

**How Faith Works in James 4:13-5:20:  
An Exegetical-Theological Interpretation**

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## **Declaration**

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## Abstract

The research showed that most scholars now agree that one enters into salvation by grace through faith, but the saving faith inevitably produces works as well. But we can find still two problems. First, some debates still remain regarding the nature of the saving faith. Many agree on its essential components: *notitia* (knowledge), *assensus* (assent), and *fiducia* (trust). They emphasise wholehearted trust at the core of faith. Some others reject that *fiducia* (trust) is to be included in the definition of faith. Second, scholars rarely explain how that faith produces the works of faith in various specific situations. The aim of the proposed research is to answer two questions: (1) “what is the nature of faith?” and (2) “how does it produce works in various specific situations?” To achieve the aim of this dissertation, this researcher has investigated Jas. 4:13-5:20 by means of a theological approach integrated with exegetical analysis based on the historical and cultural background of the text: (1) researching the historical issues on the Letter of James (e.g. the author, recipient, and date) and cultural backgrounds related to Jas. 4:13-5:20; (2) analysing a structure of Jas 4:13-5:20 and dividing sections by considering three dimensions: rhetorical devices, main themes (e.g. eschatology), and messages; (3) investigating the concept of faith in the whole Letter of James and analysing closely the exhortations in 4:13-5:20 section by section, focusing on how the living faith produces works in various contexts, by examining three related aspects: (1) the situations of the recipients; (2) knowledge of truth; (3) exhortations as the work of faith.

In Chapter 2, we researched the historical and cultural issues on James. Although the Letter of James was accepted slowly in canonization, the Letter was received as Scripture by the church. The information from various sources indicates that James, the brother of Jesus, was the leader of the early church. James, the brother of the Lord, wrote the Letter around AD 45-47 to the mainly Jewish Jesus followers who were living outside of Palestine among Gentiles, including Gentile Jesus followers. The research of historical context in Palestine and Rome between AD 33-66 indicates that the recipients were suffering from severe economic difficulties because of famine, banditry, and the exploitation by the wealthy.

Moving to the world of the text in Chapter 3, firstly we argue that James was often understood as paraenesis or protreptic or wisdom, but recently it has been agreed that James is best understood as a homily in the form of an encyclical letter. To investigate Jas. 4:13-5:20 properly, we have built a structure of Jas. 4:13-5:20 by considering three dimensions: rhetorical devices, main themes (e.g. eschatology), and messages of sections: (1) 4:13-17; (2) 5:1-6; (3) 5:7-12; (4) 5:13-18; (5) 5:19-20.

In Chapter 4’s theological analysis, the investigation on the lexical meaning of the  $\pi\sigma\tau$ - word group demonstrates that the term faith (trust) can be translated with faithfulness or loyalty because they are used closely as synonym. After close examinations of the key terms and the concept of faith in the whole Letter of James and analysing Jas. 4:13-5:20, section by section, we conclude that for James the nature of faith is the confidence in the message of truth and the right attitude of the wholehearted commitment to the word of Jesus and the will of God. The true faith then has a disposition or a direction to become mature in knowledge of the truth and in thinking, speaking, and acting. James argues that the faith as the confidence and the attitude of the wholehearted commitment to the word of Jesus and the will of God produces appropriate responses to the various situations according to the knowledge of the truth.

## Opsomming

Die navorsing het aangedui dat die meerderheid van kenners nou saamstem dat 'n mens op grond van genade deur die geloof verlos word, maar dit is ook onafwendbaar dat die die reddende geloof werke tot gevolg het. Ons kan egter nog twee probleme vind. Eerstens bly daar steeds nog debat oor die aard van die reddende geloof. Baie stem saam oor die wesenlike komponente daarvan: *notitia* (kennis), *assensus* (instemming) en *fiducia* (vertroue). Hulle beklemtoon hartlike vertroue as die kern van geloof. Ander verwerp egter *fiducia* (vertroue) as deel van die definisie van geloof. Kenners verduidelik selde hoe geloof die werke van geloof in verskeie spesifieke situasies lewer. Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om op die volgende twee vrae te antwoord: (1) "wat is die aard van geloof?" en (2) "hoe lei dit tot werke in verskillende spesifieke situasies?" Om die doel van hierdie verhandeling te bereik, het die navorser Jak 4:13-5:20 ondersoek met 'n teologiese benadering wat met eksegetiese analise geïntegreer is, gebaseer op die historiese en kulturele agtergrond van die teks deur:

- (1) die historiese kwessies aangaande die Brief van Jakobus (bv. ie skrywer, ontvanger en datum) en kulturele agtergronde wat verband hou met Jak. 4:13–5:20 te ondersoek;
- (2) die struktuur van Jak 4:13–5:20 te ontleed en verdelende gedeeltes in drie dimensies te oorweeg, naamlik: retoriese meganismes, hoofemas (bv. eskatologie) en boodskappe;
- (3) die konsep van geloof in die hele brief van Jakobus te ondersoek en die vermanings in 4:13–5:20 noukeurig te ontleed en te fokus op hoe die lewende geloof in verskillende kontekste werk deur drie verwante sake te ondersoek, naamlik
  - a) die situasies van die ontvanger;
  - b) kennis van die waarheid;
  - c) vermanings as die werk van die geloof.

In Hoofstuk 2 het ons die historiese en kulturele kwessies van Jakobus bestudeer. Alhoewel die Brief van Jakobus stadig in kanonvorming aanvaar is, is die brief as Skrif deur die kerk aanvaar. Die inligting uit verskeie bronne dui daarop dat Jakobus, die broer van Jesus, die leier van die vroeë kerk was. Jakobus, die broer van die Here, het die brief rondom die 45-47e-eeu geskryf aan die hoofsaaklik Joodse Jesus-volgelingen wat buite Palestina tussen heidene gewoon het, insluitende Christene uit die heidendom. Die navorsing van die historiese konteks in Palestina en Rome tussen 33-66 nC wys daarop dat die ontvangers swaar ekonomiese probleme ondervind het as gevolg van hongersnood, rowery en uitbuiting deur die rykes, asook verwarring oor hul geloof en identiteite as gevolg van die vals profete van elders.

Deur na die wêreld van die teks in hoofstuk 3 te beweeg, redeneer ons eerstens dat Jakobus dikwels as paraenese, protreptiese, of wysheid beskou is, maar dat daar onlangs ooreenstemming is dat Jakobus die beste verstaan kan word as 'n homilie in die vorm van 'n ensikliese brief. Om Jakobus 4: 13-5: 20 behoorlik te ondersoek, het ons 'n struktuur van Jak 4:13-5:20 gebou deur drie dimensies te oorweeg: retoriese tegnieke, hoof temas (bv. eskatologie) en boodskappe van afdelings: 4:13-17; (2) 5:1-6; (3) 5:7-12; (4) 5:13-18; (5) 5:19-20.

In Hoofstuk 4 se teologiese analise, toon die ondersoek na die leksikale betekenis van die  $\pi\sigma\tau$ -groep dat die term geloof (vertroue) met getrouheid of lojaliteit vertaal kan word omdat hulle as sinonieme gebruik word. Na noukeurige ondersoeke van die sleutel terme en die konsep van geloof in die hele brief van Jakobus, en deur Jak 4:13–5:20 gedeelte vir gedeelte te ondersoek, kom ons tot die gevolgtrekking dat die aard van geloof vir Jakobus die vertroue is op die boodskap van die waarheid en die regte houding van die volle verbintenis tot die woorde van Jesus en die wil van God. Die ware geloof het dan die ingesteldheid of gerigtheid om volwasse te word in kennis van die waarheid en in denke, praat en optrede. Jakobus beweer dat die geloof as die vertroue en die houding van die volle verbintenis tot die woord van Jesus en die wil van God gepaste reaksies op die verskillende situasies lewer volgens die kennis van die waarheid.

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## Abbreviations

### Antient Writings

1 Clem.	Clement of Rome, <i>1 Clement</i>
Eusebius, <i>H.E.</i>	Eusebius, <i>The Church History of Eusebius</i>
Josephus, <i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>
Justin Martyr, <i>Dial.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Dialogue</i>
LAB	Pseudo-Philo, <i>Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum</i>
Philo, <i>Abr.</i>	Philo, <i>De Abrahamo</i>
Philo, <i>Leg. All.</i>	Philo, <i>Legum Allegoriarum</i>
Philo, <i>Legat.</i>	Philo, <i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
Philo, <i>Mig.</i>	Philo, <i>De Migratione Abrahami</i>
Philo, <i>Mut.</i>	Philo, <i>De Mutatione Nominum</i>
Philo, <i>Quis Her.</i>	Philo, <i>Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit</i>
Philo, <i>Quod Deus</i>	Philo, <i>Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis</i>
Philo, <i>Som.</i>	Philo, <i>De Somniis</i>
Philo, <i>Virt.</i>	Philo, <i>De Virtutibus</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i>

### The Apocrypha of the Old Testament

1 Macc.	1 Maccabees
2 Bar.	2 Baruch
2 Mace.	2 Maccabees
4 Bar.	4 Baruch
Ecclus.	Ecclesiasticus
Jdt.	Judith
Jub.	Jubilees
Sir.	Sirach or Ben Sira (or Ecclesiasticus)

### Books of the Old Testament

Deut.	Deuteronomy
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes
Exod.	Exodus
Ezk.	Ezekiel
Gen.	Genesis
Hos.	Hosea
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Lev.	Leviticus
Prov.	Proverbs
Ps.	Psalms
Pss.	Psalms
Zech.	Zechariah

### Books of the New Testament

1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
1 Pet.	1 Peter
1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians
1 Tim.	1 Timothy
2 Pet.	2 Peter
2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians

Col.	Colossians
Eph.	Ephesians
Gal.	Galatians
Heb.	Hebrews
Jas.	James
Jn.	John
Lk.	Luke
Mk.	Mark
Mt.	Matthew
Rev.	Revelation
Rom.	Romans
Tit.	Titus

### Greek New Testament Texts

LXX	Septuagint
NA27	Nestle-Aland, 27 <sup>th</sup> Edition
UBS4	The Greek New Testament, 4 <sup>th</sup> Revised Edition

### English Bible Translations

CEB	Common English Bible (2011)
CEV	Contemporary English Version (1995)
ESV	English Standard Version (2001)
GNB	Good News Bible (1976)
KJV	The King James Version (1611)
NAB	New American Bible (1970)
NASB	New American Standard Bible (1995)
NET	The New English Translation (2005)
NIV	New International Version (1978)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
NKJV	New King James Version (1982)
NLT	New Living Translation (1996)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
RSV	Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952)

### Greek-English Lexicons and Dictionaries

BDAG	Bauer <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition</i>
Louw & Nida	Louw, J P and Nida, E A, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains</i>
NIDNTT	New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Problem

Martin Luther's disdain for the Epistle of James as Scripture is well-known. Luther disliked the book of James because he considered it as contradicting Paul's instruction on righteousness by faith alone (Grieb 2002:177). Luther placed the Letter of James at the end of his famous German translation of the NT from 1522 (Riesner 2007:1257), signalling his opinion of this document. Since then, James has largely been studied as a counter-argument to Paul. According to Grieb (2002:177), this was "a tradition already begun by the *Pseudo-Clementines* (fourth century)." Ever since Luther, according to Quitslund (1991:140) "the Letter has suffered from a certain benign neglect in the Christian world." Luther's opinions have negatively influenced commentators from the sixteenth century to the present (Varner 2010:199; Hartin 2009:1; Johnson 2005:297).

