AN EXPLORATION INTO THE STRUCTURE, THE ORIGINAL SITUATION, AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE LETTER OF JAMES

by

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A THESIS

Submitted to the faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
New Testament
at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Deerfield, Illinois
May 2015

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789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Accepted:

First Reader

Second Reader

ABSTRACT

Recognizing the lack of consensus among studies of the letter of James concerning its original situation, this thesis is a study in the circumstances that precipitated the letter of James; it argues that the letter responds in significant measure to the inclination of some pre 70 Diaspora Jews to rebel violently against the Roman Empire. In so doing, it is suggested that the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12 might covertly critique a set of convictions and behaviors of the letter's audience that configures a "war agenda." This thesis finds sufficient reasons to read the letter of James as a paralleled literary structure rather than as a linear progression of thought. Reading it thus provides a better control on the exploration of the plausibility of a "war agenda" as the original situation of the letter of James, inasmuch as such exploration can be speculative. Some corroborating evidence for the plausibility of the "war agenda" is provided in the form of identifying a highly volatile political environment in mid-first-century Palestine with important implications and reverberations in the Jewish Diaspora. Such evidence is correlated with the letter of James.

The letter of James can be seen thus as an authoritative exhortation embedded in the thought-world of the Old Testament as interpreted according to the teachings of Jesus. It is argued that such exhortation was addressed to the Jews in the Diaspora, irrespective of whether they were Christians, and that its author was James, the brother of Jesus and a Christian Jew. This James emerges then as a recognized leader in the nascent Christian movement, with influence among his Jewish brethren in Palestine and in the Diaspora, at a

time when there was no clear discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism. Such reading seems to account for some of the clear, and at times problematic, traits identified by other studies in the letter of James, including the seemingly meager Christology, a strong Jewish ideological background, a reflection of the thought-world of Jesus, and the social concern for the marginalized.

To Wanda, my dear wife, who walks the talk

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

BDAG	Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 2000.
BDF	Blass, F., and A. Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Trans. and rev. R. W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
Gramcord	Biblical Language Research Software (2007) of the Gramcord's Institute, Vancouver , Washington. Programmed by Paul Miller.
H.E.	Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History.* Translated by Kirsopp Lake (vol. I) and J. E. L. Oulton (vol. II). 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926 (vol. 1), 1932 (vol. 2).
Josephus	*The Complete Works of Josephus.* Translated by William Whiston. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1981.
JSNT	*Journal For The Study Of The New Testament.*
Louw & Nida	Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains.* 2nd ed. 2 vols. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.
Liddell	Liddell, Henry George and Scott, Robert. *A Greek-English Lexicon.* 9th edition with new supplement. Revised by Henry Stuart Jones. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
LXX	The Septuagint.
NA^{28}	Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece. 28th edition.
Philo	*The Works of Philo.* Translated by C. D. Yonge. Hendrickson Publishers, 2000.
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* 10 Vols. Edited by Gerhard Kittel / Gerhard Friedrich. Translator and Editor into English: Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966-1967.

INTRODUCTION

Commentaries and other investigations on the canonical New Testament letter of James have profitably identified many of its defining traits. Some well-recognized crucial traits identified in the letter of James include words of wisdom, short aphoristic sayings, vivid metaphorical language, a relatively good level of the Greek language, a seemingly meager Christology, authoritativeness, a strong Jewish ideological background embedded mainly in the LXX, reflection of the influence of the thought-world of Jesus, emphasis on speech ethics, and social concern for the marginalized.

Scholars have availed themselves of such traits to argue for opposing readings of the letter. Some scholars, for example, have argued for the general and universal purpose and applicability of its wisdom sayings, reading the letter as being without structure and without an original situation. Pseudonymity, in spite of the expressed identification of the author as James in Jas 1:1, and in spite of the absence of textual variants for such identification, has also been argued for this letter. Well-known is Martin Luther's question of its Christian character and apostolicity. Others have identified the letter of James as a Jewish document with later Christian interpolations. Even others have read it as a sustained polemic against Pauline theology. Some others react with perplexity to its seemingly meager Christianity. Others assign preponderance to its evident social concern for the marginalized in detriment of other issues that might provide more coherence to the whole letter.

These opposing readings are reflected in the multiplicity of thematic emphases suggested in studies of the letter of James. They spring, to a large extent, from the absence of consensus about its original situation—the original situation in the sense of what prompted its author to write what he wrote. This thesis addresses this critical issue of the original situation and seeks to explain the plausibility of the letter of James having been written, in a significant measure, as a response to the inclination of some in the Jewish Diaspora to abet the rebellion against the Romans that led to the catastrophe of the year AD 70. Such inclination may have constituted the original situation of the letter of James, precipitating the exhortation to turn back from the error of their way by applying wisdom from above as taught by Jesus Christ, in what amounts to the author's way of sharing his faith in Jesus Christ with his Jewish brethren. This reading of the letter may provide a more robust and cogent interpretation of its text.

The second chapter of this thesis is dedicated to the exploration of the literary structure of the letter of James, recognizing that it has some bearing on the original situation of the letter.[1] In other words, a better understanding of the literary structure of the letter of James, if any, should lead the reader closer to why its author wrote what he wrote and, consequently, illuminate the interpretation of its text. This exploration gleans some critical insights from seven relevant studies, starting with the well-known commentary of Martin Dibelius, and continuing chronologically until the recent investigation of Mark E. Taylor.[2]

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[1]This introduction counts as "Chapter 1."

[2]See Martin Dibelius, *James*, revised by Heinrich Greenven, and translated by Michael A. Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976 [1920]); and Mark Edward Taylor, *A Text-Linguistic Investigation into*

These studies, even the ones that deny any structure in the letter of James, helpfully identify critical features of how the author might have chosen to configure the text of James. Such undertaking, in turn, provides some needed control on the exploration of the original situation of the letter of James, inasmuch as conjecturing about the original situation of the letter of James can be very speculative, and inasmuch as the literary structure, as complex as it might be, manifests how the author chose to present his argument and his evidence.

The exploration proper of the original situation of the letter of James is undertaken in the third chapter of this thesis. There, two claims are presented: (1) The canonical New Testament Christian writing of James is addressed to the Jews in the Diaspora, literally, irrespective of whether they were Christians. (2) James 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12 might be covertly critiquing a set of convictions and behaviors of James's audience that configures a "war agenda." There is no denying that an exploration of this sort, most particularly the argumentation for the second claim, is constantly threatened by what Clifford J. Geertz identifies as the "thick description," namely, the need "to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts."[3] It is acknowledged as well that, given the extension of this thesis, the exploration of the "war agenda" as, plausibly, the original situation of the letter of James is limited to observations in Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12.

Recognizing that one cannot fully retrace the original situation of James given the nature of social history, it is necessary to proceed heuristically and without pretense of

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the Discourse Structure of James (New York: T&T Clark, 2006).

[3]Clifford J. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 27.

being exhaustive. In so doing, this exploration tries to apply some tools of social-scientific criticism to the letter of James. It tries to identify, for example, some of the socio-political aspects manifested or implied in the letter of James; some correlation of its linguistic, literary, theological (ideological), with its socio-political dimensions; and the manner in which it was both a reflection of and a response to a specific socio-political context.[4] This is done under the premise enunciated by Todd C. Penner that "the rhetoric of a text offers a window into the social world of a text, and, vice-versa, particular social values shape the direction of argumentative strategy."[5] Furthermore, this exploration is undertaken under the premises that the text is the result of real-life situations and concerns, that it seeks to have an impact on real-life behavior, and that reading the text, as framed by its literary structure and within its most likely social contexts, might supply more accurately, the missing information shared and assumed by author and audience.[6] Proceeding heuristically in order to gain better understanding of the original situation of James emerges as a necessary condition of the "contestable and insecure" theoretical foundations of historical sociology.[7] The "contestable and insecure" nature of historical sociology is underscored by James Mahoney when he

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[4]See John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 7.

[5]Todd C. Penner, "The Epistle of James in Current Research," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 7 (1999): 294.

[6]See David A. DeSilva, "Embodying the World: Social-Scientific Interpretation of the New Testament," in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research,* edited by Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 126.

[7]James Mahoney, "Revisiting General Theory in Historical Sociology," *Social Forces* 83 (2004): 482.

identifies the "black box problem," that he defines as "the difficulty of explaining *why* a given causal variable exerts an effect on a given outcome variable."[8]

The fourth and last chapter of this thesis seeks to identify corroborating evidence for the "war agenda" as, plausibly, the original situation of the letter of James. To that end, the fourth chapter of this thesis argues at length for James, the brother of Jesus, as the most likely author of his eponymous letter. If such authorship is found to be correct, then the most likely date for the writing of the letter of James can be placed between the years AD 44 and 62 for the reasons provided there. This span of time constitutes in turn the timeframe for the observation of the socio-political circumstances that are correlated to the message of the letter of James. The fourth chapter of this thesis finds no meager evidence for those socio-political circumstances that, when correlated with the letter of James, make the plausibility, not surprising but expected, of James, the brother of Jesus and a Christian Jew, having written his eponymous New Testament letter to his Jewish brethren, irrespective of whether they were Christians, in order to discourage their "war agenda," and to exhort them to turn back to "wisdom from above," as interpreted according to the teachings of Jesus.

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[8]Mahoney, 464. Italics original.

CHAPTER 2

AN EXPLORATION INTO THE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF JAMES

As indicated in the introduction, this thesis seeks to explain the plausibility of the letter of James having been written, in a significant measure, as a response to the inclination of some in the Jewish Diaspora to abet the rebellion against the Romans that led to the catastrophe of the year AD 70.[1] This inclination may have constituted the original situation of James, precipitating the exhortation to turn back from the error of their way, and might provide a more robust interpretation of James. This chapter is dedicated to the exploration of the complex literary structure of James because it has important implications on the exploration of its original situation. It is the literary structure, as complex as it might be, that manifests how the author of James chose to present his or her argument. As Kevin J. Vanhoozer affirms, "[F]orm is not incidental but essential to the content."[2] François Vouga indicates that, "The structuring of the text implies and determines its interpretation."[3] Scot

[1]"James" in this chapter refers to the letter of James and not to its author, unless clearly indicated otherwise.

[2]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and The Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 343. Italics original.

[3]François Vouga, *L'Épitre de Saint Jacques* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1984), 18. My translation. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (New Haven: Doubleday, 1995), 13; Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 44; and Mark Edward Taylor, *A Text-Linguistic Investigation into the Discourse Structure of James* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 3.

McKnight, in his recent commentary on James, also stresses the importance of structure by noting: "A more inductive model of analysis brings to fruition the elements that guide us in comprehending its [James's] genre."[4] A better understanding then of the literary structure of James should help to explain why its author wrote what he wrote and, consequently, illuminate its interpretation. Understanding the form, that is, the way the author chose to structure the text of James, could also lead the reader closer to the situation that prompted the author to write.

To say that the literary structure of James is complex is not an understatement, as will become evident in this chapter. Such complexity derives, among other features, from its large number of imperatives, repetition of themes, numerous inclusios, multiple literary devices such as asyndeton, catchwords that connect ideas utilizing cognate words, and the thirty-seven occurrences of the postpositive conjunction δέ in the 108 verses of the letter.[5] The numerous occurrences of this postpositive conjunction compound the complexity of our issue given that, besides indicating contrast, this conjunction often signals "some loosely defined connection between clauses or sentences."[6] The resulting ambiguity between the

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[4]Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 48.

[5]On the large number of imperatives in James, see Grant R. Osborne, "James," *in Cornerstone Biblical Commentary Volume 18*, *James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, Revelation,* edited by Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 8; and Moo, 1. A Gramcord search identifies fifty-five occurrences of imperatives in the 108 verses in James, although the two occurrences of Ἄγε (4:13 and 5:1) function as exclamatory interjections introducing another statement (see James L. Boyer, "A Classification of Imperatives: A Statistical Study," *Grace Theological Journal*. 8 [1987]: 37). Luke L. Cheung (*The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James* [Carlisle, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2003], 37) indicates that the result of a Bible Work's syntactical count for James is 52 imperatives and 1 imperatival participle.

[6]See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains,* 2nd edition, vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 89.87,

indication of either function as adversative or continuative affects the identification of structure. Finally, the discussion on the structure of James is also made complex by the many short sayings present in our text. Richard Bauckham identifies in it more than fifty short sayings, of various literary forms, mostly aphorisms, but also similitudes, paradeigmata, and argumentative rhetorical questions.[7] The fact that many of these short sayings are found in chapter one gives that chapter of James a strong aphoristic nature and the reader seeking structure in James an even more confounding complexity of the structure of the letter.[8]

This exploration of the literary structure of James seeks to glean some critical insights from some relevant studies, starting with the well-known commentary of Martin Dibelius, and continuing chronologically until the already cited investigation of Mark E. Taylor.[9] These studies help gauge the complexity of the issue of the literary structure in James. This is true even of those studies, like Dibelius's and Bauckham's, that discourage the exploration of structure in James, since they, while arguing for a lack of structure in James, end up highlighting critical features of how the author presents the text of James. This does not mean, however, that anything close to a consensus understanding on the structure of James has been reached. As Mark E. Taylor affirms, "The current diversity simply attests to

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89.94, and 89.124; and BDAG, 213.

[7]Richard Bauckham, *James, Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 34-60.

[8]See Johnson, 13.

[9]Martin Dibelius, *James*, revised by Heinrich Greenven, and translated by Michael A. Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976 [1920]).

the nature and scope of the problem."[10] Taylor and Guthrie also affirm: "[N]o consensus has emerged concerning the details of the book's organization."[11] In fact, the sample of studies addressed in this chapter, beginning with Dibelius's, confirms that a consensus understanding on the structure of James continues to elude us.[12]

"An Animated and Characteristic Unity"

Regarding James's structure, Dibelius assigns importance to a paraenetical configuration over a unified coherence in the text. Although a century old, Dibelius's contribution to the discussion on James's structure remains relevant on at least two counts: The tension, highlighted in Dibelius's commentary, on whether there is structure in James, has not been resolved; and his contribution is often engaged in current discussion.[13]

Dibelius, on the one hand, recognizes some unity in James: "Clearly some trains of thought emerge which—without any artificial construction—combine to form an animated and characteristic unity."[14] The most salient train of thought in James, according to Dibelius, is the "piety of the Poor, and the accompanying opposition to the rich and to the

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[10]Taylor, 3. See also Bauckham, 61.

[11]Mark E. Taylor and George H. Guthrie, "The Structure of James," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68 (2006): 681.

[12]See Cheung, 3. Cheung (52) labels the lack of structure that many scholars assume in James as "structural agnosticism." See also Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell, *James, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 23-27.

[13]See Timothy B. Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora: Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1993), 9. See also Bauckham, 61.

[14]Dibelius, 48.

world, … a piety out of which the entire undertaking of this paraenesis can be understood."[15] He also states that James's "linguistic dress impresses the reader as being relatively homogeneous."[16] One other example of his recognition of some unity in James is his affirmation that "in chapters 2 and 3 … James composes treatises [three, to be exact] instead of simply transmitting sayings."[17]

On the other hand, these recognitions are surprising due to Dibelius's well-known ascription of "paraenesis" to James. He defines "paraenesis" as "a text which strings together admonitions of general ethical content."[18] The admonitions that configure a "paraenesis," according to him, are traditional sayings loosely put together and without a real relationship, nor coherence, between them.[19] Although Dibelius admits some formal connections via catchwords associations in close proximity (1:4 and 5; 1:12 and 13; 3:7, and 18), and repetition of identical motifs in different places (prayer of faith in 1:5-8 and 5:16ff, meekness in 1:21 and 3:13ff, and perseverance in 1:2-4, 12 and 5:7ff), he emphatically denies structural continuity in James when he affirms that "the entire document lacks

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[15]Dibelius, 48. What characterizes the *piety of the Poor* in James, according to Dibelius, is "an attitude that manifests antipathy toward the world, mistrust of 'secular' affairs, warning against arrogance, humble submission before God," and "reproach against the rich." Dibelius (44) sees James as a "representative of the ancient, recently revitalized pride of the Poor" in the context of a "Christendom" in which "this pride began to yield to an estimation of wealth which was more compatible with the world."

[16]Dibelius, 34.

[17]Dibelius, 38. He identifies James 2:1-3:12 as 'the core of the writing.'

[18]Dibelius, 3.

[19]See Dibelius, 1 *et passim*.

continuity in thought."[20] Moreover, even the three treatises that he recognizes in James 2 and 3 are understood to be no more than "expansions of paraenetic sayings."[21]

Dibelius further understands that James, given its paraenetical genre, lacks originality. This implies that the author of James, instead of having actually structured his exhortation, simply collected wisdom sayings of universal applicability. This lack of originality leads Dibelius to deny any theology in James, although he admits a Christian emphasis in the ethical admonitions in James.[22]

It is clear that Dibelius gives much more weight to the seemingly paraenetical configuration in James, and with it, to what he sees as a lack of coherence, originality and theology, than to the "animated and characteristic unity" that he also recognizes in James. It is of note that the importance Dibelius assigns to paraenesis over unity regarding the structure of James leads him to assume the absence of a particular original situation in James. Contrariwise, his denial of structure in James leads him to identify a general, not a particular, situation to which the collection of wisdom sayings has applicability.[23]

The tension on whether there is structure in James is clearly present in Dibelius. It is also very present in current discussion. Bauckham, for example, who

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[20]Dibelius, 2. Italics original.

[21]Dibelius, 3.

[22]See Dibelius, 3 *et passim*. The Christian emphasis for Dibelius does not amount to a 'theology' given the lack of a comprehensive exposition of Christianity, pointing to the fact that James does not mention the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, even though he does recognize the influence of Jesus's sayings in James.

[23]This observation constitutes an example of how the conclusion one reaches on the structure of a writing has some bearing on the exploration of its original situation.

discourages as inane the pursuit of logical cohesion in James, finds some accuracy in Dibelius's understanding of the structure in James, affirming that, "Dibelius was … right to recognize that James does not exhibit the kind of coherence that is provided by a sequence of argument or logical progression of thought encompassing the whole work…. [Although,] he exaggerated the incoherence and haphazard character of paraenetic literature."[24] At the other extreme, Mark E. Taylor, who argues for a cohesive structure in James by attempting to identify the formal relationships in its text, asserts, "The older paraenetic presupposition of Dibelius has essentially been abandoned by current scholarship."[25] The other relevant studies explored in this chapter will make clear that the current state of affairs of the discussion on structure in James lies somewhere between these two extremes. Still, the observations on the structural incoherence of James made by Dibelius should constitute a call for moderation when trying to identify the structure of James, being mindful of its evident complexities. The study of Fred O. Francis, that we visit next, starts a new trend that by and large questioned Dibelius's assumptions.

"Literary Epistolary Form"

Another relevant study on the structure of James is that of Fred O. Francis, where he asserts that James exhibits a literary epistolary form, in spite of the fact that he does not recognize a specific original situation, or any "situational immediacy" in James.[26] Other

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[24]Bauckham, 62.

[25]Taylor, 33.

[26]Fred O. Francis, "The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James

studies commented here, such as those of Peter H. Davids, Timothy B. Cargal, Luke L. Cheung, and of Mark E. Taylor, attest the large impact of Francis's brief paper as beginning the challenge to Dibelius's presuppositions and the attempt to find more structure in James.[27]

Francis arrives at these assertions by comparing James with Hellenistic epistles such as the exchange of letters between Solomon and Hiram found in Josephus's *Antiquities* 8.2.6-8*,* the letter of Demetrius to the Jews found in 1 Maccabees 10:25-45, and early Christian letters such as 1 and 2 Thessalonians; where he identifies the form of a double opening statement.[28] Understanding these Hellenistic epistles as containing a repetition of topics in the opening verses, Francis identifies a double opening statement in Jas 1:2-11 and 1:12-25 with "joy" and "blessedness" as liturgical terms heading each introductory paragraph. If this is the case, Francis argues, it suggests the author's intentionality for epistolary structure in James.[29] Each of these two paragraphs contains, according to him, the same three themes of "testing/steadfastness, wisdom-words/reproaching, and rich-poor/doers."[30] Francis suggests that these three themes are further developed in Jas 2:1-5:6,

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and I John," *ZNW* 61 (1970): 118. Francis does not concede a contradiction between the existence of a structure in James and the lack of a specific original situation. He (111) simply identifies a letter like James, with a structure but without "situational immediacy," as a "secondary letter." Francis's study is a 16-page paper, with no more than half of it dedicated to the letter of James.

[27]Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James, A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982). The other studies mentioned above have already been referenced in this chapter. See also Todd C. Penner, "The Epistle of James in Current Research," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 7 (1999), 257-308.

[28]Francis, 112.

[29]Francis, 117.

[30]Francis, 118.

the main body of the text, and that "testing is the thematic interest that underlies the argument of James."[31] Moreover, he suggests that the themes of eschatological injunction, prayer, oath formula, health of the recipients, and the concern for "those who are deceived," found in Jas 5:7-20 are characteristic of closing formulas in early Christian and in Hellenistic epistles. Finally, Francis calls for the reassessment of the literary character of James as a structured epistle, "in light of [its] rather substantial literary–thematic coherence."[32]

The following is a summary of the more detailed structure that Francis suggests for James.[33]

1. 1:1 Writer, recipients, and greeting
2. 1:2-27 An introductory double-opening statement
   - 1:2-11 A paragraph headed by the liturgical term "joy"
   - 1:12-25 A paragraph headed by the liturgical term "blessedness"
   - 1:26-27 Two literary hinges as recapitulation of the introduction
3. 2:1-5:6 A two-part epistolary body
   - 2:1-26 Faith, and preferential deeds neglectful of the neighbor
   - 3:1-5:6 Fondness of words, wisdom and position that cause strife
4. 5:7-20 Closing admonitions

Francis's paper exhibits a certain congruity that is appealing; but in retrospect, it can be said that its large impact is incommensurate with its brevity. Perhaps, this brevity did not allow Francis to sufficiently substantiate some of his far-reaching assertions on the structure of James. The more extensive studies of Cheung and Taylor on the structure of James, discussed below, evidence that the assertions made by Francis require much more

[31]Francis, 119.

[32]Francis, 126.

[33]Francis, 120.

substantiation than what he provides. Three such instances are his assertion that "testing is the thematic interest that underlies the argument of James," the "rather substantial literary-thematic coherence" he finds in James, and the repetition of themes for what he suggests as a double opening in chapter one of the letter.[34] Any claim of an underlying theme, of thematic coherence, or of repetition of themes in the introductory double opening needs to be substantiated. This is especially so given the complexity of James. The diverse multiplicity of thematic emphases commentators find in James confirms this need.[35] McKnight perspicuously indicates, "James strikes in many directions at once."[36] Taylor also points out the "numerous interactive themes" in James.[37] But this fact does not mean that all the diverse thematic underlying emphases, including "testing," commentators suggest as central for James can be accurate. This fact makes Cheung's observation relevant when he indicates, "The repetition of different themes in James is so common that it is very difficult to avoid being subjective in one's choice of theme and thus forcing this theme into the organization of the work."[38]

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[34]Francis, 126.

[35]See, among others, Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990 [1913]), especially, pp. 146 and 192; Davids, *Epistle*, 28-34, most specifically, p. 34; Elsa Tamez, *The Scandalous Message of James: Faith Without Works is Dead,* revised edition (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002), 13. See also pp. 12, 19, 23, 25, 28, 51, 56, 60, and 62 in her work. Also, Bauckham, 67 *et passim*; John H. Elliott, "The Epistle of James in Rhetorical and Social-Scientific Perspective: Holiness-Wholeness and Patterns of Replication," in *The Social World of the New Testament*, edited by Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 105-122; and Vouga, 24-25.

[36]McKnight, 3.

[37]Taylor, 97.

[38]Cheung, 54.

The very suggestion of a double opening can flounder if a Jewish, rather than a Hellenistic, environment determined the structure of the letter.[39] Even if one grants some influence to a Hellenistic environment in the letter of James, the evidence of such influence in the double opening might be limited to the formal structuring of the double opening. In other words, even if there is an introductory double opening of the kind suggested by Francis, it does not have to include a repetition of themes. In fact, the suggestion of repetition of themes in the double opening does not appear convincing, as is commented in the next section of this chapter.[40]

Neither does Francis substantiate his assertion that "the general view that James lacks situational immediacy appears to be correct."[41] He might have sensed that the decision one makes on the literary structure of a text must have some bearing on its original situation. This is truer when one asserts, as he does, the presence of a "more intentional structure" in the double opening statement.[42] Yet, he does not deal with this linkage between structure and original situation, except to imply that the lack of "situational immediacy" does not derive from a lack of structure in James. Indeed, some elements of the original situation can be gleaned from some of the structure and from some of the thematic repetition Francis suggests for James. As a case in point, chapter three of this thesis argues for a plausible

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[39]For example, Bauckham (63) suggests that the genre of James is wisdom paraenetics, while Cheung (42) reads James as "Jewish wisdom instruction."

[40]Cheung (60) notices that James might have used some formalities of a double opening, but not quite the exact form.

[41]Francis, 118.

[42]Francis, 117.

original situation, gleaned from the text itself and read in light of the aphoristic nature of chapter one of James and some literary parallels in the letter.

What Francis does substantiate is his main argument that James has an epistolary form. This conclusion has its valid corollary proposition concerning the author's intentionality to provide such a form. Some of these facts led Davids to embrace Francis's study as corroboration of his own understanding of James as a redacted work. Davids's work is explored next.

A Redacted Work

Peter Davids, with his emphasis on James as a redacted work, ushered in a shift in the study of the structure of James. This shift is predicated on the previous trend of seeing the text of James as a random collection of discourses and sayings of a general ethical character established under the influence of Dibelius.[43] Davids argued that James is the product of a two-stage redaction, that is, the canonical writing is the final editing of a, previously separate, series of Jewish synagogue-type of homilies and of various sayings into a Christian literary epistle.[44] Davids submits as reasons for his position certain relatedness between the various discourses and the various sayings in James that create "a greater

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[43]Cf. Taylor, 8-10.

[44]Davids, *Epistle,* 22. He cites W. W. Wessel, "An Inquiry into the Origin, Literary Character, Historical and Religious Significance of the Epistle of James," Ph.D. diss., (Edinburg, 1953), to argue for the presence of features of the Jewish synagogue homily in James. See also Penner, "James in Current Research," 266-267.

whole," and a definite pattern in the repetition of themes "which fits a clear enough *Sitz im Leben.*"[45]

As mentioned above, Davids embraced Francis's main argument in favor of an epistolary form in James, and emphasized the author's intentionality that he believed was evident in the structure that Francis suggested. Davids reaffirmed this structure with the observation that the three major themes of testing, wisdom, and poverty are introduced in the first half and expanded in the second half of the double opening in the first chapter of James. According to him, these themes are, in turn, dealt with in the main body and in reverse order to the one presented in the double opening statement, thus creating the following structure.[46]

1. Testing that produces joy (1:2-4), and blessedness (1:12-18). This theme is further developed in the main body as testing through wealth (4:13-5:6).
2. Wisdom through prayer (1:5-8), and pure speech that contains no anger (1:19-21). Wisdom is further developed in the main body as demand of pure speech (3:1-4:12).
3. Poverty excels wealth (1:9-11), and obedience requires generosity (1:22-25). This is followed by the summary and transition of the double opening to the main body (1:26-27). The themes of poverty and generosity are then further developed in the main body as the excellence of poverty and generosity (2:1-26). Poverty, according to Francis and Davids, is the last theme of each of the two paragraphs of the double opening statement, and the first developed in the main body.
4. The epistolary closing (5:7-20), includes a summary of the three themes indicated above (5:7-11), rejection of oaths (5:12), prayer and forgiveness (5:13-18), and encouragement (5:19-20).

Davids flounders where Francis did: at the suggestion of the repetition of themes in what they see as the introductory double opening in James. Davids tries to find a cogent argumentation for Francis's suggestion by advancing the idea of an expansion of the

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[45]Davids, *Epistle,* 23.

[46]Davids, *Epistle,* 29.

themes in the second half of the double opening. Davids clarifies this idea as follows: The theme of testing of the first half of the double opening is further developed as blessedness in the second half; the theme of wisdom is developed as "pure speech contains no anger;" and the theme of "poverty excels wealth," is expanded as "obedience requires generosity" in Jas 1:22-25.

However, this thematic correspondence advanced by Davids appears contrived. The commandment γίνεσθε δὲ ποιηταὶ λόγου, meaning, "and become doers of the word," in 1:22, for instance, should be read as a commandment applicable to life in general, even in the face of the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life (Jas 1:2), and should not be restricted to a single issue of Jas 1:2-20, such as the issue of anger in Jas 1:20, or the issue of wealth and humility in Jas 1:9-11, as Davids suggests as the last thematic correspondence above. This is especially the case in view of the inferential conjunction διό in Jas 1:21 that could refer to the whole discussion on how to respond to the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life in Jas 1:2-20 and not only to the theme of anger of Jas 1:20. Also, Davids mistakenly suggests repetition and expansion of the theme of wealth of Jas 1:9-11 into obedience in Jas 1:22-25. Taylor correctly indicates that "the specific references to wealth [of Jas 1:9-11] disappear entirely, until, perhaps, 1.27."[47] Concerning the whole issue of the repetition of themes by way of expansion advanced by Davids, Taylor rightly concludes, "The precise nature of the expansion is difficult to discern."[48]

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[47]Taylor, 104.

[48]Taylor, 104. Along similar lines, see Cargal, 22.

Now, even if this idea of thematic expansion does not stand, Davids's contribution to this exploration is constructive; particularly, his insistence on the evident intention of the author for the structured redaction of the text. The author of James, according to Davids, intentionally structures the text utilizing certain related themes and a definite pattern in the editing of the various discourses and sayings, putting them together into a unified text. He also emphasizes that the structure he finds in James leads him closer to its original situation. The next chapter will comment further on the original situation that he suggests for James. For the time being, suffice it to say that he, contrary to Francis, does confirm that the literary structure of the letter of James has some bearing on the understanding of its original situation.[49] The next relevant study, that of Timothy B. Cargal, can be seen as shifting the emphasis from syntactical relations to semantics in the pursuit of structure in James.

A Semantically Organized Structure

In trying to understand the purpose of James, Timothy B. Cargal opts for, what he terms, the "linguistic or communication paradigm," whereby "the exegete begins with the system of the author's convictions as expressed within the text and other communication processes at work within the text."[50] He opts for this paradigm rather than the "historical" one, which according to him, tends "to focus on the historical circumstances

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[49]See Davids, *Epistle,* 28-34.

[50]Cargal, 7. He utilizes some theoretical insights and some tools of Greimasian structural semiotics such as the parallelism between "inverted" and "posited" content. The relevant insights and tools regarding the structure in James are explained herein in a summary form.

which influenced the author and to emphasize such extra-textual phenomena as the traditional sources behind the text, its socio-historical setting, and so on."[51] Cargal judges this latter paradigm limiting for establishing the structure of James and explaining its author's purpose in writing.[52]

In exploring the purpose of the author of James from within the text, Cargal gives up on discursive syntax as the organizing instrument of a consistently coherent structure in James.[53] He understands "discursive syntax" as "the expressions relating issues of time, space and actants, or what might more generally be called a 'logical sequence.'"[54] He further contends that discursive semantics is the prevalent organizing instrument of James's structure.[55] By "discursive semantics," he means "the thematization and figuritivization used to express meaningful relationships."[56] In other words, "discursive semantics" is the means by which the author communicates his or her purpose in writing via a progression of themes, hence "thematization,"[57] and recurring to figures of discourse, hence "figuritivization."[58]

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[51]Cargal, 9.

[52]Cargal, 9-29.

[53]Cargal, 39.

[54]Cargal, 37.

[55]Cargal, 39.

[56]Cargal, 37.

[57]See Cargal, 45.

[58]See Cargal, 54.

This latter device includes traditional literary devices such as symbolism, metaphors, and the like, but also, any other feature that helps the author "persuade the reader to accept the new view of human experience that comprises [the author's] system of convictions."[59] The "figures," according to Cargal, tend to introduce the themes and are "capable of being invested with new meanings that the author wants the readers to accept."[60] The "figures" help the author capture the attention of the reader who, in turn, can identify his own values in the "figure." These values of the reader may, partially or totally, be at odds with the values the author wants the reader to accept.

The "figure" marks the beginning of a division of the discourse and signals the value of the reader the author wants changed, that is, the "inverted content" of the discourse. To the "inverted content," Cargal opposes the "posited content" that posits the value of the author to the reader. This "posited content" is developed via the theme of the pertinent division of the discourse, and invests the "figure" with new meaning: the value the author posits to the reader. Cargal then speaks of parallels between the "inverted" and the "posited" content of the discourse. These parallels in turn serve him to identify the contours of the divisions, subdivisions, and sections he suggests for the literary structure of James. These contours are not necessarily determined logically or syntactically, but are value based and are, preponderantly, determined semantically. Thus, in trying to first identify the "deep

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[59]Cargal, 54.

[60]Cargal, 54.

structure" of what the author had in mind, and then the "surface structure," as presented in the text, he indicates that he follows "Greimasian structural semiotics."[61]

Cargal applies his understanding of "Greimasian structural semiotics" to the deciphering of the literary structure of James. He starts by trying to identify the overall purpose of James through, what he considers, an "inverted and posited parallel" between the description of the addressees, ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ, found at the introduction in Jas 1:1, and the protasis ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν πλανηθῇ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθεία of the conditional exhortation found at the closing in Jas 5:19-20. "Diaspora," for Cargal, becomes the "figure" the author utilizes to capture the attention of the reader, who in turn, might be expected to associate it with suffering and scattering, and with testing and trials. The theme of turning back to truth, that is, restoring the "Diaspora" of the rest of the conditional exhortation of Jas 5:19-20 is then developed throughout as the overall purpose of James and invests the figure of "Diaspora" with a new meaning: "James challenges [the readers] to accept the view that they are (also) the 'Diaspora' because they have 'wandered from the truth.'"[62]

This suggestion, however, appears to be a strained semantic nuance of Diaspora as "wandering" instead of its primary sense of "scattered." Cargal seems to force his understanding of "Greimasian structural semiotics" to fit the purpose he finds at the closing of James. He implies that the author of James had in mind the concept of "wandering" as a new meaning of "Diaspora," in order to posit to the readers the value of

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[61]See Cargal, 31-56.

[62]Cargal, 49.

turning back to truth.[63] Doubtless, the authorial intention of exhorting the readers to turn back to truth is expressed in Jas 5:19-20, but Cargal's maneuvering of "Diaspora" as a "figure invested with a new meaning" is really unnecessary to identify the purpose of James.

In any event, Cargal goes on to suggest that the enunciator (the author) purports to turn the enunciatee (the reader) back to the truth and away from his "wandering," by sharing his system of convictions. Cargal thus identifies the restoration of the Diaspora as the overall purpose of James, and offers a reading of James supporting it. According to him, this reading incorporates the following four major discursive units that he delimits by identifying the "inverted" and "posited" parallels. Each unit, in turn, reveals the theme by which the author posits new values for the readers.[64]

1. Receiving the implanted word in order to be perfect (1:1-21). Cargal suggests for this unit a parallel between the call to be complete (1:4), and the receiving of the implanted word as the means to accomplish the call (1:21).
2. Works of the word (1:22-2:26). Cargal suggests for this unit a parallel between the call to be doers of the word (1:22), and the short saying: "faith without works is dead" (2:26).
3. Having a proper attitude about oneself by humbling oneself (3:1-4:12). Cargal suggests for this unit a parallel between the discouragement against becoming teachers (3:1), and the presence of the Lord and his role as a Judge (4:11-12).
4. Bringing back one's neighbor (4:11- 5:20). Cargal suggests for this unit a parallel between the "inverted content" of speaking against one another (4:11), and the "posited" content of "restoring anyone among you" (5:19-20).[65]

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[63]See Cargal, 49. On the one hand, Bauckham (in a footnote on page 212) correctly considers that Cargal's semantic nuance of Diaspora as 'wandering' "founders on the fact that the term *Diaspora* [italics original] was not understood as Israel's voluntary 'wandering' into exile but as God's scattering of Israel among the nations as judgment for Israel's sins." On the other hand, Johnson (14) indicates that Cargal, "who works closely with the details of language and is open to a variety of approaches to the text," cannot be charged with masking "the very real difficulties posed at the level of surface discourse."

