wider community of diaspora Judeans, and the even wider Greco-Roman culture. This allows for the ambiguity in some of James' formulations and resists the temptation to presume that James can only be writing to either Christ-followers or Judeans; neither perspective can adequately account for the language and uses of tradition in the text itself.

A missional perspective also recognises that a 'both/and' approach to understanding the background to James is legitimate, where both biblical and Greco-Roman philosophical traditions and concepts can aid in understanding the letter. The much disputed terms 'word of truth,' 'implanted word' and 'perfect law of freedom' are indications that James takes both the existing culture and biblical tradition seriously and adapts them in the service of forming his own audience in their missional identity. Although I emphasised the latter in my own thesis, I noted that the former is an indication of missional engagement with culture, but for the sake of space was not able to develop this further.

#### **Areas for Further Research**

Indeed this already points to areas where there is scope for further research. Attempting to read the whole letter through the lens of mission meant that I had to be selective in which areas of a missional hermeneutic to apply. Thus there is certainly scope to consider in greater detail James' interaction with Greco-Roman philosophical concepts from a missional perspective. On the other end of the spectrum, as Bauckham states, it is clear that 'James reads the scriptures of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1835</sup> Jackson-McCabe, "James and Hellenistic Philosophy," 50.

Israel and develops the traditions of Israel in a way that entertains no doubt as to their continuing relevance.' He continues, 'the teaching of Jesus does not replace them, but shapes the way they are read, and inspires the creative re-expression that is James' way of being faithful to Torah, wisdom and Jesus.' Although I considered the letter's use of the OT and Jesus tradition in quite some detail in places, there is room for more comparative work with documents from the Dead Sea scrolls and rabbinic writings to understand how James fits within the understandings of mission that such groups show in their own literature, through similar creative but faithful re-expression. This could also be extended to a greater consideration of early Christian literature such as the Apostolic Fathers, with which I have only engaged briefly. 1837

Finally, not only does this thesis add to the growing corpus of missional readings of Scripture, it also provides a sustained case study that I believe justifies such readings of other texts that have been neglected. As I noted above, although it may be necessary to adjust the typical missional 'streams' as I have done here, since these have been fruitfully applied to James despite its lack of explicit mission terminology and its muted Christology, they should also bear fruit for other biblical texts. An immediate next step would be to explore the other Catholic epistles which have suffered the same dual neglect as James, thus bringing fresh voices to the missional conversation dominated by Paul and Luke. As Wall points out, 'James supplies a distinctive and complementary witness to God, so that it functions neither as the single articulation of God's biblical word nor as an atonal voice that must be excluded from the chorus

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1836</sup> Bauckham, Wisdom of James, 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1837</sup> One obvious lacuna in this investigation is that I have not been able to interact with original research in German. However, this is somewhat mitigated by the extent of English language scholarship that includes offerings from and translations of several important German authors. Moreover, I have also drawn on Spanish and French scholarship to broaden my thesis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1838</sup> Lockett, An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles, 1–2, notes that these epistles "have not received the attention they deserve." See also Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce, and Francis Watson, eds., Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews, LNTS 587 (London: T & T Clark, 2019). My own research into ML on James leads me to believe that such literature has also neglected the other Catholic Epistles. Although 1 Peter has been the subject of some missional reflection, it is still relatively overlooked.

of voices that together harmonize on the word of God.' This is no doubt also the case with the remaining Catholic epistles. A similar reading of 1 Peter would be of particular interest because the two letters have much in common yet are also quite distinctive and so together would provide a deeper missional reflection. Moreover, this could be extended to the Catholic epistles as a collection, especially given some of the canonical aspects of a missional reading and the growing emphasis on the Catholic epistles as a discrete collection, perhaps even intended to balance the Pauline collection. The more such readings are available, the richer the missional conversation.

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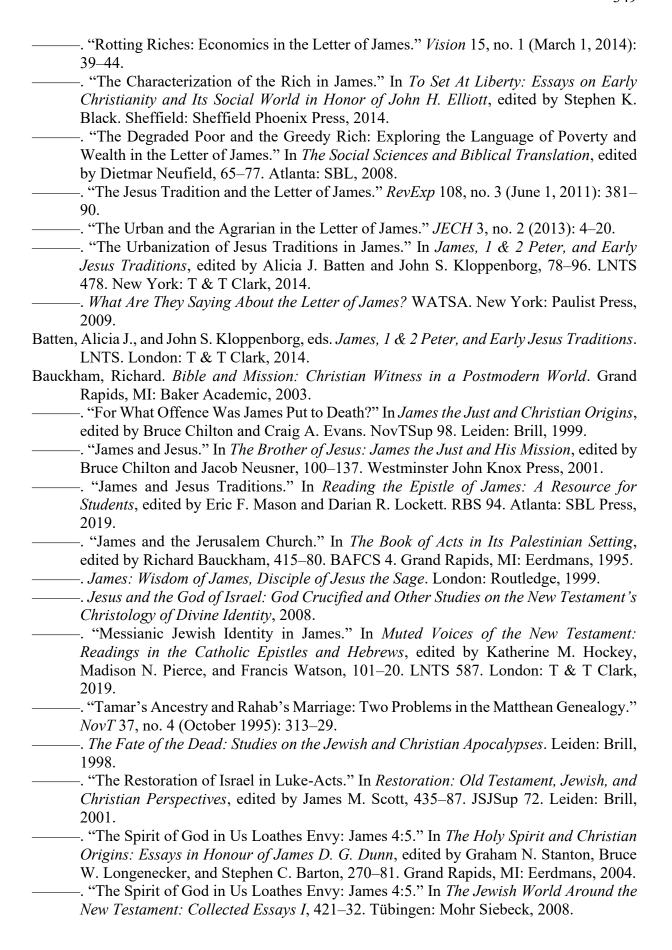
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1839</sup> Wall, Community of the Wise, 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1840</sup> Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*; Allison, *James*, 108-109; John Painter, "James as the First Catholic Epistle," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 161–82; Robert W. Wall, "A Unifying Theology of the Catholic Epistles: A Canonical Approach," in Niebuhr and Wall, eds, *The Catholic Epistles*, 13–40; Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*.

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