Even though I had attended churches that adhere to the Reformed tradition following the teachings of John Calvin<sup>1</sup>, I was brought up in an environment emphasizing only the grace of God and disdaining the works of human beings in South Korea. The Gospel which I heard was that when we accept the fact that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was resurrected from the tomb in three days, we are saved, and all our previous, current, and future sins are forgiven. Most preachers urge the congregation members to have confidence in their own salvation because we are saved not by works but by grace, by faith alone and once saved we are always saved. If anyone mentions the effect of faith by action on salvation, he or she would be rebuked by other pastors.<sup>2</sup> But when I read through the New Testament, I could find many passages that also emphasize the works of believers, especially Matthew and James; even Paul places emphasis on moral acts. There are even some passages that are apparently incongruent with each other (e.g. Rom. 3:28 and Jas. 2:24). I then became interested in researching more about faith and works. I have found that most scholars agree that we are saved by faith and grace but that the saved person must produce works of faith. The issues that I am addressing repeatedly are two: first, what is saving faith? And second, how faith is

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<sup>1</sup> The position of Luther was not shared by all reformers. His fellow reformers, such as Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), William Tyndale (1494-1536), Philip Melancthon (1497-1560), and John Calvin (1509-1564) accepted the apostolic authority of James and were of the opinion that James and Paul are not incompatible. The Westminster Confession of 1646 explicitly included James in the canon (see Riesner 2007:1257; Johnson 2005 [1995]:140-143; Baker 2005:347-348; Moo 2000 [1985]:15-19; George 2000:25-27). Calvin (1547:Canon 11) clearly argues that "we are saved by faith alone but the faith that saves is never alone." Calvin never thinks that faith and works can be separated (Institutes 3.16.1; cf. George 2000:29).

<sup>2</sup> The pastor Oak Han-Heum of the Sarang Community Church, who was widely respected by most Christians and scholars across denominations, preached that "only faith with action can guarantee entry into Heaven" at a service celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Korean Protestant church in 2007. However, Oak was reproached later by several pastors for that statement (Kwon 2014).

linked to works? I chose the Letter of James for this dissertation because James instructs what true faith is and how the faith must show in various situations. Before providing the problem statement of this study, it is required to treat the issue at hand in both James and Paul; faith and works. On the basis of that survey, we can more properly assess and establish the nature of the problem.

## **1.1.1 Faith and works in James and Paul**

### **1.1.1.1 Scholars' opinions on faith and works in James and Paul**

Before Luther the leaders of the church had not focused on the controversy of faith and works in Paul and James. For example, the 17th century monk Andreas understood that “‘faith’ in Paul is prebaptismal, whereas ‘faith’ in James is postbaptismal” (Baker 2005:347). Augustine proclaimed: “James explains how Paul should be understood, that good works are to result from justifying faith” (Baker 2005:347). Nevertheless, Luther considered Jas. 2:24 to contradict Paul’s teaching on righteousness in Gal. 2:16. According to Johnson (2005:297), “Luther’s view dominated much of the scholarly approach to the letter until very recently.”

James’ insistence that “a person is justified by works and not by faith alone” (2:24 NRSV) is often seen as a direct contradiction of Paul’s proclamation of justification by faith “alone”, because of the literal contradiction between James and Paul regarding justification by faith alone or faith with works<sup>3</sup>. Many scholars have suggested solutions to resolve the question of faith versus works in Paul and James, and these solutions can be summarised as follows:<sup>4</sup>

#### **VIEW A: Justification by faith without works of the Old Testament Law (Paul) *and* by both faith and works (James)**

According to this view, James 2 shows that “works” are among the essential elements in a sinner’s justification before God. The claim of those who offer this view is that James affirmed that “a sinner’s acceptance with God depends on both faith and works” (Jenkins 2002:xxx). When Paul spoke of a justification by faith alone without works in Romans 4, “he was speaking only of works of the Old Testament Law, refuting Judaizers by demonstrating that works of the Old Testament are not sufficient to justify a sinner” (Jenkins 2002:xxx). On the other hand, James’ argument was that

<sup>3</sup> Especially Jas. 2:24 (“You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.” [NRSV]) / Gal. 2:16 (“yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.” [NRSV]).

<sup>4</sup> Although it is not possible to divide the views of scholars into five categories in a simplistic way, I tried to present the views of scholars in terms of the five categories in order to offer a brief account of the different solutions on the literary conflicts between James and Paul.

works are required of all Jesus followers, because the faith by which the believer was justified has the effects of producing good works. “The one overturns the foundation of those who rested on the law, the other that of such as abused the gospel. The one assails the self-righteous legalist or moralist, the other the Antinomian professor, the merely nominal or intellectual believer” (Adam 1867:202). Therefore, James’ writing manifested justification in a fuller sense than Paul’s. James asserted that a person’s justification by God depends on “both faith and works.” Some also explain the contradiction between James and Paul regarding justification by making use of the terms *before* conversion and *after* conversion (Adam 1867:201-202; Bassett 1876:45; Winkler 1888:43; Plumptre 1890:75; Mayor 1954 [1892]:216; Dale 1895:77; Carr 1896:38; Hort 1909:xxiv-xxv; Cadoux 1944:29; Knoch 1969:186; Johnstone 1977:194-195; Motyer 1985 [1995]:106; Sleeper 1998:83; Felder 1998:1795; Bailey 1999:22-24; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:133-134; Baker 2005:350).

#### **VIEW B: Eternal salvation (Paul) and physical deliverance (James)**

“In this view Paul was concerned with eternal salvation in Romans 4, while James was dealing with physical deliverance from the devastating effects of sin. James was not addressing unbelievers concerning salvation” (Jenkins 2002:xxx). He instructed believers on the “temporal judgment for wanton sin (cf. Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 10:28-30), and their vindication before others as either ‘friends of God’ (Jn. 15:14; Jas. 2:23) or carnal Christians (1 Cor. 3:1-3)” (Jenkins 2002:xxx). James’ reference to justification/vindication is “only before others in a nonsalvific context” (Lange & van Oosterzee 1867:87; Deems 1888:135; Scaer 2004 [1983]:93; Kistemaker 1996 [1986]:15-16; Hughes 1991:15; Hodges 1994:41-42, 60-72; Verseput 1997:115; Lea 1999:295; Hart 1999:58-60; Gaebelein 2009:11; Chay 2012:140, 148-149).

#### **VIEW C: James’s view on faith and works as contradiction of Paul’s view on faith alone**

From the perspective of this view, James is stating that a Christian’s justification before God depends not on faith alone, but rather on faith and works; he directly opposes what Paul says in Rom. 4 and Gal. 2-3. Paul, by contrast, firmly believes in justification before God by faith alone. In this view, James’s and Paul’s views on justification are in contrast (Ropes 1916:34-35; Blackman 1957:90, 96; Sanders 2012 [1975]:122, 129; Dibelius 1976:165; Laws 1980:132-133; Chester 1994:27-28; Wall 1997a:132-133, 150-151; Allison Jr 2013:437, 496).

#### **VIEW D: Justification at inception (Paul) or at judgement (James)**

In this view, when Paul claims justification by faith, he refers to the initial act of faith and justification as the initial gift of God’s grace at the conversion and baptism. However, James views justification as the divine declaration at the last judgment (Reicke 1964:34-35; Proctor 1997:331, cf.

Scaer 2004 [1983]:93). Mitton (1966:105) explains that for James, justification “is [predominantly] associated with the Last Judgement, but can also have reference to God’s acceptance of a man in this life” and, in Richard Kugelman’s (1980:34-35) words, there is “the same tension as in Paul’s epistles between the present possession of the life of grace and the future final salvation.” Moo (2015:63-65) suggests considering the different uses of the preposition “ἐκ”, which both Paul and James employ with “works.” In Paul, in his opinion, the preposition ἐκ is used in “the relevant texts to indicate the instrument of justification.” In James, he argues, the preposition is used “in a looser sense, to say that works are necessarily involved in, or related to, God’s justifying verdict.” Paul focuses passionately on the initial transfer of the sinner into the group of God’s children. James, on the other hand, is concerned with God’s final verdict over our lives, for the works necessarily produced as a result of the union with Christ by faith (Reicke 1964:34-35; Mitton 1966:105; Kugelman 1980:34-35; Scaer 2004 [1983]:93; Proctor 1997:331; Moo 2015:63-65).

#### **VIEW E: Different foci and meanings of the words**

From the perspective of this view, Paul and James are using the same terms (particularly δικαιώω, “to justify”) with different implications in different situations. “Paul’s concern was the sinner’s basis for justification with God (i.e. the basis for his legal standing with God), while James’s concern was to refute antinomianism by showing that one’s true conversion will be “justified” objectively by works” (Jenkins 2002:64). The justification in Paul was “a forensic declaration of righteousness that a sinner achieves only through faith and the justification in James was “a universal demonstration of righteousness that is accomplished by works” (Jenkins 2002:64). James’ claim is that a person who possesses faith in Christ will be vindicated as a true Christian by his or her works, and that a mere claim to have faith that is not evidenced by works is not genuine faith (Calvin 1999:309-317; King 1941:53; Manton 1968 [1840]:238-239; Neander 1852:81-82; Stier 1864:356-357; Plummer 1903:143-147; Robertson 1915:94; Lenski 1946:578, 589-590; Tasker 1956:68; Stevenson 1966:55-56; Adamson 1976:34-38, 121-37; Mayor 1977:lxxxix-xciv; Davids 1980:102; Burdick 1981:184; Brown 1986:365-373; Rakestraw 1986:36, 42, 49; Townsend 1994:52-53; Sproul 1995:160-171; Compton 1997:44-45; Laato 1997:82-84; MacArthur 1998:137-138; Culpepper 2000:34; Dowd 2000:202; Jenkins 2002:64; Isaacs 2002:208; Barclay 2003:85; Phillips 2004:82, 90; Kent 2005:99; Guthrie 2006:241-242; Riesner 2007:1259-1260; Byron 2007:466; Doriani 2007:94-95, 99-103; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:131-132, 136, 138; McCartney 2009:55; Hartin 2009:163-169; Varner 2010:116; Stulac 2010:21; Stevenson 2010:55-56; McKnight 2011:262-263; Lockett 2012:18-20).