[64]See Cargal, 52.

[65]It is of note that for Cargal (52), Jas 4:11-12 functions as a hinge between the third and the fourth themes. This is one of various instances where Jas 4:11-12 is identified serving a special function. This observation will become more significant when the work of Mark E. Taylor is commented.

Cargal then pinpoints these four themes, which he summarizes as calls to orthodoxy, orthopraxis, humbling oneself, and "bringing back" the wayward brother, as the persuasive means that James utilizes in order to accomplish his overall purpose of restoring the Diaspora.[66]

Although Cargal's suggestive reading of James is at times at variance with most current and traditional scholarship, as is the case with the seemingly strained semantic nuance of Diaspora indicated above, his research is at home with the pursuit of structure in James. In fact, his suggestive reading of James enriches this exploration into the literary structure of James with his insistence on semantics, which is particularly necessary in James. This is so, not only because James exhibits an "animated and characteristic unity," as Dibelius indicated, but also because "James constructs an ethics defined as much by what it opposes as by what it affirms," as Johnson states.[67] Johnson had also indicated: "[A]n important organizing … principle in James is a central set of convictions concerning the absolute incompatibility of two construals of reality and two modes of behavior following from such diverse understandings."[68]

In other words, the contribution of Cargal to the exploration undertaken in this chapter is found in his emphasis on "discursive semantics" that is necessary for a writing such as James, with an evident opposition between a set of values held by the author and a

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[66]Cargal, 53.

[67]See Johnson, 83. See also Cheung, 50.

[68]Johnson, 14.

set of values held by the audience; a writing with an expressed purpose of turning its audience back to truth.[69] Cargal appropriates the assertion of Johannes Louw: "Although it is through analysis of the surface structure that the receptor is able to retrace what the author … had in mind, we should beware of seeing this procedure as an end in itself, because the author never starts with a surface structure."[70] And so this chapter continues to explore the literary structure of James assuming, with Johnson, that "there is a surface and syntactically discernible connection between statements."[71] The study of Richard Bauckham that is presented next does discern some of these connections between statements, although not to the extent of finding logical progression among the whole of James.

"*A Compendium of Wisdom Instruction*"

As evidence of his suggestion of the genre of wisdom paraenesis in James, Richard Bauckham assigns importance to the small literary units in James. He does not, however, completely dismiss coherence nor a "relatively carefully structured whole" in James.[72] He does discourage though the pursuit of a more subtle structure in James, and questions the efforts of those who try to find in James "a sequence of argument or logical

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[69]See Johnson, 14.

[70]Cargal, 32. It is opportune to recall that surface structure for Cargal has to do with "expressions relating issues of time, space and actants, or what might more generally be called a 'logical sequence.'"

[71]Johnson, 14.

[72]Bauckham, 35.

progression of thought encompassing the whole work."[73] He sees James rather as "a compendium of wisdom instruction" with the following simple and very general structure.[74]

A Prescript (1:1)
B Introduction (1:2-27)
C Exposition (2:1-5:20)[75]

In turn, Bauckham subdivides the latter division, the "exposition," in the following twelve sections.

1. 2:1-13 Partiality and the law of love
2. 2:14-26 Faith and works
3. 3:1-12 The tongue
4. 3:13-18 True and false wisdom
5. 4:1-10 A call to the double-minded to repent
6. 4:11-12 Against judging one another
7. 4:13-17 Denunciation of merchants
8. 5:1-6 Denunciation of landowners
9. 5:7-11 Holding out till the parousia
10. 5:12 Speaking the whole truth
11. 5:13-18 Prayer
12. 5:19-20 Reclaiming those who err[76]

He bases such structuring on the "reasonably clear formal markers as well as steps or changes in theme or argument."[77] These steps or changes in theme or argument are perceptible, according to Bauckham, in the closing of each of the twelve sections. He argues that for such closings James utilizes aphorisms, aphoristic questions or phrases, or simple

[73]Bauckham, 62.

[74]Bauckham, 67.

[75]Bauckham, 63.

[76]Bauckham, 63.

[77]Bauckham, 63.

sentences with a sense of completion, such as "mercy triumphs over judgment," in Jas 2:13.[78] Bauckham further indicates that the clear formal markers signal the beginning of each of the twelve sections of the exposition, and identifies the following markers: the vocative ἀδελφοί μου in Jas 2:1, 26; 3:1; 5:12 and 19 or simply ἀδελφοί in Jas 4:11 and 5:7; a question in 2:2-4 and 3:13; and two or more questions in 2:14-16; 4:1 and 5:13-14. He identifies other markers that further strengthen the contours of the twelve sections in chapters 2-5 (the exposition), such as the phrase τις ἐν ὑμῖν in Jas 3:13; 5:13-14 and 19, the interjection ἄγε νῦν in Jas 4:13 and 5:1; and the expression πρὸ πάντων in 5:12.[79] As argument for his identification of the twelve sections in the exposition of James, Bauckham also appeals to "considerable exegetical agreement."[80]

It must be reaffirmed at this point though what was noted at the beginning of this chapter in the sense that anything close to a consensus regarding the literary structure of James continues to elude students of James. Conversely, it is true that almost all of the twelve sections identified by Bauckham are validated in this exploration. The truth of the matter lies in the details: the seeming contradiction between the above two statements points to the fact that the findings of the more detailed works on James's structure coincide, by and large, with Bauckham's twelve sections. But those findings do not fully coincide with Bauckham's twelve sections in key details that affect how a reader should read them. Bauckham, for

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[78]Bauckham, 66.

[79]Bauckham, 64.

[80]Bauckham, 64.

instance, reads them as "self-contained entities with strong indications to readers that they are to be read as such."[81] His way of reading them corresponds to his understanding of James as "a compendium of wisdom instruction." But perhaps a different way of reading James 2-5 better takes into account not only those markers identified by Bauckham, but other significant markers in the text of James as well. For example, the work of Mark E. Taylor, explored at the end of this chapter, identifies a key inclusio between 2:12-13 and 4:11-12 that strongly hints at parallels between the various sections of James.[82] If Taylor's identification of that inclusio is correct, the various sections of James might be better read as a more structured and integrated whole than as "self-contained entities."

Bauckham further affirms that these strong and clear formal markers help the reader read and understand, and that they help to delineate a simple literary structure that "the first readers could be reasonably expected to recognize."[83] In this way, he encourages the reader to follow suit, to read and understand with just these, according to him, strong and clear formal markers. We need to bear in mind, however, that the first readers read and made sense of what they read within structures that were commonly familiar to them and to the author. They did so intuitively, without having to decipher them beforehand the way those outside of that particular literary milieu must do in order to get to the "author's embodied and enacted intention."[84] In other words, those of us who are outside of the particular literary

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[81]Bauckham, 66.

[82]Taylor, 60-71.

[83]Bauckham, 63.

[84]As noted, Vanhoozer (252-253) describes the meaning of a writing as the "author's

milieu of the author and of the original readers or listeners of James need to decipher its literary structure via the syntactical and semantic clues in it, given that such structure is not as intuitive for us as it was for the first readers or listeners of James. The onus is on us as readers of James today to decipher its literary structure; the same structure that the readers of its original literary milieu could follow intuitively.[85]

In regard to the prescript of James, Bauckham states that Jas 1:1 satisfies the only formality (addressor to addressee and a salutation) needed for a writing to be a letter, according to the Greek standards for a letter in the first century.[86] As for the introduction (Jas 1:2-27, according to Bauckham), he sees it as "a collection of aphorisms, carefully compiled in order to introduce [virtually] all the main themes of part C [the exposition]."[87] He also observes that this introductory function that Jas 1:2-27 has in relation to the twelve sections of the exposition does not have a tight correspondence with them, but that it does create for James "a roughly chiastic structure."[88] He then goes on to identify the following twelve short sections in the introduction: Jas 1:2-4, 5-8, 9-11, 12, 13-15, 16-17, 18, 19-20, 21, 22-25, 26,

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embodied intention" enacted in a fixed verbal structure.

[85]Vanhoozer's contention (346) is followed: "Of course, to readers familiar with a given genre, understanding is not a problem; they follow the rules and conventions intuitively. If, however, the work is of an unfamiliar kind, the interpreter must reconstruct this intuitive knowledge and make it explicit." Grant R. Osborne (*The Hermeneutical Spiral, A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation,* revised and expanded edition [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006], 26) argues, similarly, that "all writers couch their messages in a certain genre in order to give the reader sufficient rules by which to decode that message. These hints guide the reader (or hearer) and provide clues for interpretation." Parentheses original.

[86]Bauckham, 63.

[87]Bauckham, 72.

[88]Bauckham, 72.

and 27.[89] Rather than insisting on the exactness of the structure of these short sections, Bauckham again discourages trying to find trains of thought in their placement and in the relationships between them, and encourages the reader to ponder each aphorism on its own and to further reflect on their relation to each other.[90]

Bauckham exhibits coherence in his argument for James as "a compendium of wisdom instruction" when he sees the introduction as a collection of aphoristic short sections, perhaps twelve, that loosely correspond to the twelve sections of the exposition. Again, it might be that James has more coherence and trains of thought than Dibelius recognized, as Bauckham admits. And yet, Bauckham's dictum might be true for himself: There might be in James more coherence and trains of thought than Bauckham recognizes. The very placing of aphoristic short sayings next to other short sayings conditions each of the short sayings and provides a combined effect. Just reflecting "on their relation to each other," as Bauckham encourages the reader to do, becomes limiting when there might be a more intentional structure and coherence in Jas 1:2-27 as well as in the whole of James. The interpreter has the responsibility to explore further on the relations between these aphoristic short sayings, recognizing that "only the whole bestows meaning on the parts."[91] As Osborne suggests for the reading of the book of Proverbs, "It is helpful to … note the cross-referential influence of similar sayings on one another."[92] Furthermore, Taylor's way of reading the proverbial

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[89]Bauckham, 72.

[90]Bauckham, 70.

[91]Vanhoozer, 347.

[92]Osborne, *Spiral,* 251.

statements, in chapter one as well as in the whole of James, as part of its aphoristic style, appears to more fully grasp their function to provide structure to the text than the reading Bauckham suggests. Taylor states: "Originally free-floating proverbs have been worked into the discourse thus serving a unique transitional function by providing continuity and unity to the major discourse units in James."[93] Notwithstanding these observations, there is no doubt that Bauckham's treatment of James contributes to the better understanding of its literary structure. With his contribution, the trend in this exploration toward a more coherent structure of James is further affirmed. The "strong and clear markers" of the twelve sections he suggests for chapter 2 to 5 of James constitute a clear indicator of intentional coherence and structure in James; and the strong aphoristic nature and introductory function of Jas 1:2-27 are further reaffirmed. The interest to further explore the literary structure in James is reinvigorated with these clear clues that Bauckham has identified. Contrariwise, his discouragement from pursuing a more subtle structure in James will not be followed in this exploration, especially when the prospects are in favor of finding an even more robust structure in James. These prospects include the possibilities of other significant markers in Jas 2-5, and of a more intentional coherence in the placing of the short sayings in Jas 1:2-27. Discussed next is the study of Luke L. Cheung. He is another explorer of structure in James who, although a student of Bauckham, does not follow his advice to give up on seeking a more subtle structure in James.

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[93]Taylor, 90.

A "Formal-Semantical-Syntactical-Thematic Delimitation of the Text"

Luke L. Cheung follows Bauckham in the recognition of the centrality of the theme of wisdom in James, identifying the genre of James as "Jewish wisdom instruction."[94] And yet, he finds more intentionality in James concerning literary structure than Bauckham concedes. Cheung indicates that James "is not just an accumulator of traditional wisdom sayings. He integrates the different traditions: the Jewish wisdom traditions, law and prophets and the Jesus tradition in offering new insights to his audiences."[95]

Cheung then suggests the following structure for James, applying the method he identifies as discourse analysis. He does not describe such a method in detail, but we can note his understanding of it in his examination of the structure of James through "[T]he literary criteria: the introductions, conclusions, inclusions, characteristic vocabularies (lexical and semantic cohesion), transitions (hinges), and changes in the manner of expression (changes in literary form and pronominal reference)."[96] He also pays attention to other literary devices such as "hook-words or catch-words, chiasmus, and parallelisms."[97] The content or thematic analysis is also part of how Cheung applies his understanding of

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[94]Cheung, 49.

[95]Cheung, 49.

[96]Cheung, 57. Parentheses original.

[97]Cheung, 57.

discourse analysis. He labels the application of this method to decipher the structure of James, the "formal-semantical-syntactical-thematic delimitation of the text."[98]

1. 1:1 The prescript
2. 1:2-27 The prologue around the theme of perfection, with a double *propositio* of themes associated with
   - 1:2-18 the *Shema*[c]
   - 1:19-27 obedience to the Torah

   (Cheung sees 1:26-27 as a concluding summary of the prologue and 1:27 as "a transitional statement pointing forward to the argument of 2:1-26.").[99]
3. 2:1-5:11 The body of the text
   - 2:1-26 An *inclusio* around the theme of genuine faith
     - 2:1-7 Genuine faith's incompatibility with partiality
     - 2:8-13 The royal law as the standard of judgment
     - 2:14-26 Genuine faith that issues in works
   - 3:1-4:10 Wisdom from above
     - 3:1-12 Exhortation against heedlessness in the use of the tongue
       - 3:13-18 Contrast between wisdom from above and earthly wisdom
     - 4:1-10 Exhortation against worldly attitude
   - 4:11-5:11 The eschatological judgment

     (Although Cheung sees in 4:11 the beginning of this major division, he recognizes some function of transition for 4:11-12)
     - 4:11-12 Exhortation against slander
     - 4:13-5:6 Condemnation
       - 4:13-17 against merchants
       - 5:1-6 against the unjust rich
     - 5:7-8 Exhortation to patience
     - 5:9 Warning against grumbling

       (Cheung sees this warning as abrupt but forming a chiasm with 4:11-12)
     - 5:10-11 The prophets and Job as *paradeigmata* of patience
4. 5:12-20 Epilogue.[100]

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[98]Cheung, 58.

[99]Cheung, 66.

[100]For this structure of James, see Cheung's second chapter (pp. 53-85). Italics original.

For the delimitation of the prescript, Cheung follows in the footsteps of Bauckham and others who identify it with Jas 1:1.[101] It really offers no difficulty. The prologue in turn is understood by Cheung as being divided in two sections pertaining to Jas 1:2-18 with a thematic association with *Shema*^{c}, and Jas 1:19-27 with the main focus on obedience of the Torah.[102] For this division, he appeals mainly to the fact that in Jas 1:2-18, the third person singular imperatives predominates while in Jas 1:19-27, "the second person plural imperatives is invariably used."[103] This is not entirely accurate given that the imperative ἔστω in 1:19 is in the third person singular, not in the second person plural imperative. Besides, the structuring scholars find of Jas 1:2-27 is notoriously diverse.[104]

The decision on the structuring of these verses is particularly important for the purpose of this thesis to explain the plausibility that the author of James wrote with the intent to discourage the inclination of some Jews in the Diaspora to participate in the brewing rebellion against the Romans before the catastrophe of the year AD 70. The next chapter tries to show that such inclination might be found in Jas 1:2-20 in parallel with Jas 5:7-12. For this reason, the next paragraph explains a possible reading that conforms to a division of Jas 1:2-27 at Jas 1:20. This division, it is admitted, does not conform to the division of these verses

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[101]Cheung, 61. See also Dibelius, 65-68; Vouga, 35-37; Bauckham, 63; Moo, 47-50; Taylor, 121; and McKnight, 55.

[102]See Cheung, 61-67. Italics original.

[103]Cheung, 65.

[104]Cheung (65), as has been indicated, divides Jas 1:2-27 at 1:18. So does Dibelius, 108, and McKnight, 68-80. Davids (*Epistle,* 29) separates the subsection of Jas 1:19-21. This subsection of Jas 1:19-21 is the same paragraph division found in NA^{28}. Johnson (191-192) divides these verses at Jas 1:21, while Taylor (122) does so at Jas 1:19a.

made by most commentators of James.[105] If however, as it is argued in the next chapter, there was an inclination in James's audience that might have been delineated in Jas 1:2-20 in parallel with Jas 5:7-12, it would constitute one more reason in favor of identifying the division of Jas 1:2-27 at 1:20.

For the time being, the focus is on the inferential conjunction διό, meaning "therefore," of Jas 1:21. The context seems to be the crucial factor in determining the boundaries of the idea or ideas that James has presented in Jas 1:2-20 and to which the conjunction διό connects with the exhortation that follows.[106] The variegated divisions that interpreters of James have made of Jas 1:2-27, particularly those verses closer to the conjunction διό of Jas 1:21, reflect the different scope of idea or ideas presented in James before the conjunction διό. In other words, when an interpreter places the division at Jas 1:18, he or she is encompassing only the ideas presented in Jas 1:19-20 as connected with what follows by the conjunction διό in Jas 1:21. If a set of convictions and behaviors is indeed formulated in Jas 1:2-20, as argued in the next chapter, then grammar and logic require to take the inferential conjunction διό in Jas 1:21 as referring to the whole discussion of Jas 1:2-20 on how to face and on how not to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life.[107] This reading

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[105]Taylor *(*50) notes that "very few commentators discern a shift in the text between 1.20 and 1.21." Moo (85) also observes the fact that most commentators place the division between 1:21 and 1:22.

[106]For an explanation of the function of conjunctions and of this inferential conjunction in particular, see Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 294-302. See also BDAG, 250; and BDF, § 451(5).

[107]Louw & Nida (89.47) translate the inferential conjunction διό as "*therefore, for this reason, for this very reason, so then.*" Italics original.

that places the division at 1:20 encompasses the ideas presented in Jas 1:2-20 as connected by the conjunction διό to the exhortation that follows. Although Dibelius places the division at Jas 1:18, he does observe that Jas 1:21-25 is the main part of the section of Jas 1:19-27 and that Jas 1:21 constitutes the transition to the theme of submitting to the salvific word developed in Jas 1:21-25.[108] Also, as Johnson states, concerning Jas 1:13-21, "The contrast remains between two ways of life based on two measures of reality."[109] Another reason in favor of the reading that places the division of Jas 1:2-27 at 1:20 is found in the high-level literary shift between Jas 1:20 and Jas 1:21, as well as a tight cohesion between Jas 1:21 and Jas 1:22 that Taylor identifies as the next section indicates.[110] The reading of James 1 offered by this thesis suggests as plausible an opposition between the inclination of James's audience to actively participate in the brewing rebellion against the Romans that might be implied in Jas 1:2-20 in parallel with Jas 5:7-11/12, although not explicitly, and James's exhortation to submit instead in practical ways to the salvific λόγος, the perfect law of liberty, in Jas 1:21-27.[111] In light then of the inclination of James's audience that might be implied in Jas 1:2-20, Cheung's efforts toward the "formal-semantical-syntactical-thematic delimitation of the text" of Jas 1:2-27, specifically the division he makes at Jas 1:18, do not satisfy. The delineation of

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[108]Dibelius, 112. Cf. McKnight, 140.

[109]Johnson, 205.

[110]Taylor, 50-51.

[111]Regarding the function of the conjunction διό, a similar argument is given by Moo (85) in order to extend the connection of this conjunction to Jas 1:18 rather than just to Jas 1:19-20.

this plausible inclination in Jas 1:2-20 in parallel with Jas 5:7-12 is further substantiated in the next chapter.

For the structure of the body of the text, Cheung assumes the author's technique of the grammatical construction of the vocative address, ἀδελφοί μου, with the negative imperative, to mark major divisions at Jas 2:1; 3:1; and 4:11.[112] James, however, uses a very similar construction in 5:9 without any hint of marking a major division. It also needs to be borne in mind that James does not use the vocative ἀδελφοί in a consistent manner as marker of major divisions. Such are the cases, for example, in Jas 1:16; 1:19; and in 2:5. The next subheading shows that Taylor builds a strong case for a major inclusio beginning in 2:12-13, without the presence of the vocative ἀδελφοί, ending the inclusio precisely at 4:11-12, where Cheung suggests the beginning of a major division. If Taylor's significant inclusio proves more convincing, then Cheung's structuring of Jas 2:1-5:11 requires some revision.[113] The grammatical construction of the vocative address, ἀδελφοί μου, with the negative imperative, identified by Cheung in order to decipher the structure of the body of the text of James might indeed help determine James's intended divisions, and yet other formal relationships in the text are necessary to substantiate the divisions. Bauckham, for example and as noted above, resorts to various markers to attempt to decipher the structure of the body of the text of James. Bauckham's approach, in this case, is more appropriate than Cheung's.

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[112]Cheung, 71.

[113]Cheung, 75-79.

Lastly, the following extended quote of Cheung's observations on Jas 5:12-20, the epilogue of James according to Cheung, provides an example of how he applies discourse analysis to the deciphering of the structure of James.

> In the epilogue, our author draws attention to an important and earlier matter in the body (especially requests and commands) and thus urges the recipients forcefully to pay attention to that matter. Responsibility phrases in terms of imperatives (5:12, 13, 14, 16), motive clauses (5:15-16, 19-20), and conditional clauses (the phrase τις ἐν ὑμῖν occurs three times: 5:13, 14, 19) which are prevalent in the main body are also found throughout the ending of the work. The focus of 5:12-18 is on the theme of perfection with different circumstances having appropriate matching responses (Tamez 1992:69). The epilogue begins appropriately with an apparent allusion to a saying of Jesus (cf. Mt. 5:33-37; 12:37), perhaps deliberately so in highlighting the authority of his teaching, accentuating the importance of integrity (perfection) in speech by refusing to take an oath in every discourse (5:12). The emphasis in 5:13-18 is on the presence of the power of Christ in the communal prayer of the faithful righteous, both in healing and forgiveness of sins, for their perfection. 5:19-20, an allusion to Prov. 10:12, not only serves as the conclusion to the entire work but also restates its purpose.[114]

This reading makes the epilogue of James a literary hodgepodge of clauses, emphasis on perfection, highlighting of Jesus's authority, power of Christ in the communal prayer, conclusion of James, and restatement of its purpose. The application that Cheung makes of his method of "formal-semantical-syntactical-thematic delimitation of the text" to decipher the structure of James seems rather inconclusive, inasmuch as he does not provide a clear compass as to how to assess the different components of his method in order to determine the divisions in the text. He really leaves the door open for ambiguity and unpredictability, especially if one takes into account the well-known complexity of the

[114]Cheung, 68. Parentheses original.

structure of James. Notwithstanding these comments, Cheung does contribute to the pursuit of the structure of James by his very attempt to apply discourse analysis to the exploration of structure in James. Also, he contributes to such an exploration by confirming, perhaps unintentionally, the complexity of the structure of James. The last relevant study of this exploration is that of Mark E. Taylor. In it a more clear orientation in the exploration of structure in James than what Cheung provides might be found.

Formal Relationships Reveal the Structure

Taylor utilizes text-linguistics to investigate the structure of James under the premise that "The macro-structure conveys the large thematic ideas that in turn govern the micro-structures, and thus the whole text."[115] According to Taylor, such a premise "presupposes that a written text begins with an author's formulation of an idea which is then expressed and developed by conscious language choices."[116] These language choices are manifested in the formal relationships in the text. Taylor then affirms that text-linguistics seeks "to understand the formal relationships in a text, whether grammatical, semantic or contextual, that hold a text together so that it makes sense."[117] Taylor follows the model of

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[115]Taylor, 38. He cites and shares the same premise postulated by Porter in Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 300. Taylor (3) points out that "[t]he field [of text linguistics] is broad and diverse but is united by a concern to enquire after 'whole' meanings of texts rather than just the meaning of its parts and to analyse the various text-sequences of a discourse in order to study the relationships between sections of the composition." Furthermore, Taylor (5) indicates that "the objective of text-linguistics is to demonstrate how the parts relate to the whole in any given text, thus offering key insights for interpretation."

[116]Taylor, 39.

[117]Taylor, 39.

discourse analysis as applied by Guthrie who defines it as "[A] process of investigation by which one examines the form and function of all the parts and levels of a written discourse, with the aim of better understanding both the parts and the whole of that discourse."[118]

Taylor also points, as a major tenet of text linguistics, to "the relevant situational and text pragmatics features that shape a discourse, such as author, provenance, occasion, reader's circumstances and social context."[119] He does so assuming that "a proper understanding of the *milieu* in which a book was crafted is essential for assessing its structure."[120] After having indicated these major tenets of the method of text linguistics, he goes on to apply it to James. He begins with the analysis of the cohesion shifts in James.

Taylor defines the analysis of cohesion shifts as the "means of probing the cohesion dynamics of a text in order to discern where significant shifts occur in a discourse."[121] This analysis presupposes, according to him, the existence in the text of "objective, recognizable criteria … that manifest intentional breaks in its linguistic structure."[122] The recognizable criteria consist of "genre, topic, temporal indicators, actor, subject, verb tense, voice, mood, person, number, reference and lexical items."[123] The

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[118]George H. Guthrie, "Discourse Analysis," in *Interpreting the New Testament,* ed. David A. Black and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 255. Taylor follows the model developed and applied by Guthrie in George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).

[119]Taylor, 39.

[120]Taylor, 40. Italics original.

[121]Taylor, 45.

[122]Taylor, 45.

[123]Taylor, 45.

elements of genre and topic are assigned more weight in the establishment of literary shifts in the text.[124] He then classifies the literary shifts as low, medium and high level, depending on the number of changes in the various components of the recognizable criteria in each micro-structure analyzed.[125]

Having identified the following twenty-two high-level literary shifts in James: 1:9, 1:12, 1:13, 1:16, 1:19, 1:21, 2:1, 2:5b, 2:14, 2:21, 2:25, 3:1, 3:13, 4:1, 4:7, 4:11, 4:13, 5:1, 5:6, 5:12, 5:16 and 5:19, Taylor assigns significance to the high-level shifts occurring before and after Jas 1:12, 1:16; 4:11-12; 5:6, and 5:12 "thus indicating their independent character in that they are 'isolated' from the surrounding context."[126] These findings confirm, according to Taylor, what Dibelius considered "an isolated saying which is connected neither with what follows nor with what precedes."[127] This isolation, Taylor indicates, explains why some commentators connect those verses with what precedes and other commentators connect the same verses with what follows. The corollary of this predicament is that other factors need to be brought into consideration in order to determine the function of such isolated verses.[128]

The suggestion made in the next chapter of the plausible inclination of James's audience to actively participate in the brewing rebellion against the Romans that

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[124]Taylor, 45. He assigns more weight to these elements, following the method of text linguistics as modeled by Guthrie.

[125]Taylor, 45.

[126]Taylor, 58.

[127]Taylor, 48.

[128]Taylor, 48.

might be critiqued, albeit not explicitly, by Jas 1:2-20 and Jas 5:7-11/12, finds structural support in the high-level literary shifts that Taylor recognizes between Jas 1:20 and Jas 1:21, and the one after Jas 5:6, as well as in the tight cohesions he finds between Jas 1:21 and Jas 1:22, and in Jas 5:7-11. Although he links the conjunction διό of Jas 1:21 with only Jas 1:20 and not to the whole section of Jas 1:2-20, as was already argued in this chapter, Taylor does observe "a shift from the proverbial expression of 1.20 to exhortation [in Jas 1:21-25]."[129] Concerning the shift between Jas 1:20 and Jas 1:21, Taylor makes the following observations: "Additionally, there are shifts in the actor, subject, verb mood, person and number fields. The reference shifts from God in 1.20 to the hearers in 1.21. It is also significant that there are no shifts in the two colons following 1.21, thus indicating a tight cohesion between 1.21 and 1.22."[130] For the shift after Jas 5:6 and the cohesion unit in Jas 5:7-11, Taylor observes:

> [A]lmost every cohesion field shifts after 5.6c with the exhortation to 'be patient' introduced by the conjunction οὖν. Shifts occur in genre, topic, actor, subject and almost all verb fields. The lexical field shifts as the language of patience and endurance from chapter one is reintroduced with the terms μακροθυμήσατε (5.7, 8), στηρίζατε (5.8), ὑπομείναντας (5.11), and ὑπομονήν (5.11). References to Old Testament figures, such as the prophets and Job, introduce new references. Other cohesive factors binding 5.7-11 together as a unit include references to the return of the Lord in 5.7,8 and 11, the repetition of imperatives, as well as the repetition of the interjection in 5.7, 9 and 11.[131]

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[129]Taylor, 51.

[130]Taylor, 51. The colon in Taylor's investigation is the basic unit in the text and "normally consisting of a subject and a predicate and thus essentially equivalent to a proposition." He follows the definition found in Johannes P. Louw, "Discourse Analysis and the Greek New Testament," in *The Bible Translator* 24 (1973): 101-118.

[131]Taylor, 57.

The high-level literary shifts identified by Taylor at Jas 1:9, 1:12, 1:13, 1:16, 1:19, 5:6 and 5:12 are of particular importance for this thesis, as they open the possibility of identifying smaller units of discourse in James. Some of these smaller units could be found in Jas 1:5-8, 9-11, 13-15, 16-19a, 19b-20, and 5:7-11/12. Their relevance for this thesis, particularly for the discussion on the inclination of James's audience, will be noted in the conclusion of this chapter and developed in the next.

Given the particular importance of the high-level literary shift identified by Taylor before and after Jas 5:12 for the plausible inclination of James's audience that this thesis suggests, it is opportune to underscore the following findings of Taylor.

> A turn in the discourse is marked by the expression πρὸ πάντων δέ. The genre shifts from exposition in 5.11 to exhortation in 5.12, and the topic returns to 'speech and judgment', thus indicating lexical shifts as well. The same types of shifts occur following 5.12 with the rhetorical question κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν. The repetition of the phrase τις ἐν ὑμῖν (5.13,14,19) provides cohesion to the section with a renewed focus on the community.[132]

Next, in his pursuit of the literary structure of James, Taylor explores the use of "inclusio," in order to complement the boundary markers preliminarily established by the cohesion shifts he identifies in James.[133] He suggests the following fourteen inclusios: 1:2/4 - 1:12, 1:12 - 1:25, 1:13 - 1:21, 1:16 - 1:19, 2:1 - 2:9, 2:12/13 - 4:11/12, 2:14/16 - 2:26, 2:14 - 2:16/17, 2:20 - 2:26, 3:1 - 3:12, 4:1 - 4:3, 4:6 - 5:6, 4:7 - 4:10, and 5:7 - 5:11. Taylor's

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[132]Taylor, 58.

[133]Taylor, 59. He (59) defines "inclusio" as "the repetition of a key lexical item, phrase or even paragraph at significant points in the discourse giving a 'sandwich' structure to the text." Taylor (60) further restricts the recognition of an "inclusio" by the following rule he cites from Guthrie (*The Structure of Hebrews,* 77): "[W]here a single word, or brief phrase, is identified as the key element utilized to close out an *inclusio*, there should be no intervening use of that word, or the use of that word should be uniquely

identification of the first two inclusios, those of 1:2/4 -1:12 and 1:12 - 1:25 tries to find balance in a sort of a double opening in James chapter one.[134] This seems to be a similar mistaken approach to that of Francis and Davids. The function of the conjunction διό in Jas 1:21, as indicated in the previous section, might be that of connecting the ideas presented in Jas 1:2-20 with the ideas of the exhortation found in Jas 1:21-27. If that ends up being the function of the conjunction διό in Jas 1:21, then finding a balance within a sort of a double opening in James chapter one becomes unnecessary.

Another problematic inclusio that Taylor suggests is the one "grand inclusio" in 1:2-25 and 5:7-20.[135] He does, indeed, present enough evidence for an inclusio between 1:2-12 and 5:7-11 such as the thematic connection of patience in 1:2-12 and patience and largesse of soul in 5:7-11. However, to extend the inclusio to the whole of Jas 5:7-20 does not account for the fact that the themes of patience and of largesse of soul are not expressly found beyond 5:7-11. Neither does it take into account the strong traditional association between prayer for the sick as found in Jas 5:13-18 and the exhortation to bring back the wayward brother found in Jas 5:19-20, as is put forward by Dale C. Allison.[136] Such association is not present in James 1 and turns Jas 5:13-20 instead into a separate unit with

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complementary to the opening, serving to round off the topic under discussion." Italics original.

[134]Taylor, 60-62, and 69.

[135]Taylor, 69-70.

[136]Dale C. Allison, Jr., "A Liturgical Tradition behind the Ending of James," in *Journal for the Study of New Testament* 34 (2011): 3-18.

the function of a liturgical ending of James, separate from Jas 5:7-12.[137] Nothing in this discussion diminishes the validity of the inclusio identified by Taylor in Jas 5:7-11; on the contrary, this inclusio emerges even more convincingly as a transition unit between the twin calls against the braggarts, οἱ λέγοντες ... ἐμπορευσόμεθα καὶ κερδήσομεν, in Jas 4:13-16, and against the rich in Jas 5:1-6, and the liturgical ending found in Jas 5:13-20.[138]

The truly significant inclusio, however, that Taylor identifies with important implications for the overall structure of James is the "carefully crafted *inclusio*" between 2:12-13 and 4:11-12.[139] He presents strong evidence for this inclusio, such as the presence of the key term νόμος in Jas 2:12 and in 4:11-12 where it appears on four occasions and God himself is identified as ὁ νομοθέτης. Taylor perceptively points out that this key term in James completely disappears in the material between Jas 2:12 and 4:11.[140] Similar evidence is presented regarding other key terms in James such as λαλέω / καταλαλέω, κρίνω, and ποιέω / ποιητής in association, in both places, with νόμος.[141] The unmistakable thematic relationship

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[137]See Allison, "A liturgical Tradition," 4 and 8-9. Although McKnight (239) does not hint at awareness of the strong traditional association between prayer for the sick and the exhortation to bring back the wayward brother, he notes some links between Jas 5:13-18 and 5:19-20, especially concerning the theme of restoration from sin and its consequences. Dibelius (241) also finds that Jas 5:7-11 is separate from the rest of Jas 5:7-20. Todd C. Penner (*The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Rereading an Ancient Christian Letter* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 150-151) also argues for Jas 5:7-11/12 as a separate unit. Johnson (311) emphasizes the transitional character of Jas 5:7-11. Moo (220) also separates this subsection, although he sees in it more of a connection with Jas 5:1-6 than a transitional function with the ending of James.

[138]More on this designation as "braggarts" of those addressed in Jas 4:13-17 will become clear in the next chapter.

[139]Taylor, 65. Italics original. See also Taylor and Guthrie, 686.

[140]Taylor, 64.

[141]Taylor, 64-65.

in the short material of these two passages is indeed compelling.[142] Further, Taylor identifies the important functions of summary and of transition for both of these short sections.

If accepted, as it should be, given the strong evidence, this inclusio could resolve the confusing disparity of placing and functions other commentators assign to Jas 2:12-13 and 4:11-12.[143] Also, this key inclusio strongly hints at parallels between the various sections of James, as can be observed below in the structure Taylor proposes. This inclusio could constitute a breakthrough in the exploration of structure in James. In fact, it could be seen as a fulcrum on which the structure of James turns. One of the implications of this inclusio would be the need to change the tendency to read James as a linear progression of thought and to read it instead as a paralleled structure.[144]

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[142]See Taylor and Guthrie, 686.