## 1.1.1.2 Different problems and meanings between James and Paul

### 1.1.1.2.1 Paul and James are addressing quite different problems

Many scholars, as we see above, agree that Paul and James do not contradict each other directly on the issue of justification because they are dealing with different problems and using key terms with different meanings. There are clearly differences of problem and context between them. Paul is concerned with those who taught justification by works of the law (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16). In Acts 15:1, 5, Paul and Barnabas had no small difference of opinion and debate about those who came from Judea and the party of the Pharisees, because they were teaching the necessity of circumcision and observance of the whole law of Moses. In Galatians, Paul is opposing Gentile Jesus followers who want to “become circumcised and observe all the commandments of Torah, including the ritual ones (Gal. 4:9-10; 5:3,12)” (Johnson 2004:15). In the Letter of James, James is concerned with those who taught justification without works (Jas. 2:14-26).

Tamez (2002:53) rightly mentions that “[t]he problem arises when we ignore the context of the passages.” Nelson (2007:4) insists that “Paul’s teaching is appropriate for legalists but not for antinomians. James’ is appropriate for antinomians but not for legalists.” MacArthur (1998:125) also argues that “Paul opposes works-righteous legalism; James opposes easy-believism.” Compton (1997:31-34) describes that “Paul combats some form of Jewish legalism in his discussion of justification in Romans and elsewhere. ... James, on the other hand, responds in his discussion to a form of dead orthodoxy, or even antinomianism.” Rakestraw (1986:34) further explains that “Paul is attacking self-righteous legalism, and James self-righteous indifference.” Johnstone (1977:196-197) holds that “Paul opposes *legalism*, or self-righteousness.” “James, on the other hand, in the paragraph before us, and more or less obviously and directly throughout the whole Epistle, opposes *antinomianism*” Johnstone (1977:196). Jeremias (1955:371) spells it out well that “Paul is fighting against Jewish confidence in meritorious works, against the effort to save oneself, against the under-estimating of sin, against the over-estimating of man’s power, against the self-righteousness of the pious man who has too good an opinion of himself.”

Paul’s argument evidently developed in the context of the requirement that Gentile Jesus followers should keep the demands of the Law of Moses, “particularly those commandments dealing with circumcision and food laws” (Sleeper 1998:78). James’s argument, on the other hand, developed in the context that there are those who confess their faith, but do not practice the words of God. “Paul shows concern about the conditions for admitting Gentiles into the church; James is more concerned about Christian morality, about putting faith into practice” (Sleeper 1998:78). When Paul writes about justification, he is opposing a Jewish legalism to depend on obedience to the law for

salvation and to overemphasize works. James, on the other hand, is contesting an antinomianism to turn faith into mere doctrinal orthodoxy and to underemphasize works (cf. Moo 2015:61).

### 1.1.1.2.2 The meaning of δικαίω in the letters of Paul and James

Most individual words in any language usually possess many different possible meanings because the semantic range of words is diverse. In James, for example, the word “πειρασμός” is used positively in 1:2 and 12 and translated to “trial” or “testing”.<sup>5</sup> In 1:13-14 its verbal form “πειράζω”, however, is used negatively and translated into “tempted” by most English versions of the Bible.<sup>6</sup> “It should not therefore surprise us that the same word may be used by James and Paul in different ways and possess different meanings” (Stein 2000:5).

The Greek verb δικαίω is commonly translated “justify”, but to “justify (δικαίω)” can be used in two different senses. Jenkins (2002:67) explains that this word can mean “either a declarative or a demonstrative force.” Maxwell (2007:375) shows that δικαίω carries “its forensic meaning” or “its demonstrative meaning.” Stulac (2010 [1993]:21) describes this term as “declared to be righteous” in the judicial sense, and “shown to be righteous” in the moral sense. Isaacs (2002:208) delineates two different senses with “a declaratory sense of God’s pronouncement of forgiveness or acquittal” and “a demonstrative sense to mean ‘vindicate.’” Moo (2000 [1985]:134-135) also concedes that “[f]irst, dikaiōō might mean ‘vindicate in the judgment.’ ... But a second meaning of dikaiōō has the sense ‘demonstrate to be right,’ ‘vindicate.’”<sup>7</sup> MacArthur (1998:138) emphasizes that the verb δικαίω (justified) can have two general meanings: “The first pertains to acquittal, that is, to declaring and treating a person as righteous. ... The second meaning of *dikaiōō* pertains to vindication, or proof of righteousness.” The claim of Calvin (1959 [1999]:315) is that “we must take notice of the two-fold meaning of the word *justified*”: (1) “the gratuitous imputation of righteousness before the tribunal of God”; (2) “the manifestation of righteousness by the conduct, and that before men.” These two senses of the verb δικαίω can be found in Louw and Nida’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (Louw & Nida 1996).

<sup>5</sup> In Jas. 1:2 “πειρασμός” is translated as “trials” by ESV, NET, NRSV, NKJV, NIV, NASB, and GNT. In Jas. 1:12 “trial” by ESV, NIV, NASB, GNT; “testing” by NET, NLT, CEV.

<sup>6</sup> In Jas. 1:13, 14 “πειράζω” is translated as “tempted” by ESV, NET, NRSV, NKJV, NIV, NASB, NLT, CEV, GNT, and YNG.

<sup>7</sup> Although Moo (2000:135) acknowledges the second meaning, he emphasizes that the second meaning of δικαίω is a fairly rare use of the verb in a few passages (Mt. 11:19; Lk. 10:29; 16:15).

Paul employed the term  $\delta\kappa\alpha\iota\acute{o}\omega$  significantly as “a theological term to indicate God’s declaration that a believing sinner stands righteous before Him” (Jenkins 2002:67).<sup>8</sup> In Romans Paul declares, for example, that “they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24), “he [God] justifies the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26), “a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law” (Rom. 3:28), “he [God] will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith (Rom. 3:30), and that, “we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). In his letter to the Galatians, he says, “we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law” (Gal. 2:16).  $\Delta\kappa\alpha\iota\acute{o}\omega$  may also mean “to demonstrate that something is morally right — ‘to show to be right, to prove to be right’” (Louw & Nida). Thus, when Christ said: “wisdom is justified by her deeds” (Mt. 11:19, ESV), it means that wisdom will be proved true by her actions.<sup>9</sup> When Paul cites Ps. 51:4, “so that you will be justified in your words and will prevail when you are judged” (Rom. 3:4, NET), it means that God will be *proved right* in God’s words (see NIV, NLT, CEV).<sup>10</sup> Since two senses of  $\delta\kappa\alpha\iota\acute{o}\omega$  are established in a forensic justification and as vindication of a claim, we need to consider how Paul and James use it in their letters.

The majority of scholars explain that Paul would use this term to mean that the ungodly are “declared righteous” by God. James uses the term to mean “proved righteous” by good works. Calvin’s (1959 [1999]:315) explanation is that “Paul means by it the gratuitous imputation of righteousness before the tribunal of God; and James, the manifestation of righteousness by the conduct, and that before men.” For Jeremias (1955:370-371), Paul uses “the verb  $\delta\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$  in the synthetical sense. God adds something, He gives righteousness to the ungodly.” James uses “the verb  $\delta\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$  in the analytical sense. God recognizes the fact of the existing righteousness.” Tasker (1956 [1983]:67-69) shows that “James is not using the word *justified* with reference to that occasion alluded to by Paul (Rom. iv. 3; Gal. iii. 6) when Abraham is said to have ‘believed in the Lord; and he [God] counted it to him for righteousness’ (Gn. xv. 6, R.V.).” James is here speaking of “the infallible proof, given in the incident recorded in Gn. xxii, that the faith which resulted in that imputation was real faith ... *Justified* in this verse means in effect ‘shown to be justified’” Tasker (1956 [1983]:68). Motyer (1985 [1995]:20) posits that “[t]o Paul the question was, ‘How is

<sup>8</sup> Jenkins (2002:67) provides that  $\delta\kappa\alpha\iota\acute{o}\omega$  ( $dikaio\acute{o}$ ) is “used in this declarative sense in Rom. 3:26, 30; 4:5; 8:30; and Gal. 2:16-17; 3:8.”

<sup>9</sup> “Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.” [NRSV]; “wisdom is vindicated by her deeds” [NET]; “wisdom is vindicated by her deeds” [NASB]; “Wisdom is shown to be right by what it does” [CEV].

<sup>10</sup> The word  $\delta\kappa\alpha\iota\acute{o}\omega$  ( $dikaio\acute{o}$ ) is, according to Jenkins (2002:67), “also used in this demonstrative sense in Genesis 44:16; Lk. 7:35; 10:29; 16:15; and 1 Timothy 3:16, 18.”

salvation experienced?’ and the answer, ‘By faith alone.’ To James the question was, ‘How is this true and saving faith recognized?’ and the answer, ‘By its fruits.’” Following J. Adamson’s translation of Jas. 2:21, Rakestraw (1986:40) makes clear: “[t]his demonstrative-analytical sense of *dikaioō* is thus held to be distinct from the declarative-forensic-judicial usage found in Paul.” Davids (1989:78) finds that *δικαιόω* is “translated in Paul correctly as ‘put right with God,’ whereas James uses it as it is used forty-four times in the Septuagint for ‘declared to be right by God.’” Fung (1992:162) denotes the differentiations between “forensic justification by faith” and “probative justification by works.” In Compton’s (1997:26) view, “Paul uses justification and its cognates in Romans 3:28 and elsewhere in the sense of God’s declaring or pronouncing someone righteous.” James, on the other hand, uses it “in the sense of someone’s proving or showing his righteousness before others. Thus, Paul uses it in a judicial or forensic sense, whereas James uses it in a demonstrative or probative sense.” MacArthur (1998:137-138) contends that Paul almost always uses the term in the forensic sense and James uses it in the demonstrative sense:

It is the second sense in which James uses *dikaioō* in 2:21, asking rhetorically, **Was not Abraham our father justified by works?** He explains that Abraham’s supreme demonstration of that justification occurred **when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar**, which, as noted above, happened many years after his justification *by faith* recorded in Genesis 15:6.

Jenkins (2002:64) presents four scholars’ assertions and concludes that “Paul was writing of a forensic declaration of righteousness that a sinner achieves only through faith, and James was writing of a universal demonstration of righteousness that is accomplished by works.” Paul, as Isaacs (2002:208) notes, “uses the verb ‘to justify’ in its declaratory sense of God’s pronouncement of forgiveness or acquittal. James, on the other hand, uses it in a demonstrative sense to mean ‘vindicate’.” Phillips (2004:82) argues that “James did not have in mind the ‘imputed righteousness’ that Paul taught (Rom. 3-4; Gal. 3) ... but James was concerned with it as proof that Abraham, when put to the test, lived up to his faith.” The good deeds that flow from faith, as Doriani (2007:103) says, “vindicate us, declare that we *do* belong to Christ.” Maxwell (2007:376) clarifies that “*δικαιόω* in Paul means ‘to impute righteousness’ (forensically), while in James it means ‘show to be righteous.’” Furthermore, he argues that “*δικαιόω* carries its forensic meaning when the contrast is between works and faith, while it carries its demonstrative meaning when the contrast is between works and words.” Blomberg and Kamell (2008:139) explain that “[t]he first is a legal declaration made by God at the time one commits one’s life to Christ. The second is the demonstration by a transformed life that such a commitment was genuine.”<sup>11</sup> As Hartin (2009:166-

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<sup>11</sup> They also open other possible interpretations, especially Ben Witherington (2007:478-479)’s reference that James refers to final verdict of God.

167) phrases it:

One can describe the relationship as something akin to the “before and after” scenario. Paul is concerned about the situation of a person before she or he comes to faith and justification. According to Paul, works of the Law do not lead to faith and justification. For James, on the other hand, the perspective is rather that of a believer who already has faith and is in a justifying relationship with God. James stresses that it is vital for that person to express his or her faith in actions, or good deeds.

According to Stulac (2010 [1993]:21) “Paul would use this term to mean ‘declared to be righteous’ in the judicial sense of ‘acquitted’ a judgment. ... James was using the term to mean ‘shown to be righteous’ in the moral sense.”

There are other interpretations on the respective usage of δικαιώω by Paul and James in describing it with “at conversion and last judgment.” Moo (2000 [1985]:141) especially insists that both James and Paul use “justify” in the sense of vindication in the judgment, but “James and Paul use ‘justify’ to refer to different things. Paul refers to the initial declaration of a sinner’s innocence before God; James to the ultimate verdict of innocence pronounced over a person at the last judgment.” He provides two bases for his opinion: firstly, the demonstrative meaning of δικαιώω is a fairly rare application in the New Testament (Mt. 11:19; Lk. 10:29; 16:15). Secondly, the meaning does not fit the overall context.<sup>12</sup> Jeremias (1955:371) describes that “Paul, when speaking of the justification, nearly always has in mind justification at baptism where the ungodly is declared by God to be righteous. James, when speaking of the justification, has in mind the last judgment.” As Reicke (1964:34) comments, James “views justification in the light of the last judgment, while Paul has in mind conversion and baptism.” For Chester (1994:27-28), “Paul sees this primarily as the point of entry into the community, where faith is involved as the response to God’s gracious act, whereas for James it is a question of being accepted by God at the last judgement.” Proctor (1997:327) notes that “James uses the term [*dikaioutai*] to denote God’s eschatological pronouncement on one who is shown to be righteous.”

Dowd (2000:203) points out a two-fold justification in Pauline teaching; one at baptism and the other at the last judgment. She clarifies that “Paul, when speaking of the justification, nearly always has in mind justification at baptism where the ungodly is declared by God to be righteous. James ... has in mind the last judgment (cf. 2:14).” Scaer (2004 [1983]:93) sees that Jas. 2:24 is “a reference to the eschatological justification, as James places the works of Abraham before the congregation as

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<sup>12</sup> Moo observes that “[t]he overall thrust of this passage, established by the broader context, is what constitutes the ‘true religion’ that will survive the judgment of God (1:21-27; 2:12-13) and by the specific question raised in v. 14: will ‘that kind of faith’ save a person?” For more details, see Moo 2000:135-136.

the evidence for his being considered justified by God.” Witherington III (2007:478-479) also finds: “[i]f, however, we take—and we should—the vindication in James 2:24 as referring to that final verdict of God on one’s deeds and life work, then even Paul can be said to have agreed.”

Rakestraw (1986:40-42) and some others (Mitton 1966:105; Lenski 1946:589), on the one hand, agree with the last judgment as the fundamental background for Jas. 2:14-26. On the other hand, they contend that both Paul and James use δικαιώω in a declarative-judicial sense, but their emphases are different. Paul emphasizes the sinner’s initial justification by God at conversion; but James’ attention is on the declaration by God (and perhaps by people) during a believer’s lifetime, that he or she is truly a righteous person because the justification of Abraham and Rahab is something that occurred during their earthly lives (e.g. Jas. 2:21, 25). For Deems (1888:135), Paul is considering “the class of unregenerate men,” who ask the question, “how a man is to be justified with God?” But “James is considering the class of men who are regenerate, or suppose themselves so, who believe that they have been justified as to God and must now establish their claim to righteousness with their fellow-men.”

### 1.1.1.2.3 The meaning of πίστις in the letters of Paul and James

Many observe that the meaning of faith in Jas. 2:24 is different from the meaning of faith in Rom. 3:28 or Gal. 2:16. Kent (2005:79) points out that “[b]y using the article with faith, he was making his reference very specific. He was not talking about faith in general, but about *the* faith which the person in his illustration was claiming to possess.” King (1941:53) explains that the faith James is thinking of is “just a head-belief” and the faith Paul is thinking of is “the sort that works.” Jeremias (1955:370) summarizes the consensus of the past, that “πίστις with Paul means the faith of salvation, the confidence that Christ died for my sins and that God has raised Him for my justification. Πίστις with James means—to admit the existence of God.” Tasker (1956:63-64) emphasizes that James shatters the confidence of those who have “a professed faith which is totally lacking in results.” He calls that faith “wordy faith”, which has no saving power. Lorenzen (1978:233) contends that “[f]irst, for Paul faith is man’s total response to and involvement with Jesus Christ. ... Second, faith is always *obedient* faith. Salvation by faith does not negate the necessity and importance of works.” Rakestraw (1986:36-37) explicates that for James, πίστις in 2:14-26 is “equivalent to the intellectual acceptance of theological assertions, particularly the monotheistic creed (which even the demons believe) mentioned in v 19.” But for Paul “faith is entailed in the very concept of justification, whereas with James right actions are entailed in the very concept of faith.” He finds that “James emphasizes the intellectual-objective aspect of faith and Paul the volitional-subjective aspect which actually *includes* the former and which should *follow* it.” Chester (1994:25) makes clear that “*faith*

*is used in at least two different ways*” in the Letter of James. He points out that “[i]t is used positively, in the sense of ‘true’ faith, in 1. 3, 6; 2. 1, 5; 5. 15, and also negatively, in the sense of claimed, that is, *false*, faith, in 2. 14-26.” In his view, the meanings of the term “faith” overlap even in usage in 2:14-26. Faith is used twice in the sense of genuine faith in 2:22, on the part of Abraham. For Chester, “this passage helps to clarify the point at issue. Thus 2. 24, 26, along with 2. 22, show that ‘faith’ can only be properly what it claims to be when, as in the case of Abraham, it is *shown* by ‘works’.” In contrast to James, Laato (1997:71-72) says: “Paul does not at least *expressis verbis* distinguish between dead and living faith. He begins generally only with one type of faith. Accordingly, a clear alternative is offered: either one has faith or one does not have faith.” Laato then declares that “[t]he differences between James and Paul are merely terminological. Materially they offer the same theology.” Bailey (1999:22) concedes that there are two different aspects of faith in Paul and James. He postulates that James does not deny Paul’s saying that “we are initially justified by faith without works.” Lea (1999:295) insists that “James was contrasting two types of faith, one which was genuine and another which was false. Paul was contrasting two plans of salvation, one which God approved, and another which human beings devised.” From his perspective, “James described the kind of faith which proved or demonstrated righteousness before human beings. Paul described the kind of faith which received God’s approval.” Stein (2000:6) clarifies that for “Paul ‘faith’ almost always refers to a whole-hearted trust in God that salvation can be received as a gracious gift apart from any meritorious works because of the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ.” Barclay (2003:84) affirms that there are two kinds of belief:

There is belief which is purely intellectual. For instance, I believe that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle equals the sum of the squares on the other two sides; and, if I had to, I could prove it - but it makes no difference to my life and living. I accept it, but it has no effect upon me. There is another kind of belief. I believe that five and five make ten, and, therefore I will resolutely refuse to pay more than ten pounds or ten dollars for two items marked at half that sum. I take that fact not only into my mind but also into my life and action.

What James is arguing against, in his view, is “the first kind of belief, the acceptance of a fact without allowing it to have any influence upon life.” Kent (2005:80) makes clear that “[w]hat James was contrasting was true faith, which inevitably produces action because it is alive, versus a mere claim to faith, which is profession only and has no life-changing power.” For him, “[i]t is not a faith that entrusts the soul to God’s provision of grace in Christ.”

#### **1.1.1.2.4 The meaning of ἔργον in the letters of Paul and James**

There is an obvious difference between how “works” is used by James and by Paul: James speaks

simply of “works” in Jas. 2:24, while Paul refers to “works of the law” in Rom. 3:28 and Gal. 2:16. Many scholars are also convinced that James and Paul use the term, “works” differently in different contexts. Proctor (1997:329-331) emphasizes that “it is significant that James never uses Paul’s typical phrase ‘works of the law’, which he could hardly have avoided doing if he had Paul’s arguments in mind.” Richard Kugelman (1980:34) argues that “James uses the term ‘works’ twelve times, in every case he is speaking of deeds of love of the neighbor.” James’ understanding of works, in terms of Laws (1980:129), is “most naturally seen in terms of the deeds of charity demanded in v. 15f.” For Sidebottom (1967 [2010]:16-18), “it means acts of Christian love.” Lea (1999:287) observes that “[w]hen James called for deeds, he was not suggesting that these deeds resulted in salvation. He was calling for Jesus followers to do what living faith naturally does: show care and concern for those in need.” The claim of Bauckham (2003:1488) is also that “James is entirely oblivious to the question of Gentile believers in Christ, and the works he has in mind are acts of neighborly love.” Felder (1998:1794) manifests that “James gives clear evidence in this pericope that by ‘works’ he means two things.” First, for Felder, “as is manifest in 2:14-17, ‘merciful deeds’ of social concern for the less fortunate become ‘works’ for James.” Second, he continues, “by ‘works’ James also suggests strongly in 2:18-26 that he means acts of faith that specifically show that men and women are personally open to a new (and renewing) spiritual relationship with God.” Davids (1999:52) points out that “James speaks of works, and the one work of Abraham he cites is not the circumcision of Isaac from Genesis 17, but the binding of Isaac from Genesis 22.52. The former fits the Pauline argument, while the latter fits the Jacobean context of testing.”

Moo (2015:62), on the other hand, has questioned the confining of James’ “works” to acts of charity. When we consider his specific examples, drawn from the lives of Abraham and Rahab (Jas. 2: 21-25), “works” in James do not clearly involve acts of charity. “Particularly in Abraham’s case, the focus is on his obedience to God *per se*, with no inkling of any charity shown to others.” For Moo, thus, “it would seem that both Paul and James are operating with an understanding of ‘works’ that is basically similar: anything done that is in obedience to God and in the service of God.”