[143]Dibelius (147-148) views Jas 2:12-13 as a concluding admonition to the treatise of Jas 2:1-13, although he sees v. 13 as an independent saying that "because of [its] compact formulation, the thought in our passage has found a particularly forceful expression." For Jas 4:11-12, Dibelius (208) confesses certain hesitation but opts to include these verses with Jas 3:13-4:12. Johnson (13) points to Jas 2:12-13 as the clearest instance of verses "that appear unattached to the relatively self-contained essays," and gives Jas 4:11-12 as one of the examples of isolated verses "that most confound efforts to locate in James a single coherent literary structure." Cargal (137 and 169) includes Jas 4:11-12 as part of the section of Jas 3:1-4:12 as well as of the section of Jas 4:11-5:20. Moo (197) discusses the various decisions made by other commentators on the placing and function of Jas 4:11-12, opting for a separate subunit but linking it with what has been said before and even suggesting an inclusio on speech comprehending Jas 3:1-4:12. Cheung (77-82) recognizes the lack of clarity concerning the placing and function of Jas 4:11-12 and that it should be read as transitional, yet misguided by applying only the grammatical construction of the vocative address, ἀδελφοί μου, with the negative imperative, to mark major divisions as found in 2:1, 3:1, and 4:11, he makes Jas 4:11-12 the beginning of the section of Jas 4:11-5:11. McKnight (218) sees Jas 2:12-13 functioning as "a summary exhortation for the whole passage and draws a conclusion to the passage [Jas 2:1-13]." Furthermore, McKnight (359), similarly to Moo, views Jas 4:11-12 as forming an inclusio with Jas 3:1-2 around the theme of speech, although he notes that "the change in substance and theme at 4:11 is noticeable." One last example is found in the recent article of William Varner, "The Main Theme and the Structure of James," in *Master's Seminary Journal* 22 (2011): 115-126. Varner identifies Jas 4:11-12 as a separate unit. In view of this discussion on the critical inclusio of Jas 2:12-13 and 4:11-12, the dismissive approach of Blomberg and Kamell (25) to it because these passages "read more naturally … as conclusions to smaller units of thought than as forming a grand inclusio around fairly disparate material," turns out to be unwarranted, particularly in the light of the evidence presented by Taylor.

[144]Varner (128) is not the only one who reads James under this light of "linearization of

Besides the literary cohesion shifts and inclusios, Taylor examines a plethora of literary means that set boundaries of major units and establish the interrelationships among such units. He examines, among others, hook words as cognates that connect different units, parallel introductions, and proverbial transitions, in order to seek cohesion on the macro-level. He also finds a sense of cohesion to the whole in James via the themes of deity, community, perfection, law, salvation and judgment, the use of the tongue and the numerous references to speech throughout.[145]

Over all, Taylor's application of the method of discourse analysis for the deciphering of the structure of James is systematic and thorough. His detailed identification of the multiple and complex literary means in James to effect cohesion is helpful in exploring James's "animated and characteristic unity."[146] Finally, Taylor, even though he recognizes that the dynamics in James point to a complex rhetorical strategy that resists a neat, step-by-step outline, puts forward the following paralleled structure for James. [147]

1. 1:1 Letter opening
2. 1:2-27 A double introduction on living by righteous wisdom

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James." This is Varner's way of identifying the "unique semantic development of the main theme." For Varner, wisdom is the main theme. He utilized the method of prominence in order to identify the theme of wisdom as the "peek" (main) thematic thrust of James in the central passage of Jas 3:13-18. Applying such a method, he sets apart the passage of Jas 3:13-18 as the one that highlights the main concern of the author by examining the various linguistic features that "frontground" this passage, that is, set it apart. Other scholars presented in this exploration such as Bauckham and Cargal could be identified with this way of reading James, as can be the case of many commentators, including Moo, Blomberg and Kammel, and McKnight.

[145]Taylor, 76.

[146]Varner (116) also observes in Taylor a certain overanalyzing of the text by way of "imagining too many literary characteristics." One weakness that Varner suggests for the work of Taylor is the absence of one controlling theme.

[147]See Taylor, 121-124.

1:2-11 Handling trials with righteous wisdom
- 1:2-4 Exhortations related to trials
- 1:5-8 Need for righteous wisdom
- 1:9-11 Wise attitudes for rich and poor

1:12 Overlapping transition on blessings for those who persevere under trial

1:13-27 The perils of self-deception
- 1:13-15 Temptation's true nature
- 1:16-19a God's true nature: He gives the Word
- 1:19b-21 Righteous living through the Word
- 1:22-25 Do not be deceived: Be doers of the Word –The Law of liberty–
- 1:26-27 Transition on self-deception regarding speaking and acting

3. 2:1-5:6 Body of the letter with a chiasmic structure on living the "Law of liberty"

2:1-11 Body opening on violating the royal law through wrong speaking and acting inappropriately toward the poor

2:12-13 Beginning of the *inclusio* of 2:12/13 – 4:11/12: "so speak and so act as one being judged by the Law of liberty"

2:14-3:12 First essay of the body proper on wrong acting and speaking in community
- 2:14-26 Wrong actions toward the poor
- 3:1-12 Wrong speaking
  - 3:13-18 Central proverbial transition and center of the chiasm on righteous vs. worldly wisdom

4:1-10 Second essay of the body proper on prophetic rebuke: a call to humility and repentance
- 4:1-5 Rebuke of the community's words and deeds
- 4:6-10 A call to repentance

4:11-12 Closing of the *inclusio* of 2:12/13 – 4:11/12: "do the law, do not judge it"

4:13-5:6 Body closing on twin calls to the arrogant rich
- 4:13-17 Rebuke of arrogant presumption
- 5:1-6 Judgment on the arrogant rich

4. 5:7-20 Conclusion: enduring in righteous living in community
- 5:7-11 Need for patient endurance
- 5:12 Transition of the exhortation against oath taking
- 5:13-20 Need for righteous words in community.

Taylor's systematic and thorough application of discourse analysis contributes most significantly to this exploration of the literary structure of James. However, one particular lack in his investigation must be noted. He correctly identifies, as a major tenet of text linguistics, "the relevant situational and text pragmatics features that shape a discourse … [correctly assuming that] a proper understanding of the *milieu* in which a book was crafted is essential for assessing its structure."[148] Yet, his investigation focuses on the formal literary relationships in the text as has been succinctly presented in this section, and does not engage "the relevant situational and text pragmatics features" that shaped James. The lack of engagement with such concern is reflected in his interpretation of the data, when he moves from the data to the themes in James. For example, he concludes his investigation affirming that "James exhorts his readers, in their own context of suffering and social injustice, to a complete and full obedience manifested in a love for God and love for neighbour."[149] He does not explore whatsoever the context of suffering and social injustice to which he is referring. In other words, the lack of engagement with the original situation that gave way to James is bound to create disjunction when one tries to translate structure into thematic development in James. This is precisely what the next chapter is about, the exploration of the original situation of James.

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[148]Taylor, 39-40. Italics original.

[149]Taylor, 124.

Conclusion

This chapter has gleaned some critical insights concerning the literary structure of James from the selected and relevant studies explored, with the understanding that a better grasp of the literary structure of James should enable us to explore the situation that prompted the author of James to write. It has once again become clear that the literary structure of James is manifestly complex, and that a consensus understanding of the structure of James continues to elude New Testament studies. Dibelius's old description of the composition of James as an "animated and characteristic unity," and Bauckham's more recent depiction of the same composition as "a relatively carefully structured whole" can both be seen as valid. Their studies should constitute a call for moderation, even today, when trying to identify the structure of James. Francis's brief study suggested substantial thematic coherence in James and thus encouraged expectations of more structure in the letter than what Dibelius acknowledged. Davids followed suit and emphasized the intentionality of the author of James manifested in a redacted work that responds to an original situation within a decipherable literary structure. With the work of Cargal, it becomes clearer that James evidences that its author had in mind a set of values that he or she opposes to the set of values of that of its audience. Johnson recognizes Cargal's contribution as an important organizing principle in James and underscores James's convictions concerning the incompatibility of two construals of reality. With Bauckham's work, other key features of James become clearer, such as the centrality of the theme of wisdom, the presence of formal literary markers of structure, and its strong aphoristic nature, particularly, of James 1. The pioneering

application of discourse analysis to the exploration of structure in James and the anchoring of the centrality of the theme of wisdom in a more structured James are two important contributions of the study of Cheung. Finally, Taylor's investigation should be recognized as a more systematic application of discourse analysis to the deciphering of the complex structure of James, gathering sufficient evidence for the identification of Jas 2:12-13 and Jas 4:11-12 as a key inclusio that strongly hints at parallels between the various sections of James.

As a result of this exploration, this thesis acquiesces with the suggestion of a more paralleled structure in James and identifies the following as viable parallels in the structure of James with which an exploration of a plausible original situation of James in the next chapter can be undertaken. The extent of this thesis cannot comprehend the whole of James and so the exploration is limited to these two sets of paralleled passages.

1.	1:1	Letter opening	
2.		1:2-27	Dealing with the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life
3.		5:7-11/12	Dealing with the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life
4.	5:13-20	Prayer for the sick and bringing back to truth the wandering brother	

Another result of this exploration that is incorporated into this thesis is the identification, made mainly by Taylor, of the following smaller units in the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-27 and 5:7-11/12. These smaller units, summarily described here, will be further visited in the next chapter for the exploration of the original situation of James.

1.	1:2-4	Genuine faith opposes the war agenda
2.	1:5-8	the "διακρινόμενος" lacks wisdom and might favor the war agenda
3.	1:9-11	The rich trusts wealth, not God, and might support the war agenda
4.	1:12-15	Blaming God for the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they perceive as inducing them to do evil
5.	1:16-19a	Questioning the goodness and the immutability of God

6.	1:19b-20	Ὀργή as the ultimate means to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life
7.	5:7-11/12	Exhortation to resilience and the imperative against oaths

With these insights into the structure of James, the next chapter explores the inclination that Jews in the Diaspora may have had in favor of the brewing rebellion against the Romans before the catastrophe of AD 70, as the plausible original situation of James that might provide a more robust explanation of the meaning of James. This exploration will be undertaken from the text itself read in light of the parallels and small units of James identified above.

CHAPTER 3

AN EXPLORATION INTO THE ORIGINAL SITUATION OF JAMES

This chapter explores the plausibility of James, a canonical New Testament Christian writing, having been addressed to a Jewish Diaspora, literally, with the intent to discourage the inclination of some Jews in the Diaspora to participate in the brewing and violent rebellion against the Romans before the catastrophe of the year AD 70.[1] This inclination is henceforth identified as the "war agenda." Such an agenda could have constituted the original situation that prompted the author of James to write. Also, such an agenda might provide a more robust interpretation of James than the interpretation obtained by suggesting strife within Christian groups as the original situation for James that is often found in commentaries as will be shown in this chapter.[2] The need for this type of exploration derives from the elusiveness of consensus among scholars about the original situation of James and from the multiplicity of thematic emphases they suggest for James.

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[1]As was the case in the previous chapter, "James" in this chapter also refers to the letter of James and not to its author, unless clearly indicated otherwise.

[2]The term "inclination" is used in this chapter in the sense of "a disposition or bent, especially of the mind or will; a liking or preference; a tendency toward a certain condition, action, etc." Definition taken from Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/inclination (accessed: September 16, 2014).

Elusiveness of Consensus on the Original Situation of James

Consensus on the literary structure of James is not the only important aspect that has eluded Jamesian studies. The following examples establish the fact that consensus on the original situation that prompted the author of James to write has also eluded studies of James. In his recent work, Scot McKnight accepts that "James remains an enigma: in spite of the best efforts of many scholars, its *Sitz im Leben* remains elusive."[3] The still helpful, although a century old, work of Joseph B. Mayor indicates that there must have been an original situation that led the author to address his audience's "special needs and dangers, [based] on his intimate acquaintance with the national character and the general conditions of the time."[4] Mayor's judicious indication is worth bearing in mind when exploring the original situation of James, given that the larger context of "the national character and the general conditions of the time" could very well turn out to be more appropriate for identifying the original situation of James than the suggestion made by some scholars of internal strife within Christian groups.[5] Dibelius, contrary to Mayor and denying a specific milieu, conjectures that "the selection and the amplification of admonitions naturally indicate that the circumstances of Christianity tended in general toward an adaptation to the life-style and

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[3]Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 3.

[4]Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of James,* reprint (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990 [1913]), 154. His work of over a hundred years ago maintains some relevance for this study of James thanks to his detailed and massive research on pertinent issues of this thesis, particularly authorship, audience, date, and language.

[5]Although the specific discussion on the author of our text will be undertaken in the next chapter, the important role that James, the brother of Jesus and possible author of our text, could have had at the national level in the Palestine of mid-first century AD is here underscored.

disposition of the 'world.'"[6] Neither does Davids find a specific historical situation. He believes instead that "the cultural descriptions in James's material describe something of the general situation in which the author of the epistle finds himself (or his readers)."[7] Elsa Tamez reads James as a text authored by "a person concerned about the well-being of the oppressed Christian communities and about the poor in general."[8] Richard Bauckham, arguing against specific exigencies in James, affirms, "All is manifestly typical or hypothetical."[9] Such elusiveness has left interpreters without a precise compass to identify the original situation of James, and constitutes another reason, besides the elusiveness of consensus on the literary structure of James, that explains the diverse multiplicity of thematic emphases they read in James.

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[6]Martin Dibelius, *James*, revised by Heinrich Greenven and translated by Michael A. Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976 [1920]), 46. Similarly to Mayor, the work of Dibelius maintains some relevance, and more so than Mayor's work. Dibelius's is still part of the current discussion in Jamesian studies. In the words of Penner, "By understanding Dibelius's framing of the discussion regarding James one is better able to appreciate the way in which scholarship of the last 15 or so years … has systematically responded to Dibelius's prior conclusions." See Todd C. Penner, "The Epistle of James in Current Research," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies.* 7 (1999): 262.

[7]Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James, A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 30. Parentheses original.

[8]Elsa Tamez, *The Scandalous Message of James,* revised edition (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 7.

[9]Richard Bauckham, *James, Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 27. Recognizing the elusiveness of consensus on the original situation in James, see also Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 23-25; and Craig L. Blomberg and Marian J. Kamell, *James: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 27-32.

Multiplicity of Thematic Emphases in James

The following examples illustrate how the elusiveness of consensus regarding the original situation of James has led scholars to propose different thematic emphases in the letter. Thus the need remains to try to find a more precise compass for the better interpretation of James. This need can be addressed by further exploring the original situation of James.

Mayor locates the contribution of James in encouraging its audience to bear trials patiently, and in warning them against certain errors of doctrine and practice.[10] As for Dibelius, his comprehension of James as paraenesis and of James's goal as countering the worldly ways leads him to understand all of James as a manifestation of "the piety of the Poor."[11] Davids wrestles with the original situation to which James is a reaction and, unfortunately, limits the basic cultural data from which to determine the original situation to the two groups, one mercantile and the other agricultural, referred to in Jas 4:13-5:6. As the most likely setting of James, he identifies the Palestinian church suffering under class warfare, before the catastrophic events of AD 66-70, that led to "complaining, bitterness, and party struggles, along with the temptation to join the Zealots."[12] He admits, however that

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[10]Mayor. See especially, pp. 146 and 192.

[11]Dibelius, 48. As indicated in the previous chapter of this thesis, "the *piety of the Poor*" in James, according to Dibelius, is characterized by submission to God and a rejection of worldly ways that include the means of the rich.

[12]Davids, 33.

"[O]ne can never be sure of the setting of James."[13] James then becomes, according to Davids, a demand for Christians to "give up the world."[14] Tamez, recognizing the uncertainty with regard to author, date, and place of origin, turns to the text itself, and provides her own context that she labels "the perspective of the poor." She then reads James against such a context. Next, she views James as "A new and relevant letter that reflects a situation of injustice and oppression and that challenges Christians to confront that situation."[15] Bauckham, combining the lack of original situation and the absence of literary structure he suggests for James, finds James to be a "[C]ompendium of wisdom instruction on a varied range of topics relevant to fulfilling the law, implementing the wisdom from above, and attaining perfection."[16] He then identifies perfection as the overarching theme in James, based on what he suggests as (1) the reiterated notion of this theme in the first short section of the introduction (1:2-4), (2) the intentional seven (a number he takes as the number of perfection or completeness) occurrences of the τέλειος word-group in the whole work, and (3) the seven attributes of "wisdom from above" in Jas 3:17. According to Bauckham, the author put together such a compendium in his capacity as head of the church in Jerusalem and for the Jewish Christians in the Diaspora. This must have taken place, according to Bauckham, before the leadership of the nascent Christian movement in Jerusalem dissolved due to the

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[13]Davids, 34.

[14]Davids, 34.

[15]Tamez, 13. See also pp. 12, 19, 23, 25, 28, 51, 56, 60, and 62.

[16]Bauckham, 67.

aftermath of the catastrophe of AD 66-70.[17] Blomberg and Kamell are inclined to find the theme of wealth and poverty as the dominant concern of James.[18] John H. Elliott constitutes yet another example when he identifies "the issue of completeness and wholeness and their implied opposite, division and fragmentation" at the personal, social, and cosmological dimensions, as the main theme in James.[19]

François Vouga explores a much broader social and economic context for James. He raises the expectations of a deeper wrestling with a more precise original situation in James:

> We note at the outset a particular emphasis on the analysis of social realities ….The text itself takes into account certain universality … encompasses the ensemble of activities of the Hellenistic and Roman society. He [James] knows the rural world … but he also knows the urban society and what makes its fascination and distinction: Commerce. James understands this world from the inside out (Jas 1,5-9; 4,13-17) and speaks to his readers of whatever thing that is familiar to them.[20]

Vouga then suggests that James is addressed to poor Christians dispersed in the Greco-Roman world, in order to instill in them the message that the Judeo-Christian faith finds "its telos in faithfully dealing with precariousness and suffering, [and that such faith]

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[17]See Bauckham, 16-25.

[18]Blomberg and Kamell, 26.

[19]John H. Elliott, "The Epistle of James in Rhetorical and Social-Scientific Perspective: Holiness-Wholeness and Patterns of Replication," in *The Social World of the New Testament*, edited by Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2008): 105-122.

[20]François Vouga, *L'Épître de Saint Jacques* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1984): 24-25. My translation.

does not lead to a social conformism of societal laws of ruthless ambition, but rather to a liberating rejection of the fascination with the powers in the world (Jas 4:1-10)."[21]

These examples confirm the estimation of Todd C. Penner, in his 1999 assessment of the then current research on James, of the evident lack of consensus among scholars on any single point regarding the historical realities of James.[22] This lack of consensus takes place even in the midst of the growing scholarship on James that Penner rightly observes.[23] He also seems right in his recognition of the general agreement that "the rhetorical aims, social function and structure of the material in James must be granted more weight in understanding the text as a whole."[24] The present chapter takes stock of Penner's observations, particularly of the need to take into account "the intersection of social world, social history and rhetorical analysis" in the exploration of the original situation of James that would explain why the author wrote what he wrote.[25]

Methodological Proceedings

This exploration proceeds heuristically given the "contestable and insecure" nature of historical sociology, and mindful of the impossibility of recovering the whole of the original situation of James. The introduction of this thesis contains the considerations that

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[21]Vouga, 27. My translation.

[22]See Penner, 297.

[23]See Penner, 260-261.

[24]Penner, 272.

[25]Penner, 296.

justify the heuristic approach of this thesis, particularly of this chapter. This exploration is also undertaken exegetically from the following selected parallels of the canonical text of James identified in the previous chapter. These selected parallels constitute a controlling framework, exegetically, for this heuristic exploration of the original situation of James.

1.	1:1	Letter opening	
2.		1:2-27 (1:2-20)	Dealing with the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life
3.		5:7-11/12	Dealing with the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life
4.	5:13-20	Prayer for the sick and bringing back to truth the wandering brother	

For this exploration, the present chapter postulates the following two claims: (1) The canonical New Testament Christian writing of James is addressed to the Jews in the Diaspora, literally, irrespective of whether they were Christians. This claim should not be understood as denying the Christian faith of the author of James, which is assumed by this thesis. (2) The paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12 might be covertly critiquing a set of convictions and behaviors of James's audience that configures a war agenda.[26] There is no denying that an exploration of this sort is constantly threatened by what Clifford J. Geertz defines as the "thick description," that is, the need "to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts."[27] The goal therefore must remain limited to entertaining the

[26]The complete paralleled passages suggested in the previous chapter are Jas 1:2-27 and Jas 5:7-11/12 inasmuch as they deal with how to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life. Of Jas 1:2-27, only Jas 1:2-20 is addressed in order to buttress this claim. That is because, as this chapter argues, Jas 1:2-20 might identify a set of convictions and behaviors of James's audience that in turn might configure a war agenda. If that is the case, then grammar and logic require to take the inferential conjunction διό in Jas 1:21 as referring to the whole discussion of Jas 1:2-20. James 1:21-27 provides, it is suggested, instructions on how to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life. It is also suggested that these instructions lead, in the first place, to the major Jamesian concern for the poor, addressed initially in Jas 2:1-11.

[27]Clifford J. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 27.

plausibility of the inclination of some Jews in the Diaspora toward the war agenda as having significantly precipitated the writing of the letter of James.

The Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora

The first claim postulated by this chapter is that the canonical New Testament Christian writing of James might have been addressed to the Jews in the Diaspora, literally, irrespective of whether they were Christians. Other critical issues, such as authorship, audience, and date, are left for the next chapter, trying to avoid circular reasoning and the preempting of conclusions on the original situation. In this, the lead of Brevard S. Childs is followed. Childs, for the purpose of understanding James's canonical function, holds open the critical options of authorship and date of the composition due to the danger of "twisting the subsequent reading of the canonical text in order to support the theory."[28] In fact, this exploration of the original situation of James might contribute some elements to the discussion on the authorship, audience, and date of James. The search for clues to try to identify the "Diaspora" of Jas 1:1 is where this chapter begins the exploration into the original situation of James.

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[28]Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction.* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 444. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (New Haven: Doubleday, 1995), 89-90, decides for a similar methodology, except that, acknowledging "the slender hope of reconstructing [James'] historical situation," he starts with authorship by James the Brother of the Lord as "the best chance of locating James historically."

The Literal Sense of ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ in James 1:1

The addressees of James are identified with the phrase ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ in Jas 1:1. This whole verse is under no textual uncertainty so the phrase as it stands is taken as original.[29] Many commentators on Jas 1:1, even older commentaries, agree that this phrase, in and of itself, refers to Jews living outside Palestine. For example, Fenton J. A. Hort rejects the notion that the twelve tribes in the Diaspora of Jas 1:1 refer to the church at large as the true Israel, based on the fact that there is "no indication of a spiritual sense" in that address.[30] Concerning this phrase, Mayor asserts "All that it implies is that the advice contained in the letter is in the opinion of the writer suitable for all or any Jews of the Dispersion."[31] Further, he does not think that this phrase "is susceptible of a like figurative meaning."[32] James B. Adamson submits that the phrase means "the Jewish people as a whole."[33] Further on, he unapologetically affirms, "The phrase does indeed 'belong to the physical': its meaning is mortal, terrestrial, ethnic, material, and geographical, and has no more spiritual, celestial, or eternal significance than the regular Jewish Diaspora."[34] For

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[29]The critical apparatus of NA[28] does not register any variant for the text of the addressees in Jas 1:1. Davids (6-7) points correctly to a firm textual tradition for Jas 1:1.

[30]Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The Epistle of St. James* (London: MacMillan, 1909), xxii.

[31]Mayor, 169.

[32]Mayor, 341.

[33]James B. Adamson, *James, The Man and His Message* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 11.

[34]Adamson, 14.

Bauckham, "The only natural interpretation of the phrase 'the twelve tribes in the Diaspora' is that it refers to all members of the people of Israel who lived outside the land of Israel."[35]

Other scholars, however, find metaphorical language in this phrase. For example, Vouga recognizes that Diaspora points to Jews outside Palestine, and yet he opts for James having utilized this designation in the sense of "foreignness," recalling the Jewish root of Christianity.[36] Blomberg and Kamell even see the phrase as, "most naturally," addressing "Jewish Christians outside of Israel."[37]

At this point, it is opportune to bear in mind that this section is trying to identify some clues of the original situation of James from the parallel of Jas 1:1 and Jas 5:13-20 indicated in the exploration of the structure of James in the previous chapter. Being that the text of James is the permanent and controlling referent, trying to determine its audience from the text itself is of the utmost import in the search of the original situation of James. Outcomes as to the original situation of James could differ diametrically if James addresses the Jews in the Diaspora literally, irrespective of whether they were Christians, or if the author, metaphorically, addresses Christians.

The immediate concern, however, is to question the methodology that some commentators utilize in order to suggest a metaphorical or symbolic reading of this phrase.

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[35]Bauckham, 14. See also Grant R. Osborne, "James," *in Cornerstone Biblical Commentary Volume 18*, *James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, Revelation,* edited by Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 6 and 20.

[36]Vouga, 37.

[37]Blomberg and Kamell, 28 and 48. Reading the phrase "ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ" of Jas 1:1 metaphorically, see also Davids, 64; Johnson, *Letter of James,* 169-170; Ralph P. Martin, *James* (Waco: Word Books, 1988), 8-9; McKnight, 65-68; Moo, 23-25 and 49-50. Also Thomas Manton as cited by

The second group of scholars indicated above, those who find metaphorical or symbolic language in the phrase under consideration, and even some scholars of the first group, read their interpretation of other texts of James or even of other New Testament texts, such as First Peter, back into this phrase from Jas 1:1, as if the phrase itself warrants the metaphorical or symbolic reading.

Hort, for example, rejects the notion that the twelve tribes in the Diaspora of Jas 1:1 refer to the church at large as the true Israel based on the fact, mentioned above, that there is "no indication of a spiritual sense" in that address. Yet, he supports the plausibility of James being addressed to Jewish Christians, arguing that the expression "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" of Jas 2:1 seems to prove it, the expression "the good name" of Jas 2:7 probably also proves it, and the expression "the coming of the Lord" of Jas 5:7 perhaps also proves it.[38] Although Bauckham recognizes the unsuitability of the terms "tribe" and "Diaspora" to be applied to the church, and understands the phrase "the twelve tribes in the Diaspora," as encompassing the whole Diaspora, he affirms that "The letter presupposes its readers' allegiance to Jesus the Messiah … [and that its readers] thought of themselves … as the nucleus of the Messianic renewal of the people of Israel."[39] The way that Bauckham bypasses the literalness of the phrase under consideration is precisely by reading his interpretation of another text in James back into Jas 1:1.

Dale C. Allison, "The Fiction of James and Its Sitz im Leben," *Revue Biblique* 108 (2001): 533.

[38]Hort, xxii-xxiv.

[39]Bauckham, 15.

> [T]his Messianic renewal of Israel has the Messianic redemption of the world as its goal. This is clear from 1.18, where those Israelites who have new birth as children of God are called 'a kind of first fruits of his creatures'. They are the first sheaf of the eschatological harvest, offered to God in thankful assurance of the full harvest to come.[40]

Furthermore, Ralph P. Martin sees, in the phrase under consideration, the "worldwide community of believing Jews of the messianic faith."[41] He does so because he understands that the references to the scattering of Acts 8 and 11 "furnish the basis for Christian associations with the concept of dispersion."[42] For Moo, this phrase "certainly appears at first sight to be a reference to the Jewish people who live in the 'diaspora.'"[43] Yet, based on his understanding that the selection of twelve apostles by Jesus suggests that the Christian mission brings forth the eschatological Israel, he concludes, "James writes to Jewish Christians who have been 'dispersed' as a result of persecution (Acts 11:19)."[44] One final example is found in David P. Nystrom who correctly argues, "If the 'twelve tribes' must refer to ethnic Israel, then it is unclear how it can only refer to Jews who happen to be Christians. Logic demands that we either understand the term as referring only to all Jews, or

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[40]Bauckham, 105.

[41]Martin, 8.

[42]Martin, 10.

[43]Moo, 23.

[44]Moo, 50. Parentheses original.

else we understand the term symbolically."[45] He ends up, contra a literal reading of this phrase, considering as likely that "James has the multiracial church in view."[46]

First Peter 1:1 constitutes another New Testament reference often cited to suggest a sort of metaphorical use of Diaspora language being established in nascent Christianity for Christians in general or for Jewish Christians in particular. This understanding is then transferred to the phrase in Jas 1:1.[47] But the mention of Diaspora in 1 Peter 1:1 is further described in 1 Pet 1:1-2 by the adjective ἐκλεκτοῖς, "chosen," and the noun παρεπιδήμοις, with the connotation of living "in a strange and hostile environment;"[48] as well as by the specific geographic location and a Trinitarian statement. But such is not the case with the phrase in Jas 1:1. Rather than any form of Trinitarian Christian descriptive markers, the author inscribes the phrase under consideration in Jas 1:1 deeper into a Jewish environment by evoking the constitution of the nation of Israel with the expression ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς. Even Bauckham recognizes that "[R]eference to the tribal constitution of Israel, which had no equivalent in the new Israel, seems inherently unsuitable for transference to the church."[49] Karl Ludwig Schmidt also signals "[T]he possibility that we

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[45]David P. Nystrom, *James,* NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 38.

[46]Nystrom, 39.

[47]See, for example, John B. Polhill, "The Life-Situation of the Book of James," *Review & Expositor,* 66 (1969): 376.

[48]John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 36.

[49]Bauckham, 14.

cannot take for granted the link between Jm. 1:1 and 1 Pt. 1:1 ... [and that the expression of Jas 1:1] might be meant quite realistically with no accompanying spiritual sense."[50]

Evaluation of the configuration of metaphorical language in the rest of James favors as well the literal sense of the phrase ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ of Jas 1:1. The text of James is generous in the use of metaphorical language, e.g., Jas 1:14-15, 17-18, 21, 25; 3:6-8, 10-11; 5:2-5, 7. These examples exhibit the three elements necessary to configure a metaphor, namely, image, topic, and the point of similarity or comparison.[51] In this phrase of Jas 1:1, the image would be the twelve tribes in the Diaspora; and the topic or item illustrated, as suggested by some scholars, is either the Church at large or the Jewish Christians, scattered or as foreigners, or even without any of these two latter descriptors. The configuration of a metaphor is frustrated, however, by the absence of the point of similarity or comparison. If the metaphorical language in the phrase ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ of Jas 1:1 should be dismissed as it is here suggested, the reference to all Jews in the Diaspora is the only other option standing as the literal referent of this phrase in Jas 1:1 and as the addressees of James.

It seems then that the reading back of interpretations of other passages in James or of other passages in the rest of the New Testament into this phrase is unwarranted, and that the literalness of the phrase should be allowed to run its course. In other words,

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[50]Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "Diaspora," *TDNT* 2, 101.

[51]For the configuration of a metaphor, see Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral, A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation,* revised and expanded edition (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 125.

instead of reading back into this phrase, prima facie, other texts of James or of the rest of the New Testament, it is more legitimate to read forward and explore the hermeneutical implications of entertaining the literalness of the phrase into other passages of James, and into the original situation of James. It is understood then that the phrase ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ of Jas 1:1 should be taken as referring to the Jews living outside Palestine at the time of the writing of James, irrespective of whether some of them were Christians.[52]

How should one read then the expression τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης, that is, "the faith in our glorious Jesus Christ" in Jas 2:1 that might be understood as the strongest indicator of a possible Christian audience?[53] Distinction perhaps should be made between the certain Christian identity of the author and the identity of James's audience that may not have been necessarily Christian. Davids is right when he argues that "(1) James contains some individual ideas embedded in the work which are not Jewish, but Christian, (2) James has close affinities with some NT literature, and (3) James probably alludes to the words of Jesus."[54] But his assertions only confirm a Christian authorship of James, not a Christian identity of James's audience. Furthermore, a Christian thought-world in James is irrefutable. In the words of D. A. Carson, "James presupposes a

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[52]See Schmidt, 98-99. See also Childs (435) who offers an explanation along similar understanding: "That this designation was shortly understood metaphorically by the church to include all believers does not gainsay the letter's primary canonical addressee."

[53]My own translation.

[54]Davids, 14. See also Martin (59) who understands Jas 2:1 as signaling "the distinctive belief of this Jewish Christian group."

profoundly Christian understanding of the law."[55] Again, the Christian identity of the author is not in question, but the Christian identity of all of James's audience certainly is.

Now, in order to understand the expression "the faith in our glorious Jesus Christ" in Jas 2:1, it is also necessary to bear in mind that the pronoun ἡμῶν, meaning "our," can be taken as a "literary plural (*pluralis sociativus*) [by which] the writer … brings the reader … into association with his own action."[56] In other words, the pronoun "our" does not necessarily imply the inclusion of the audience in the faith in the glorious Jesus Christ. Also, the imperative of ἔχω in James 2:1, followed by the object τὴν πίστιν (the faith) in the accusative case, can be taken as "consider, look upon, view."[57] A Jewish Christian author is then likely exhorting his Jewish audience, regardless of whether they were Christians, to consider his faith in the glorious Jesus Christ as the basis for following the injunction against favoritism or partiality.[58] This could be specially the case, if the author has in view those in the audience who are Christians. If so, non-Christian Jews are invited to consider the exhortation of James with the hermeneutical key of the Christian faith. Again, this amounts

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[55]D. A. Carson, "James," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament,* edited by G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 997-1012. This is a thorough study of the influences and resonances in James of the thought-worlds of the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and of the teachings of Jesus. Along a similar line of understanding James as having appropriated the teachings of Jesus, see also Bauckham (30) for whom James is a wisdom teacher who appropriated the teachings of Jesus, a former wisdom teacher.

[56]F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* edited and translated by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961), 146. Italics and parentheses original.

[57]BDAG, 421.

[58]See McKnight (44) who explains that the ethic of James is "Torah observance through the lens of Jesus for a messianic community." This thesis agrees with the first part of McKnight's assertion, but clearly not with his understanding of the messianic community as the canonical addressees of James.

to a Christian leader reaching out to a Jewish audience to consider the tenets of the revelation from God as seen through the teachings of Jesus.

From what has been argued so far then, it seems more legitimate to let the literal sense of the phrase ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ of Jas 1:1 run its full course and allow it to illuminate other passages in James, in the sense that James was likely addressed to the Jews living outside Palestine at the time of its writing, irrespective of whether they were Christians.[59]

More Clues of James Having Been Addressed to Jews in the Diaspora

It was suggested in the previous chapter that Jas 5:13-20 parallels Jas 1:1, which was just considered. The former passage may provide more clues for the likelihood of James having been addressed to the Jews in the Diaspora at the time of its writing. This passage deals with prayer for the sick and bringing back to truth the wandering brother. The strong traditional association between these two themes in this passage has unfortunately been ignored. This has led commentators to treat Jas 5:19-20 as a free-standing unit, and/or to treat the theme of ἐπιστρέφω of Jas 5:19-20 as unconnected from its immediate context, and has given other commentators an additional reason to treat James 5 as a random selection

[59]This understanding might help explain the utilization of the terms *συναγωγή* in Jas 2:2, and of *ἐκκλησία* in Jas 5:14. It is conceivable that the author might have intended his or her letter to be read in the synagogues as well as in churches in the Diaspora. Both terms can be simply a designation for an assembly. See BDAG, 963 and 303. See also Johnson, *Letter of James,* 331. Of course, for those readers who understand that James was addressed to a Christian audience, the term *ἐκκλησία* in Jas 5:14 designates the church. See, for example, Dibelius, 253; Davids, 192; Moo, 237; and McKnight, 437.

of themes.[60] McKnight exemplifies the failure to grasp this association when he affirms that Jas 5:13-18 "does not genuinely fit with what follows in 5:19-20."[61]

More recently, however, Dale C. Allison has demonstrated that the themes of healing and turning back the wayward, which come together in Jas 5:13-20, were a linguistic convention in the LXX, particularly influenced by Ezekiel 33 and 34, and that such convention eventually became part of Jewish and early Christian liturgical traditions.[62] Allison confirms the same thematic association in the Jewish prayer tradition that eventually became incorporated in the Eighteen Benedictions at the end of the first century.[63] The strong association between these two themes finds a good example in Ezek 34:4, where the prophet reconvenes the leaders of Israel, among other things, for not having healed the sick, and for not having brought back the lost. The utilization of the verbs πλανάω and ἐπιστρέφω both, in Ezek 34:4 and in Jas 5:19-20, also favors the determining influence of Ezekiel in the linguistic convention appropriated by James.[64] This clue, it is admitted, can point to either a

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[60]See for example: Dibelius, 242; Vouga, 145; Johnson, *Letter of James,* 13; Nystrom, 32; Moo, 248; Bauckham, 13; Luke L. Cheung, *The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James* (Carlisle, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2003), 68; Mark Edward Taylor, *A Text-Linguistic Investigation into the Discourse Structure of James* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 120; Blomberg and Kamell, 241. Davids (198) does hint, without identifying it, at some thematic connection between Jas 5:13-18 and 5:19-20.