When we consider Jas. 2:14-26 and the rest of James, as Stein (2000:7) emphasizes, “‘works’ are always seen positively and, when described, involve acts of loving mercy, kindness, and obedience to God. They are performed from a faith that ‘works through love.’ They have nothing to do with ritualistic or ceremonial actions.” As Johnson (2005 [1995]:60) clarifies, James uses the term “works” for such an effect or action in 1:4 and 3:13, and applies it especially to the “working out” of faith (1:25; 2:14, 17-18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26). It is then obvious that James *never* connects

“works” to the term “law.” Rather, James uses the term in the moral sense of “deed/effort” as the result of faith or in an act of personal obedience to God.

In Paul, many argue that “works” have a very different meaning from James. Laws (1980:129) insists that “[w]hen Paul speaks of ‘works’ in relation to justification, he speaks consistently and explicitly of works of obedience to the Jewish Law.” Lea (1999:287) also argues that “[w]hen Paul warned that a person could not be saved by ‘works,’ he referred to the works of obedience to the Jewish law (Rom. 3:20).” Paul constantly condemns “the works of the Law” and levels his sharpest argument to bear against the attempt to earn salvation through such works. Nevertheless, Paul does not dismiss good works, actually referring repeatedly to “good work” in a positive sense (e.g. Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; Gal. 6:4; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:13). Further Paul mentions the “fruit of the Spirit” often in place of good work in his letters (Laato 1997:74-75). As Doriani (2007:96) argues, “Paul denies that anyone can be saved by works (or ‘works of the law’). But he stresses the need for good works as much as Jesus and James do.” Doriani (2007:97) provides many occasions of Paul’s emphases on the necessity of “works”:

- God will “test what sort of work each one has done” (1 Cor. 3:13 ESV).
- “Each one should test his own actions” (Gal. 6:4).
- “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph. 2:10).
- “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love” (Gal. 5:6).

Dauids (1999:52) asserts that “Paul always speaks of ‘the works of the law,’ meaning the markers of Judaism, especially circumcision and dietary laws, never of works *per se*.” Bauckham (2003:1488) contends that “[w]hen Paul refers to ‘works of the law’ (a phrase not used by James) it is with special, though not exclusive, reference to the boundary markers, such as circumcision and food laws, which symbolized Jewish exclusivity.” As Joachim Jeremias (1955:370) famously epitomized it, “Ἔργα with Paul means the keeping of the Commandments of the law, such as circumcision, prescriptions of purity and of food, meritorious fulfilment of the Tora. Ἔργα with James means Christian love.”

However, Moo (2015:61-62) has questioned this prevailing understanding of “works” in Paul’s letters. In his view, “Paul’s concept of ‘works’ is much broader than this interpretation would suggest.” On the basis of Rom. 9:10-12 and Rom. 4, he insists that “‘works’ includes *anything* that is done, ‘good or bad’.” According to Moo (2015:62), “Paul intends to exclude *all* works – not just certain works or works done in a certain spirit – as a basis for justification.” Following Moo,

Rakestraw (1986:38) confirms that “Paul and James, then, mean the same thing by ‘works’—actions done in obedience to God and in the service of God.” Compton (1997:25) also concedes that “Paul is using “works of law” in the sense of anything done in obedience to God’s Word and, by extension, anything that a person does.” For him, “[w]ith Abraham in Romans 4:1ff, Paul’s point is that even works done before the giving of the Law and motivated by Abraham’s desire to love and obey God are excluded.” The difference between Paul and James, for Moo (2015:62; cf. Rakestraw 1986:38-39), “consists in the *sequence* of works and conversion: Paul denies any efficacy to pre-conversion works, but James is pleading for the absolute necessity of post-conversion works.”

It is obvious that in Romans and Galatians “works” are normally described by the phrase “works of law” (Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16 [3]; 3:2, 5,10). For Paul, “works” are contrasted with grace (Rom. 11:6), an attempt to boast before God, placing God under obligation (Rom. 4:2), and earning justification as a result (Rom. 4:4). Consequently, “works” are a way of obtaining righteousness that does not accommodate faith (Rom. 9:30-33), and it is impossible to reach justification through this method (Rom. 3:20). While “works of the law” in Rom. 3:38 may not refer to boundary markers between Jews and Gentiles or the ceremonial practices of the Jewish faith (Moo 2015:61-62; Compton 1997:25-26; Rakestraw 1986:38), but the Jewish law in general, as Stein (2000:7) observes, it is quite probable that “the specific ‘works’ that Paul has in mind are: circumcision (Rom. 4:1-12; Gal. 5:3, 6; 6:15; 1 Cor. 7:19; cf. Acts 15:1,5); ritualistically keeping certain days (Gal. 4:10); abstaining from certain food and drink (Col. 2:16); etc.” It should be noted that Paul does not stand against works like clothing the naked and feeding the hungry. Paul is not opposing living acts of kindness and mercy which are needed to be accompanied by faith. He is not opposed to good deeds done in obedience to God. “These kinds of works are spoken of quite positively in Paul” (Stein 2000:7). “Works” in James are not “works of the law” such as circumcision, but “rather the works of love, such as caring for those who are in need, not showing favoritism, being humble, or being slow to speak. In essence, works are the sum total of a changed life brought about by faith” (Blomberg & Kamell 2008:132). Where, in the words of Moo (2015:62), “Paul denies the need for pre-conversion works,” James emphasizes “the absolute necessity of post-conversion works.”

#### **1.1.1.2.5 The new perspective on Paul**

For an accurate understanding of Paul’s Jewish opponents and the meaning of “justification by faith apart from the works of the law” in Paul’s teaching, it is required to deal with the New Perspective on Paul that has had “the greatest influence on Pauline studies since the Reformation” (Sprinkle 2005:21).

### 1.1.1.2.5.1 Early Protests

In the past, it has commonly been assumed that Paul's doctrine of justification by faith apart from the works of law was a direct attack against Jewish legalism (Sprinkle 2005:21). The traditional Protestant assumption was that "Judaism was religion whose focus was on the keeping of laws, and in which the successful keeping of laws was expected to be compensated by God's grace" (Wessels 2017:2). This understanding of Judaism was reinforced by such scholars as Ferdinand Weber, who arranged complex and massive rabbinic writings systematically and showed Judaism as a religion of legalism (Thielman 1994:25). Weber's work influenced other scholars deeply (e.g. Emil Schürer, Wilhelm Bousset, and Rudolf Bultmann) (Thielman 1994:26-27).

In spite of the influence of Weber's interpretation, there were some who challenged the traditional understanding of Judaism. The Jewish reformer and theologian Claude G. Montefiore pointed out that Weber had deduced the Rabbinic theology from "incidental, casual and unsystematic" Rabbis (Montefiore 1901:171). Montefiore asserts that the law in Judaism was not a burden that led toward self-righteousness, but on the contrary, "[t]he Law was given for Israel's benefit" (Montefiore 1901:175). The law was "a gift from a merciful and forgiving God" (Mattison 2009)<sup>13</sup>. According to Montefiore, measures were taken against transgressions, and faithful obedience of the Torah was rewarded, but no one really assumed that they could receive their salvation by observing the law. Montefiore emphasizes that the Torah had to be kept in its entirety, and that failure to do so provoked God's anger. But since the mercy and grace of God are greater than the anger of God, the Torah includes a system of atonement for sins (Zetterholm 2009:91).

Montefiore was not alone in objecting to the traditional assumptions. A non-Jewish scholar, George Foot Moore exposed the groundless studies of previous New Testament scholars (e.g. Ferdinand Weber, Emil Schürer, and Wilhem Bousset), criticizing both their method and use of the original sources. Moore concludes that rabbinic Judaism was not a religion of legalism (cf. Zetterholm 2009:94; Sprinkle 2005:22-23).

The analyses of Montefiore, Schechter, and Moore, among others, had little effect. "Their criticism was drowned out by the emerging Protestant biblical scholarship and the distorted picture of Paul as the definite opposite of Judaism continued to dominate both within theology and at the universities" (Zetterholm 2009:94).

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<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.thepaulpage.com/a-summary-of-the-new-perspective-on-paul/>

While Moore devastated the traditional idea regarding Judaism, he mentioned little in relation to the theology of Paul and it was left to Krister Stendahl to deal with this connection (Sprinkle 2005:23). Stendahl points out that there is a broad distinction between Paul's original meaning and the interpretation as formulated during the Reformation (Zetterholm 2009:98). According to Stendahl, Paul's main focus was not so much on the salvation of individual believers, but rather on "the relation between Jews and Gentiles, and not within the problem of how man is to be saved, or how man's deeds are to be accounted, or how the free will of individuals is to be asserted or checked" (Stendahl 1976:26). The important purpose of justification by faith, Stendahl argued, was not in the first instance directed at the individual believer, but the communities of Jews and Gentiles. (Wessels 2017:1-2).

The main message of Romans is "about God's plan for the world and about how Paul's mission to the Gentiles fits into that plan" (Stendahl 1976:27). Therefore, the actual pivot in Romans, according to Stendahl (1976:28), is found in chapters 9 – 11, where Paul describes God's plan for the final salvation and how Paul preached Christ to Jews first and then Gentiles with apostolic authority. "After emphasizing God's promises to Israel in the beginning of Romans 9, Paul continues by noting that the refusal of the Jewish people to accept Jesus as the Messiah of Israel has led to the situation where salvation now has been offered to the non-Jews" (Zetterholm 2009:99). Stendahl (1976:28) argues that, according to Paul, God's plan seems to have anticipated the "No" of the Jews and opened the possibility of the "Yes" of the Gentiles and in the end, the Jews also will be saved (Rom. 11:15, 25-27). Ultimately, Stendahl argues that "[i]f this people is God's people, then, when righteousness comes, it must mean salvation, triumph, victory, blessing, and the destruction of the enemy. This is plain and simple, because God's righteous act means that God is putting things right" (Stendahl 1976:31).

Sprinkle (2005:25) summarises well what Stendahl argued to revise Paul's theology into two arguments:

First of all, justification has been tragically misread by traditional exegetes. It does not reflect the core of Paul's theology. Rather it arose out of the Jew/Gentile issues that he encountered on his mission. Justification is not the battle cry of an individual who has found peace with a holy God, but a doctrine of identity that unites Jews and Gentiles into one family.

Secondly, Paul's mission to the Gentiles is the framework in which all of his theology must be read. The community, not the individual, was Paul's major concern.