[61]McKnight, 431.

[62]Dale C. Allison, "A Liturgical Tradition behind the Ending of James," in *Journal for the Study of New Testament* 34 (2011): 9. Allison points to the following seven texts in the LXX to demonstrate such linguistic convention: Deut 30:2-3; 2 Chr 7:14; Prov 3:7-8; Isa 6:10; Jer 3:22; Eze 34:4; and Hos 6:1-2. By the way, the juxtaposition of the strong association between prayer for the sick and the exhortation to bring back the wayward brother in Jas 5:13-20 favors the contention of the previous chapter of an intentional literary structuring of James.

[63]See Allison, 7.

[64]See Allison, 10.

Jewish or a Christian audience for James. The point, however, is that the strong association between prayer for the sick and the exhortation to bring back the wayward brother in Jewish liturgical tradition, similar to the juxtaposition of these two themes in Jas 5:13-20, strengthens rather than weakens the plausibility of James having been addressed to Jews in the Diaspora at the time of its writing, irrespective of whether they were Christians.

Furthermore, the language in James 5:13-20 is rather ambiguous. Κακοπαθέω in Jas 5:13, for example, signifies to suffer misfortune.[65] This term was utilized to describe physical persecution, hardship in war, and general hardships in life.[66] Ἀσθενέω in Jas 5:14 can identify to be weak in general or to suffer a debilitating illness.[67] This term can denote "physical, spiritual, or mental weakness."[68] This ambiguous language might be read as an exhortation to James's audience to resort to community dynamics of prayer, confession of sins, fellowship, and submission to God in faith. Such community dynamics could help James's audience to heed the rest of the exhortation of James and to change their inclination toward the war agenda and to be, instead, actively concerned with the poor. The evocation of Elijah could favor this idea, especially if Martin is right in suggesting that James's purpose in mentioning Elijah is to "downplay the nationalist and jingoist side of Elijah's career and to build up a case for reliance on God's help alone."[69] And as Martin also submits, Jas 5:13-20

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[65]BDAG, 500.

[66]See McKnight, 432. See also Johnson, *Letter of James,* 329.

[67]BDAG, 142. See also Martin, 201.

[68]McKnight, 434. See also Johnson, *Letter of James,* 330.

[69]Martin, 201.

emphasizes the "stress on contemporary human needs that are met by God's response, [and that this emphasis] is designed to ward off any false hopes pinned to revolution and strife; and the efficacy of prayer is connected with his reader's willingness to submit to the divine plan and to await God's intervention like the wise farmer."[70] If this reading fits into this ambiguous language, it would constitute one more clue in favor of an audience for James composed of Jews in the Diaspora, irrespective of whether they were Christians.

James's utilization of the verb ἐπιστρέφω in 5:19-20 might constitute another clue of the information assumed by author and audience pointing to a predominantly Jewish audience. The statement of Jonathan M. Lunde that "*epistrephō* can function as a synonym for *metanoeō*," does not suffice.[71] According to James G. Crossley, ἐπιστρέφω is the default LXX translation of the general description of turning away from something and turning to something else, as well as of the religious concept of repentance, "teshubah" from the Hebrew šûb, found in the Masoretic Text, with the implication of turning away from sin and turning to God.[72] Crossley notes the more general utilization of μετανοέω and its cognates, rather than ἐπιστρέφω and its cognates, in the Synoptic gospels and in the book of Acts for the same religious concept of repentance. He further suggests that the utilization of μετανοέω, instead of ἐπιστρέφω, in the Synoptic gospels and in the book of Acts, refers to the calling of

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[70]Martin, 201.

[71]Jonathan M. Lunde, "Repentance," in *Dictionary of Jesus and The Gospels,* edited by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 673.

[72]See James G. Crossley, "The Semitic Background to Repentance in the Teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 2 (2004): 138-157. The following are some of the LXX examples given by Crossley (149): Deut 4:30; Isa 31:6; 44:22; Jer 3:10, 12, 14, 22; 4:1; 5:3; 8:4;

Gentiles to repentance, while the utilization of ἐπιστρέφω denotes a call for repentance addressed to Jews.[73] Furthermore, Crossley clarifies that when the books of the New Testament utilize ἐπιστρέφω to refer to the repentance of Gentiles, the text makes it clear. For example, in Acts 15:19 διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω μὴ παρενοχλεῖν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, Luke quotes James utilizing ἐπιστρέφω, explicitly, for the repentance of Gentiles.[74] If Crossley's findings are correct, the use of ἐπιστρέφω in Jas 5:19-20 can be seen as another clue in favor of a Jewish audience for James. In other words, the utilization of ἐπιστρέφω in James 5:19-20, without clear or explicit indications of Gentiles in the context, favors the literalness of the use of "Diaspora" in Jas 1:1 argued in this chapter.[75]

Based then on the discussion on the literal sense of ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ in James 1:1 and the clues suggested in Jas 5:13-20, it is likely that the audience of James were Jews in the Diaspora, irrespective of whether they were Christians. This chapter continues heuristically trying to identify what specific area or areas constituted the reason or reasons the Author calls the audience to turn back to truth. In so doing, the

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15:19; Hos 2:7[9]; 3:5; 5:4; 6:1; 7:10; Amos 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11; Joel 2:12-14; Zech 1:3; Mal 3:7; and Neh 1:9.

[73]See Crossley 154ff.

[74]See Crossley, 154. If, as it is argued in the next chapter, the James of Acts 15 is the same that authored the letter of James, it is significant that he utilizes ἐπιστρέφω both in the passage of Acts 15:19 and in Jas 5:19-20. The passage in Acts makes it clear that the referent are the Gentiles, while in Jas 5:19-20 the referent is not explicit. This fact hints in favor of a Jewish audience, as is suggested by Crossley.

[75]Unfortunately, the commentaries consulted on Jas 5:19-20 are silent on this nuanced application of ἐπιστρέφω mainly to Jews rather than Gentiles in the New Testament. See for example, Dibelius, 257-260; Davids, 198-201; Johnson, *Letter of James,* 337-340; Moo, 248-251; Blomberg and Kamell, 247-249; and McKnight, 452-461.

following section explores the plausibility that the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-12 covertly critique a set of convictions and behaviors of James's audience. Such a set of convictions and behaviors could configure the inclination of James's audience toward a war agenda that James opposes.

Exhortation to Resilience in James 1:2-20 and 5:7-12 Might Indicate a War Agenda

The second set of paralleled passages in James explored in this chapter is Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-12. This exploration seeks to substantiate the second claim of this chapter that the canonical New Testament Christian writing of James might covertly critique a set of convictions and behaviors of James's audience. Such a set of convictions and behaviors might have led the audience to the war agenda that James opposes by challenging their convictions with his or her own set of convictions and discouraging their behaviors in these passages. The exhortation in these passages emphasizes the call to ὑπομονή and to μακροθυμέω. The first term appears five times in the two passages and the latter term, and its noun form, appears four times in Jas 5:7-11.[76] James enhances and further specifies the concept of ὑπομονὴ, utilized in James 1:3-4, and 12, by the use of the term μακροθυμία and the verb μακροθυμέω in 5:7-10. It is easy to think simply of a stylistic variation between these

[76]BDAG (1039) cites both Jas 1:3-4 and Jas 5:11 under the rendering of ὑπομονή as "the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, *patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance.*" For μακροθυμέω and μακροθυμία, BDAG (612) renderings are respectively, "to remain tranquil while waiting, *have patience, wait,*" and the "state of remaining tranquil while awaiting an outcome, *patience, steadfastness, endurance.*" BDAG's lexical renderings do not hint at any significant nuanced difference between these two apparent synonyms. Johnson, *Letter of James,* (188) renders ὑπομονή as "standing one's ground in the face of something."

apparent synonyms but with the same meaning of patience.[77] The utilization of ὑπομένω and ὑπομονή in 5:11, however, might suggest otherwise, given that ὑπομονή was the term of choice in 1:3-4 and 12 and is repeated in Jas 5:11. Davids perceptively sees in the use of this diverse terminology an exhortation for James's audience "not to take the judgment of the wicked into their own hands, but to wait for God to avenge them."[78] The iterated utilization of μακροθυμέω in Jas 5:7 and 8, instead of ὑπομένω, seems to emphasize the added and more specific connotation of "the active adoption of an attitude of 'forbearance' and 'putting up with' another."[79] This active attitude, more than just the passive enduring of adversity, can be understood as the largesse of soul that does not recur to vengeance. In other words, what the author of James might have wanted to instill and promote is resilience in the midst of adversities. A resilience inclusive of enduring adversity, hence the utilization of ὑπομονή and ὑπομένω, but also of the largesse of soul that does not recur to vengeance, hence the utilization of μακροθυμία and the verb μακροθυμέω, in the passages under consideration.[80]

James does not explicitly indicate what adversities the author had in mind. This section of this chapter thus focuses on what might have motivated the exhortation to

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[77]See Dibelius (243) who affirms that "in Jas the idea is simply, 'do not lose patience,'" as the intended meaning of the exhortation concerning μακροθυμέω in Jas 5:7-9.

[78] Davids,182.

[79]Johnson, *Letter of James,* 313. Martin (190) also recognizes a distinction, although, surprisingly, he identifies patience with μακροθυμία and "standing firm" with ὑπομοένω. He actually mixes both into patient endurance, finding its setting "in a Zealot (or Zealot-like) impatience that sought to take up a crusade of violence (4:1-3) and so ensure the victory of God's cause by strife and revenge on the rich." Cf. Moo, 55.

[80]Contra Moo (222) and McKnight (405) who find in these two terms an allusion to the same thing, namely, patience.

resilience, especially as the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and Jas 5:7-12 might hint at an inclination of James's audience toward a war agenda. What is clear is that James evidences that its author had in mind a set of values that are opposed to the set of values of that of its audience. In other words, it is basically established that James discourages a certain inclination of its audience, while exhorting them to follow an alternative agenda, although James does not make explicit what constituted the inclination of its audience.[81] As Johnson puts it, "James' readers are being prepared for the fundamental choice between being friends with God or friends with the world (4:4)."[82] But James, it is herein argued, provides some clues for a better identification of the inclination of its audience. In the words of Savas C. Agourides, "James gives the picture of a definite situation but rather paradoxically by a way of rendering the specific and particular to the general."[83] McKnight also cautiously asserts, "It might be wiser to think that James has one major concern on his mind that emerges regardless of the topics he discusses."[84] James 1:2 provides an example of the general way in which James gives the picture of a definite situation, with the subordinate clause of the conjunction ὅταν, followed by the grammatical construction of noun-aorist subjunctive-adjective, πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις. Such a subordinate clause points to the definite

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[81]See, for example, Timothy B. Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora: Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1993), 31-56; Johnson, *Letter of James,* 80-88; McKnight, 39; Osborne, "James," 15.

[82]Johnson, *Letter of James*, 205. Parentheses original.

[83]Savas C. Agourides, "Origin of the Epistle of St James: Suggestions for a Fresh Approach," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review,* 9 (1963): 67. Martin (17), from the text of James itself, also deduces "some real problems" that James's audience faces.

[84]McKnight, 133. He cautions that this "theory, too, is probably beyond proof."

reality of James's audience facing πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις, before the action of the main verb ἡγέομαι, in the sense of "considering," in Jas 1:2 takes place. James indicates here that the variegated adversities, the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις, will most certainly happen to its audience, and that they should consider them as complete joy. The aorist here views the variegated adversities, that James's audience will certainly endure and may already be enduring, as a whole.[85] Again, although James does not specify the variegated adversities its audience faced, nor what constituted their inclination, James, it is herein argued, does provide some clues that allow for some controlled speculation in the exploration of James's original situation.

The following section explores then the plausibility that the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-12 covertly critique a set of convictions and behaviors of James's audience. Besides acknowledging that arguments from silence are necessarily speculative, it is here summarily insinuated that the covert way in which James might have critiqued the set of convictions and behaviors of its audience, might be explained by the increasing radicalization of Jewish nationalism turning into revolutionary readiness against the Romans that helped shape a highly unstable political situation during the lifetime of the author of James. This covert way might also be explained by the influential stature of the

[85]For the grammatical understanding of Jas 1:2, see Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), especially pages 201, 209, and 241; Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 321-322; and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (New York: T & T Clark, 1963), especially pages 93, 99, and 112. Concerning this clause, Johnson (*Letter of James,* 177) notes the characteristic of James of rendering the specific and particular to the general, when he affirms that "the conjunction 'whenever' and the adjective 'various' generalize: *every kind* of testing is to be regarded in terms of joy."

leadership of the author of James among Christians and non-Christians alike, as leader of the Christian Church in Jerusalem, and by his or her possible strong desire to erect and maintain a modus-vivendi in the midst of the unstable political situation in mid-first century Palestine. However, this chapter is getting ahead of itself, as this insinuation will be explored in the next chapter, while the task at hand is to try to identify the set of convictions and behaviors of James's audience.

James Might Be Covertly Critiquing a Set of Convictions and Behaviors of its Audience that Might Configure a War Agenda

The paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-12 are segmented, as per indications in the previous chapter, in the following smaller units for the exploration of clues that James might have provided for the better identification of the plausible inclination of its audience toward a war agenda.

1.	1:2-4	Genuine faith opposes the war agenda
2.	1:5-8	The διακρινόμενος lacks wisdom and might favor the war agenda
3.	1:9-11	The rich trusts wealth, not God, and might support the war agenda
4.	1:12-15	Blaming God for the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they perceive as inducing them to do evil
5.	1:16-19a	James affirms the goodness and the immutability of God
6.	1:19b-20	Ὀργή as the ultimate means to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life
7.	5:7-11/12	Exhortation to resilience and the imperative against oath

Genuine Faith Opposes the War Agenda

The small unit of Jas 1:2-4 is part of the suggested paralleled passage of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-12 that exhorts resilience in the midst of the variegated adversities facing James's audience. The small unit of Jas 1:2-4 further develops such exhortation by grounding

it in the understanding that the Diaspora should have of the variegated adversities themselves actually generating such resilience when in the presence of genuine faith.[86] As Martin judiciously puts it, "[T]rials serve as a feature of the life of trust that refines and shapes believers' knowledge of divine providence and God's holy purpose."[87] The faith to which James appeals in Jas 1:3 does not have to be Christian specific, but rather the common faith of the Jewish Diaspora, as anchored in the Old Testament, that acknowledges God as such.[88] The following are some of the other descriptors of the faith held by Judaism and that Rudolph Bultmann identifies as the legacy of the Old Testament: "Faith is a daring decision for God in man's turning aside both from the menacing world and also from his own strength.... Its opposite is murmuring and doubt…. On the other hand, a mark of faith is simplicity, singleness of heart. This is demanded … as distinct from doublemindedness…. Faith in God becomes a monotheistic confession."[89]

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[86]This reading flows from understanding γινώσκοντες in Jas 1:3 as an adverbial participle that indicates how it is that James's audience can respond with resilience to the variegated adversities they are facing or that they will most certainly face. The main verb modified by the adverbial participle is ἡγέομαι in Jas 1:2. See, for this understanding, Wallace, 272. See also Dibelius, 72; Davids, 68; and Johnson, *The Letter of James,* 177f. The mention of Diaspora here is based on the plural pronoun ὑμῶν and the identification of the diaspora as the audience in Jas 1:1, as has been argued. Johnson (*The Letter of James,* 177), regarding this plural pronoun, comments that "The entire community is at stake." McKnight (77) also identifies in Jas 1:3 a plural audience that for him is the "messianic Jewish community." As to the genuineness of the faith from the grammatical construction τὸ δοκίμιον, see Turner, 14. He indicates that the grammatical construction of the article with a non-predicate adjective represents "a quality *par excellence*," hence the suggestion herein given of the genuineness of the faith in Jas 1:3. (Italics original). For a similar understanding of this grammatical construction, see Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains,* 2nd edition, vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 27.45.

[87]Martin, 15. See, along very similar understanding, McKnight, 80.

[88]See Rudolph Bultmann, "Πιστεύω κτλ," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* vol. 9, edited by Gerhard Friedrich; translator and editor into English: Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 198.

[89]Bultmann, 198-200.

All of these selected elements characterize the faith that James propounds, including the call to trust in God in the midst of the variegated adversities faced by the Jewish Diaspora as the thrust of Jas 1:2-4. The other elements of such a faith, as identified by Bultmann, are well-recognized characteristics of the faith James propounds. Those elements appear in other smaller units of James, but, for the time being, suffice to say that they constitute crucial criteria with which James might be opposing the inclination of James's audience toward a war agenda. In other words, the outcome of a genuine faith in the midst of the variegated adversities faced by James's audience would necessarily be to follow James's agenda instead of the war agenda. McKnight seems right then when he affirms, "'Endurance' … may well describe the decision … to refuse the option of violence to establish justice and to learn to wait for God's work to be accomplished in God's timing."[90]

The Διακρινόμενος Lacks Wisdom and Might Favor the War Agenda

The small unit of Jas 1:5-8 seems to make clear that it is in the realm of σοφία, that is wisdom, that James's audience can understand that the variegated adversities may in fact generate resilience, when in the presence of genuine faith. It was shown in chapter two of this thesis that Bauckham made clearer the centrality of the theme of wisdom in the letter of James, and that one of Cheung's contributions is the anchoring of the centrality of the theme of wisdom in a more structured James. "The nature of this wisdom as a measure for

[90]McKnight (80) identifies thus the opposing alternative for James's audience facing "socio-economic oppression."

behavior is spelled out in 3:13-18."[91] James 3:13-18 is the central passage in the paralleled structure acquiesced by this thesis, but for the exploration of Jas 1:5-8, it seems appropriate to quote Nystrom's description of wisdom in James that he reads in consonance with wisdom in the rest of the New Testament. Nystrom, it seems, brings out the main thrust of James concerning the central theme of wisdom.

> [W]isdom is allied to understanding God's purposes and plan and indicates a determination to live accordingly. We need wisdom to know how to cope with trials, for wisdom provides a clear view of our situation from God's perspective. With wisdom we perceive that what the world calls misfortune, whatever its source, is an opportunity for God to bring about his purpose.[92]

Nothing in Nystrom's description of wisdom, although he does so from a survey of wisdom in the New Testament, is foreign to the portrayal of wisdom in Wisdom Literature, from which James clearly imbibes. Osborne, for example, commenting Jas 1:5, indicates, "In the Wisdom Literature (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach), wisdom means to live in God's world by his rules, with two foci, its practical orientation (embracing every area of life and conduct) and its dependence on God (reverence and submission to his dictates)."[93]

James 1:5-8 does not take for granted that everyone in the audience has the measurement of wisdom necessary to face the variegated adversities of the day. Instead, a most critical lack to remedy is brought to the fore with the conditional clause εἰ δέ τις ὑμῶν

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[91]Johnson, *Letter of James,* 179.

[92]Nystrom, 50.

[93]Osborne, "James," 25. Parentheses original. For similar descriptors of wisdom to those of Nystrom and Osborne, see Martin, 21; Johnson, *Letter of James,* 179; Moo, 57; Blomberg and Kamell, 52; and

λείπεται σοφίας, with which the very likelihood of lacking wisdom is addressed.[94] The remedy, James exhorts, is to be sought by asking for wisdom to God in faith. This unit presents God as διδόντος, a substantival participle with which James identifies God as the God who gives.[95] It also describes God as giving ἁπλῶς, an adverb indicating that God gives with simplicity, single-mindedly, without reservation. Furthermore, according to this unit, God gives without reproach.[96] This unit also commands that the asking for wisdom should be done in faith and without διακρινόμενος, characterizing thus the one whose inclination is not aligned with the realm of wisdom that James propounds. This small unit dramatically illustrates the διακρινόμενος with the simile of the wave of the sea that is at the mercy of the wind, and keenly identifies the διακρινόμενος person as δίψυχος, that is "double-souled," and as "unstable in all his ways."[97] Johnson correctly understands the description of the διακρινόμενος person in Jas 1:5-8 as someone with "a divided consciousness or motivation."[98]

McKnight, 84.

[94]Johnson, (*Letter of James,* 179), correctly identifies this lack as "most critical."

[95]BDAG, 242. See the entry δίδωμι.

[96]BDAG, 104. Contra Louw & Nida (57.107) who favor the connotation of generosity in ἁπλῶς. In this context, where simplicity contrasts the "wavering" and the "double-souled," BDAG's meaning should be preferred. See also Davids, 73; Johnson, *Letter of James,* 179; Blomberg and Kamell, 51; Moo, 59.

[97]See Osborne ("James," 27) who indicates that διακρινόμενος, given its middle voice and being a present participle, means "to dispute with oneself." Vouga (44) also describes διακρινόμενος as being "en lute constant avec lui-même." Similarly, McKnight, 89; BDAG (231) who gives the connotation of διακρινόμενος as "to be uncertain, *be at odds w. oneself, doubt,* waver." Italics original. See also Louw & Nida (31.37) for whom the διακρινόμενος refer to those who "think that something may not be true or certain – to doubt, to be uncertain about, doubt." (Italics original).

[98]Johnson, *Letter of James,* 180.

Moo's finding of an opposition between the person of genuine faith of Jas 1:2-4 and the person of doubt of Jas 1:5-8 also helps build a better understanding of the διακρινόμενος person.[99] Such a person, according to Blomberg and Kamell, "is unwilling to trust God with their life."[100] If these understandings are so, the διακρινόμενος person then is the same that lacks wisdom, in the sense of not submitting to "God's purposes and plan" and lacking a "determination to live accordingly," as Nystrom describes wisdom.

The small unit of James 1:5-8 also provides a striking contrast between the διακρινόμενος person and the way God gives: with simplicity, single-mindedly, without reservation, and without reproach. James 1:8 underscores this striking contrast by the utilization of the aphoristic saying ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ. The adjective δίψυχος is unattested before James and it literally points to a "double-souled" person, which the current lexica translates as "double-minded person."[101] This aphoristic saying deepens the objection by further identifying such a person as ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ, "unstable in all his ways."[102] Following Johnson who reads the description of this person in James as seeking "to live by two measures at once," Jas 1:5-8 identifies those who, in order to face the challenging reality of πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις, sway back and

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[99]Moo, 60.

[100]Blomberg and Kamell, 52.

[101]Louw & Nida (31.38) who locate δίψυχος as "pertaining to being uncertain about the truth of something – double-minded, doubting, doubter." Similarly, see BDAG, 253. See also Johnson, (*Letter of James*, 181) who indicates the unattested nature of this adjective before James.

[102]Johnson, *Letter of James,* 181. See also BDAG, 35.

forth in their consideration between wisdom in line with James, and a contrary inclination.[103] James 1:5-8 might thus provide a clue, albeit covertly as indicated above, describing those who, in the words of Martin "had resolved to trust their own devices and were confident that human resources would avail to bring about their deliverance from trial."[104] If this is the case, the clue James 1:5-8 provides is likely that the διακρινόμενος lacks wisdom, opts for taking things in his or her own hands, and might favor the war agenda. In this sense, the διακρινόμενος is presented in opposition to those in the audience of James whose genuine faith opposes the war agenda.

The Rich Trusts Wealth, Not God, and Might Support the War Agenda

Next, Jas 1:9-11 opposes the rich to the ὁ ταπεινός, and further describes the transitoriness of the former.[105] This small unit expressly identifies the ὁ ταπεινός as a brother, ὁ ἀδελφὸς, but does not identify the rich as such. At the most, the status of the rich as a brother is left in doubt.[106] According to Walter Grundmann, ὁ ταπεινός was seen in the

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[103]Johnson, *Letter of James,* 184.

[104]Martin, 21.

[105]Dibelius (86), explaining Jas 1:10 says that "[i]t made no difference whether this transgressor [the rich] belonged to the Jewish faith externally or not – in any case, he no longer belonged to it inwardly."

[106]When symmetry is demanded in the grammatical construction of Jas 1:9-10, some commentators supply ὁ ἀδελφὸς for the rich as if the author regards the rich as a brother, similarly as the author explicitly identifies the ταπεινός as a brother. See, for example, Johnson, *Letter of James*, 185; Moo, 66-68; Blomberg and Kamell, 62; Osborne, "James," 29. It seems, however, that the author, rhetorically, at the very least, leaves in doubt the condition of the rich as a brother, and instead, identifies the rich as someone who trusts his own wealth, rather than God, to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life. This reading agrees with other commentators of James such as Dibelius (87) who indicates that "no trace of any allusion to a brotherly

Hellenistic literary world as an individual with a "negative character [of] … weakness and pusillanimity," while in the LXX, this expression portrays the individual of "lowly state … and also [of] the disposition of the one who humbles himself … the righteous man who does what is right before Yahweh."[107] The identification of the ὁ ταπεινός in James 1:9 as a brother and as someone who is commanded to celebrate his exaltation suggests that it is the conceptualization of the LXX that informs the description of ὁ ταπεινός in James rather than the negative perception of ὁ ταπεινός in the Hellenistic milieu. Dibelius, for example, finds that the Psalms, among other Jewish writings, distinguish

> [T]he poor as a special group distinct from the people as a whole; and [that] precisely at this juncture a most momentous development of a religious and social nature came into play.… The more piety was understood as humbling oneself before God's will, the more poverty could function as intrinsically fertile soil for piety. As a result, 'poor' and 'pious' appear as parallel concepts.[108]

Davids, Vouga, and Johnson also identify the LXX as the source that informs the conceptualization of ὁ ταπεινός in James.[109] From the thought process manifested in James so far, James's use of ταπεινός then might refer to the person who determines to submit to "God's purposes and plan," even in the midst of the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of

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relationship can be found in the harsh words of vv 10f." Similarly, Martin, 26; and Vouga, 47.

[107]Walter Grundmann, "ταπεινός," in *TDNT* 8, 1 and 10. The definition in Louw & Nida (88.52) is more neutral, "pertaining to being unpretentious in one's behavior."

[108]Dibelius, 39.

[109]Davids, 76; Vouga, 46; Johnson, *Letter of James,* 184.

life.[110] If this is the case, the correlation of ταπεινός with that of the economically poor, suggested by Grundman, appears unnecessary. Several commentators also make this seemingly unnecessary correlation based on the often-thought synonymy between ταπεινός and πτωχός, and on the often-found experience of the economically poor being ταπεινός.[111] But James does not utilize these two terms ambiguously or interchangeably. In Jas 2:2-6, the reiterated utilization of πτωχός and its cognates refers to economic privation, while in Jas 4:6 the term ταπεινοῖς points to the humble ones to whom God gives grace, and in Jas 4:10, the author commands ταπεινώθητε ἐνώπιον Κυρίου, in the sense of "humble yourselves before the Lord." So the ταπεινός in Jas 1:9 should be regarded as transcending mere economic criteria and emphasizing the humility, the submission to "God's purposes and plan" even in the midst of the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life.[112]

James then opposes the rich, ὁ πλούσιος, to this ταπεινός as someone whose transitoriness, described in Jas 1:10-11, will bring about his humbling. James, it seems, is introducing the rich in opposition to the ταπεινός, as someone who does not live in the realm

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[110]Nystrom (25) judiciously affirms: "the poor are the pious because they throw themselves on the mercy of God in the face of injustice. It is this inclination that James extols." See also Martin, 23.

[111]According to Grundmann (19), the "ὁ δὲ πλούσιος in the continuation [of Jas 1:9] defines ὁ αδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινός as the brother who is bowed down by poverty … might just as well be rendered by πτωκός as ταπεινός." Craig L. Blomberg (*Neither Poverty nor Riches* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999], 149) tries to demonstrate that "the teaching about trials in chapter 1 [is] first of all addressed to the socio-economic plight at the forefront of the community's concern." This correlation with the poor and the rich is made by McKnight (95) in order to argue that the main issue that James's audience is enduring has to do with economic privation. Similarly, Davids, 76. Moo (65) also affirms that the term ὁ ταπεινός describes "the believer's socio-economic situation." Osborne ("James," 29-30) also makes the correlation of the ὁ αδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινός to poverty in economic terms.

[112]See Vouga, 46.

of wisdom and rather depends on his or her wealth to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life.[113] This understanding of the rich in Jas 1:10-11 agrees with specific reference to material wealth of the term ὁ πλούσιος.[114] It also agrees with Dibelius's assertion that the rich in Jas 1:9-11 "must be people who are spiritually alien to the pious community."[115] Thus the ταπεινός may be mentioned in order to contrast his attitude with that of the rich that the author opposes and that may constitute the main thrust of this small unit.[116] If the ταπεινός is determined to submit to God, it would appear that the contrast the author emphasizes in this small unit should be understood as identifying the rich with trusting wealth rather than God. If this is so, the rich then does not have the resilience exhorted by the author in Jas 1:2-4 nor the determination to live according to "God's purposes and plan" to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life. Wealth seems to be the only thing the rich provides to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life. Furthermore, if the specific πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life that the author of James is addressing have to do with the political subjugation by the Romans, as this thesis suspects, one clue that Jas 1:9-11 may be covertly providing is that those who promote the war agenda count on the material wealth of the rich, and that many of the rich in the Jewish Diaspora may have been on the brink of being swayed to trust on their wealth, rather than in God, and support the war agenda. This latter assertion, it is admitted, is clearly an argument

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[113]See Vouga, 46; Martin, 24.

[114]See Johnson, *Letter of James,* 185; and Osborne, "James," 29.

[115]Dibelius, 87.

[116]See Dibelius, 84.

from silence and, therefore, necessarily speculative. It is also formulated as a plausibility from the "thick description" of the small unit of Jas 1:9-11.

Blaming God for the Πειρασμοῖς Ποικίλοις of Life, They Perceive as Inducing Them To Do Evil

James 1:12, based particularly on the beatitude saying Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν, is generally recognized among commentators as a hinge verse between Jas 1:2-11 and Jas 1:13ff.[117] In the words of Osborne, this verse "sum[s] up 1:2-4 in order to contrast with 1:13-15."[118] This contrast may provide yet another clue in James of a plausible war agenda among its audience by blaming God for the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they perceive as inducing them to do evil, as is suggested in this section. The beatitude of Jas 1:12 is for those who successfully endure the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life as indicated in Jas 1:2-4 and further developed in Jas 1:5-11.[119] In other words, for those who attaining wisdom remain faithful even in the midst of the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life.[120] Johnson perceptively surmises Jas 1:12 thusly, "God rewards with life those whose endurance of

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[117]See Dibelius, 88; Vouga, 49; Moo, 71; Bauckham, 70; Taylor, 60-62; McKnight, 105; Osborne, 32.

[118]Osborne, "James," 32. Similarly, McKnight, 105.

[119]Osborne ("James," 32) rightly indicates that πειρασμόν is a collective singular recapitulating the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of Jas 1:2.

[120]See Joel Marcus, "The Evil Inclination in the Epistle of James," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982): 620.

testing has proven them worthy. They have shown by this faithful patience that they 'love God.'"[121]

By the way of the exhortation in Jas 1:13 that no one, when in the midst of the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life should say ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι, the author may be contrasting his or her own conviction of facing the adversities of life living in the realm of wisdom, as was described above, against the conviction of his or her audience of facing the same adversities by pursuing the realm of evil and blaming God for it. This assertion is unpacked right away. The preposition ἀπὸ with the genitive noun θεοῦ "takes the place of ὑπό in a causal sense."[122] "The thought is that the temptation is caused by God."[123] Up until now in James, πειρασμός and its cognates have had the connotation of test, but in the assertion ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι in Jas 1:13a, the cognate verb πειράζω takes an evil connotation as is made evident by the negative imperative μηδεὶς ... λεγέτω; that is, the negative imperative against saying such a thing, because πειράζομαι with an evil connotation should not be attributed to God.[124] This evil connotation is made explicit by the association the author makes with the realm of evil when appealing to the character of God as ἀπείραστός ἐστιν κακῶν, meaning

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[121]Johnson, *The Letter of James,* 190.

[122]Turner, 258.

[123]BDAG, 107. Among the many commentators that follow or are in line with BDAG, see Davids, 81; Vouga, 52; Moo, 72; Blomberg and Kamell, 70; and McKnight, 114.

[124]See Johnson, *The Letter of James,* 192; Martin, 32; Moo, 71-72; Blomberg and Kamell, 70; Osborne, "James," 32.

"unable to be tempted by evil, impervious to evil."[125] As Johnson puts it, "God has nothing to do with evil."[126] Not only does Jas 1:13 emphatically deny any association of God with evil, but it also firmly rebuffs whatever misconception the audience might have of God inducing them to do evil. This the author does with the categorical assertion πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένα, precisely translated: "[And] he himself does not tempt anyone."[127] From these assertions, it seems that the audience of James might have been entertaining the idea that God somehow was tinkering with evil in allowing the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they were facing; in other words, James's audience might have been thinking that God orchestrated the trials of life as evil, and even that God was leading them to respond to the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life from within the realm of evil.[128]

In so doing, James's audience might be sharing in the same human proclivity to attribute evil to external forces, including God, especially when in the face of the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life.[129] As Martin affirms, "[T]he tendency is to look for someone to blame and thereby to evade personal responsibility."[130] The debates among Jews concerning this proclivity are reflected in the Wisdom literature, from where the author of

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[125]Dibelius, 92; Martin, 34-35; Blomberg and Kamell, 70; Osborne, "James," 31.

[126]Johnson, *Letter of James,* 193.

[127]Heinrich Seesemann, "πεῖρα," in *TDNT* 6, 29.

[128]See Vouga, 52; Martin, 35; Johnson *Letter of James*, 193; Moo, 72-73; Blomberg and Kamell, 90-91; and McKnight, 114-115.

[129]See Dibelius, 90 and Martin, 34.

[130]Martin, 34. See also Vouga, 53.

James might have imbibed. Commentators cite Prov 19:3 as an example: "One's own folly leads to ruin, yet the heart rages against the Lord."[131] Another example cited by commentators is Sir 15:11ff.: "Do not say, Because of the Lord I left the way. … Do not say, it was he who led me astray. … Before a man are life and death, and whichever he chooses will be given to him. … He has not commanded anyone to be ungodly, and he has not given anyone permission to sin."[132] Such debates entertain the issue of responsibility in the face of the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life, that is, how to respond to the adversities life brings. The author of James exhorts to respond to them in the realm of wisdom, with resilience that exhibits a proven faith in God. The audience of James seems to have been entertaining a response within the realm of evil, blaming God for orchestrating the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they were facing, and perceiving them as evil, and furthermore, entertaining the thought that God was in fact inducing them to respond with evil.[133]

But what exactly were the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they were facing? What exactly was the evil response they were entertaining?[134] McKnight correctly affirms, "Most commentators simply pass this [type of] question by or suggest that it is temptations in general."[135] He is right when he affirms, "James has something far more concrete in mind

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[131]NRSV. See Dibelius, 90-91; Martin, 34; Vouga, 53; Moo 73.

[132]Martin, 34. His translation. See also, Dibelius, 90-91; Vouga, 53; Moo 73.

[133]See Dibelius, 90; Davids, 83; Martin, 35; Moo, 73.

[134]McKnight (116) asks a similar question trying to identify a specific situation, although he had affirmed (3) that James's "*Sitz im Leben* remains elusive."

[135]McKnight, 116.

with the idea of temptation."[136] In answering this question, McKnight conjectures that what the author of James had in mind was that "the messianic community or at least some in the messianic community are being oppressed by the rich and are suffering economically. [And that] … this condition promotes 'desires' for revenge and violence."[137] His conjecture might be deemed inadequate in light of the language of James as this chapter continues to explore. In arguing, as it has been done above, for the Jewish Diaspora, literally, as the audience of James, the plausibility of the oppression by the Romans against Palestine and against the Jewish Diaspora as the specific πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they were facing, as well as the plausibility of the war agenda as the evil response James's audience may have been entertaining, might provide a more robust explanation of the language of Jas 1:13-15 and of the rest of James.

The plausibility herein suggested also fits the rest of the small unit of Jas 1:12-15. James 1:14-15 squarely attributes the tinkering with evil to their own evil inclination that creates a sinful dynamic that leads to death.[138] Martin correctly asserts, "The point of emphasis here is to fasten moral responsibility on the individual … James' main purpose is to trace the genealogy of sin no further than to the person tempted by their *epithymia*."[139] He had also perspicuously averred that in Jas 1:14-15, the author of James identified in his or her

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[136]McKnight, 117.

[137]McKnight, 116.

[138]See Dibelius, 92-94; Davids, 83; Vouga, 54; Johnson, *Letter of James,* 194 and 204; Moo, 75; Blomberg and Kamell, 72; Osborne, "James," 34.

[139]Martin, 36. Italics original.

audience "the arrogant desire to achieve its ambition independently of God."[140] Marcus rightly labels the person questioned by James in this small unit as being "in the power of his evil inclination."[141] If Martin and Marcus, among other commentators, are correct in reading this small unit of James as pointing to James's audience being "in the power of their evil inclination," then such a language also fits the likelihood herein entertained of a war agenda as precipitating in a significant measure the letter of James. If this is the case, the author opposes this evil response that leads to death, having exhorted them to respond rather with resilience as the outcome of living in the realm of wisdom.

James 1:16-19a Affirms the Goodness and the Immutability of God and of His Plan

The small unit of Jas 1:16-19a may be seen as the positive side of the coin. While, as already indicated, Jas 1:12-15 categorically rejects any misconception that the audience might have of God inducing them to do evil, Jas 1:16-19a affirms the goodness and the immutability of God and of his plan. This small unit does start with the negative imperative μὴ πλανᾶσθε, by which the author, in the words of Herbert Braun, "rejects as pernicious the idea that God might send a bad thing like temptation."[142] Several commentators correctly indicate the seriousness of the specific situation that this negative imperative implies.[143] This coincides with the sternness that BDAG's definition provides for

[140]Martin, 31.

[141]Marcus, 621.

[142]Braun, Herbert, "Πλανάω," in *TDNT* 6, 245. See also Vouga, 56.

[143]See, for example, Davids, 86; Martin, 37; and Vouga, 56.

this negative imperative: "Make no mistake," in the sense of "Be[ing] mistaken in one's judgment," and under the connotation of "To proceed without a sense of proper direction."[144] The war agenda suggested in this thesis as such a grave and serious specific situation fits the bill. The mention, in Jas 1:16 right after the negative imperative under consideration, of the vocative ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, "my beloved brothers," conveys the idea of a heartfelt pastoral concern by the author when exhorting his or her audience regarding such a grave and serious specific situation.[145] This assertion is further confirmed by the second instance, out of only three instances in all of James, of the use of the same vocative in Jas 1:19a that, according to the structure acquiesced by this thesis, closes this small unit.[146] James 1:16 also moves the flow of the argument, serving thus as a hinge verse between Jas 1:13-15 and Jas 1:17-19a.[147]

Commentators generally agree that the latter verses constitute a difficult passage, given its textual variances and its various hapax legomena. Yet they agree that the main thrust of the exhortation is clear.[148] For Dibelius, such main thrust has to do with the

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[144]BDAG, 821-2.

[145]See Vouga, 56; Blomberg and Kamell, 73; McKnight, 123; and Osborne, 35.

[146]The third and last instance is found in Jas 2:5. For the definition of this vocative, see BDAG, 7.

[147]See Dibelius, 99; Braun, 244; Davids 86; Vouga, 56; Taylor, *Investigation,* 49-50; Moo, 76; and Blomberg and Kamell, 72.

[148]Dibelius, 101; Davids, 86-87; Martin, 39; Johnson, *Letter of James*, 196; Moo, 80; Osborne, 35.

fact that "God is without change."[149] Johnson identifies it as "the steadfastness of God."[150] And McKnight emphasizes the "constant goodness of God."[151] James now counters the same misconception of its audience that God is inducing them to do evil, dealt with in Jas 1:13-15. James 1:17-19a suggests that God is invariably good and so are his gifts and his plan. That God is invariably good as are his gifts is deduced by the commentators cited above from the not so plain language of Jas 1:17, πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον ἄνωθέν ἐστιν καταβαῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, παρ' ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγὴ ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα. Most commentators read this verse, particularly the expressions Πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, "Father of lights," and παραλλαγὴ ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα, "variation or shifting shadow," limited to astronomical phenomena and to creation language as suggestive of the power of God over the astronomical bodies and as metaphorical references to God's invariability. This much is correct inasmuch as the language in Jas 1:17 does evoke astronomical phenomena, but it does not explain why the author brings such phenomena to bear in his or her argumentation on how to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life.[152] The investigation of John C. Poirier might shed better light on this verse.[153] For him, "The impossibility of a shadow in James's 'father

[149]Dibelius, 102. Similarly, Martin, 39; and Blomberg and Kamell, 74.

[150]Johnson, 197.

[151]McKnight, 129.

[152]For these translations, see BDAG (120) for ἀποσκίασμα, (768) for παραλλαγὴ, (1016) for τροπῆς, and (1073) for Πατρὸς τῶν φώτων. For the reading of these expressions in Jas 1:17 limited to astronomical and creation language, see among others, Dibelius, 100; Davids, 87; Vouga, 57-8; and Moo, 78. Martin (31) does recognize that "the text is less than clear [and that] we cannot be certain of the full background with its possible allusion to astronomical phenomena."

[153]John C. Poirier, "Symbols of Wisdom in James 1:17," *Journal of Theological Studies* 57

of lights' associates this symbol of illumination with a traditional rendering of divine wisdom … the father of lights is none other than the father who gives wisdom."[154] He substantiates his assertion by finding religious background in the language of Jas 1:17 that might have been appropriated by the author of James, such as the teaching of 4 Maccabees of wisdom enabling one "to withstand suffering."[155] He explains that the reference to "perfect" and to "lights" in Jas 1:17 "invokes the image of the Urim and Thummim."[156] He also finds "resemblance between the Qumranic understanding of the Urim and Thummim and Jas 1:17's designation of wisdom as an antidote to suffering."[157] McKnight cites Poirier approvingly and agrees with the suggestion that "wisdom may be seen in James as an antidote to persecution."[158] This suggestive appropriation of religious Jewish background fits well with the flow of the argument in James as seen so far, in the sense that James exhorts its audience to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life within the realm of wisdom. Wisdom thus understood becomes one of the good gifts that God invariably gives, and the one particular gift that the author has in mind. As Jas 1:5 indicates, if someone lacks wisdom to face the

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(2006): 57-75.

[154]Poirier, 59.

[155]Poirier, 61.

[156]Poirier, 64.

[157]Poirier, 65.

[158]McKnight, 125.

πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life, he should ask of God who gives with simplicity and without reproach.[159]

James 1:18 presents God's plan as one more important component of the exhortation to its audience to respond to the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life within the realm of wisdom. The connotation of the verb βούλομαι in this verse falls under the definition of "to plan on a course of action, *intend, plan, will*."[160] BDAG further indicates the administrative connotation of this verb when compared to θέλω regarding the will of deity.[161] Similarly, concerning this verb, Louw and Nida underscore "the implication of some reasoned planning or will to accomplish the goal."[162] The utilization of βούλομαι in this verse suggests then that God has orchestrated a plan that is not at the mercy of the vicissitudes of life. Such a plan, having been orchestrated by God, who is invariably good and who invariably gives good gifts, must also be invariably good. The wisdom from God can help James's audience realize that instead of the war agenda they should submit to God's plan.

The rest of Jas 1:18 indicates that God's plan consists of ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας, εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχήν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων, that is, "He [the father of lights] gave birth to us by the word of truth, in order that we might be a sort of first

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[159]Several commentators of Jas 1:17 suggest wisdom as the good gift that God gives without anchoring such suggestion cogently, as Poirier does. See for example, Martin (38) and Blomberg and Kamell (73) who point to "the verbal and conceptual links with 3:17-18" that define "wisdom from above."

[160]BDAG, 182. Italics original.

[161]See BDAG, 182. See also, Johnson, *The Letter of James,* 197; and Osborne, "James," 36.

[162]Louw & Nida, 25.3.

fruits of his creatures."[163] Most commentators cited see in the language of this verse references to the gospel of Jesus Christ, to Christian believers, and to the messianic community.[164] As this thesis has argued for a Jewish Diaspora as the audience of James, regardless of whether they were Christians, a brief notation regarding the referential character of this verse is in order. The author may possibly not be distinguishing between Jews and Christians inasmuch as the language of this verse can be applied to both. Some commentators do register certain uneasiness about their application of this verse to Christians. For example, Dibelius does recognize that "it might be conceivable that also Jews could have depicted their deep religious experiences as a new, miraculous birth."[165] Regarding the expression of "first fruits," Martin states, "It is also related to Israel, which as the elect nation is the firstborn of Yahweh (Exod 4:22) and the chosen people (Deut 7:6; Jer 2:3)."[166] Moo judiciously recognizes that "Writing as early as James does and with so obvious a Jewish context makes it difficult to know just where to situate James in relationship to the developing Christian tradition."[167] However, these commentators and others apply this language to Christians in order to be consistent with their decision of a Christian audience in Jas 1:1; a decision already challenged in this chapter. Nothing prevents,

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[163]For this translation, see Johnson, *Letter of James,* 192; Blomberg and Kamell, 75

[164]See, for example, Dibelius, 104-6; Martin 40; Moo 79; Blomberg and Kamell, 75; Osborne, 36; and McKnight, 122 and 131.

[165]Dibelius, 106.

[166]Martin, 40. Parentheses original.

[167]Moo, 80.

however, understanding this language as a strategy by James to beckon the Jewish audience into his Christian faith.

There is no discussion, however, in what is at stake regarding the argument in this chapter, namely, that God's plan of giving birth to a sort of first fruits of his creatures is invariably good, just as the "Father of lights" is invariably good. The exhortation of this small unit is then to submit to God's plan. This call becomes then the alternative to the war agenda that leads inexorably to death, and that the author rejects in Jas 1:13-15. In the closing expression of this small unit found in Jas 1:19a, the author seems to further encourage his or her audience in the wisdom of his or her approach by appealing to the fact that they know these things, and addressing them again as "my beloved brothers."[168] And yet, there might be more clues in the small unit of Jas 1:19b – 20.

Ὀργή as the Climactic Conviction to Face the Πειρασμοῖς Ποικίλοις of Life

The two previous sections of this chapter commented on how James questions the conviction of its audience of assigning blame to God for the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they perceive as inducing them to do evil, and their own evil inclination that creates a sinful dynamics that leads to death. The adversative conjunction δὲ of the tripartite imperative of Jas 1:19b, ἔστω δὲ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ταχὺς εἰς τὸ ἀκοῦσαι, βραδὺς εἰς τὸ λαλῆσαι, βραδὺς εἰς

[168]This reading of Jas 1:19a takes ἴστε in the indicative, rather than in the imperative. Both are grammatically possible. Bo Reicke (*The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* [New York: Doubleday, 1964], 56), Martin (40), Johnson (*Letter of James,* 198), and McKnight (135) also take it in the indicative. Contra Blomberg and Kamell (85) and William Baker (*Personal Speech-Ethics in the Epistle of James* [Tübingen: Mohr, 1995], 84) who take it in the imperative as the beginning of a new small section.

ὀργήν, may then be introducing the behavior the author exhorts them to have instead.[169] The command "to be quick to listen and slow to speak" is not an isolated command in James. As Baker correctly argues, "Speech ethics is a major concern in … James."[170] This theme, particularly the command related to proper speech is also found in Jas 1:26, in the major inclusio of Jas 2:12-13 / 4:11-12, in Jas 3:1-12, and in Jas 5:9. In Jas 4:11, the verb utilized is καταλαλέω, meaning to "*speak degradingly of, speak evil of, defame, slander.*"[171] In Jas 5:9, which is part of the suggested paralleled passage to Jas 1:2-20 under consideration in this section, James identifies the gravity of a complaining and slandering behavior in its audience. It is done via the utilization of the verb στενάζω, signifying "to complain in an intensive and excessive manner."[172] The picture is one of bitter slanderous speech among James's audience. If the war agenda precipitated in a significant measure the writing of James, one can easily envision the crass ideological debate that might have ensued among first-century Jews both in Palestine and in the Diaspora that would explain why proper speech is a "major concern in James." But James does not stop there.

James tightly connects this major concern with what can be seen as the climactic conviction of its audience leading to the war agenda, namely, ὀργὴ ἀνδρὸς

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[169]The adversative function of the conjunction δὲ seems to make more sense taking into consideration as well the possible literary context of this section and of the whole of James where the author seems to be elaborating his or her own set of conviction in opposition to that of his or her audience. Cf.: Baker (85) who takes it as continuative, Dibelius (109) who conjectures that it "could simply have been kept with the saying," and McKnight (136) who takes it as "a mild inference."

[170]Baker, 6.

[171]BDAG, 519. Italics original. Similarly, Louw & Nida, 33.387.

[172]Louw & Nida, 33.384.

δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ ἐργάζεται. James's audience might have been convinced or seriously considering that their anger would bring about the righteousness of God in the midst of the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life they were facing.[173] Hermann Kleinknecht helps us get to the meaning of ὀργή since classical Greek as an "impulsive state of the human disposition which … breaks forth actively in relation to what is without ... and … the most striking manifestation of powerful inner passion … orientated to … revenge or punishment."[174] Gustav Stählin indicates that ὀργή in the New Testament "contains an element of awareness and even deliberation;" he further identifies the meaning of ὀργή in the New Testament as "the first step to murder."[175] Vouga centers on violence in his reading of Jas 1:20: "The passion, the assertions, or the protestations dealt with violence can not be seen as obedience to God's will."[176] Martin sees here traces of "the influence of Zealot policy that sought to introduce God's rule by 'worldly' means and armed revolt."[177] The ὀργή in Jas 1:19-20 is clearly portrayed as graver, more somber, more enduring, and far more reaching than what Davids suggests for the ὀργή in Jas 1:19-20 as an "angry outburst against another Christian."[178] Again, the war agenda, as this thesis continues to argue, could be providing a

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[173]See Baker, 88.

[174]Hermann Kleinknecht, "ὀργή," in *TDNT* 5, 383-84.

[175]Gustav Stählin, "The Wrath of Man and the Wrath of God in the New Testament," *TDNT* 5, 419-20.

[176]Vouga, 62. My translation.

[177]Martin, 31.

[178]Davids, 93. Contra Davids, see also Blomberg and Kamell (86) who entertain the possibility that Jas 1:20 could have been written "in opposition to the Zealot movement."

more robust explanation for the language of James, including seeing Jas 1:19-20 as a climax of the set of convictions and behaviors of James's audience that are opposed by its author.[179]

Exhortation to Resilience and the Imperative Against Oaths

According to the suggested structure for James in the previous chapter, James 5:7-12 constitutes the paralleled passage to Jas 1:2-27. It was noted above in the section on exhortation to resilience, that Jas 5:7-11 contains the diverse terminology of ὑπομονή and μακροθυμέω with which the author might have wanted to instill and to promote among his or her audience the resilience needed to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life. In the previous section that deals with ὀργή as the climactic conviction of James's audience, it was explained that the verb στενάζω in Jas 5:9, part of Jas 5:7-11, contributes to the picture of bitter slanderous speech among James's audience. These themes of resilience and proper speech are two major concerns in James, and both of them are dealt with, albeit not completely, in Jas 5:7-11. This reading leaves Jas 5:12 by itself. How does it relate to Jas 5:7-11 and to the

[179]James 1:20 provides the reason for the author's opposition against ὀργή: ὀργὴ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δικαιοσύνην Θεοῦ οὐκ ἐργάζεται. Ὀργή does not produce (literally: does not work out) the righteousness of God. The discussion on the similarities and / or differences between James and Paul regarding the righteousness of God does not seem relevant for the exploration and the claims of this thesis. This thesis stubbornly seeks to understand James as James. Suffice to say then that a possible reading of "the righteousness of God" in Jas 1:20 might have to do with the plan God has orchestrated; a plan that is invariably good and that is not at the mercy of the vicissitudes of life, nor of the anger of human beings. Along these lines, see Blomberg and Kamell (86) who suggest that "The righteousness of God," "would refer to his saving activity and rule, which cannot be ushered in by violence or anger." See also McKnight (140) who sees in this an opposition by the author of the "thoughts that God's kind of society can be produced through violent actions and force." Along similar reading, see also Vouga, 62.

rest of James? Does it provide any clue for the present exploration of the original situation of James?

James 5:12 reads: Πρὸ πάντων δέ, ἀδελφοί μου, μὴ ὀμνύετε μήτε τὸν οὐρανὸν μήτε τὴν γῆν μήτε ἄλλον τινὰ ὅρκον· ἤτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ ναὶ ναί, καὶ τὸ οὒ οὔ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπὸ κρίσιν πέσητε. A translation may go as follows, "But before all, my brothers, do not swear, neither by heaven nor by earth nor by any other oath, but let your 'yes,' be yes, and your 'no,' no, so that you may not fall under judgment."[180] The postpositive adversative conjunction δέ may be contrasting the temporal precedence of things: Resilience and proper speech are main concerns, but even before that, the author may have felt the need to urgently address the concern about taking oaths. The expression πρὸ πάντων in Jas 5:12 has often been taken as marker of primary importance.[181] But perhaps such connotation was not the one intended by the author. What if the author had the second connotation that BDAG provides for the preposition πρό? Namely, "marker of a point of time prior to another point of time, *earlier than, before*."[182] This connotation, if accepted, could resolve the problem raised by the commentators cited of the theme of taking oaths as seemingly more important than themes that are clearly major concerns throughout the letter such as resilience and proper speech,

[180]My own translation. But see Blomberg and Kamell, 230; and McKnight, 423.

[181]Several commentators follow suit with BDAG, 864; Louw & Nida, 65.54; BDF § 213; and Turner, 260. See for example, Moo, 232; Blomberg and Kamell, 230; and McKnight (424-25) who read it as "a non-comparative, introductory expression," something like, "finally."

[182]BDAG, 864.

especially when the taking of oaths in Jas 5:12 is the single occasion this theme is mentioned in James.

Now, although taking oaths is related to the theme of proper speech in Jas 5:12 when the negative imperative against taking oaths is contrasted with the imperative to "let your 'yes,' be yes and your 'no,' no," the main thrust of the negative imperative against ὀμνύω in Jas 5:12 may lie elsewhere.[183] According to Johannes Schneider, the basic meaning of this term is "to grasp firmly, with the idea of linking assurance with a sacred material."[184] One nuance that John Meier correctly indicates for ὀμνύω is "the promissory oath," whereby "a vow is addressed directly to God and promises him some object or action that is supposedly pleasing to him."[185] Martin also underscores a similar component to that of Schneider and Meier of "binding one's allegiance by invoking God's name as asseveration of one's truthfulness."[186] One more helpful insight in explaining the taking of oaths in Jas 5:12 comes from Reicke when he affirms, "The swearing of oaths is a sign of impatience with the order of things."[187] With these insights, it seems likely that at least some in James's audience were taking oaths to bind themselves to the war agenda, unswervingly committing themselves to the revolutionary effort as a result of their lack of resilience vis-à-vis "the

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[183]Among the commentators who understand ὀμνύω in James 5:12 limited to speech, see Johnson, *Letter,* 326-328; Moo, 231-234; and Blomberg and Kamell, 230-231. See also William R. Baker, "Above All Else: Contexts of the Call for Verbal Integrity in James 5:12." *JSNT* 54 (1994): 57-71.

[184]Johannes Schneider, "ὀμνύω," in *TDNT* 5, 176.

[185]John P. Meier, "Did the Historical Jesus Prohibit all Oaths? Part 1," in *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 5 (2007): 179.

[186]Martin, 199.

[187]Reicke, 56.

order of things." This conjecture might be judged overly speculative by some, but it makes sense not only of the raising of this theme at the end of the body of the letter but also of the expression πρὸ πάντων δέ, if understood as "but before anything."[188] Evidence of the taking of oaths related to violence is found in Acts 23:12. This verse registers the instance when some men bound themselves under a curse even unto death with a resolute intent to kill in first-century Palestine. This is but one example that illustrates that perhaps it is not farfetched to conjecture that the prohibition of taking oaths in Jas 5:12 was likely given in response to those in James's audience who may have been binding themselves to the war agenda. James, likely, wanted to stop that development as a matter of urgency. That step would have bound them more firmly to participate in the rebellion. For James, it is a step too far, given the somber consequences of the taking of oaths in the heavily charged violent political climate that the letter may be suggesting.

Conclusion

The exploration in this section has submitted the following set of convictions and behaviors that some in James's audience were likely entertaining and practicing in order to face the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life:

1. Taking things in their own hands with disregard for the gift of wisdom
2. Trusting wealth rather than God
3. Believing that God orchestrated the trials of life as evil, and God was even leading them into the realm of evil
4. Engaging in crass ideological debate

[188]Commentators cited do not entertain this possibility, with the exception of Martin (199) who finds the background of this verse in the "taking of oaths by the revolutionary *sicarii*."

5. Translating anger into violence would bring about the righteousness of God
6. Binding themselves unswervingly to do something that they thought pleased God

It has been shown that the claim, postulated in this section, of a war agenda in James's audience provides a cogent reading of Jas 1:2-20 and its, herein suggested, paralleled passage of Jas 5:7-12. Each and every conviction or behavior identified in these passages, individually and as a set, makes the war agenda a likely original situation that precipitated in a significant measure the writing of James. The accumulative effect of these convictions and behaviors points to something more complex and more ominous than only strife among Christians, or the rejection by Christians of the economic oppression by the rich.

The description herein given of the war agenda among James's audience results in a reading more consonant with a violent response to the challenging reality of πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις that some in James's audience must have been seriously entertaining. This "thick description" and correlation of the war agenda among James's audience find agreement with the volatile political situation of Jewish rebellion against the subjugating Roman Empire in Palestine in the first century. The twelve tribes in the Diaspora could very well be entertaining various means to render highly significant economic and strategic support to such a rebellion. Some of them could even be considering armed participation in such a rebellion. Reicke, based surely on the then insurmountable power of the Romans vis-à-vis the Jews, calls this brewing rebellion "the illusory freedom of political independence."[189] Also, Michael Townsend suggests that the addressees of this exhortation are the Palestinian Christians, of Jewish background, of the years AD 55-60 as a consequence

of their being influenced by the Zealot nationalistic movement, Christians who "had not realized the incompatibility of Christian faith and Zealot nationalism."[190] More recently, Jim Reiher comes up with similar findings in his study of the violent language in James as a clue to its historical occasion:

> The very vocabulary used (and illustrations made) add weight to the thesis that James was written during violent times. James wrote in a context where even Jewish Christians were being tempted to join these pre-Zealot banditry groups. Indeed some had joined and were participating in violent reprisals against the perpetrators of injustices.[191]

As already indicated, the convergence between James and other sources will be brought to bear on the original situation of James in the next chapter when more corroboration will be provided for the likelihood of James having been written to respond, in significant measure, to the inclination of its audience to join, the brewing violent response against the increasingly oppressive subjugation of the Roman Empire that ended up in the catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in the year AD 70. It was hinted above already that the highly sensitive matter of this likely original situation and of the exhortation of James could explain James's restraint in not making explicit this volatile political context.

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[189]Reicke, 24.

[190]Michael J. Townsend, "James 4:1-4: A Warning Against Zealotry?" in *Expository Times*, 87 (1976): 211-213. His argument exemplifies, however, the difficulty encountered by those who argue for a Christian audience vis-à-vis the language of James in places such as 1:20 and 4:1-3, where the author may be referring to literal physical violence and killings taking place.

[191]Jim Reiher, "Violent Language: A Clue to the Historical Occasion of James," *Evangelical Quarterly* 85 (2013): 245. Parentheses original.

CHAPTER 4

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE LETTER OF JAMES

The previous chapter suggested the likelihood of James having been written to respond, in significant measure, to the inclination of its audience to join the brewing violent response against the increasingly oppressive subjugation of the Roman Empire that ended up in the catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in the year AD 70, by providing a cogent reading of the paralleled passages of Jas 1:1 and 5:13-20, and of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-12.[1] The present chapter explores the convergence between the letter of James and other sources that may further corroborate such an inclination. This exploration recognizes with Vanhoozer that "what we reconstruct is the kind of thought and life-situation that finds expression in the text [and that] such thought, … has a historical context that conditions but does not determine it."[2] This chapter takes also in consideration the need emphasized by John H. Elliott of "more rigorous attention … to the sociological dimension of the exegetical task."[3] More specifically, this chapter seeks to address the lack pointed out by Elliot in many exegetical treatments of the biblical text of "ascertaining not only *what* the

[1]This war agenda was defined and explained in chapter 3 of this thesis. Contrariwise to the previous chapters, in the present chapter "James" refers to James, the brother of Jesus and the most likely author of the letter of James, as it is argued herein.

[2]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and The Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 340.

[3]John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation*

sociohistorical circumstances of given traditions and compositions were but also *how* and *why* these circumstances gave rise to the productions under considerations."[4]

The rationale of this chapter runs as follows: In order to explore the socio-historical circumstances that most likely converge with those of the letter of James, the need arises to situate the letter of James in a timeframe. Such a timeframe would serve as a control of the pertinent sources that can be brought to bear in the exploration of those circumstances. This chapter argues at length for James the brother of Jesus as the author of his eponymous letter. If James the brother of Jesus turns out to be the most likely author of his eponymous letter, then the other sources to be consulted must be those addressing similar circumstances to those of his lifetime. This chapter relies then, most particularly, on those sources that shed light on the happenings in Palestine and in the Jewish Diaspora and to the issues addressed by James between the years AD 41 and 62; given that the decision on the most likely author of James is tied, concurrently, to a timeframe for the date of the letter, since authorship and date are inextricably linked.[5] The terminus a quo corresponds to the beginning of the governorship of Agrippa, the staunch Jewish nationalistic leader during the events related in Acts 12.[6] The terminus ad quem marks the most likely date of James's death.[7] The sources

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and Strategy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 1.

[4]Elliott, 3. Italics original.

[5]See Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James, A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2.

[6]See Acts 11:28. See also H.E. 2.8.1 and 2.9.1; Philo, *Legatione,* 28.179. See also Josephus, *Antiquities,* 19.8.2.

[7]See H. E. 2.1.2.

available for this exploration are then the book of Acts, the epistles of Paul, Philo, Josephus, and Eusebius, and the secondary literature that investigates the history that pertains to this timeframe and to this geographical space.

Authorship of the Letter of James

As indicated, this chapter argues for James the brother of Jesus as the most likely author of his eponymous letter. The same suggestion of authorship has been made by others with various other arguments and evidence.[8] Even after exploring some corroboration and presenting some arguments that strongly point to James as the author of his eponymous letter, one can not aspire to much more than what Luke Timothy Johnson labels "moral certitude," that is, the result of "the cumulative force of probabilities."[9]

The text of James, as read in the previous chapters of this thesis, portrays its author as someone with an authoritative voice and message for all the Jewish Diaspora, irrespective of their Messianic allegiance. It also portrays its author as someone with a tall agenda of bringing back to truth the wandering brothers from the error of their way, seizing the occasion of their war agenda in order to discourage it, in no uncertain terms, and to show them the ways of the wisdom of God as revealed in the Old Testament and as interpreted by

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[8]See, for example, C. Leslie Mitton, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 7; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother of Jesus, Friend of God: Studies in The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 3; Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 13-39; and Grant R. Osborne, "James," *in Cornerstone Biblical Commentary Volume 18*, *James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, Revelation,* edited by Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 3-5.

[9]Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (New Haven: Doubleday, 1995), 92. Regarding authorship, Johnson finds that this moral certitude points to James, the brother of Jesus as the author of our letter.

Jesus. In a sense, the author is showing the audience for how to live a proven faith in Jesus Christ even in the midst of the vicissitudes of life. It further portrays its author as someone who articulates, among other things, a strong exhortation to resilience, to proper speech, to submit to God, and to apply the wisdom from God. The sources cited for this chapter, such as the book of Acts, the epistles of Paul, Philo, Josephus, and Eusebius, and the secondary literature that investigates the history that pertains to this timeframe and to this geographical space, seem to offer sufficient evidence that further corroborates the above portrayal of the author of our Epistle, and that identifies him with James, the brother of Jesus.

Authoritative Leadership

As to the authoritativeness of the author of the letter of James pointing to James, the brother of Jesus, some corroboration is found in Acts 12:17 where Luke registers Peter's instructions to the church in Jerusalem to "tell James and the brothers" about his escape from Herod. This verse also indicates that after having given this instruction, Peter "left for another place." The James of Acts 12:17 had clearly become one of the leading figures of the church in Jerusalem; one to whom the news of Peter's escape must be conveyed.[10] The mention of his name, and not of any other of the "brothers" to whom Peter's escape must be communicated, suggests his leadership position.

His leadership and authoritativeness are revealed as even more important when seen in the light of the surrounding historical circumstances of Acts 12. Luke indicates therein that Herod, as part of his persecution against the church, "had James, the brother of

John, killed with the sword. [And that] after he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also."[11] Peter recognized, according to Acts 12:11, that he had been miraculously rescued not only from the power of Herod, but also "from all that the Jewish people were expecting."[12]

Herod and the Jewish people appear working in tandem against the church. This Herod is the one governing all of Palestine in the years 41-44 under Claudius, the Roman Emperor between 41-54.[13] Philo further identifies this Herod as king Agrippa who had paid a visit to Alexandria "on his way to Syria to take possession of the kingdom which had been given to him" by the Roman Emperor Caius.[14] Josephus indicates that soon after the death of Caius in 41, Emperor Claudius confirmed Herod Agrippa as king and expanded his kingdom to the same territory of Palestine that had been governed by his grandfather, Herod the Great. It seems that Herod Agrippa seized the opportunity of the change of government in Rome from Caius, who was highly suspicious of the Jews and who was identified by them, in the words of Philo, as an "irreconcilable enemy," to the less anti-Jewish Emperor Claudius.[15]

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[10]See John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 246.

[11]Acts 12:2-3 (NRSV).

[12]Acts 12:11 (NRSV).

[13]See Acts 11:28. See also H.E. 2.8.1 and 2.9.1; Philo, *Legatione,* 28.179. See also Josephus, *Antiquities,* 19.8.2.

[14]Philo, *Legatione,* 28.180. In *Legatione* (29.188), Philo reports about the "colossal statue of [Gaius] to be erected in the holy of holies … [as] "a winter of misery … far more grievous than any storm.…" The name "Gaius" is also found as Caius in the sources consulted. This chapter opts for the spelling "Caius," unless the citation refers to this Emperor as "Gaius."

[15]See also Josephus, *Antiquities,* 19.5.3.

Agrippa seems to have been intent in strengthening the Jewishness of Palestine. That the nascent Christian church was becoming a victim of this intent is made clear in Acts 12. His death, after only three years in government, must have diminished the intensity of the onslaught against the Christians, but the nationalism of the Jewish nation could very well have gained momentum under him. Agrippa's term of office in Palestine could turn out to be seen as a watershed period for the radicalization of Jewish nationalism against the subjugating Romans.[16]

This is, in summary, the historical context of Peter's instructions to the church in Acts 12:17 concerning James. It seems then that James had an important position of authority within the church in Jerusalem, that such a position was exerted within a highly charged political environment of growing Jewish nationalism, and that James had first-hand experience of the enormous tour de force potential of Jewish nationalism, only bridled by the military power of Rome. The authoritativeness shown in the letter of James may thus be corroborated by the position of authority that James had, which was even taken for granted by none other than Peter, the apostle to the Jews.[17]

James and the Jewish Diaspora

The highly charged political environment of growing Jewish nationalism must have posed a great challenge to the also growing Christian church in Jerusalem. James emerges then as the appropriate figure to carry out a Messianic ministry among the Jews,

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[16]See Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 74.

[17]For Peter as an apostle to the Jews, see Gal 2:8.

irrespective of their Messianic allegiance. The previous chapter suggests that the letter of James was addressed to the Jews in the Diaspora, literally, irrespective of whether they were Christians. If this suggestion is correct, then the leadership and authoritativeness of James indicated above should not be seen as restricted to the growing Christian movement in Jerusalem but should also be seen as extending to the non-Messianic Jews. Such was his ministry, as Joseph B. Mayor perceptively affirms, "He was anxious, if possible, to make his countrymen realize their position, as called by God to be first-fruits of his Creation, through whom the same blessings were to be extended to others."[18] Markus Bockmuehl points to a similar context when he refers to "the concrete circumstances in Judaea and Jerusalem of the 40s and 50s, where only a thoroughly Jewish mission could hope to be tolerated."[19] He further asserts that such circumstances might have caused James's political desire "to secure a *modus vivendi* for the church in Jerusalem."[20]

The estimation of James by his nationalistic compatriots, however, was not restricted to toleration of him; it was one that was amply assured in the 40s and 50s.

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[18]Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of James,* reprint (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990 [1913]), 341. It is opportune to recall that Mayor (cxlii-cxliii) includes Christian and non-Christian Jews in James's audience.

[19]Bockmuehl, 75.

[20]Bockmuehl, 82. Italics original. James's practical approach to the complex issues and dynamics he confronted as exhibited in the strategizing of a *modus vivendi* suggested by Bockmuehl vis-à-vis Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, is further exhibited by James's attitude in the Judaizing debate as Davids (19) underscores: "Acts presents James the Just as a mediating personality who tried to keep peace between the extreme Jewish legalistic segment of the church and the supporters of the Pauline mission." For Ralph P. Martin, *James* (Waco: Word Books, 1988), xxxix, "we may credit him [James] with a desire to maintain peace and harmony within Jewish factions by appealing to ancestral beliefs and customs, and by an endeavor to effect a *modus vivendi* at a time of strained relationships within the Jewish community itself." Eckhard J. Schnabel, (*Paul the Missionary* [Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2008], 51), also suggests such a *modus vivendi.* See also Richard Bauckham, *James, Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 185, for the Palestinian context in which James exerted his leadership but with a clear view of

Eusebius's remark, that "James, who was called the brother of the Lord, … [and] to whom the men of old had also given the surname of Just for his excellence of virtue," suggests that James enjoyed a positive estimation in the eyes of very many Jews.[21] The following abbreviated citation of Hegesippus made by Eusebius further suggests a positive estimation of James by many Jews, even when the most entrenched Jewish nationalism continued to gain momentum, and James's modus vivendi may have been running thin. It was this complex set of circumstances that resulted eventually in the killing of James when some representatives of the most Jewish conservative sentiments seized the opportunity of the power vacuum in Jerusalem at the death of Festus, the governor of Judea, in the year 62, and before the arrival in Judea of Albinus, his successor.[22]

> The charge of the Church passed to James the brother of the Lord, together with the Apostles. He was called the 'Just' by all men from the Lord's time to ours, … he was holy from his mother's womb … and he used to enter alone into the temple and be found kneeling and praying for the people, … because of his constant worship of God … Owing to this some believed that Jesus was the Christ … Now, since many even of the rulers believed, there was a tumult of the Jews and the Scribes and Pharisees saying that the whole people was in danger of looking for Jesus as the Christ. So they assembled and said to James, 'We beseech you to restrain the people since they are straying after Jesus as though he were the Messiah. We beseech you … for all obey you. For we and the whole people testify to you that you are righteous and do not respect persons [πρόσωπον οὐ λαμβάνεις] **...** So the Scribes and Pharisees … cried out to him and said, 'Oh, just one, to whom we all owe obedience, since the people are straying after Jesus who was crucified, tell us what is the gate

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influencing the Jewish Diaspora.

[21]H. E. 2.1.2.