### 1.1.1.2.5.2 The “New Perspective on Paul”

These points above had no sufficient impact on Pauline scholars, however, until the publication in 1977 of E. P. Sanders’ book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Sanders made a powerful impact on the traditional understanding of Judaism and the study of Paul. The motive of Sanders’ massive work is “to compare the ‘patterns of religion’ of the Judaism that existed from 200 BC-AD 200 on the one hand, with the Christianity promoted by the Apostle Paul on the other” (Sprinkle 2005:29). Sanders treated the Tannaitic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, like the efforts of Montefiore and Moore, “to describe and define Palestinian Judaism on its own terms, not as the mirror reflection of Christianity” (Mattison 2009). Sanders has coined a now well-known phrase to describe the character of first-century Palestinian Judaism: “covenantal nomism.” The meaning of “covenantal nomism” is the view that “one’s place in God’s plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression” (Sanders 1977:75). Sanders also summarizes the overall pattern of rabbinic religion as follows:

God has chosen Israel and Israel has accepted the election. In his role as King, God gave Israel commandments which they are to obey as best they can. Obedience is rewarded and disobedience punished. In case of failure to obey, however, man has recourse to divinely ordained means of atonement, in all of which repentance is required. As long as he maintains his desire to stay in the covenant, he has a share in God’s covenantal promises, including life in the world to come. The intention and effort to be obedient constitute the *condition for remaining in the covenant*, but they do not *earn* it (Sanders 1977:180).

After studying many document from the period 200 BC – 200 AD Sanders’ conclusion is that Judaism was not a religious system which operated on salvation by works. The system rather operated in an opposite manner: “[t]here are two aspects of the relationship between grace and works: *salvation is by grace but judgment is according to works; works are the condition of remaining ‘in’, but they do not earn salvation*” (Sanders 1977:543, emphasis original).

Why, then, did Paul reject Judaism? Sanders found Paul’s real reason as he argued that observing the law cut off Gentile believers from Christ: “salvation is only in Christ and appropriated only by faith” (Sanders 1977:519). The law, according to Sanders (1977:551), is good, but “salvation is only by Christ; therefore the entire system represented by the law is worthless for salvation.” Sanders (1977:552, italics original) sums up that “[i]n short, *this is what Paul finds wrong in*

*Judaism: it is not Christianity.*"<sup>14</sup>

Sanders' picture of Judaism was accepted by many scholars, but his understanding of Paul was not. Most scholars, even those who agreed with Sanders' depiction of Judaism in the first century, were not satisfied with Sanders' analysis on Paul. They tried to find theological reasons why Paul might have rejected Judaism, with some notable alternative suggestions. Heikki Räisänen, for example, believing that Sanders' portrayal of Judaism was correct, concluded that "Paul's thought on the law is full of difficulties and inconsistencies" (Räisänen 1987:264). At the other extreme, some proposed that Paul found nothing wrong with Judaism at all; he still believed that Jews had no need of Christ because they could be saved through their covenant; only the Gentiles needed Christ for salvation (cf. Westerholm 2015:7-8; Carson & Moo 2005:376-337).<sup>15</sup> "But the most satisfying and certainly most popular suggestion was the one offered by James D. G. Dunn and followed up by a host of scholars" (Carson & Moo 2005:377).

James DG Dunn was the one who made the phrase, "the new perspective on Paul," prevalent regarding Sanders' description of Paul's understanding of Judaism and soteriology. Dunn argues that Gal. 2:15-16 appeals to the shared understanding between Paul and Jewish Jesus followers: "we are Jews by nature and not sinners the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:15; Dunn 1990:190). Dunn emphasized that the meaning of the terms δικαιώω (justify) and δικαιοσύνη (righteousness) is "determined more by its Hebrew background than by its Greek form" (Dunn 1998:341). According to Dunn, "in Hebrew thought 'righteousness' is a more relational concept – 'righteousness' as the meeting of obligations laid upon the individual by the relationship of which he or she is part" (Dunn 1998:341). Dunn argues that "God's righteousness is precisely God's covenant faithfulness, his saving power and love for his people Israel. God's justification is God's recognition of Israel as his people, his verdict in favour of Israel on grounds of his covenant with Israel" (Dunn 1990:190). So in talking of "being justified" in Gal. 5:16, for Dunn (1990:190), God's justification does not refer to an initial act of God, rather it means "God's acknowledgement that someone is in the covenant - whether that is an *initial* acknowledgement, or a *repeated* action of God (God's saving acts), or his *final* vindication of his people." The claim of Dunn (1998:344) is that "[t]he heart of Paul's theology of justification was the dynamic interaction between "the righteousness of God" as God's saving action for *all* who

<sup>14</sup> In a later book, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (1983), "Sanders repeats his basic understanding of Paul's view of the Jewish law, but more extensively develops how he conceives that Paul related to the Jewish people and to Judaism in general" (Zetterholm 2009:107). The claim of Sanders is that "Paul considers both Jews and non-Jews to unite with Christ in the same way — by faith" (Zetterholm 2009:107).

<sup>15</sup> E.g. Lloyd Gaston 1987, *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press); Peter J Tomson 1990, *Paul and the Jewish law: Halakha in the letters of the apostle to the gentiles* (Assen: Gorcum); Stanley K. Stowers 1994, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press); Mark D Nanos 2012, *A Jewish View In Four views on the Apostle Paul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 159-193).

believe, and “the righteousness of God” as God’s faithfulness to *Israel*, his chosen people.” According to Dunn, “Paul believed that God had opened up Israel to the Gentiles and had made His grace available for them too. The covenantal relationship with Israel was thus expanded to include the Gentiles, and the fundamental point in this relationship became faith” (Lietaert Peerbolte 2014:139-140). Here, the term πίστις can mean the faithfulness of God and Christ, or the faithful obligation of the believers. Dunn (1998:379-385) argues that the crucial term πίστις χριστοῦ in Gal. 5:16 should not be translated as “faith of Christ” – “the faith which Christ exercised”, but as “faith in Christ” because it is the believers’ faith in Christ that saves them, not the faithfulness of Christ himself. Thus all Jews agreed that the righteousness, given by grace, comes from faith, not from works of the law. The division between Jesus-believing Jews and the non-believing Jews was “between those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah and those who did not” (Zetterholm 2009:116).

What is it then that Paul objects to? Dunn claims that it is the Jewish “ethnic exclusivism, not personal legalism” (Carson & Moo 2005:377). Another key phrase for Dunn is “from works of the law.” Dunn claims that Paul did not criticize the law itself, but rather “the works of the law,” understood as a Jewish ethical barrier:

‘Works of law’, are nowhere understood here, either by his Jewish interlocutors or by Paul himself, as works which *earn* God’s favour, as merit-amassing observances. They are rather seen as *badges*: they are simply what membership of the covenant people involves, what mark[s] out the Jews as God’s people; given by God for precisely that reason, they serve to demonstrate covenant status. They are the proper response to God’s covenant grace, the minimal commitment for members of God’s people (Dunn 1990:194).

For Dunn, the phrase “works of the law” cannot be reduced to the simple “works,” as the Reformers did. What Paul ultimately rejected, according to Dunn, was “Jewish particularism” (Zetterholm 2009:116) or “ethnic exclusivism” (Carson & Moo 2005:378). In a situation of facing foreign powers and the Dispersion, Jews in the centuries before Christ misused the law “as a way of maintaining their unique identity and status as the people of God” (Carson & Moo 2005:378). The “badges” or “works” particularly at issue were covenant works: circumcision, Sabbath and food laws. In this context, Dunn argues, Paul used the phrase “works of the law” as Jewish marks of identity that distinguish Jews from non-Jews. Dunn also suggests careful understanding of the traditional dichotomy between faith and works:

We should not let our grasp of Paul’s reasoning slip back into the old distinction between faith and works in general, between faith and ‘good works’. Paul is not arguing here for a concept of faith which is totally passive

because it fears to become a ‘work’. It is the demand for a *particular* work as the necessary expression of faith which he denies (Dunn 1990:198).

Carson and Moo (2005:378) suspect that many other scholars have followed the general path that Dunn has laid out an offer and that it is, essentially, a new way of understanding Paul, or at least some main element of his teaching.

### 1.1.1.2.5.3 Response to the new perspective

The covenantal nomism-position and the reinterpretation of Paul’s letters quickly influenced theoretical studies on Paul. Nevertheless, there have been isolated voices indicating contentious points against the new perspective ever since the publication of Sanders’ *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. And now these voices have grown to a choir.

Thielman reacted to Sanders in his monograph, *From Plight to Solution*, in 1989: Sanders had suggested that Paul argued from “solution to plight.”<sup>16</sup> (actually, Thielman comments that Paul argues from “plight to solution”). Thielman’s (1989:45) claim is that “both canonical and non-canonical Jewish literature from the era in which Paul lived demonstrate familiarity with a pattern of thinking about God’s dealings with Israel which runs from plight to solution.” Ware (2011:519) mentions that Friedrich Avemarie (1996)<sup>17</sup> had pointed out the applicability of Sanders’s “covenantal nomism” model to rabbinic theology. Avemarie argued that, in rabbinic thought, works do not play any role within the setting of the covenant, as Sanders assumed, but rather that they acted complementarily as well as independently, even as alternative ways of salvation (Ware 2011:519). Eskola criticized the depiction of ancient Judaism provided by Sanders as inequitable: “unfortunately the whole theory explains little of the main corpus of Second Temple Jewish texts and can by no means be considered a proper way of interpreting their soteriology. That is why the key factors in both Jewish and Pauline soteriology call for an unprejudiced reassessment” (Eskola 1997:412). Mark A. Seifrid (2000:18) also finds some problems with the new perspective on Paul, arguing that beside its obvious attractiveness, it had fundamental flaws which threaten the entire theory. Seyoon Kim examined Paul’s arguments against the works (of the law) and concludes that “Paul, the former Pharisee and “zealot” for the law, provides an extremely valuable piece of

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<sup>16</sup> Zetterholm (2009:166) explains well what “solution to plight” means: “Since Judaism was not legalistic, as had previously been assumed, but characterized by a common pattern within ancient Judaism, covenantal nomism, Paul really found nothing wrong with Judaism. The main reason Paul rejected the Torah as a way to salvation was that God had chosen another way—Jesus Christ. Paul thus started with the solution to the problem, while inventing the problem to which Jesus was the solution.”

<sup>17</sup> Citing Friedrich Avemarie, *Tora und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1996): as cited in Ware, James P 2011. Law, Christ, and covenant: Paul’s theology of the law in Romans 3:19-20. *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 62(2):513-540.

evidence that the Judaism of the first century A.D. contained an element of works-righteousness within its framework of covenantal nomism” (Kim 2001:83).

While accepting many aspects of Sanders’s view of Judaism, A. Andrew Das nevertheless finds an overemphasis on the element of grace, and underestimation of the frequent instructions to observe the Torah perfectly (Zetterholm 2009:170). While Dunn believes Sanders to be correct with regard to Judaism and wrong with regard to Paul (Zetterholm 2009:177), Das (2001:252) observes that “Sanders wrongly minimized the belief in Judaism that God intended for the Law to be obeyed strictly and in its entirety. Judaism maintained a balance between the need for strict obedience of the Law and the possibility of atonement and forgiveness for God’s elect.”