[22]Eusebius indicates too in H. E. 2.23.1, "The Jews were disappointed of the hope in which they had laid their plot against [Paul] and turned against James, the brother of the Lord, to whom the throne of the bishopric of Jerusalem had been allotted by the Apostles."

> of Jesus? And he answered with a loud voice, 'Why do you ask me concerning the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven on the right hand of the great power, and he will come on the clouds of heaven.' … Then again the same Scribes and Pharisees said to one another, 'We did wrong to provide Jesus with such testimony, but let us go up and throw him down that they may be afraid and not believe him.' And they cried out saying, 'Oh, oh, even the just one erred.' … So they went up and threw down the Just, and they said to one another, 'Let us stone James the Just,' and they began to stone him since the fall had not killed him.[23]

The embellishment and/or legendary nature that some have suggested for this account are still open to question, but there is no denying that Hegesippus's account coincides to some extent with the other sources explored herein, such as the book of Acts and Josephus, concerning the positive estimation that James enjoyed among very many Jews.[24] Bauckham, along similar lines, affirms, "Most of the later traditions about James are at least semi-legendary, but they are nevertheless a reflection of his historical pre-eminence."[25] Josephus, for example, confirms this positive estimation of James when he describes the protestations against the killing of James by "those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens."[26] Josephus goes on to explain that the killing of James was orchestrated by Ananus,

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[23]H.E. 2.23.4-15.

[24]Although, Martin Dibelius (*James*, revised by Heinrich Greenven, translated by Michael A. Williams [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976, 16-17) suggests the legendary nature of Hegesippus's account, he accepts that it corresponds with the reputation of Just and influence that James enjoyed among many Jews. For a similar view that the general outline of Hegesippus on James corresponds with what we can know of James on other grounds, see J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 20.

[25]Bauckham, 16.

[26]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.9.1. Dibelius (14) indicates that this description of Josephus concerning James's death is the object of expert debate regarding its genuineness on whether it is a Christian interpolation. Dibelius seems right when he favors its genuineness and suggests that nothing in Josephus's remarks constitutes an unwarranted exaltation of Christianity, nor of James.

the high priest, having seized the interregnum between the death of Festus and the arrival of Albinus as the Roman procurator in Judea in the year 62.[27]

Furthermore, Luke in Acts 21:18 reports that at the return of Paul to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey, Paul and his companions, including Luke himself, went to see James. Luke's remarks also suggest the position of leadership that James continued to enjoy. The fact that James, during this visit and according to Luke's report in Acts 21:20-26, intimates to Paul the success of the Messianic ministry among "many thousands of Jews … [who were also] zealous for the law," as well as the need for Paul to join in some purification rites, strongly points in favor of Bockmuehl's suggestion of the delicate modus vivendi that James must have carefully constructed for his Messianic ministry in Jerusalem among his Jewish brethren. This delicate modus vivendi on the part of James might have taken place even during the years of growing Jewish nationalism and radicalization against the subjugating Romans since the times of Agrippa in the years AD 41-44 and until James's death in the year AD 62.

Josephus' description and Luke's report cohere with the main thrust of Hegessipus's account and all of them point in the direction of the positive estimation that James enjoyed among the Jews. James, very likely then, must have undertaken a vibrant Messianic ministry among his Jewish brethren in Palestine and in the Jewish Diaspora. The strong Jewish character of the letter of James, indicated in the previous chapter, further

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[27]See, Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.9.1.

corroborates that James might have enjoyed a listening and attentive ear among the Jews, irrespective of their Messianic faith.

James and the Volatile Political Environment in Judea

Furthermore, James's strong discouragement of the inclination of some in his audience to take things in their own hands and to violently respond to the challenging reality of πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις, and, more specifically, to wage war against the subjugating Roman Empire in Palestine in the first century, also coheres with the volatile political environment of the 40s, 50s, and 60s in Judea, that is, the timeframe of James's leadership attested by the sources. A more detailed description of such political environment will be given at the end of this chapter. Here, such description is limited to explore the authorship of the letter of James. For the time being, suffice it to say then that Acts may provide various hints of the increasing radicalization of Jewish nationalism turning into revolutionary readiness against the Romans that must have created an unstable political situation during the lifetime of James. As will be noted below, Jewish nationalism was never far from religious fervor. The following incidents exemplify this strong link. Those incidents that hint at increasing radicalization of Jewish nationalism include Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 6:7-7:60; the persecution against the church in Jerusalem in Acts 8:1-3; the already mentioned persecution against the church led by Herod Agrippa in Acts 12; the Antioch incident of some trying to impose circumcision on the Gentile believers that led to the Jerusalem Council as reported in Acts 15; the "many thousands of Jews … zealous for the law" in Acts 21:20; the mention of "the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert" in Acts 21:38; the furious

rejection of Paul by the Jewish crowd when he referred to his mission to the Gentiles in Acts 22:21-23; the conspiracy of the Jews, in which more than forty men bound themselves by oath, not to eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul in Acts 23:12-15; and the insistence of the Jewish leadership on Felix and then on Festus during several years, trying to get rid of Paul in Acts 24:1-23, 24:27, and 25:1-12.

Josephus also points to the volatile political situation in post-Agrippa Judea: "These [men from Cesarea and Sebaste] were the very men that became the source of very great calamities to the Jews in after-times, and sowed the seeds of that war which began under Florus [64-66]."[28] Further on, Josephus reports that during the procuratorship of Cumanus (48-52), "Judea was overrun with robberies."[29] One more example from Josephus should satisfy, for the time being, the correspondence, argued in this chapter, between James's discouragement of the war agenda and what the other pertinent sources indicate of the volatile political situation in Judea in the 40s, 50s, and early 60s. This particular notation refers to the early part of the government of Emperor Nero (54-68): "Now, as for the affairs of the Jews, they grew worse and worse continually; for the country was again filled with robbers and impostors, who deluded the multitude."[30] The pertinence then of James's discouragement of the war agenda becomes increasingly clear as the sources cited provide a

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[28]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 19.9.2.

[29]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.6.1. It will become clear later on in this chapter that "robbers" in Josephus refer, most often, to Zealot revolutionaries.

[30]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.8.5.

better sense of the growing political instability in Judea during the timeframe of the Christian ministry of James among his Jewish brethren.

James and the Concern for the Marginalized

The concern for the marginalized manifested in the exhortation to care for the needy brother and sister in Jas 2:1-11, with a complementary caustic warning against the braggarts and an even more caustic denunciation of the rich in 4:13-5:6, finds coherence with a leader in the church in Jerusalem who verbalizes his preoccupation for the poor, as of the utmost importance in Acts and in the Pauline correspondence.[31] The Pauline corpus confirms this in Gal 2:9-10, indicating that "James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars. … All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor." Famines were a factor in the poverty of many, particularly in Judea, such as the one reported in Acts 11:27-30 that took place during the government of Emperor Claudius (41-54). This famine, very likely, is the same one that Josephus mentions as having taken place under Fadus and Tiberius Alexander, procurators in Judea in the years 44-46 and 46-48, respectively.[32] These dates will become even more pertinent later on when the date of the letter of James is considered. This particular famine is reported as a great famine by Luke in Acts and by Josephus, and could have gravely expanded the suffering of the poor in Judea.

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[31]The braggarts here are those who speak boastfully and that Jas 4:13 identifies in the Greek as "οἱ λέγοντες."

[32]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.2.5 and 20.5.2. See also H.E. 2.12.

However, the thrust of James's alternative agenda of helping the poor in Jas 2:1-11 must be understood in the larger context of the systemically unjust socioeconomic relations of a typical mature agrarian economy that without exception has generated "marked social inequality … [with] pronounced differences in power, privilege, and honor," such as Judea was under Rome in the first century.[33] In his theory of social stratification, Gerhard E. Lenski also differentiates maritime societies from agrarian ones given the fact that "commerce rather than agriculture was the chief source of the economic surplus."[34] James's concern for the poor illustrates this differentiation when he questions the braggadocio of the entrepreneurs that go from city to city, in Jas 4:13-17, as not necessarily in line with the Lord's will. From his vantage location in Jerusalem, a typical agrarian city as identified by Lenski, James seems to engage further afield the socioeconomic realities of his audience in the Diaspora, some of whom engage in the economic activities of the typical maritime societies of the Eastern Mediterranean in the first century. James, cognizant of the social inequality that both kinds of economies generated among his audience, exhorts them to practice the Royal Law, loving one's neighbor, particularly the poor, in Jas 2:1-11. This constitutes another clear instance of how James undertook his ministry among his Jewish brethren by exhorting them to apply "wisdom from above" as interpreted by Jesus—in a real sense, sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them, appealing in this case to Jesus's command to love one's neighbor.

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[33]Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1984), 210.

[34]Lenski, 192.

Furthermore, James' caustic castigation of the rich in Jas 5:1-6 exhibits elements of surplus, exploitatively obtained from the peasantry, in the context of a more typical agrarian economy. Sean Freyne, following Lenski's model, indicates that "the peasantry … may include owners of small, family-sized holdings, … or tenants who engaged in subsistence farming while paying a rent, usually in kind to an absentee landowner. …[and that] imperial domination had seen the emergence of large estates in Palestine … [with] more and more people … driven off the land and reduced to penury."[35]

From these observations, it is further suggested that James could have written his eponymous letter in Jerusalem, with Palestine as his own setting, without losing sight of the realities of the Jews living in the Diaspora, including their economic means and circumstances that contributed to the deepening of the already entrenched socioeconomic inequalities. James seizes the opportunity of the war agenda to flesh out for his Jewish brethren his Christian concerns; in this case, the Christian concern for the neighbor in need.

James and Proper Speech

One more aspect that finds coherence between the original situation that this thesis argues for and the known historical circumstances of James's lifetime is the emphases on proper speech found in the letter of James. The previous chapter already hinted at the crass ideological debate that must have ensued among first-century Jews and reflected in the

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[35]Sean, Freyne, "Galilee and Judea: The Social World of Jesus," in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research,* edited by Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (Grand Rapids: Apollos, 2004), 29.

bitter slanderous speech castigated in the letter. Such ideological debate could have been further complicated by religious, economic, social, and political considerations.

The variegated nature of the thought world of Second Temple Judaism could have easily fomented such behavior. As E. P. Sanders indicates, much of Judaism between 63 BC and AD 66 was made up of small parties, and "none of them was able to coerce the general populace into adopting its platform."[36] Furthermore, Sanders continues, "The Jews' 'religious' behaviour was closely related to the political and social environment."[37] Such an environment was made even more complex by the diverse influence and appropriation of Hellenism into Judaism as explained by Walter T. Wilson:

> The forms of Judaism accessible to us are far too diverse ideologically and stylistically and overlap in too many complex ways to be neatly classified according to one of these two categories, Palestinian or Hellenistic. Here it needs to be emphasized that the distinguishing aspects of Jewish identity during this era were never expressed with respect to anything like a normative Judaism. Jews exercised considerable freedom in terms of how they defined their Jewish heritage, how they determined appropriate allegiance to that heritage and how they negotiated the relationship between that heritage and Hellenism. This was possible in part because there was nothing like a generally recognized authority to establish standards of belief and practice for all Jewish communities… This diversity was due in no small part to the various ways that Jewish people interacted with the forces of Hellenism.[38]

This diverse and conflicting religious environment was nurtured within a framework of a theology of national election in Israel, as Mark Adam Elliott stresses and defines: "A nationalistic theology could (and apparently did) consist, at one and the same

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[36]E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992), 11.

[37]Sanders, 12.

[38]Walter T. Wilson, "Hellenistic Judaism," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*,

time, of the hope that God would save Israel (theological ideas) by means of a national campaign (military ideas) that would result in political independence (political ideas)."[39] Although the text of the letter of James does not seem to correspond to a nationalistic theology as Elliott describes it, James did remain "faithful to the vision of national redemption in Jerusalem," making his leadership not only tolerable, but accepted even among non-Messianic Jews.[40] Bockmuehl also assumes that "the Jerusalem church survived only because of its visible support for the Jewish national institutions."[41] James's strong discouragement of judgmental slandering via his emphases on proper speech may have found its raison d'être in this complex web of highly charged political ideological environment of first century Judea with reverberations in the Jewish Diaspora. Albeit, speculative, that could have been the case.

The Person and Leadership of James

Thus far observed have been the pertinence and coherence of the exhortation of James as expressed in the text itself, such as the authoritativeness of his injunctions, his strong discouragement of the war agenda, his concern for the marginalized, and his encouragement of proper speech, with the social, religious, political, ideological and economic situation of the timeframe of his life. The focus is now turned to the person of

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edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 479.

[39]Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 34. Parentheses original.

[40]Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 74.

James himself, "the most Jewish of all the Jewish leaders," as James M. Boice identifies him in relation to the other leaders in the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15.[42] This is necessary because some scholarship questions whether he had what it took, to have been the author of such an authoritative letter that exhibits a good level of Greek.[43]

Assumed Leadership

It is not only Peter in Acts 12 who assumes the recognized leadership of James. That instance of Peter's recognition of the leadership of James took place at the critical juncture of the vigorous thrust exerted by Agrippa in favor of Jewish nationalism during his short governorship of the years 41-44 in Judea.[44] The apostle Paul also recognizes the leadership of James, the brother of the Lord, in various places. According to Gal 1:18-19 Paul, in one of his visits to Jerusalem saw the apostle Peter and James, while he did not see the other apostles. Paul, in 1 Cor 15:7, testifies about the resurrected Lord having appeared to James. In Gal 2:9-10, Paul also recognizes the distinguished leadership of James as one of the pillars of the church, along with Peter and John.[45] These Pauline references confirm what

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[41]Bockmuehl, 74.

[42]James Montgomery Boice, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 265.

[43]Dibelius (38) also concurs that the letter of James exhibits "a relatively good Greek," and regards the letter as a pseudonymous document. Davids (11) constitutes another example of those who deny that James, the brother of Jesus, could have written this letter. Davids does so by questioning whether James, the brother of Jesus, "had access to the education necessary to enable him to write using the style observed in the letter."

[44]According to Schnabel (48), this change of leadership from the apostles to the "elders" took place "after the departure of the apostles [from Jerusalem] in A. D. 41/42."

[45]See Mayor, 20. Sophie Laws, cited by Martin, xxxix, identifies James as "a very

the tradition knew of this James as being the brother of Jesus; the same tradition that is attested in the Synoptics in Mark 6:3 and in Matt 13:55.[46] The Pauline references also confirm that the leadership of James was recognized and assumed by other leaders of the nascent Christian movement such as Peter and Paul. The report of Luke in Acts 15:4-29 regarding the Jerusalem Council that met to discuss the issue of whether Gentiles needed circumcision in order to be saved, presents the decisive leadership of James towering even above the apostles Peter and Paul.[47] Jude, the likely author of his eponymous New Testament letter, also identifies himself as brother of James, perhaps, as Osborne suggests, in order "to anchor his [Jude's] authority for writing this letter."[48] Eusebius, almost three centuries after James, finds that church tradition also identifies this James with James, the brother of the Lord; the one "to whom the men of old had also given the surname of Just for his excellence of virtue."[49] Citing Clement's *Hypotyposes*, Eusebius also indicates: "Peter and James [the brother of John] and John … did not struggle for glory … but chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem."[50]

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considerable figure in the tradition of early Christianity."

[46]See Bruce Chilton, "James, Jesus' Brother," in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research,* edited by Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 253.

[47]See Mayor, 21. Commenting on Gal 1:19 and 2:7-9, Martin (xxxvi) affirms that "Paul adverts to the role of James in such a way as to suggest his growing awareness of the latter's importance."

[48]Osborne, "Jude," 357. Concerning the relationship between the letters of Jude and James, Dibelius (45) affirms that "it is probable that the author of the Letter of Jude presupposes the existence of a letter attributed to James, which therefore is probably our writing."

[49]H.E. 2.1.1-3.

[50]H.E. 2.23.1-15.

Even Dibelius, who argues in favor of the letter of James as a pseudonymous document, based on his mistaken presupposition of James being dependent on the Judaizing debate with the apostle Paul and on his unsubstantiated suggestion that this debate was already settled at the time of the writing of James, acknowledges the towering leadership of this James when he affirms, "Our sources know only one person of reputation in primitive Christianity who could have been suggested by the way in which his name appears in the prescript of our letter: *James, the brother of Jesus*."[51] Dibelius's argument of the letter of James being dependent on the Judaizing debate with the apostle Paul does not really stand to the thrust of James's injunctions, argued in this thesis, of discouraging a violent rebellion and encouraging the practicing of the Royal Law, the law of liberty, in favor of the marginalized, as the authentic manifestation of faith in the glorious Lord Jesus Christ. The Royal Law, understood thus, does not require Paul as sparring opposite to James.[52] It seems that the following insightful argument of Davids adequately responds to those who argue for the pseudonymous authorship of the letter of James: "Against a theory of pseudonymous authorship stands the simplicity of the greeting, the lack of exalted titles; … for a

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[51]Dibelius, 12. Italics original. See also Dibelius, 17-18, where he tries to explain that the letter of James is a pseudonymous work and a result of the Judaizing debate with Paul. Dibelius is by no means alone in seeing the letter of James as part of the Judaizing debate with the apostle Paul. Penner (290) indicates that Hengel "sees the implications of the presence of a sustained anti-Pauline polemic in 2.14-26," and that Hengel's "main contribution is the systematic reading of the letter as a sustained attack on Pauline theology and praxis." Bauckham (119) indicates as well that "Baur himself, following F. H. Kern, saw it as pseudonymous, and a late 'catholicizing' attempt from the Jewish Christian side to reconcile the Pauline and Petrine parties, [based on the fact that] the letter makes no reference to the issues of circumcision, food laws and other distinctives of the Mosaic law." Luke Timothy Johnson (*Letter,* 10-17), on the other hand, rightly considers such understanding of James a distortion.

[52]Against Dibelius's suggestion of James being dependent on the Judaizing debate with Paul, see also Davids, 21, and Osborne, "James," 5.

pseudonymous author would most likely identify his 'James' better and would stress his authority."[53] What stands from Dibelius's argument though is his acknowledgement that no other person fits the designation in the prescript of the letter, as does "James, the brother of Jesus." For Bauckham, it is also crystal clear that "only one James was so uniquely prominent in the early Christian movement that he could be identified purely by the phrase: 'James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.'"[54] He further and correctly affirms: "James was the central authority for a world-wide Jewish Christian movement."[55]

C. Leslie Mitton then is correct when he states: "The letter fits what is known about James the Just [and,] only James the Just had the authority this letter claims."[56] Similarly, Luke Timothy Johnson concludes: "A letter from *this* James [the brother of Jesus] to 'the twelve tribes in the dispersion' accords well with the fairest reading of our earliest sources and the self-presentation of the composition itself."[57] Johnson also convincingly argues for James, the brother of Jesus, as the author of the letter of James, and asserts that "the evidence provided by the letter fits comfortably within that provided by our other earliest and best sources (Paul, Acts, Josephus), whereas it fits only awkwardly if at all within the framework of the later and legendary sources that are used for most

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[53]Davids, 9.

[54]Bauckham, 16.

[55]Bauckham, 21. Lamentably, Bauckham does not scout James's growing and substantial influence among his non-Messianic Jewish compatriots in Palestine and in the Diaspora.

[56]C. Leslie Mitton, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 230.

[57]Johnson, *The Letter*, 121. Italics original. See also Savas C. Agourides, "Origin of the Epistle of St James: Suggestions for a Fresh Approach," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 9 (1963): 72.

reconstructions."[58] The tradition that associates James, the brother of Jesus, with his eponymous letter is thus accepted in this thesis.

This tradition is collected by Eusebius whereby the letter of James is presented as disputed, meaning that it is potentially canonical, and not rejected. This is further elaborated when Eusebius indicates that the letter's "authenticity is denied, since few of the ancients quote it [but that] … nevertheless we know that these letters [James and Jude] have been used publicly with the rest in most churches."[59] Eusebius also presents James as the author of his eponymous letter, and as the first of the Catholic Letters. That Eusebius is collecting tradition is reflected in the way James's authorship is stated: "James … whose is said to be the first of the Epistles."[60] As Davids surmises, the tradition on this James, also known as James the Just, as the author of his eponymous letter appeared at the latest by "AD 253 (the death of Origen) and established itself firmly by the end of the fourth century (Jerome, Augustine, and the Council of Carthage)."[61]

The Education of James

Davids, with his penchant for redactional criticism, finds in a redactor a viable working hypothesis to his own inclination to doubt that this James, "the son of a carpenter" had what it takes, educationally, to put together a sophisticated letter, stylistically, and with a

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[58]Johnson, *Brother*, 3. Parentheses original.

[59]H.E. 6.14.1.

[60]H. E. 2.23.24. Eusebius and others prefer the term "Epistle." Without further ado, this thesis opts for the term "letter."

[61]Davids, 2. Parentheses original.

good level of Greek.[62] At the end of the day, however, Davids does not deny that the ideological source for the redactor is James, the brother of Jesus. So one does not have to challenge the presence or absence of a redactor in order to uphold James, the brother of Jesus, as the author of this letter, although "there is no allusion [in this letter], in any form whatsoever, to the activity of a secretary," as J. N. Sevenster affirms.[63] Davids does acknowledge Sevenster's contributions from the latter's study on how much Greek could the first Jewish Christians, such as James, have known; namely, that "it is now definitely established that the knowledge and use of Greek was often quite a normal phenomenon in Jewish circles."[64] Also, Sevenster incisively affirms that the "possibility can no longer be precluded that a Palestinian Jewish Christian of the first century A. D. wrote an epistle in good Greek."[65]

To doubt the educational capability of James, the son of a carpenter, to write a letter of such tenor as the letter of James, is to find oneself in a similar conundrum as the people at the synagogue found themselves concerning Jesus, as registered in Matt 13:56: πόθεν οὖν τούτῳ ταῦτα πάντα. James, of the same pious family as Jesus, and a person on a quest to figure out his more famous brother as hinted at in John 7:1-5, must have had a

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[62]Davids, 22. See also Sevenster (9) who cites Kümmel, Jülicher and Ropes as other scholars who question the educational capability of this James as the author of his eponymous letter.

[63]Sevenster, 12.

[64]Sevenster, 177.

[65]Sevenster, 191.

similar learning environment as that of Jesus, in the "carpentry" of their Jewish faith, c'est-à-dire, in the inner workings of reflection, interpretation, and understanding of their faith.[66]

Furthermore, to doubt the intellectual capability of James to write this letter misses not only the training that all Jewish boys had in the Torah and the assiduous study of their sacred writings, but also the profound impact of the experience of the appearance to James of the resurrected Jesus, as Paul reports in 1 Cor 15:7.[67] Such an experience for a pious man on a quest concerning Jesus, when viewed in the light of the towering leadership of James in a tough and complex religious, political, economic and ideological environment must have sent this man not only to his knees, a position in which James is often found as Hegessipus indicates, but also to the scrolls at the synagogues and at the Temple in Jerusalem, as well as to the edifying conversations among other disciples of Jesus. According to Eusebius, Philo witnesses to the dedication by the early Christians to the study of the sacred scriptures.[68]

It is not only the letter of James that evidences James's esteemed intellectual standing among his brethren. His leadership in the nascent Christian church and his ministry among his Jewish brethren at large as is shown in the book of Acts and in the Pauline correspondence, particularly Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia, further corroborate that

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[66]Philo, in *Legatione Ad Gaius* 16.115 and 29.195, points to the educational training of Jews from infancy and the importance of studying the laws with all the heart. Although, Philo writes from his own context, it exemplifies the priority assigned by the Jews in general to education. See also Mayor, 78.

[67]For the training of all Jewish boys in the Torah and their assiduous study of their sacred writings, see Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 106 and 120. Paul Johnson in turn cites Eliezer Ebner's *Elementary Education in Ancient Israel during the Tannaitic Period (10-220 C. E.),* (New York: Block Publishing, 1956).

James had what it took, educationally as well, to write his eponymous letter. It is opportune to recall that among the nascent fellowship of believers in Jesus, there were "many even of the rulers," who very likely interacted with James as one of the pillars of the nascent movement, many of whom had the formal educational training James might have lacked. In such fellowship, James could further sharpen his intellectual skills.[69]

The Jerusalem Council as reported in Acts 15 offers another example of James's intellectual capabilities that makes of the letter of James not an isolated intellectual effort. James's performance has appropriately been evaluated by F. F. Bruce as an exercise in "a statesmanlike breadth of vision."[70] The context Bruce suggests for the Jerusalem Council also illumines the complexities of the circumstances that required skillful leadership as that exhibited by James: "The church of Jerusalem was concerned about the implications of a forward movement which so decisively altered the balance of Jews and Gentiles in the whole Christian fellowship."[71] The role of James, the brother of Jesus, at this critical junction is then of central importance. The following remarks of other commentators concerning the performance of James, the brother of Jesus, at the Jerusalem Council confirms not only his recognized leadership, but they also buttress the argument of this section in favor of his sufficient educational skills. Michael A. Brown states: "Perhaps James chose a passage

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[68]*H. E.* 2.17.7-20.

[69]See John 12:42. Acts 6:7 also reports that "a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." Many of them surely had formal education and must have interacted with James.

[70]F. F. Bruce, *The Book of The Acts,* The New International Commentary on the New Testament, revised edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 239.

[Amos 9:11-12] that delineated with exquisite precision the fact that the restored kingdom will admit both Jew … and Gentile."[72] Osborne brings up Acts 12 and 15 and concludes: "In both instances James was a central figure in the Jerusalem church, in a sense acting as its head elder."[73] Luke Timothy Johnson affirms that Acts "does portray James in its account of the Jerusalem Council as having a pastoral concern and an assumed authority extending well beyond Jerusalem."[74]

Influence of James in the Jewish Diaspora

The plausibility of the influence of James in the Jewish Diaspora is now explored. His great stature as a leader in the nascent Christian movement as seen above might have had repercussions and influence not only among Messianic and non-Messianic Jews of the first century in Jerusalem and in Palestine, but also beyond, among Diaspora Jews. The Jews were present all over the then known world. Philo particularizes the nation of the Jews as one that "was not contained as every other nation by the circuit of the one region which was allotted to it by itself, but … it had spread over the whole face of the earth."[75] Josephus also reports the geographical extension of the Jewish Diaspora: "It is hard to find a place in

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[71]Bruce, 281.

[72]Michael A. Brown, "James' Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council: Steps Toward a Possible Solution of the Textual and Theological Problems," in *JETS* 20 (1977): 113. Similarly, Schnabel, 54.

[73]Osborne, "James," 4.

[74]Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother,* 4.

[75]Philo, *Legatione Ad Gaium*, 31.214.

the habitable earth that hath not admitted this tribe of men."[76] The speculative calculation of the number of Jews in the Diaspora in the first century stands at around five to six million people.[77] Theodor Mommsen indicates that Palestine contained only a minor portion of the Jews.[78] John M. G. Barclay agrees with the suggestion of Harnack and of Juster that "vastly more Jews lived in the Diaspora than in the homeland."[79] Paul Johnson indicates, "[B]etween 734 and 581 BC there were six distinct deportations of the Israelites … [and that] From this time onwards, a majority of Jews would always live outside the Promised Land."[80] These citations illustrate the importance of the Jewish Diaspora in number and in how representative and significant they were for the Jews in general. This present exploration adds weight to the conclusion that nothing that is known so far precludes the likelihood of the letter of James having been addressed to all the Jewish Diaspora.

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[76]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 14.7.2. Schnabel (49) affirms that "Jewish communities existed in all larger cities of the eastern Mediterranean." See also Paul R. Trebilco and Craig A. Evans, "Diaspora Judaism," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 282.

[77]See Trebilco and Evans, 286.

[78]Theodor Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire from Caesar to Diocletian,* translated by William P. Dickson (London: MacMillan, 1909 [1886]), 8. See also pp. 162-167.

[79]John. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora; From Alexander to Trajan (323BCE – 117 CE)*; (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1996), 4. Barclay also mentions that Harnack calculates the population of the Jewish Diaspora in the first century between four and four and a half million people, while Juster calculates it between six to seven million people.

[80]Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 82. See also Mayor, 152, for the years of the various Jewish exiles.

Western or Eastern Diaspora?

More is known about the Jewish Diaspora in the Eastern Mediterranean than of the Jewish Diaspora beyond the Euphrates, but there are clear references to the important presence of Diaspora Jews beyond the Euphrates. The long speech of Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian and the Roman general commanding the forces against the Jews at the end of the war of AD 66-70, registered in *The War of the Jews* of Josephus, is a good example of this fact. Titus complains that the Jews had "sent embassies to those of [their] nation that are beyond the Euphrates."[81] Any influence James might have had among Diaspora Jews could have extended to the Jews beyond the Euphrates, but again, more is known about Diaspora Jews in the Eastern Mediterranean of the first century and so the focus in New Testament studies is greater on the Western Diaspora, namely, Jews living in the region of the Eastern Mediterranean, rather than on the Eastern Diaspora, namely, Jews living beyond the Euphrates.[82]

This reality is made evident in the book of Acts where, in 2:9-11, Luke reports that at Pentecost there were present in Jerusalem Jews, including proselytes, residing in Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia and in some specifically mentioned regions of the Eastern Mediterranean; and yet the thrust of the missionary activity reported in Acts excludes Parthia, Media, Elam and Mesopotamia. The synagogues mentioned in Acts, for example, are

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[81]Josephus, *War of the Jews,* 6.6.2.

[82]For his study on the Jewish Diaspora, Barclay (10), for example, acknowledges the limitation of the literary and archaeological evidence, geographically, to Egypt, Cyrenaica, the province of Syria, the province of Asia and to the city of Rome. Also, Sevenster (77) focuses on the evidence of Diaspora

located in Salamis, Cyprus (13:5), Pisidian Antioch (13:14), Iconium (14:1), Thessalonica (17:1), Berea (17:10), Corinth (18:1,4), and Ephesus (18:19), and none in the Eastern Diaspora. The point being that, although the probability of the influence of James in the Eastern Diaspora exists, the geographical sources for our evidence forces us to focus on the influence of James in the Western Diaspora. In any event, the Western Diaspora rather than the Eastern Diaspora was the more directly impacted by the brewing war and by the war itself, although, as Titus' speech shows, the Western Diaspora was not completely out of view. The relevance of the letter of James was then much greater for the Western Diaspora.

Normalcy and Diversity

Now, seven centuries of Diaspora conditions had generated a sort of normalcy to the realities of the Jews, in Palestine and abroad; a normalcy that for the Diaspora is reflected in the New Testament as, for example, in John 7:35 and in Jas 1:1; a normalcy that did not appear to have the somber implication of the punishment of the Exile at the forefront any longer.[83] Philo also reflects this when he indicates that those regions occupied by the Diaspora have been so "by their fathers, and grandfathers, and great grandfathers, and still more remote ancestors … [and that such regions are accounted] as their country."[84]

Jews in the Roman Empire at the beginning of the Christian era.

[83]See Trebilco and Evans, 293.

[84]Philo, *Flaccum,* 7.46. See also Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* translated by S. Applebaum (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), 271-295.

In conjecturing about the influence of James, the brother of Jesus, in the Jewish Diaspora of the first century, it is appropriate to be mindful of the diversity of conditions in which the Jews of the Diaspora lived, in order to dissipate the idea of homogeneous conditions for the millions of Diaspora Jews in the first century.[85] Such diversity of conditions might be one factor explaining what Agourides observed as a strategy of James, as noted in the previous chapter: "James gives the picture of a definite situation but rather paradoxically by a way of rendering the specific and particular to the general."[86] Such strategy fits well the diverse conditions of the Jews in the Diaspora; it also fits the variegated Judaism of the first century and the multiplicity of forces and ideologies that must have tried to gain the loyalties of Diaspora Jews.

A Resilient Identity

Such sense of normalcy and the diversity of Diaspora conditions did not overshadow the resilient identity of Diaspora Jews in the first century. Paul Johnson acutely suggests, "The Jews, deprived of a state, became a nomocracy—voluntarily submitting to rule by a Law which could only be enforced by consent."[87] Although Johnson has the early exile in Babylonia in view, such "nomocracy" is found in the first-century Jewish Diaspora as well, as the cornerstone of the "international *ethnos"* that the Jews had become.[88]

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[85]See Trebilco and Evans, 295.

[86]Agourides, 67.

[87]Paul Johnson, 83.

[88]See Barclay, 423. Italics original.

Tcherikover explains that "to live according to their ancestral laws" was a privilege of the utmost importance that the Jews in the Diaspora secured and enjoyed.[89] Trying to abide by their Law was the core of the resilient identity of the Jews even in the Diaspora. As Trebilco and Evans explain: "The Torah was clearly the key text for Diaspora Jews…. The allegorical method used by Aristobolus and Philo presupposes the supreme authority of the Scriptures."[90] Barclay, who sketches the Jewish identity in the Diaspora, finds the core of their identity in the combination of ancestry and custom; but it seems that the truth of the matter lies rather in the key identity role of the Torah from which Jewish "ancestry and custom" found significance.[91]

Barclay does have it right when he explains, regarding the Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora, that the Jewish "ancestry and custom" were manifested in a "web of social and religious commitments [that supported] the social fabric of Diaspora Judaism."[92] A caveat is needed though: the same sociological dynamics of Jewish identity must have been present in Jerusalem and in the rest of Palestine where the Torah also played a central role for Jewish identity and where this identity was also manifested in a "web of social and religious commitments [that supported] the social fabric … of Judaism."

In fact, it was compliance with the Torah that determined Jewish identity, as there was the possibility of becoming a Jew by being a proselyte. Philo associates the

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[89]Tcherikover, 82-83.

[90]Trebilco and Evans, 292.

[91]See Barclay, 13 and 404.

[92]Barclay, 442-443.

condition of being a proselyte with pertaining to the "politeia" of the Jews, the "new and God-fearing constitution, learning to disregard the fabulous inventions of other nations, and clinging to unalloyed truth."[93] Tcherikover, explaining Jewish identity, indicates that "in every land of the West where Jews lived, organized Jewish communities were founded, and a form of public life was created which gave the people of Israel the strength to resist assimilation."[94] That the Torah was the cornerstone of the resilient Jewish identity in Palestine and in the Diaspora is further attested by the exclusion from Jewish fellowship of those who did not seem to comply with it. As John 9 reports, the man born blind and healed by Jesus, was excommunicated from Jewish fellowship by those who seem to be the synagogue's leaders.[95] Josephus also associates religion with country when he reports concerning Tiberius Alexander, procurator of Judea between the years 46-48 that "he did not continue in the religion of his country."[96] It seems that Tiberius Alexander had excluded himself from association with the Jewish "politeia" by renouncing the religion of his ancestors, which was based in the Torah.

Now, the "web of social and religious commitments [that supported] the social fabric of Diaspora Judaism," as Barclay describes, sprung from compliance with the Torah, the Law of Moses, that strengthened Jewish identity even in the Diaspora. This "web of social and religious commitments" included the strong bond of Jews everywhere with the

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[93]Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus I*, 9.51.

[94]Tcherikover, 296.

[95]See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 359-375.

city of Jerusalem and with its Temple in Jerusalem, expressed in the annual pilgrimage of thousands of Diaspora Jews to Jerusalem, the active participation in their festivals and feasts, the keeping of the Sabbath, the practice of male circumcision, regular instruction in the Torah, the payment of the Temple tax, and meal dietary restrictions, among others.[97] As Barclay sees it, this "web of social and religious commitments" provided a strong internal coherence to Judaism, "not by total isolation from its surrounding milieu but by clarity of differentiation at socially decisive points."[98] In other words, these practices constituted boundary markers of Jewish identity vis-à-vis their various social milieus in which different Jewish Diaspora communities lived.

These identity markers however did not erase the lack of normative Judaism, nor did they negate the variegated nature of Second Temple Judaism noted above. The political, social, economic, and ideological implications of Judaism must have been understood then in different ways. The strong Jewish identity being discussed derived from the "web of social and religious commitments," based on the Torah. Yes, but it did not entail the same understanding of Judaism, particularly of the implications of Judaism in the social, political, and ideological spheres.[99] Wilson is pertinent again: "Jews exercised considerable freedom in terms of how they defined their Jewish heritage, how they determined appropriate

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[96]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.5.2.

[97]See Philo, *Flaccum,* 7.45; Barclay, 413-419; Trebilco and Evans, 292; Tcherikover, 354; and Acts 2:5, 9-11; and 15:1, 5, 20, and 29.

[98]Barclay, 444. Cf. Trebilco and Evans, 295.

[99]See Sanders, 11-12, and Wilson, 479.

allegiance to that heritage and how they negotiated the relationship between that heritage and Hellenism."[100] Trebilco and Evans concur: "Without an authority to impose uniformity, great variety could develop in Diaspora Judaism, which became a complex and variegated phenomenon."[101] Barclay then appears right when he affirms, "[H]ermeneutical unanimity was unnecessary so long as the web of custom was preserved intact."[102]

It seems as if Dibelius does not capture this distinction between the strong Jewish identity derived from the "web of social and religious commitments" and the lack of uniformity in Judaism, when he indicates that "the author [of the letter of James] even dares to demand the fulfillment of the entire Law, apparently without in any way considering the application of this injunction [Jas 2:10] to the Sabbath, circumcision and purification laws – the sense which it had within Judaism."[103] It is rather in the context of this tension between strong Jewish identity, on the one hand, and the lack of uniformity within Judaism on the other, that James, the brother of Jesus, must have increasingly become a voice to be reckoned with in Jerusalem and in the Jewish Diaspora. James, in his letter, appeals to the core of the Torah, the base of the resilient identity of Judaism, and not to the vagarious "web of social and religious commitments" of the Jews.

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[100]Wilson, 479.

[101]Trebilco and Evans, 295.

[102]Barclay, 443.

[103]Dibelius, 18.

The Nascent Christian Movement and the Jewish Diaspora

That the nascent Christian movement was making inroads among the Jewish Diaspora or that the latter felt threatened by it, is evident from passages in Acts, such as 4:36-37 in which it is reported that Joseph, also known as Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus, made what could have been a significant financial contribution to the ministry of the apostles; according to 6:9, the staunch and murderous opposition against Stephen originates from members of the Jewish Diaspora, then settling in Jerusalem; Saul's persecution is advanced against those of the Jewish Diaspora in Damascus who were following "the Way" in order to bring them under the Jewish religious authorities in Jerusalem; as is reported in 9:2. One more example is found in Acts 11:19 that indicates that the followers of "the Way" shared the message "only to Jews" in Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch.

The influence of the nascent Christian movement in the Jewish Diaspora seems to emerge clearly; and when James became the main leader of this movement in Jerusalem, his influence in the Jewish Diaspora is not difficult to infer. Seen thus, the letter of James can constitute a vibrant exhortation, embedded in the thought-world of the Old Testament as interpreted with the hermeneutical key provided by Jesus, and influenced by the literature of Second Temple Judaism; in other words, a call to the Jews in the Diaspora to turn to Christ. The vibrant exhortation of James can be seen then speaking authoritatively to the issues of the day, namely, the political, economic, and ideological implications of Judaism vis-à-vis Roman subjugation, in the way suggested in the second chapter of this thesis. Agourides also identifies such influence: "[O]ne would certainly be justified in

presuming that certain points of the epistle which concern both Christians and Jews also presuppose the prestige of the author among the Jews."[104] In other words, the letter of James can be seen as the Christian voice of Judaism that responds, in significant measure, to the increasing inclination among Jews, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora, to abet the brewing revolutionary effort against the Romans.

James: A Christian Voice of Judaism

That the letter of James could be seen as the Christian voice of Judaism for a particular situation need not be odd. James can be situated at a time when there was no discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism. Brevard Childs understands it thus:

> James assumes an unbroken line of continuity between Israel and the obedient Christian life. His division does not fall between Judaism and Christianity, but rather between true and false religion. True faith is demonstrated by obedience to the one will of God, … by following faithfully the law of liberty, and waiting patiently for the coming reign of God in righteousness.[105]

Neither does Bauckham find discontinuity in James between Israel and the church; he finds instead that "the teaching of Jesus … inspires the creative re-expression that is James' way of being faithful to Torah, wisdom and Jesus."[106] Along similar lines, McKnight, based on the facts that the community of Jas 2:2 meets in the synagogue and that Jas 5:14 constitutes the isolated use of ἐκκλεσία in the letter of James, identifies "the border

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[104]Agourides, 73.

[105]Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction.* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 443. See also Andrew Chester and Ralph Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 52; and Penner, 258. These scholars seem correct when they identify the letter of James as an "unbroken continuity between Judaism and Christianity."

[106]Bauckham, 157.

between [the] messianic community and the rest of the Jewish community [as] amorphous," and concludes that "'twelve tribes' [of Jas 1:1] is both messianic and still ethno-religiously inseparable from the Jewish community."[107] If the letter of James can be seen as a Christian voice of Judaism for the particular situation of Roman subjugation that affects Jews, messianic or not, it seems appropriate to comment next on how it is that James could have been such a voice for the Jewish Diaspora as well, and not only for the Jews in Jerusalem and in Palestine.

Jewish Diaspora, the Temple, and Palestine

One important component of the "web of social and religious commitments" was the strong bond of Jews everywhere with the Temple and with the city of Jerusalem, expressed in the annual pilgrimage and the celebration of feasts and practice of other religious rites in their holy city. Acts 2:5 reports that at the day of Pentecost [ἦ]σαν δὲ ἐν Ἰερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν ("and there were Jews dwelling in Jerusalem, pious men from every nation under heaven").[108] This is just one example of the strong religious links that the Jewish Diaspora, East and West, maintained with Jerusalem, reflecting the centrality of Jerusalem for these devout Jews. They are further identified in Acts 2:9-11 as "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome,

[107]McKnight, 67.

both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs." They peregrinated to Jerusalem from among "every nation under heaven." At the last visit by Paul reported in Acts, Luke includes the information that it was the "Jews from the province of Asia" who stirred the people in Jerusalem against Paul. This is another example of the centrality of Jerusalem and its Temple for the Jewish Diaspora.[109] Trebilco and Evans find enough evidence to affirm: "[P]ilgrimage to Jerusalem probably provided significant contact for the Diaspora communities with developments in Jerusalem and Palestine in general and further consolidated the bond between the Diaspora and Palestine."[110] Sevenster also finds "abundant proof of manifold relations between the diaspora Jews and the Jewish land."[111] It can be concluded then that many Diaspora Jews, Messianic or not, peregrinated to Jerusalem and that this peregrination also took place while James was the recognized leader of the nascent Christian movement that had not completely branched off Judaism.

Luke Timothy Johnson rightly finds correlation between James's influence in Jerusalem with his influence in the Diaspora: "James the brother of Jesus was a notable figure in Jerusalem because he was a leader in the nascent Christian movement."[112] And he adds: "The letter [of James] provides literary confirmation of the portrayal of James's

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[108]My own translation.

[109]Acts 21:27.

[110]Trebilco and Evans, 292.

[111]Sevenster, 82.

[112]Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother,* 2.

influence extending beyond Jerusalem to those 'in the dispersion (James I:I).'"[113] If James had a relevant message for the Jews in Palestine of an alternative Christian agenda to that of the brewing revolutionary war efforts, and if this brewing war would have had all sorts of implications and reverberations for the Jewish Diaspora, it follows that James could very well have utilized his eponymous letter to convey his relevant message to the Jewish Diaspora as well.

It is easy to envision many Jews, Messianic or not, who knew full well the teachings of James pertinent to the highly charged political, economic, and ideological environment of Palestine that has been suggested herein. It is easy also to envision many of these Jews in Palestine who had family, friends, and acquaintances in the Jewish Diaspora who came to Jerusalem for the annual pilgrimage and with whom they discussed the concerns of the day and the teachings of their leaders, including James's. It is similarly easy to envision that the need arose to have the teachings of James for such a critical situation summarized in a letter for the benefit of those in the Diaspora. Perhaps then, such a need, among others, was addressed with the letter of James. The reconstructions as to how the need for such a letter arose could vary according to our imaginative conjectures. Perhaps, the pilgrims to Jerusalem themselves, after hearing the teachings of James, asked James to surmise his teachings regarding the particular war agenda that has been suggested. Some Christian Jews in the Diaspora who had listened to the teaching of James while on pilgrimage

[113]Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother,* 4. Parentheses original.

to Jerusalem may have thought that such teachings were good for their non-Christian brethren to better understand the Old Testament as interpreted by Jesus.

In any event, as Mayor supposes, "St. James, the president of the Church in Jerusalem, would naturally be interested in the Jews of the Dispersion who came up to the annual feasts."[114] It might be then that the letter of James contains a structured resume of the teachings of James, the brother of Jesus, on the Christian response to the war agenda. These teachings might have often been given to his Jewish audiences, Messianic or not, in Jerusalem and wherever he might have ministered.[115] The letter was then addressed and sent to the Jewish Diaspora, as Bauckham suggests, "with a view to relevance wherever his letter should be read."[116] As the leader of great stature that James, the brother of Jesus, was among his Jewish brethren in Palestine, according to the sources cited in this chapter and to the reconstruction herein made, his important influence among the Jewish Diaspora, given the close connections of Diaspora Jews with their homeland, ensues most naturally. The letter of James addressed to the Jewish Diaspora as an authoritative exhortation in the context of a highly volatile political, economic and ideological environment in the 40s, 50s, and 60s in Judea, turns out to be expected rather than surprising.

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[114]Mayor, 341. See also Mitton, 7; and Bauckham, 17. Although Mayor, Mitton, and Bauckham consider that the letter of James was written to the Christian Jews in the Diaspora, their suggestion of the way the letter of James got to the Diaspora is well taken and viable, but the contention here is that it was not addressed to the Christian Diaspora per se, but to the Jewish Diaspora, irrespective of their Messianic allegiance. Mayor (160) wrestles more with the issue of the addressees and concludes that "those addressed accept Jesus as the Messiah [but also that] they still seem to form one body with their unbelieving compatriots."

[115]See 1 Cor 9:5.

[116]Bauckham, 185.

The need still remains to further explore whether the political environment of mid-first-century Judea corroborates the argument that the letter of James could have been written, in significant measure, to discourage its audience from the war agenda. But before that is done, a couple more brief comments should be made concerning the identity of James, the brother of Jesus, as the author of our letter, and the seemingly meager Christology of our letter.

James, The Brother of Jesus

Further pinpointing the identity of our James, the brother of Jesus, as the author of our letter, the reader is referred to the erudite and thorough study of Joseph B. Mayor who convincingly concludes that the author of our letter is James, "the President of the Church at Jerusalem, and the brother of the Lord."[117] He further discusses in detail the difficulty of how to understand the expression "the brother of the Lord," whether half-brothers (the Helvidian view), foster-brothers (the Epiphanian view), or cousins of the Lord (the Hyeronimian view).[118] He concludes, "James the Lord's brother was son of Joseph and Mary."[119] Similarly, Hort concludes against the Hyeronimian view, but finds "preponderance of reason for thinking the Epiphanian view to be right."[120] James, for Hort, ends up being the same James, the brother of Jesus, but not the son of Joseph and Mary, rather of Joseph by a

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[117]Mayor, 23.

[118]Mayor, 24.

[119]Mayor, 73. His complete study is found in pages 19-83.

[120]Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The Epistle of St. James* (London: MacMillan, 1909), xxi.

former wife. Dibelius, although not accepting authorship by James, the brother of Jesus, concedes that our letter is falsely attributed to no other James than the brother of Jesus.[121] In this thesis, it is agreed with the end result of the study of Mayor, and concludes that James, the brother of Jesus, is the most likely author of the letter of James. Most commentaries consulted point in the same direction.[122]

The great stature of James, the brother of Jesus, as a leader in the nascent Christian movement with great influence among the Jews in Palestine and in the Diaspora, as it has been delineated in this chapter, renders additional support to such a conclusion. It also renders support to the position against the suggestion of our letter as a pseudonymous document, made by Dibelius, and against the possibility of a different James of those mentioned in the New Testament as the author of our letter; given that, what the sources cited indicate about any of them does not fit with the level of authority and influence that the letter of James requires. James, the brother of Jesus, clearly does.

Christology in the Letter of James

As to the seeming meager Christology of the letter of James that led Spitta and Massebieau to suggest that Jas 1:1 and 2:1 are Christian interpolations, and James as a strictly Jewish document; the contention of this thesis for the letter of James as the Christian voice of Judaism that responds, in significant measure, to the war agenda of the Jewish

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[121]Dibelius, 11-21.

[122]Adamson, 3-52; Blomberg and Kamell, 32-35; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter,* 89-121; Mayor, 19-83; Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 9-22; McKnight, 13-38; and Osborne, "James," 3-5. Cf. Davids, 3-22; and Dibelius, 11-21.

Diaspora can provide some explanation to the complex issue of Christology in the letter of James.[123] That the letter has been seen as lacking a vibrant Christology as expected of a canonical New Testament book is further aggravated by the absence therein of any reference whatsoever to the life and resurrection of Jesus, and by the presence of strong admonition to abide by the whole Law and little, if any, so it seems, of God's grace.[124] This latter aggravation led none other than Luther to disparage against the canonicity of our letter.[125]

James, a Jew and a Christian leader of great stature and influence within and beyond the nascent Christian movement, who, according to Acts 15:16, awaits the restoration of the Davidic kingdom, and who has successfully until now found a "modus vivendi" for a growing Christian presence in the midst of the highly politically charged environment of mid-first-century Judea, now conveys his authoritative message to his compatriots in the Jewish Diaspora. This authoritative message was likely issued as a result of the growing inclination of many Jews, in Palestine and in the Diaspora, to abet the brewing revolutionary efforts against the Romans. James seizes such opportunity to share with his Jewish brethren his faith in Jesus Christ, exhorting them to turn back to God, to "wisdom from above," following the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The seemingly lack of Christology in the letter of James seems to render support to such argument. The subject matter of the letter does not require a substantive elaboration of Christology. If the original situation argued in this thesis is found correct and

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[123]For the suggestions of Spitta and Massebieau, see Davids, 3.

[124]See Mitton, 7.

if its intended audience was composed primarily of Jews in the Diaspora, Messianic or not, an emphasis on Christology could have been counterproductive. The letter could have been rejected on the grounds of Christology and not given an opportunity to consider the issue of wisdom from above applied to the political and social environment of mid-first-century Judea and to its reverberations in the Jewish Diaspora. J. H. Moulton correctly suggested, over a century ago, that most Jews "would be deaf to all arguments which even named the Crucified."[126] James seems to find the pivot point of his argument elsewhere in what was common to him and to his audience, namely, in the wisdom from above, in the whole Law, in the faith a la Abraham and a la Rahab the prostitute, whereby obedience is the byproduct of faith, the applied wisdom from above. The letter of James provides thus a window into the Christian ministry of James among his Jewish brethren of exhorting them to faith "in our glorious Jesus Christ.

What should be surprising then is not the seeming lack of Christology in James, but how much of Christ and of his teachings is found in the letter.[127] This might explain why the explanations of the seemingly meager Christology in James by those who purports that the audience of our letter is a Christian seem diffuse and not compelling.[128] It is opportune to cite, with complete agreement, D. A. Carson who, in his thorough study of the

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[125]See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter,* 125.

[126]J. H. Moulton, "The Epistle of James and the Sayings of Jesus," in *Expositor Series* 7 (1907): 48.

[127]Cf. Osborne, "James," 4.

[128]Cf. Dale C. Allison, "The Fiction of James and Its Sitz im Leben," *Revue Biblique* 108

influences and resonances in James of the thought-worlds of the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and of the teachings of Jesus, finds "several bits of evidence, … that when taken together, suggest that James presupposes a profoundly Christian understanding of the law."[129] James calls his beloved Jewish brethren in the Diaspora to ἐπιστρέφω and away from their growing inclination to take things in their own hands. He does so by appealing to common grounds, their Law, the core of their resilient identity; but he does so as a Christian. The teachings of Christ seem to constitute for James the true hermeneutical key to their whole Law. In the words of Osborne, "[E]very sentence is Christian to the core."[130]

Then again, James is seen as a Christian voice and message of Judaism vis-à-vis the brewing revolutionary efforts of many Jews against the Romans in mid-first-century Palestine. Osborne continues well: "While explicit references [to Christ] are sparse, implicit material stemming from the Jesus Logia … permeates James's epistle."[131] Or as Davids concludes, "These allusions [to the teaching of Jesus] argue that the author was someone saturated with the teaching of Jesus."[132] Furthermore, Davids adds: "The apparent lack of Christology is not a fault in a letter which neither needs much Christology nor lacks an

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(2001): 555.

[129]D. A. Carson, "James," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, edited by G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 999.

[130]Osborne, "James," 4.

[131]Osborne, "James," 4. Osborne indicates that Mayor "notes 60 possible Synoptic references, and Davids notes 36 (with 9 more general allusions)."

[132]Davids, 16.

implicit one."[133] The evidence of the letter of James being Christian to the core leads Agourides to conclude, "[I]n no other book of the New Testament does the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount spring up in such a simple and concise way."[134] What Charles Kannengiesser affirms of New Testament and other early Christian writings applies full well to the letter of James; namely, that "New Testament [writings] are founded on a hermeneutical conversion within their ancestral tradition.... That productivity witnessed a persistent centrality of the Old Testament in the earliest circles of Christian converts."[135] James, "the most Jewish of all the Jewish leaders [at the Jerusalem Council]," had converted to Christ and, in the exercise of his ministry to his Jewish brethren, transmitted wisdom from above as enacted in their Law and interpreted with the hermeneutical key of the teachings of Christ as the sure way to consider pure joy when facing the πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life.

Date

The evidence marshaled and the arguments given provide certain "moral certitude" that the most likely author for our letter is James, the brother of Jesus. If this is so, the letter of James can be placed within the timeframe of the ministry of James as the leading figure of the nascent Christian movement in Jerusalem. The terminus a quo then can be the year AD 44, when Peter escaped from Agrippa and James starts appearing as the leader.[136]

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[133]Davids, 17.

[134]Agourides, 67.

[135]Charles Kannengiesser, "Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church," in *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters,* edited by Donald K. McKim (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 1.

[136]See Acts 12.

The terminus ad quem is the year AD 62, when James died in the context of the power vacuum in Jerusalem at the death of Festus, the governor of Judea, and before the arrival in Judea of Albinus, according to the report from Josephus and Eusebius cited above. Nothing said in this paragraph precludes the influential leadership that James must have had between Pentecost and the year AD 44.

Correlating the argument of the war agenda as a likely original situation for the letter of James, with the date of its writing, suggests that such original situation needed not only a certain momentum to justify the writing of the letter, but also that such a momentum was having some reverberations among the Jewish Diaspora that would have caused James to write his letter to them. This line of reasoning finds nothing in the letter that makes its dating dependent on the catastrophic war of AD 66-70, nor on any sort of Christian doctrinal development, nor dependent on a debate with Paul.[137] In order to further corroborate or invalidate the original situation of the letter of James suggested herein, this thesis explores next some of the political circumstances pertaining to Judea and to the Jewish Diaspora in the timeframe of AD 44-62, that corresponds to the timeframe of the leadership of James, within which the letter must have been written. These political circumstances provide, in turn, some rationale for the suggestion of the year AD 48 as the year of the

[137]Cf. Harnack, Jülicher, and the Tübingen School, as cited by Davids (*James,* 3), who link the date of the writing of the letter of James to their understanding of Petrine and Pauline synthesis in James and place its writing in the second century AD. Dibelius (45) understands the letter to be a pseudonymous paraenetical document and places it between AD 80-130. The reasoning of this section agrees with Osborne ("James," 6) regarding the absence of dependence of the letter of James vis-à-vis a debate with Paul, when Osborne affirms that "the language of 2:14-26 [does not] demand awareness of Paul's teaching." Osborne rightly anchors this position in the fact that the issues dealt with by the letter of James are "Jewish in origin and not just Pauline."

writing of the letter of James. This rationale appears in a summary form in the conclusion of this chapter.

Political Circumstances in Judea

It is opportune to recall the strong linkage that generally exists between religion and the social, political, and economic environment for the Jews. Mid-first-century Judea is definitely not an exception. Allison, citing Grotius, correctly affirms, in relation to the letter of James, "The admonitions regarding conflicts, disputes, and murder are to be understood against the background of Jewish political and social unrest."[138] According to sources cited in this chapter, this strong linkage becomes evident during the lifetime of James. Having concluded that James, the brother of Jesus, was the most likely author of the letter of James, and having suggested the year AD 44 at one end and the year AD 62 at the other end as the most likely timeframe for the writing of our letter; the book of Acts, the Pauline literature, Philo, Josephus, and Eusebius, and the secondary literature that investigate the history that pertain to this timeframe and the geographical space of Palestine and the rest of the Eastern Mediterranean, emerge as pertinent sources from which to sketch the most likely political environment of those years. These sources adumbrate the most likely political environment that might have occasioned the inclination of Jews in Palestine and in the Diaspora to take things in their own hands and violently rise against the subjugating Roman Empire in Palestine, as it is shown here.

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[138]Allison, 533. See also Sanders, 11-12.

Herod Agrippa

The onslaught of Herod Agrippa against the leaders of the nascent Christian movement of the years AD 41- 44 reported in Acts 12, was noted above. Agrippa was held in great esteem by Caius and Claudius, Roman emperors between AD 37 - 41 and AD 41 – 54, respectively.[139] Caius designated Agrippa as king and assigned to him the domains that had been Herod Philip's to the north and northeast of Galilee; and, a couple of years later increased Agrippa's domain with Antipas's domains of Galilee and Perea. Claudius ratified Agrippa in his kingship of these territories in the year 41 and added the territories of Judea and Samaria to Agrippa's domains.[140]

Philo in *Flaccus* submits his version of the repercussions of Emperor Tiberius's death in the year AD 37 upon the Jews in Egypt, especially those in Alexandria.[141] Philo indicates that Flaccus, Governor in Egypt, became somewhat of a puppet for those who were ill disposed against the Jews in Egypt. Philo also describes that amidst this set of circumstances, the passing visit of Agrippa to Alexandria on his way to take up his rule north and of Galilee in the year AD 37, could not have been at a worse time, having aroused the ill-disposition of many enemies of the Jews to a frenzy that resulted in ignominious riots against the Jews.[142]

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[139]Josephus, *Antiquities.* 17.6.10; 19.4; and 19.5.3.

[140]Josephus, *Antiquities.* 19.5.1.

[141]Tiberius was the predecessor of Caius as Emperor in Rome.

[142]Philo, *Flaccus*, 12.101.

In *Legatione ad Gaium,* Philo outlines the staunch opposition of the Jews against the desire of Caius to set up statues of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, which again generated troubles against the Jews in Alexandria.[143] Eusebius, citing Josephus and Philo, surmises these latter happenings as hatred from Caius against the Jews, as follows:

> Now the character of Caius was extremely capricious towards all, but particularly towards the race of Jews. He hated them bitterly; in other cities, beginning with Alexandria, he seized the synagogues and filled them with images and statutes of his own form … and in Jerusalem the temple, which had hitherto been untouched and held worthy of preservation from all violation, he tried to change and transform to a shrine of his own to be called that of 'Caius the new Zeus manifest.'[144]

The influences exerted by the Jew and pro-Jewish king Agrippa with Emperor Caius, his friend, and by the massive repudiation of Caius' intention by the Jews who utilized the good offices of Petronius, the Syrian Legate, were able to persuade Caius against his own desire, or at least to postpone the Emperor's embittered desire to set up statutes of himself in the temple in Jerusalem. Philo indicates that Caius "concealed his anger till a favourable opportunity, though he was very much exasperated."[145] Caius's animosity against the Jews increased, but his own death in AD 41 trampled out his sacrilegious plans.[146] The abrasiveness of Caius and the resolute rejection of his sacrilegious plans by the Jews lead Paul Johnson to suggest, referring to the revolt of the year AD 66 that "the revolt might indeed have come during the reign of Caligula [Caius] … had it not been for his merciful

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[143]Philo, *Legatione ad Gaium,* 14.116 - 20.139.

[144]*H. E.* 2.6.1-2. See also Tcherikover, 315.

[145]Philo, *Legatione ad Gaium,* 34.260.

[146]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 18.8.8.

assassination."[147] These sets of circumstances were heavy on the Jew and pro-Jewish king Agrippa, a dear friend of Caius. The latter describes Agrippa as "completely under the influence of his national customs;"[148] a description further reaffirmed by Agrippa himself in a long letter to Caius in which Agrippa makes evident his unaltered commitment to his Jewish nation, to the laws and customs of his Jewish ancestors, and particularly to the holiness of the temple in Jerusalem.[149]

Josephus relates the important role that Agrippa played in the succession of Claudius, Agrippa's friend, as the Roman Emperor, upon the slaying of Caius in the year AD 41.[150] Josephus also mentions the two important benefits obtained by Agrippa from the new Emperor, namely, the addition of Judea and Samaria to Agrippa's kingship and the letter from Claudius to restore the privileges of "politeuma" of the Jewish Diaspora, within the empire, in order to live undisturbed according to their ancestral laws and customs that had been jeopardized under Caius.[151] This latter benefit obtained by Agrippa further reaffirms the close connections for the Jews between the events in Palestine and the Jewish Diaspora.

These turns of events provide enough evidence of the strong pro-Jewish inclination of Agrippa and of the immense power bestowed on him by Caius and by Claudius

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[147]Paul Johnson, 136.

[148]Philo, *Legatione ad Gaium,* 35.261.

[149]Philo, *Legatione ad Gaium,* 36.276 – 42.330.

[150]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 19.4.1-2.

[151]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 19.5. "Politeuma" is a term understood by Trebilco and Evans (288) as "a formally constituted, semiautonomous civic body within a city whose members were not citizens but possessed some important rights."

in Palestine. This background adumbrates the grave magnitude of the ominous danger faced by the Christians in Palestine and beyond represented in king Agrippa's onslaught against the nascent Christian movement referred to in Acts 12, given his great power in Palestine and his great influence even beyond the borders of Palestine.[152] It is in such a context that James is thrust to the limelight of leadership of the nascent Christian movement in Jerusalem; and in this capacity he emerged as a leader with tremendous statesmanship to guide this new movement through such perilous times. He definitely needed to delineate and resolutely implement the "modus vivendi" suggested by Bockmuehl.

The death of Agrippa in the year AD 44 brought to an end his short-lived kingship, and let up the pressure on the nascent Christian movement although it did not completely eradicate such pressure. No doubt, the Jewish nationalist forces had been deepened and strengthened by their pro-Jewish king. Barclay must be right when he affirms that "the short reign of Agrippa … in some respects exacerbated the tensions in the region … [and that] this Jewish king was set to favour the interests of his Jewish subjects. … The Jews' disappointment at his death was compounded by the reversion of their territory to direct Roman control."[153] James's message and ministry had to be exerted in this context of reinvigorated Jewish nationalism in Jerusalem.

The reinvigorated radicalization of Jewish nationalism did not disappear with the death of king Agrippa. Josephus makes reference to the volatile political situation in post-

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[152]See Josephus, *Antiquities,* 19.8.1.

[153]Barclay, *Jews,* 252.

Agrippa Judea: "[T]he inhabitants of Cesarea and of Sebaste … cast … reproaches upon the deceased [king Agrippa] … … these were the very men that became the source of very great calamities to the Jews in after-times, and sowed the seeds of that war which began under Florus."[154] This incident reflects the fact that not all the inhabitants of Palestine were in accord with the reinvigorated Jewishness emerging within this land. As seen above, the results of the investigation of Sevenster points to the increasing Hellenization of Palestine before Agrippa. King Agrippa himself chartered the two courses of deepening Jewish radicalization, while pragmatically accommodating the forces of Hellenization present in Palestine. He must have understood full well those forces of Hellenization given his upbringing in Rome under Tiberius's household.[155]

Post-Agrippa

The tension between these two cultural and political forces is made evident in the incident referred to in the last paragraph, as well as in other incidents reported also by Josephus, such as how emboldened some Jews of Perea had become, having taking up arms against the inhabitants of Philadelphia, without the consent of their leaders.[156] Other incidents that Josephus reports and that evidence this tension are the successful protestation of the Jews before Emperor Claudius against the intent of Fadus, the then procurator of Judea (AD 44-

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[154]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 19.9.2.

[155]See Barclay, *Jews*, 252.

[156]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.1.1.

46), regarding the keeping of the garments of the high priest; and the failed uprising led by Theudas.[157]

Josephus reports however that under the procurators Fadus (AD 44-46) and Tiberius Alexander (AD 46-48), Judea was in tranquility. Given the incidents mentioned above, this tranquility must have been relative; but Josephus also reports that this tranquility was obtained as a consequence of these procurators "making no alterations of the ancient laws."[158] The outcome of no real opposition to the deepening of Jewish nationalism of mid-first-century Judea, reinvigorated under king Agrippa, must have been this kind of relative tranquility. The great famine reported in Acts 11:27-30 and in Josephus, as having taken place under these two procurators, might have played a part in bringing about this relative tranquility as a lot of energy must have been spent in its mitigation.[159]

This section explores the political circumstances in Judea and in the Jewish Diaspora between AD 41 and 62, in order to further corroborate or invalidate the war agenda as a likely original situation for the letter of James. Tiberius Alexander, a Jew from Alexandria, might have been able to deepen the Jewish nationalism that must have been taking place in mid-first century Judea, but he had given up on Judaism, his ancestral religion, perhaps disappointing the expectations of some, regarding the strengthening of Jewish nationalism. This likely frustration seems to have been manifested at the turn of

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[157]See Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.1.1. and 20.5.1.

[158]Josephus, *War*, 2.11.6.

[159]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.2.5 and 20.5.2.

events when Agripa II, the son of the pro-Jewish king Agrippa, having come of age to represent Rome in one of its territories was sent somewhere else other than Judea, while Cumanus became the procurator in Judea between the turbulent years of AD 48 to 52.

Josephus mentions various incidents that reveal the increasing tension in Palestine between Jewish nationalism and the disregard of Cumanus and of his troops for the traditions of the Jews that led Josephus to conclude, "[U]nder … Cumanus began the troubles, and the Jews' ruin came on."[160] He also indicates that under Cumanus, "all Judea was overrun with robberies."[161] "Robberies" in Josephus might be a byword for the activities of the Zealots, given his antagonism to the Jewish revolutionary efforts against the Romans.[162] The following statement in Josephus illustrates what could have been the increasing nationalistic sentiments of the Jews in mid-first-century Judea: "Galileans were much displeased, and persuaded the multitude of the Jews to betake themselves to arms, and to regain their liberty, saying, that slavery was in itself a bitter thing, but that, when it was joined with direct injuries, it was perfect intolerable."[163]

The Book of Acts provides more hints of the increasing radicalization of Jewish nationalism turning into revolutionary readiness against the Romans creating an

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[160]Josephus, *War,* 2.12.1.

[161]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.6.1.

[162]See Michael J. Townsend, "James 4:1-4: A Warning Against Zealotry?" *Expository Times*. 87 (1976): 212. See also Paul Johnson (122) who indicates that the Sicarii correspond to "the ultraviolent terrorist fringe of a movement who called themselves the Zealots … [and that] according to Josephus, the movement [the Zealots] was founded in AD 6 by Judah the Galilean, when he organized an uprising against Roman direct rule and taxation. He seems to have been a kind of early rabbi, and he taught the ancient doctrine that Jewish society was theocracy, acknowledging rule by none but God."

[163]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.6.1.

unstable political situation during the lifetime of James. Luke registers in Acts 21:20 that James makes the apostle Paul cognizant of the "many thousands of Jews … zealous for the law" in Acts 21:20; many of whom might have participated in the furious rejection of Paul when he referred to his mission to the Gentiles in Acts 22:21-23. The radicalization of many Jews is further shown in their conspiracy, in which more than forty men bound themselves by oath, not to eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul in Acts 23:12-15 and in the insistence of the Jewish leadership on Felix and then on Festus during several years, trying to get rid of Paul in Acts 24:1-23, 24:27, and 25:1-12. The reaction, reported in Acts 21:38, of Claudius Lysias, to the news of the religiously occasioned uproar in Jerusalem, readily confusing Paul with a revolutionary leader, constitutes other evidence of the highly politically charged environment in Judea.[164] Claudius Lysias's reaction is also "a piece of evidence for the threat to Roman law and order posed by various 'terrorist' groups … in the name of Jewish nationalism."[165] According to Acts 24:27, this event took place two years before the end of the governorship of Felix in Judea (AD 52-60). From Acts 21:27 through 25:12, Luke makes evident the insistence and decisiveness of the Jews to get rid of Paul at whatever cost, and with it, the religious radicalization around the Law of the Jews.

Under Felix and Beyond

Under Felix, the political upheaval in Judea got worse. The report from Josephus concerning Eleazar as "the arch-robber … who had ravaged the country for twenty

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[164]For the religious nature of this uproar see Acts 23:6-8, 29; 24:21-22; 25:19; 26:4-18.

[165]Martin, xxxix.

years" confirms once again that during the lifetime of James, Jewish nationalism grew increasingly restless against the Romans.[166] Further down, Josephus reports of "another body of wicked men … [who] deceived and deluded the people under pretence of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government, and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there shew them the signal of liberty."[167]

Barclay, citing Josephus, brings up an incident in Caesarea at the times of Felix. Barclay identifies Caesarea as "the most important interface for Jew-Gentile relations in the region; and since the city was established on Hellenistic lines, yet had a majority Jewish population, it provided a litmus test for intercommunal relations."[168] Barclay, it is recalled, is describing the Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora, which includes the mid-first-century. The incident he brings up is the defeat suffered by the Jews in the resolution given by Emperor Nero on the question of who should have control in Caesarea, whether the Jews who were the majority and taking into consideration that Caesarea was within the contours of Palestine, or the Greeks taking into consideration that the city was manifestly Hellenistic. Barclay suggests, "The scene was set for an explosion of violence; the imperial verdict seemed to demonstrate to Jews throughout the province that all they could rely upon now was their own ability to fight."[169]

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[166]Josephus, *Wars,* 2.13.2.

[167]Josephus, *Wars,* 2.13.4.

[168]Barclay, *Jews,* 252.

[169]Barclay, *Jews,* 253.

And to the fight they went. Josephus indicates, "The affairs of the Jews grew worse and worse; … for the country was again filled with robbers and impostors, who deluded the multitude. Yet did Felix catch and put to death many of those impostors every day, together with the robbers."[170] Josephus provides a similar description for the situation in Judea under Festus, procurator between the years AD 60 and 62, with a hint of a more imminent all-out war: "Judea was afflicted by the robbers, while all the villages were set on fire, and plundered by them."[171] There seems to be plenty of evidence of an explosive atmosphere and that an increasingly violent revolutionary effort characterized the circumstances of mid-first-century Judea, and more specifically the years between AD 41 and 62 during which James undertook his ministry, mainly in Jerusalem, with recognized influence beyond Palestine. The latter year being the year of the killing of James when the modus vivendi he had successfully orchestrated until then was overcome by the drums of war accentuated by the entrenched radicalization of Jewish nationalism. This radical Jewish nationalism, in turn, seized the opportunity of the power vacuum in Jerusalem that same year and upon the death of Festus to get rid of James. And so, as Reiher remarks, James "lived and died during violent times."[172]

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[170]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.7.5.

[171]Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.8.10.

[172]Jim Reiher, "Violent Language: A Clue to the Historical Occasion of James," *Evangelical Quarterly* 85 (2013): 230.

Conclusion

This chapter marshaled evidence and arguments that provide sufficient "moral certitude" for James, the brother of Jesus, as the most likely author of his eponymous letter. This conclusion allowed for the exploration of the political circumstances in Judea and in the Jewish Diaspora within the timeframe of the leadership of James in Jerusalem, that is, between AD 44 and 62. The resulting picture springing from the original and secondary sources pertinent to that timeframe is one of an explosive political environment of entrenched Jewish nationalism both in Judea and in the Diaspora. Such a picture further corroborates the war agenda as a likely original situation for the letter of James, inasmuch as this thesis argues that the letter of James responds, in significant measure, to the inclination of some pre-70 Diaspora Jews to rebel violently against the Roman Empire.