Simon J. Gathercole (2002) also points out that Sanders depicts ancient Judaism as a too simplistic religion of grace, downplaying the texts that reveal Jewish thought in terms of merit and works when reflecting on election and salvation. Judaism was not legalistic, Gathercole claims, nor was works-righteousness the primary feature of ancient Judaism. Instead, Gathercole (2002:13) asserts, “[i]n fact, obedience as a condition of and basis for final vindication and salvation at the *eschaton* is fundamental to Jewish thought.” Gathercole (2002:135) argues that Paul also shows continuity with Jewish tradition in regarding that obedience is considered the ultimate criterion for the final judgment. Gathercole argues that Paul certainly grasps “obedience” differently, since Paul surely did not understand “works” in terms of works done in obedience to the Torah. Paul’s ethics is rather the Christocentric nature that leads his readers to imitate Christ because “Paul sees the primary work’ of the Christian as imitation of, and obedience to, Christ” (Gathercole 2002:132).

Stephen Westerholm (2015:10) also explains Paul’s denial of righteousness by the law as opposing a Jewish soteriology of works: “[Paul]... uses the word in its ordinary sense: being ‘declared righteous [or ‘in the right’]’ (e.g. Rom. 2:13; 1 Cor. 4:4; 6:9-11).” With regard to Romans, for example, Westerholm (2004:400) contends that the doctrine of justification by faith

is indeed the divine response to the dilemma posed, not by the earlier exclusion of Gentiles from the covenant, but by God’s demand of righteousness from all human beings, none of whom is righteous (2:6-13; 3:9-20). The works (or works of the law) by which no flesh can be declared righteous (3:20, 28) are not the boundary markers that distinguish Jews from Gentiles, but the righteous deeds that God requires of all human beings. Jews continue to pursue righteousness through such works (9:32); this pursuit Paul finds misguided, not because the law does not demand works (cf. 2:13; 10:5), but because no one *is* righteous, and God has provided for the righteousness of sinners, through Christ, by faith. Justification is thus a gift of grace, received through faith, not gained by works. Received in this way, it excludes the possibility of human boasting.

Westerholm (2015:10) insists that if Paul denies that God declares sinners to be righteous through works of the law (Gal. 2:16), “he is saying something much more basic than that the ‘boundary markers’ separating Jews from Gentiles need no longer be observed.” Westerholm points out that “not even Sanders’s analysis leads to the conclusion that Palestinian Judaism *never* contrasts works with merits or faith with grace” (Zetterholm 2009:191). While Westerholm (2015:11) has accepted Sanders’ findings that the ancient Jews did not think they “earned” salvation by observation of the law, this insight has little impact on Westerholm (2015:11), for whom “Paul’s insistence on *exclusive* reliance on divine grace *apart from works* (Rom. 3:24; 4:4-8; 5:15,17; 11:6; cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 3:5-7) cannot have been shared by non-Christian Jews.” Westerholm provides two reasons. First, for Paul, the mindset of “the flesh” (i.e. humanity in its unredeemed condition) is hostility to God; “it does not submit to God’s law, indeed it cannot; those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:7-8; cf. 3:9-20; 6:20-21; 7:18, etc.). Second, “[n]o doubt so radical a view of human sinfulness imposed itself on Paul in the light of the radical remedy—Messiah’s crucifixion—he believed God had provided for it (cf. Gal. 2:21)” (Westerholm 2015:11).

D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo provide three qualifications to Sanders’ “covenantal nomism.” “*First*, the claim that covenantal nomism was the only soteriological paradigm within first-century Judaism must be questioned” because recent study is uncovering “the complexities of Second Temple Judaism and the divergent theological viewpoints and perspectives found in the material” (Carson & Moo 2005:380). Perhaps a more serious problem, for Carson and Moo, is Sanders’ methodology that excludes homiletic passages that contain legalistic expressions (Carson & Moo 2005:380). Another reason for thinking that a strand of legalism existed in first-century Judaism is the evidence from the New Testament. Most scholars admit that some of the New Testament books obviously imply that some Jews based their salvation on observing the law (Carson & Moo 2005:381). One final point along these parts is that most scholars’ acknowledge that obedience to the law was emphasized in first century Judaism. Just as any faith that emphasizes obedience is likely to produce some legalists, Judaism undoubtedly also did produce “some adherents who turn their obedience into a meritorious service which they think God must reward” (Carson & Moo 2005:382). Their *second* general qualification of covenantal nomism is related to the first term, the “covenant.” Regarding Sanders’ assumption that “God’s covenant with Israel was the starting point for Jewish obedience to the law,” Carson and Moo (2005:382) beg reflection that many groups of Jewish sectarians expanded at that time. The Qumran sectarians, for instance, claimed that they were the true Israel and anathematized “mainline” Judaism but Pharisees were not. But there was not a clear criterion that led the Qumran sectarians to claim that they were “in” and the Pharisees were “out.” In effect, according to Carson and Moo (2005:382), “national election had been

replaced by a form of individual election” in Paul’s day. “For such groups, ‘getting in’ is not simply a matter of God’s grace revealed in the covenant. More is involved, and at least some of that ‘more’ appears to involve human works” (Carson & Moo 2005:382). Carson and Moo’s *third* qualification is “the increasingly widespread recognition that, on any reading of the data, first-century Judaism was synergistic” (Carson & Moo 2005:383). As Sanders showed, if one “got in” by grace, one “stayed in” by obedience, what mattered on the day of judgment was “the quality and consistency of obedience to the law” (Carson & Moo 2005:383).

The new perspective on Paul has influenced the interpretation of Paul’s letters greatly. Many scholars think the new perspective provides a more reliable understanding of Paul’s teachings, by their situatedness in first-century Judaism. But after an initial period of widespread concurrence, Sanders’ covenantal nomism is again under severe reconsideration. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Seyoon Kim (2001:83) described the situation accurately:

The pendulum which had swung too far toward the side of denying any element of works-righteousness in Second Temple Judaism has begun to swing back. When it eventually finds its equilibrium we may see that neither the traditional view of Judaism as a religion of pure works-righteousness nor the New Perspective that totally denies any element of works-righteousness in Judaism is right, but that Judaism was a covenantal nomism with an element of works-righteousness (Kim 2001:83).

This means that at the moment, as many Pauline scholars celebrate the new perspective on Paul, another shift of equally traditional understanding seems to be evoking a surge of interest (Talbert 2001:4).

### 1.1.1.3 Conclusion

Most scholars<sup>18</sup> now agree that James is compatible with Paul on the issue of justification because

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<sup>18</sup> See Calvin 1559 [1562?]:314-316; Manton 1968 [1840]:238-239; Neander 1852:31, 81-82; Stier 1864:356-357; Adam 1867:209; Bassett 1876:45; Deems 1888:139; Winkler 1888:43; Plumptre 1890:75; Mayor 1954 [1892]:218; Dale 1895:75-77, 81; Carr 1896:38; Bacon 1900:16-17; Plummer 1903:146-147; Hort 1909:64; Maclaren 1910:421; Robertson 1915:94; Knowling 1922 [1904]:65; Gaebelien 2009 [1920]:10; Moffatt 1928:44; King 1941:53; Cadoux 1944:27; Lenski 1946:577-578, 586, 589-590; Tasker 1956:70; Reicke 1964:34-35; Stevenson 1966:56; Mitton 1966:108; Knoch 1969:186; Johnstone 1977:196-197; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:158; Kugelman 1980:33-34; Burdick 1981:184-185; Davids 1982 [2013]:122; Rakestraw 1986:49-50; Scaer 2004 [1983]:91-92; Motyer 1985 [1995]:106; Kistemaker 1996 [1986]:15-16; Davids 1989:75; Adamson 1989:32; Hughes 1991:108, 111; Townsend 1994:52-53; Baker 1995:17; Compton 1997:44-45; Laato 1997:78; Proctor 1997:331; Wall 1997a:151; Sleeper 1998:84; MacArthur 1998:125; Felder 1998:1795; Lea 1999:295; Davids 1999:53; Bailey 1999:24; Culpepper 2000:34; Dowd 2000:202; Stein 2000:17; Bauckham 2002 [1999]: 133-134, 140; Isaacs 2002:208-209; Bauckham 2003:1488; Barclay 2003:83-85; Phillips 2004:82, 90; Broseid 2004:81; Baker 2005:350; Kent 2005:96; Popkes 2005:138-139; Guthrie 2006:241-242; Riesner 2007:1260; Byron 2007:466; Doriani 2007:96, 103; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:132, 139; McCartney 2009:55; Hartin 2009:169; Ringe 2009:370-371; Varner 2010:116; Stulac 2010:21; Stevenson 2010:55-56; McKnight 2011:256; Painter 2012:111; Moo 2015:62. But some scholars insist that many Scriptures contradict the idea that all

the problems with which they are concerned are different, hence they imbue key terms with different meanings. The differences between Paul and James are superficial, due to differences in reader, situation, and nuance of the terms, and the contrast in James is not in reality between faith and works, but between lived faith and dead faith.

Clearly thus, Paul's controversy about justification is apparent in the requirement that Gentile Jesus followers must keep the requirements of the Law of Moses, especially those dealing with circumcision and food laws (Acts 15:1, 5; Gal. 4:9-10, 5:3, 12). On the other hand, James's argument progresses in the context of those who confess their faith, but do not practice the words of God. Paul is concerned about the conditions for acknowledging Gentiles into the church; James is more concerned about Christian morality, about putting faith into practice. For Paul, the enemy was legalism or nationalism; for James, it was either dead orthodoxy or antinomianism.

The Greek verb δικαιώω is commonly translated "justify", but it can be used in two different senses: either with a declarative meaning, as declared to be righteous in the judicial sense, or a demonstrative meaning, as shown to be righteous in the moral sense. Paul's attention is on the sinner's initial justification by God at conversion, and hence the impossibility of salvation by works of a sinful human being, whereas James' attention is on the vindication by God (and perhaps by people) during a believer's lifetime, or at the last judgment (e.g. Jas. 2:21, 5).

In Paul "faith" almost always refers to whole-hearted trust in God and dependence on God for salvation. What James is arguing against is mere intellectual agreement with a fact without allowing it to have any influence upon life. What James was contrasting was true faith that inevitably produces action because it is alive, versus a mere claim to faith that is profession only and has no life-changing power. For James, the mere intellectual acceptance without practice is not a saving faith.

Even though "works of the law" in Rom. 3:28 may not refer to boundary markers between Jews and Gentiles (i.e. the perceived ceremonial practices of the Jewish faith), it is quite apparent that the specific "works" that Paul has in mind are circumcision (Rom. 4:1-12; Gal. 5:3, 6; 6:15; 1 Cor. 7:19; cf. Acts 15:1,5), ritualistically keeping certain days (Gal. 4:10), abstaining from certain food and drink (Col. 2:16) etc. It should be noted that Paul is not opposing living acts of kindness and mercy which need to accompany faith. He is not opposed to good deeds done in obedience to God.