On balance, it can be affirmed that the momentum of an explosive political environment that prompted the writing of the letter was there all along during the timeframe of the leadership of James in Jerusalem, who, as seen in this chapter, must have had important influence among Diaspora Jews, as well. As indicated in this chapter, Philo outlines the staunch opposition of the Jews against the desire of Caius Caligula, Emperor in AD 37 - 41, to set up statutes of himself in the temple in Jerusalem. This staunch opposition was not limited to Jerusalem but had reverberations among Diaspora Jews as is evidenced by the appearance of Philo and other prominent Diaspora Jews before Caius himself in Rome. That this staunch opposition amounted to revolutionary readiness to violently rebel against the Romans is perceptively suggested by Paul Johnson, as noted in this chapter, in the sense

that the Jewish revolt that started in AD 66 "might indeed have come during the reign of Caligula … had it not been for his merciful assassination," in the year AD 41. At that time, James was already one of the pillars of the church in Jerusalem and a Christian leader who had first-hand experience of the enormous tour de force potential of Jewish nationalism. For a pastorally concerned leader such as James, this set of circumstances, likely, prompted some of his reflections that eventually became incorporated into his eponymous letter. One can envision the tension but also the preaching of James incorporating principles and short wisdom sayings into his exhortations against the war agenda in the temple in Jerusalem, in the synagogues and in the churches where he ministered, that eventually found their place in the letter of James. The Rubicon was crossed with Caligula. The irreversible momentum of a looming Jewish revolutionary war can be identified with the resolute desire of Caligula to set up statues of himself in the temple in Jerusalem and with the unswerving opposition of Jews in Palestine and in the Diaspora. From then on, the timing of the letter of James as a response, in significant measure, to the war agenda was only a matter of strategic opportunity. This reconstruction coincides with the suggestion of some scholars regarding the date of the letter of James. They suggest that it must have been written before the Jerusalem Council. Moo, for example, suggests, "A quite early date for this letter, sometime perhaps in the middle 40s."[173]

This chapter also brings to light the respite that the kingship of Herod Agrippa in Judea in the years AD 41-44 must have brought to mounting revolutionary readiness of the

[173]Moo, 25. See also Mayor, 163; Agourides, 78; Johnson, *Letter*, 121; Blomberg and

Jews against the Romans, given his stalwart Jewish nationalism and his clear agenda to protect and to please his Jewish brethren, as is evident in Acts 12. His skills with Hellenistic and Roman culture and influence as someone who was brought up in the household of the emperors in Rome would have allowed him to strike a diplomatic balance between the expectations of Jewish nationalism and the expectations of Rome. Jewish nationalism was strengthened under his short kingship in Judea and was actually exacerbated by his sudden death in the year AD 44.[174] The term of his kinship in Judea between AD 41-44 then could have constituted a hiatus in the brewing of a violent rebellion in Judea and among Diaspora Jews. The years AD 44 to 48 saw the governorships in Judea of Fadus (44-46) and of Tiberius Alexander (46-48). The hiatus experienced under Herod Agrippa likely contributed to the relative tranquility experienced under these subsequent governorships in Judea. The less anti-Jewish Emperor Claudius (vis-à-vis Caius), for example, favored the Jews against Fadus in the matter of the keeping of the garments of the high priests.[175] This kind of measures must have contributed to ease the tensions, albeit not completely, as Josephus recalls the failed uprising led by Theudas during these years.[176]

The obstinate and strong response of Jews against the calamitous governorship of Cumanus in AD 48-52, as noted above, suggests that Jewish nationalism must have actually radicalized even during the hiatus and the relative tranquility of the years

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Kamell, 30; and Osborne, "James," 6.

[174]See Josephus, *Antiquities*, 19.9.

[175]See Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.1.1.

AD 41-48. The explosive political environment and revolutionary readiness in Palestine and in the Jewish Diaspora, however, did not seem to diminish one iota during those years; in fact, it was actually exacerbated with the sudden death and short governorship of the pro-Jewish king Agrippa in AD 44. That is to say, that the momentum for a revolutionary uprising was always there, at least since the government of Caius Caligula in AD 37-41. Any of the years between AD 41 and 48 then would have been appropriate for the writing of the letter of James. The momentum and the increasing radicalization of Jewish nationalism suggested here might have found a detonator in the grievous incidents against the Jews under Cumanus, including an offensive public obscene act and offensive attack against the Law of Moses made by some soldiers, with the complacency of Cumanus.[177] The atmosphere is one of utter subversion and threats and fears of conflagration of the Temple in Jerusalem, leading Josephus to conclude that under Cumanus "began the troubles, and the Jews' ruin came on … [and that] after this time all Judea was overrun with robberies."[178]

As suggested above, any time between AD 41-48 could have been strategically appropriate for the writing of the letter. The question arises though as to whether the hiatus and relative political tranquility that Palestine enjoyed during those years might have rendered the letter of James untimely. At least two reasons can be given for a negative answer. First, the Jewish nationalistic spirit was not crushed by the *Pax Romana.* Rome

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[176]See Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.5.1.

[177]See Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.6; and *Wars*, 2.12.

[178]Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.6.1.

subjugated Judea only by sheer force. Jewish nationalism only waited for the proper time to strike. Judea was well known in Rome as a troublemaker province. So the revolutionary readiness was present even during the relative tranquility. Second, Zealotry was always a reality during the subjugation of Judea by Rome, although a more formal and structured Zealot movement was likely more of a reality closer to the war of AD 66-70.[179] Zealotry is understood here then more vaguely as the variegated manifestations of Jewish nationalistic interests against the Romans. An understanding along these lines led Townsend to define "Zealot" "as something of an umbrella term covering a number of nationalist interests."[180] For similar reasons, Reiher speaks of "pre-Zealot banditry groups.[181] So the relative tranquility of those years does not have to preclude the likelihood of the writing of the letter of James in order to respond, in significant measure, to the war agenda. Neither would it be out of the realm of possibilities that the letter of James was written during the year AD 48, just after the beginning of government by Cumanus, when James might have realized the inability of character of Cumanus to even maintain the relative tranquility enjoyed under Fadus and under Tiberius Alexander. The letter could have been written right before the Jerusalem Council in the same year of AD 48 when the Council was held.

James, it has been suggested, had a vantage position and had the ability to understand and to evaluate the times and circumstances in Palestine and those that affected

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[179]See, Josephus, *War,* 2.17.2.

[180]Townsend, 212.

[181]Reiher, 245.

the Jewish Diaspora, including the volatile political situation in mid-first-century Judea. In conjecturing about a more precise date within the years AD 41 and 48 for the writing of the letter of James, it seems wiser to endorse a later date allowing time for the building up of the critical momentum, including the reverberations in the Jewish Diaspora, and to which a letter of this caliber would speak meaningfully. A later date would also allow time for the reflections themselves to be put together. In endorsing a later date, one needs to be mindful of the valid concern of Moo and other scholars that suggest a date before the Jerusalem Council.[182] This is so because the issue of whether Gentiles needed circumcision in order to be saved, that had such far-reaching repercussions and of which James was the decisive leader, must have found its place in the letter of James. As Osborne affirms: "[A] Jewish epistle could not have avoided the topic [Jew-Gentile controversy]."[183] From the brief historical reconstruction made here, this thesis agrees with Osborne and other scholars on the most likely date of the letter of James. Osborne rightly asserts, "[T]he date that has the strongest likelihood for the writing of James is the mid- to late 40s."[184]

In closing, it is hard to imagine James, the increasingly towering leader of the nascent Christian movement in the AD 40s and 50s in Jerusalem, and "the most Jewish of all

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[182]Moo (26) puts forward the year AD 47/48 as the most likely year of the Jerusalem Council. Eckhard J. Schnabel (*Paul the Missionary* [Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2008], 52) puts forward the year AD 48 for the Council.

[183]Osborne, "James," 6.

[184]Osborne, "James," 6. Similarly, see Mayor 168) who suggests a date between AD 40 and 50. He dated the Jerusalem Council in AD 51. See also Adamson, xv; Moo (26-27) who indicates that "this period [middle 40s] witnessed … the beginning of the serious social-political-religious upheavals that would culminate in the Jewish was of rebellion in 66-70;" Blomberg and Kamell, 30; and McKnight, 2.

the Jewish leaders [at the Jerusalem Council],” being oblivious or silent to the revolutionary efforts undertaken by his Jewish brethren that must have been brewing right before his eyes. That James had been exhorting against this path right there in Jerusalem, calling his Jewish brethren, irrespective of their Messianic allegiance, to applied wisdom from above as enacted in their Law and interpreted with the hermeneutical key of the teachings of Jesus, and that the letter of James is a well structured surmise of his exhortations for the benefit of the Jewish Diaspora, emerges as likely for the why and the how of the letter of James. The political circumstances of Judea and of the Diaspora Jews explored in this chapter corroborate this conclusion.

EXCURSUS

A VEHEMENT EXHORTATION AGAINST WAR

IN JAMES 4:1-4

This excursus argues that James 4:1-4 with its vehement exhortation against war further corroborates the argument of this thesis that the letter of James responds, in significant measure, to the inclination of some pre 70 Diaspora Jews to rebel violently against the Roman Empire (the war agenda). Chapter 3 of this thesis showed that the accumulative effect of each and every conviction and behavior identified in Jas 1:2-20 and in its paralleled passage of Jas 5:7-11/12 provides some substance to this argument. Whereas the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12 only hint at the war agenda, Jas 4:1-4 addresses it more directly with a more explicit language. The reason for this excursus is found in the fact that the main contribution of this thesis is limited to the identification of the likely set of convictions and behaviors in the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12 that hint at a war agenda. Also, the extension of this thesis does not allow to extend the consideration of Jas 4:1-4 to its paralleled passages of Jas 2:14-3:12, or to the central passage of Jas 3:13-18 or to the rest of Jas 4:1-10, if one is to follow the literary structure of James put forward by Mark E. Taylor (see chapter 2 of this thesis). Furthermore, the stern language of Jas 4:1-4 and its referent of belligerence, including war, battles, warring, and murder, may further validate the argument of this thesis.

The Sternness and the Referent of Belligerence of the Language of James 4:1-4

Some of the difficulties and debates among interpreters of Jas 4:1-4 will be mentioned in the next section, but the sternness and the referent of belligerence of its language are irrefutable. Scot McKnight keenly underscores the directness of the indictment in Jas 4:1-3 manifested in the vividness expressed by the striking prevalence of present tenses and by the direct address of the second person plural.[1] The short exhortation of Jas 4:1-4 renders its tour de force via three rhetorical questions, one of which is pleonastic with the repetition of the interrogative adverb πόθεν, which asks for the source of wars and conflicts among James's audience.[2] The other two questions, anticipating a "yes" answer by the utilization of the negative particle οὐκ,[3] refer to τῶν ἡδονῶν as the source of the hostilities impugned by James, and to his accusation against his audience of being "adulteresses," for orienting their lives in such a way that betrays their friendship with the world and their enmity with God. James also utilizes in vv. 2 and 3 no less than four asseverations regarding the realities of empty-handedness of the audience as a result of their wrong-headedness and to which they respond with killings, conflicts, war and murder.

At the outset, James utilizes the rhetorical question Πόθεν πόλεμοι καὶ πόθεν μάχαι ἐν ὑμῖν; in Jas 4:1, in order to identify that the hostilities taking place among the

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[1]See Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 320-27.

[2]BDAG, 838 (2).

[3]BDF, § 440.

addressees constitute "the absolute antithesis to the peace-seeking spirit of the godly described in the previous two verses (3:17-18)."[4] James does make the important connection in Jas 4:1-4 with the two types of wisdom described in Jas 3:13-18 in order to assert the significance and the implications of opting for "the hostile spirit (3:14-15) … [over] the peace-loving disposition (3:13, 17-18)."[5] The utilization of πόλεμοι for the identification of hostilities among the addressees elicits a situation of belligerence. Louw and Nida provide the following definition for this word: "To engage in serious and protracted conflict, often involving a series of attacks."[6] The religious reflection concerning war even in Hellenism sought the prevention of πόλεμος and concluded that the "political calculation on military successes rests, not on the divine gift of wisdom, but on a god-forsaken short-sightedness … [and that] what is made out to be a more or less direct divine dispensation [to wage war] is in truth the result of human wickedness."[7] For Otto Bauernfeind, it is clear that in the Old Testament "war is the prerogative of the God of Israel."[8] In his understanding of Jas 4:1-2, Bauernfeind observes that James preaches incompatibility between war and the Christian faith.[9] As to the word μάχαι, according to Bauernfeind, its "word group is frequently used for

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[4]Grant R. Osborne, "James," *in Cornerstone Biblical Commentary Volume 18*, *James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, Revelation,* edited by Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011), 85.

[5]Ralph Martin, *James* (Waco: Word Books, 1988), 141-142.

[6]Louw and Nida, 39.26.

[7]Otto Bauernfeind, Πόλεμος, *TDNT 6*, 505.

[8]Bauernfeind, Πόλεμος, 510.

[9]Bauernfeind, Πόλεμος, 515.

physical combat in the military sense."[10] He further indicates that in the LXX, "the military sense predominates…. [And that] In the NT the group can be related for certain to physical conflict only in Ac 7:26."[11]These definitions and the utilization of μάχαι strengthen the sense of belligerence in the language of James 4:1-4.

The question by which James identifies the source of the wars and conflicts in his audience is also redolent of belligerence: οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν, ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν; According to Gustav Stählin, ἡδονη in the New Testament is "one of the many forces which … strive against the work of God and His Spirit and which drag man back into the kingdom of evil."[12] He further explains the development of this word from ethically neutral "pleasure" and "desire" into a "passionate yearning," a "capricious preference," with the connotation (citing Philo) of "consistent antithesis to λόγος." The latter sense is probably, according to Stählin, how ἡδονή is used in Jas 4:1.[13] According to Jas 4:1 and the sense given by BDAG to James's use of στρατευομένων, the ἡδονῶν also wage war "within the human soul."[14]

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[10]Otto Bauernfeind, Μάχομαι, μάχη, ἄμαχος, *TDNT 4*, 527.

[11]Bauernfeind, Μάχομαι, 527. He judges as debatable the referent to physical conflict of μάχαι in Jas 4:1. This is clearly his uneasiness with the possibility of physical conflicts referring to Christians.

[12]Gustav Stählin·Ἡδονή, φιλήδονος. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Vol. 2. Edited by Gerhard Kittel. Translator and editor into English: Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995; 909-926. In the words of François Vouga (*L'Épitre de Saint Jacques* [Genève: Labor et Fides, 1984], 112), ἡδονη is "une puissance de seduction." Similarly, Martin, 145; Moo, 181; and Osborne, 85.

[13]See Stählin, 910-917.

[14]BDAG, 947. Similarly, Moo, 181 and Osborne, 85.

Next, Jas 4:2-3 excoriates the unbridled and futile evil desires that lead some in his audience to commit murder, to fight and to wage war. The punctuation of Jas 4:2 in NA[28] reflects the majority view among recent commentators, allowing for the identification of a logical parallelism

ἐπιθυμεῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε, φονεύετε
καὶ
ζηλοῦτε καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν· μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε.

This verse can be translated as follows

You desire and do not have, so you commit murder
and
You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and wage war.[15]

The last sentence of Jas 4:2: οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ὑμᾶς, and Jas 4:3: αἰτεῖτε καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε, διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε, ἵνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε, reiterate the futility of their evil desires, and question their lack of dependence on God reflected in not asking or asking with evil intent. As Osborne insightfully describes, "[T]hey rarely pray, and even when they do, their prayers are negated by evil desires."[16]

Finally, Jas 4:4 μοιχαλίδες, οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου ἔχθρα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν; ὃς ἐὰν οὖν βουληθῇ φίλος εἶναι τοῦ κόσμου, ἐχθρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσταται. After

[15]My own translation, but see McKnight, 325-26. Osborne (84) agrees that this punctuation creates a "better parallelism." Similarly, Johnson, 277; Moo, 182; and Craig L. Blomberg and Marian J. Kamell, *James, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 188. Contra Martin (140-141) who takes ζηλοῦτε together with φονεύετε and translates them as "you kill out of jealousy." Martin's rendition can be seen as euphemistic, given his apprehension with the "enormity of murder as the taking of human life."

[16]Osborne, 86.

identifying belligerence produced by futile evil desires in his audience, James indicts his audience as μοιχαλίδες, meaning "adulteresses."[17] Joseph B. Mayor and others have correctly pointed out that this indictment, with its feminine gender, finds its contextual background in the Old Testament prophets, particularly Hosea, that depict Israel as the "(unfaithful) wife" of God.[18] Following the indictment as adulteresses, Jas 4:4, reiteratively, equates their behavior, impugned in Jas 4:1-3, with friendship with the world, constituting themselves ipso facto in enemies of God. By the use of the verb βούλομαι, James assigns to the friendship with the world a sense of a deliberate decision.[19] According to Vouga, their daily reality "is dominated by the forces of alienation and destruction.[20] Commenting on the equation of their behavior with ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου, Blomberg and Kamell rightly underscore that it implies their identification with the world's "standards and priorities."[21] That world, according to Osborne, is to be understood as "that entity and mind-set totally opposed to God and his moral requirements."[22]

This brief reading of Jas 4:1-4 confirms that its language is stern and its referent clearly one of belligerence. Commentators, by and large and as it has been shown

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[17]BDAG, 656.

[18]Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990 [1913]), 449. See also, Peter Davids, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 160; Vouga, 115; Johnson, 278; Martin, 141; Moo, 186-87; Blomberg and Kamell, 189; and Osborne, 84.

[19]See Martin, 148; and Johnson, 279.

[20]Vouga, 115. My own translation.

[21]Blomberg and Kamell, 190.

[22]Osborne, 87.

above, present it as such. Martin Dibelius, for instance, underscores the "complete seriousness of this call to repentance."[23] Moo, rightly, perceives from the language of this passage "the intense strife that is convulsing the community."[24] More recently, Osborne concludes, "The language makes a great deal of sense as describing the serious discord in the community."[25] Whoever is the audience of this stern exhortation, with a clear referent of belligerence, has been categorically castigated by James and exposed in such a way that their conduct has been judged as "so debased that it entails 'waging war' and 'murder' to achieve its patriotic and superficially attractive –but really perverted–ends;"[26] and as "blatantly sinful and violent;"[27] among other imaginative epithets of commentators that seek to convey to modern readers the authoritative denunciation of James.

The general agreeable reading that commentators present of Jas 4:1-4, as has been shown so far, albeit with some nuances, is broken when trying to identify the audience of such stern denunciation. There is perplexity, surprise, even abhorrence, in the realization that perhaps the culprits of James's authoritative indictment are early Christians and even some of the leaders of the primitive church. A church that, notwithstanding some issues such as discrimination against the Hellenistic widows, is portrayed in the New Testament,

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[23]Martin Dibelius, *James*, revised by Heinrich Greenven, and translated by Michael A. Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976 [1920]), 216. Dibelius identifies the whole passage of Jas 4:1-12 as the "complete call to repentance."

[24]Moo, 181.

[25]Osborne, 83.

[26]Martin, 143.

[27]McKnight, 335.

particularly in the book of Acts, as full of the Holy Spirit, eager to live according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with a missionary zeal, growing in number, sharing what they had to satisfy the material needs of the brothers and sisters in the Lord. Some of those concerns are explored next under the question on whether James 4:1-4 denounces Christians at war.

Does James 4:1-4 Denounce Christians at War?

The more explicit language on war of Jas 4:1-4 has created some difficulties in its interpretation, particularly for those who argue that the letter of James was addressed to a Christian audience.[28] Michael Townsend, for example, wrestles with the perplexity generated by his reading of Jas 4:1-4 as referring to war, literally, and his assumption of a Christian audience for the letter of James.[29] Townsend and others can not fathom that Christians may had been committing murder as a literal reading of Jas 4:1-4 would suggest, according to them.[30] Without giving up on his literal reading of this passage, Townsend finds a resolution to his perplexity by suggesting that Jas 4:1-4 constitutes "a warning against zealotry."[31] A warning for "recent converts from Judaism … Christians, to be sure, [whose] loyalties were still Jewish … [and who] had not realized the incompatibility of Christian faith

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[28]Luke Timothy Johnson (*The Letter of James* [New Haven: Doubleday, 1995], 276) describes the difficulties of the phrase "you kill" in Jas 4:1 by indicating that it "seems intolerably strong when written to Christian readers." Douglass J. Moo (*The Letter of James* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans], 179) rightly identifies the existence of considerable debate about "the community problems that created so strong a need for peacemakers."

[29]Michael J. Townsend, "James 4:1-4: A Warning Against Zealotry?" *Expository Times* 87 (1976): 211-213.

[30]Besides Townsend, see also Mayor, 445; Davids, 156; James B. Adamson, *James: The Man and His Message* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 334-338; and Martin, 140.

[31]Townsend, 211.

and Zealot nationalism."[32] Townsend tries to make palatable the perception of Christians committing murder by targeting the Jewish-Christian believers, the recent converts from Judaism, influenced by the Zealot movement. But the ambiguity remains and his resolution and definition do not satisfy because what Townsend identifies as a true Christian is only a matter of degree: Only Christians who were "recent converts from Judaism" could have been attracted to the activities of the Zealots and, in fact, might even have been participating in them.[33] But, where and how do you draw the line? James 4:1-4, as can be seen from the analysis above, does not hint at any degree of Christian maturity at which Zealotry would have been an avoidable attraction.

More recently, Jim Reiher has shown that the "very vocabulary used [in the letter of James] adds weight to the thesis that James was written during violent times."[34] Commenting on Jas 4:1-2, he underscores the highly volatile political environment that must

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[32]Townsend, 212. In the words of Mayor (cxlii), "they [the addressees of James, those who accept Jesus as the Messiah] still seem to form one body with their unbelieving compatriots… They exhibit an immature stage of Christianity." Similarly, Ralph Martin (143) who identifies the target of the exhortation of Jas 4:1-10 as "double-minded people [who] are professing if woefully misguided believers."

[33]Townsend, 212. It is appropriate to recall here, approvingly, that for Townsend (212), "'Zealot' must be regarded as something of an umbrella term covering a number of nationalists interests." This description better depicts the informal and variegated links and commitments of many Jews to the nationalistic interests and to the Zealots that must have prevailed in mid century Palestine and in the Jewish Diaspora. It also better responds to the fact that a more formal and structured Zealot movement might not have been put together until a few years before the war engulfed Judea as is reflected in Josephus: "At this time [under Florus in the years AD 64-66] it was that some of those that principally excited the people to go to war, made an assault upon a certain fortress called Masada." Previous to the war, there were those who "excited the people to go to war," and so Townsend's description of 'Zealot' as an umbrella term depicts well the developments of the years, even decades, leading up to the war in AD 66-70.

[34]Jim Reiher, "Violent Language – A Clue to the Historical Occasion of James" *Evangelical Quarterly* 85 (2013), 229. Similarly, Martin (144) affirms. "Since James and his community were situated in a Zealot-infested society and since it is quite conceivable that (at least) some of the Jewish Christians were former Zealots (cf. Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13), the taking of another's life is not out of the realm of possibility for the church members as a response to disagreement ."

have served as a context for the letter of James and that is reflected in the "choice of words," including "wars and fighting, coveting and killing."[35] Unlike Townsend and others, Reiher does not exhibit any qualm about Jewish Christians being "tempted to join the politically as well as religiously motivated social bandit parties or groups …[and who] are either actively involved in the early Zealot movement or else currently sympathizing with their methods."[36] Along the same line of argument of Reiher, Scot McKnight, commenting the phrase "you commit murder" of Jas 4:2, concludes, "There is very little to suggest that these texts speak of anything but actual murder."[37] And a little bit later: "[T]he balance of the evidence favors a physical reading" and indicates that the magnitude of the conflicts in the messianic community "led them in desperation to put away their rivals."[38] As noted earlier, McKnight correctly finds evidence to favor the literalness of the language of Jas 4:1-3 in the striking prevalence of present tenses and by the direct address of the second person plural in these

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[35]Reiher, 238.

[36]Reiher, 238-239. History shows that so-called Christians have been persuaded differently regarding the use of violent means for the causes of justice or doctrine. McKnight (322) reminds us of "the bloody battles around Nicea, Constantine, the Crusades, the Reformation, the Inquisition, and beyond." The vehement exhortation against war found in Jas 4:1-4, being part of the Christian canon, has normative force for Christians as well, although it was likely addressed originally to Diaspora Jews, as is argued in this thesis. Concerning the normative force of James 4:1-4 for Christians, McKnight's asseveration is right on: "[T]he words of James should embarrass those who are committed to a Lord who taught the way of love, the way of peace, and whose cross brought into graphic reality a new (cross) way of life."

[37]McKnight, 326.

[38]McKnight, 327. McKnight does appear ambivalent at times though, as when he (322) asserts, "I am not completely convinced that "conflicts and disputes" refers directly to physical violence, but that should remain as an open option." Mayor (445) also favors the possibility of Christians actually committing murder and mentions Jas 5:6, 1 Pet 4:15, and Acts 21:20. For the last reference, he suggests, "[S]ome of the assailants of St. Paul at Jerusalem were members of the Christian community."

verses.[39] Neither Reiher nor McKnight, however, answer the valid concern of Townsend: "Christians murdering each other would … certainly not have been dealt with in a few lines."[40] Moo, more recently, raises a similar valid concern, "It strains credulity to suppose that James would pass so quickly over so serious a matter within the community."[41]

Moo presents then the "alternative of a hypothetical eventuality rather than an actual occurrence."[42] According to Moo, in this way James is just "warning his readers … [that] the danger of actual violence is real."[43] It is true that McKnight does not respond to Moo's valid concern of so short an exhortation of James on such a grave denunciation against, perhaps, Christian believers. But it is also true that Moo's "alternative of a hypothetical eventuality" does not address the vividness and directness of the language that point rather in the direction of actual conflicts, wars and murders.

A Stern Exhortation Against the War Agenda

Townsend correctly calls "an argument of despair" the one put forward by those who, like him, identify a Christian audience in James, but who, unlike him, suggest that Jas 4:1-4 "is not addressed to Christians at all."[44] This thesis does not need to recur to that

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[39]See McKnight, 320, 325, and 327.

[40]Townsend, 211.

[41]Moo, 181.He has in mind a Christian community.

[42]Moo, 184.

[43]Moo, 184. See, similarly, Grant R. Osborne, 85. Osborne (86) indicates that the metaphorical use of "kill" describes "the character assassination they [the leaders of the churches] used to gain the upper hand."

[44]Townsend, 211.

"argument of despair," as it has all along argued for the Jewish Diaspora, literally, as the audience of the letter of James. It is simply coherent that the strong and more explicit language of Jas 4:1-4 referred to war, understood literally and not metaphorically, applies to such an audience that is inclined to abet the brewing war against the Romans.[45] James 4:1-4 can be read instead as the implementation of James's evangelistic strategy, seizing the opportunity that the war agenda provides to explain "wisdom from above" as interpreted by Jesus Christ, by vehemently exhorting against war and calling his audience to turn back to truth from the error of their way.

It is true, as Moo notes, that "James does not comment directly on the issues involved."[46] But it is not necessarily correct to suggest, as he does, that this fact "suggests that his [James's] concern was more with the selfish spirit and bitterness of the quarrels than with the rights and wrongs of the various viewpoints."[47] Moo's suggestion seems to deflect the vehemence, vividness and directness of the language of Jas 4:1-4 and its referent of belligerence. As has been suggested in this thesis already, the absence of comments by James on the specific issues may rather find its raison d'être in the highly sensitive issue of the political volatility of mid-first-century Judea.

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[45]It is appropriate to recall Dale C. Allison ("The Fiction of James and Its Sitz im Leben," *Revue Biblique* 108 [2001]: 533) when he cites Grotius: "The admonitions regarding conflicts, disputes, and murder are to be understood against the background of Jewish political and social unrest."

[46]Moo, 181.

[47]Moo, 181.

This excursus applies Moo's principle: "Giving a word its normal meaning is a sound exegetical procedure."[48] He further clarifies that this principle should be applied unless context clearly points in a different direction.[49] If the context for the letter of James as argued in this thesis is to be found to a large extent in the war agenda, then the language of Jas 4:1-4 coheres superbly with such a context and should be interpreted literally and fully as "one of the most strongly worded calls to repent that we find anywhere in the NT."[50] Given the ministry, leadership and influence of James in mid-first-century Judea and his influence in the Jewish Diaspora, as this thesis argues, his vehement exhortation in Jas 4:1-4 with a clear referent of belligerence, can be seen as constituting a key piece of his evangelistic thrust of the letter to call his Jewish brethren back to "wisdom from above" as interpreted by Jesus Christ.

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[48]Moo, 183.

[49]See Moo, 183.

[50]Moo, 186.

CONCLUSION

The exploration undertaken in the second chapter of this thesis finds good reasons to read the canonical New Testament letter of James as a paralleled literary structure. The key inclusio of Jas 2:12-13 and Jas 4:11-12, identified by Mark E. Taylor, strongly hints at this paralleled literary structure of the various sections of the letter of James. Although this thesis recognizes that the current state of affairs points to the absence of a consensus understanding about the literary structure of the letter of James, it has shown that reading the letter of James as a paralleled literary structure has good potential for a more robust understanding of this canonical writing of early Christianity. It is suggested that such structure can better account for the multiplicity of themes and for the complex structure of the letter of James than the traditional tendency of reading it, not as a paralleled literary structure but as a linear progression of thought. It is also suggested that the reading of the letter of James as a paralleled literary structure better accounts for its aphoristic nature, most particularly of James 1, contrary to the disparate reading promoted by Dibelius and, to a lesser degree, by Bauckham.

Clearly, more exegetical prodding of this suggested structure of the letter of James is necessary. The exploration of the original situation of the letter of James undertaken in the third chapter of this thesis is limited to the parallels of Jas 1:1 and 5:13-20, and of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12. These parallels created some boundaries within the letter and, in turn,

provided some needed control for such exploration. Exegetical work of the other parallels suggested by Taylor (Jas 2:1-11 and 4:13-5:6, Jas 2:12-13 and 4:11-12, 2:14-3:12 and 4:1-10) and of the central passage of Jas 3:13-18 can be undertaken to further validate this suggested structure of the letter of James.

The likelihood of the inclination of some Jews in the Diaspora to participate in the brewing and violent rebellion against the Romans before the catastrophe of the year AD 70 as the original situation of the letter of James was explained in the third chapter. Such inclination was identified as the "war agenda." The explanation of the "war agenda" as the original situation of the letter of James was attempted heuristically, given the impossibility of recovering the whole of the original situation of James. The same chapter strongly argued that the exhortation of James was addressed to the Jews in the Diaspora, irrespective of whether they were Christians, finding as more legitimate the literal, and not the metaphorical, reading of the phrase ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ in Jas 1:1. It was then explained that in the letter of James, Diaspora Jews are invited to consider its authoritative exhortation with the hermeneutical key of the Christian faith, what amount to the sharing of the gospel by James to his Jewish brethren.

For such likelihood, it was argued that the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12 are covertly critiquing a set of convictions and behaviors of the letter's audience that configures a "war agenda." It is clear that the letter of James discourages a certain inclination of its audience, while exhorting them to follow an alternative agenda, although it does not make explicit what constituted such inclination. It was acknowledged then that arguments from silence are necessarily speculative. Also, it was argued that the

covert way in which James critiques the set of convictions and behaviors of its audience, can be explained by the increasing radicalization of Jewish nationalism turning into revolutionary readiness against the Romans that helped shape a highly unstable political situation during the lifetime of the author of James. This covert way can also be explained by the influential stature of the leadership of the author of James among Christians and non-Christians alike as leader of the Christian Church in Jerusalem, and by his possible strong desire to erect and maintain a modus-vivendi in the midst of the unstable political situation in mid-first century Palestine.

In any event, it was argued that the letter of James provides some clues for a better identification of the inclination of its audience. Chapter 3 submitted then the following set of convictions and behaviors that James's audience could have been entertaining and practicing in order to face the "πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life."

1. Taking things in their own hands with disregard for the gift of wisdom
2. Trusting wealth rather than God
3. Believing that God orchestrated the trials of life as evil, and that God was even leading them into the realm of evil
4. Engaging in crass ideological debate
5. Translating anger into violence would bring about the righteousness of God
6. Binding themselves unswervingly to do something that they thought pleased God

Each and every conviction or behavior submitted, individually and as a set, makes the "war agenda" a likely original situation of James. The accumulative effect of these convictions and behaviors points to the "war agenda" as something more complex and more ominous than only strife among Christians, or the rejection by Christians of the economic oppression by the rich, as the original situation of James.

More prodding in the rest of the letter of James can be undertaken also in order to further explore the original situation suggested here. This thesis only explored the paralleled passages of Jas 1:2-20 and 5:7-11/12 that yielded the clues given above. Further exegetical exploration of the other paralleled passages such as Jas 2:1-11 and 4:13-5:6, Jas 2:12-13 and 4:11-12, and Jas 2:14-3:12 and 4:1-10, as well as of the central passage of Jas 3:13-18, might shed more light on the possibilities of the concern for the marginalized as the alternative agenda the letter seems to propose, and of the exhortation to submit to God instead of engaging in the bitter ideological debate, and above all, applying "wisdom from above" to face the "πειρασμοῖς ... ποικίλοις of life."

Chapter 4 endeavored to provide some corroborating evidence for the "war agenda" as the original situation of the letter of James. James, the brother of Jesus and a Christian Jew, emerges in chapter 4 as a recognized leader in the nascent Christian movement, with influence among his Jewish brethren in Palestine and in the Diaspora, at a time when there was no clear discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism, and as the author of his eponymous letter. The strongly argued identification of this James as the author of his eponymous letter supplied the years between AD 44 and AD 62 as the timeframe for the exploration of the historical context of the letter of James. Such exploration yielded plenty of evidence of a highly volatile political environment in mid-first-century Palestine. Much of that evidence was then correlated with some of the content of the letter of James, resulting in the conclusion that the letter of James must have been an authoritative exhortation against the violent revolutionary efforts of Diaspora Jews and in favor of

applying the "wisdom from above," as enacted in their Law and interpreted with the hermeneutical key of the teachings of Jesus.

The tenets of this thesis may undermine the perception of the letter of James as a cul-de-sac in the New Testament, a perception of an isolated exhortation that somehow made it into the Christian canon. Perhaps the late acceptance of the letter of James into the Christian canon can be better explained by the likelihood of it having been addressed to the Jewish Diaspora, literally. Thus, the letter of James can provide good dividends for research of early Christian history and theology on how a vibrant Christian ministry was developed among the Jews by James, the brother of Jesus, in the midst of the highly volatile political environment of mid-first century Palestine, with implications and reverberations for Diaspora Jews. On the other hand, if the letter of James was addressed to Christians in order to exhort against strife among them, one is hard pressed to account for the explicitly meager Christianity in it and for its canonicity. One would have expected an exhortation similar to the letter of Paul to the Philippians, with an explicit strong "Christianity" in it.

Perhaps also the reading suggested in this thesis of the letter of James as a cogent exhortation that speaks to the political environment of its day and offers as an alternative agenda the concern for the marginalized, can encourage readers today to seek in the letter of James applied "wisdom from above" for the complex political issues and for the increasing and appalling social injustice of our day, both at the global and at the local levels.

Finally, the reading suggested in this thesis seems to account for some of the clear traits identified by commentaries and other studies in the letter of James, such as impelling practical words of wisdom, a relatively good level of the Greek language, a

seemingly meager Christology, a strong Jewish ideological background embedded mainly in the LXX, reflection of the influence of the thought-world of Jesus, emphasis on speech ethics, and social concerns for the marginalized. In this way, the reading of James suggested in this thesis may provide a more robust interpretation of its content.

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