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genuine Christians will produce good works, because 1 Corinthians 3 shows a case of a Christian who is saved but does not qualify (cf. Radmacher 1990:37-38; Hart 1999:41-42; Dowd 2000:203; Wilkin 2002:17-19).

These kinds of works are spoken of quite positively in Paul. “Works” in James are not “works of the law” such as circumcision, but “rather the works of love, such as caring for those who are in need, not showing favouritism, being humble, or being slow to speak. In essence, works are the sum total of a changed life brought about by faith.

Therefore, James was not contradicting Paul. Instead, he was qualifying the type of faith Paul addressed, namely, a living and saving faith that produces works.

### 1.1.2 Debates on the nature of faith in the historic Reformed tradition

Calvin (Institutes 3.16.1) contends that we never imagine a faith or justification devoid of good works. For Calvin (1547: Canon 11), “[i]t is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone.” Calvin (Institutes 3.16.1) also claims the close connection between justification and sanctification, saying “Christ justifies no one whom he does not at the same time sanctify.” Calvin emphasises the close correlation between faith and works and between justification and sanctification; he distinguishes between faith and works but does not separate or disconnect works from faith.

According to the historic Reformed understanding,<sup>19</sup> faith which is connected with salvation, is not a mere intellectual assent, but is composed of three essential components: *notitia* (knowledge), *assensus* (assent), and *fiducia* (trust). Riddlebarger (2009:84-85) explains it well:

According to this historic Protestant understanding, faith is seen as a composite of three necessary elements: knowledge, assent, and trust. That is, one must have knowledge about the Christian message (*notitia* – knowledge, which involves the intellect), one must arrive at the conviction that what the Bible claims is in fact true (*assensus* – assent, wherein the intellect comes to believe that the content of *notitia* is true), and last, one must believe that what the Bible says is true for me. I must act upon what I know and believe to be true (*fiducia* – trust in Christ, which is an act of the will).

Strange (2004:218) explains that the historical Reformed view that true saving faith involves not only knowledge and assent, but also trust, a whole-hearted reliance upon and resting in the Saviour. While the majority of scholars hold that saving faith is a combination of *notitia* (knowledge), *assensus* (assent), and *fiducia* (trust), in later 17th century Reformed dogmatics a different conception of the idea of faith appeared. Heppe & Bizer (1978 [1950]:533) introduce Marck’s

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<sup>19</sup> In South Korea as the context of this researcher, the views of the historic Reformers have a great influence on the issue of faith.

description.<sup>20</sup> For Marck, the nature of faith does not include personal trust (*fiducia*), the *fiducia* is the result of faith. According to Marck, saving faith is “an act of a rational soul” that consists in receiving God as the end and Christ as the Mediator. Marck explains the concept of “an act of a rational soul” as the essence of saving faith with two requirements: (1) knowledge of evangelical promises; (2) explicit assent, in the will receiving God and the Mediator; in the emotions (a) loving God and the Mediator, (b) longing for them, (c) joy, (d) hatred and loathing of the things which are contrary to them. For Marck “union with Christ” and “participation in his benefits” are the result of faith (Heppe & Bizer 1978 [1950]:533). Even though Marck rejects *fiducia* as the nature of saving faith, it seems not much different than the emotions in the explicit assent and *fiducia*.

In the late 1980s, Hodges and Ryrie, who advocate the view of the non-Lordship salvation<sup>21</sup>, disagreed with the concept of saving faith as consisting of *notitia* (knowledge), *assensus* (assent) and *fiducia* (trust). They insist that saving faith does not include submission to Christ’s Lordship. Neither Ryrie nor Hodges, in terms of Sproul (1995:169), “wants to see repentance or fruit as requirements of salvation.” Zane C. Hodges (1989:31) describes it as follows: “[w]hat faith really is, in biblical language, is receiving the testimony of God. It is the inward conviction that what God says in the gospel is true. That – and that alone – is saving faith.” Hodges (1989:160) makes it clear that “[i]f we keep this fact firmly in mind, we will never make the mistake of thinking that repentance is a condition for eternal salvation.” Charles C. Ryrie (1997 [1989]:43) acknowledges that “every believer will bear fruit somewhere (in earth and/or heaven), sometime (regularly and/or irregularly during life), somehow (publicly and/or privately),” thereby discounting fruit as an essential quality. Radmacher (1990:37-38) criticizes people’s (especially John MacArthur) modifying the word “faith” with “real”, “saving”, “spurious”, “intellectual”, “genuine”, etc. and argues that “James does not contrast counterfeit faith and authentic faith. Rather, he contrasts faith that shows itself in works and faith that does not show itself in works. Both are faith.” For Radmacher, “[t]he opposite of faith is unbelief or nonfaith, not absence of works.” Anderson (1999:14) also argues that “James does not use dead to mean ‘fake, false, or spurious’, in either the English language, or the Greek language. To that end, in the context of James 2:14-26 it means inactive, not vibrant, not on fire.” Anderson (1999:24) is claiming that there is no evidence to

<sup>20</sup> Marckius, Johannes 1690 [1686]. *Compendium theologiae christianae didactico-elencticum*. Amsterdam: Groningen.

<sup>21</sup> The lordship salvation controversy was raised actively when John F. MacArthur published “The Gospel according to Jesus” in 1988. The controversy is a theological dispute regarding key soteriological questions within Evangelical Christianity. One of the most fundamental issues in the “Lordship” controversy, as Gleason (2003:58) says, is the nature of genuine faith. The controversy, according to Storms (2006), is “not a dispute about whether salvation is by faith only or by faith plus works. All agree that we are saved by grace through faith, apart from works (Eph. 2:8-10). But the controversy is about the nature of the faith that saves.” Lyle (2016:1) summarizes it well: “Lordship salvation” advocates say that in order to be saved, one must not only believe and acknowledge that Christ is Lord, but also submit to His lordship. Non-lordship proponents argue that such a pre-salvation commitment to Christ’s lordship compromises salvation by grace.

support different categories of faith. There are different *levels* of faith in the New Testament, but no different *categories* of faith. For Anderson (1999:25) saving faith is the assent to the facts about Jesus Christ: “[t]hough saving faith begins as an assessment of certain facts about Jesus Christ, it consummates when a person believes that Christ has died for his sins on the cross and has given him the gift of eternal life.” Following Radmacher, Wilkin (2002:10-11) rejects two different types of faith in Christ, “one saving and one non-saving”, affirming rather that “[t]here is no such thing as true faith as opposed to false faith. All faith is faith. If we believe in Christ for eternal life, then we have eternal life and we know we have it, because He guarantees it, ‘He who believes in Me has everlasting life’ (Jn.6:46)” (Wilkin 1999:55).

Gordon Clark (2004:1-7) also argues that faith is believing and that means acceptance of propositions: “acceptance of the propositions is a mark of having been regenerated and of having eternal life.” Nothing must be added to this definition of saving faith, as it then is, for Clark, not biblical. Chay (2012:149) rejects one of the reformers’ famous phrases, “[w]e are saved by faith alone but the faith that saves is never alone,”<sup>22</sup> because it is, for him, a contradiction in logic. He understands that if we say the faith that saves must manifest works, it seems to be little different than that a person must show works to be saved. It is, for Chay (2012:150), “to reduce the Reformation ideal of *Sola Gratia* to a synergistic understanding of salvation similar to the Roman Catholic theology evidenced in the council of Trent.” Those who would add works, or trust, or obedience to faith, as far as Chay (2012:149) is concerned, are to “alter, adjust and unknowingly amend the biblical meaning of faith itself.”

But the majority of the Reformers defined saving faith in the New Testament as involving not only knowledge and assent, but also *fiducia* (trust). Heppé & Bizer (1978 [1950]:532-533) emphasise that the majority of Reformers hold to the proposition that “fiducial assent is the form of faith.” Strange (2004:223) points out that the Reformers, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli agreed that “the faith that alone justified, looking away from itself to the merits and mediation of Christ, was never alone; rather, it was ever accompanied by all saving graces. Faith was a trust in Christ that issued forth in obedience.”

Charles Hodge (2005 [1872]:90) insists that “Protestants with one voice maintain that the faith which is connected with salvation, is not a mere intellectual exercise.” For Hodge, the meaning of believing in Christ as the Saviour is not mere assent, but also receiving and resting upon Christ

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<sup>22</sup> Calvin’s original phrase in *Antidote to the sixth session of the Council of Trent on the doctrine of justification* (1547) is the following: “It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone.”

alone for our own salvation. Hodge explains that the meaning of the saving faith in Scriptures is “an act of the whole soul, of the understanding, of the heart, and of the will” (Hodge 2005 [1872]:91).

The idea of faith as the characteristic of Christianity in the New Testament does not mean “mere ‘belief’ in an intellectual sense,” but “an entire self-commitment of the soul to Jesus as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world” (Warfield 1929:483). This faith by which he obtains life is obviously no mere assent. It is, according to Warfield (1929:470), “a profound and abiding disposition, an ingrained attitude of mind and heart towards God which affects and gives character to all the activities.” Vernon C. Grounds (1964:328) explains that “in the Reformed tradition *fiducia* received an emphasis above and beyond either *notitia* or *assensus*. In other words, trustful self-commitment was viewed as the very essence of faith. Louis Berkhof (1958:505) explicates the meaning of *fiducia* (a volitional element):

This is the crowning element of faith. Faith is not merely a matter of the intellect, nor of the intellect and the emotions combined: it is also a matter of the will, determining the direction of the soul, an act of the soul going out toward its object and appropriating this. ... This third element consists in a personal trust in Christ as Saviour and Lord, including a surrender of the soul as guilty and defiled to Christ, and a reception and appropriation of Christ as the source of pardon and of spiritual life.

Anthony A. Hoekema (1989:140) portrays the concept of faith as “a response to God’s call by the acceptance of Christ with the total person.” The meaning of total person is the one who accepts Christ “with assured conviction of the truth of the gospel, and with trustful reliance on God in Christ for salvation, together with genuine commitment to Christ and to his service” (Hoekema 1989:140). He explains three aspects of faith which are never to be separated, but may be distinguished (1) knowledge, (2) assent, (3) trust. For Hoekema (1989:142), trust as the third aspect of faith is evident from the Scriptural words used for faith, from the words of biblical figures, and the instances of trust reveal it as the crowning aspect of faith. Hoekema even adds obedience to trust. Faith, for Hoekema (1989:143), “must lead to obedient service in Christ’s kingdom, since, as James puts it, faith without works is dead.” Though faith is often considered as being passive, “there is also a sense in which faith is active. Faith is active in obedience.” Frank Thielman (2005:697-698) follows this reasoning by asserting that faith includes “both a willingness to embrace the understanding of the world articulated in the Christian gospel and obedience to that understanding.” For Thielman, “Faith and obedience go hand in hand.” About reformation teaching, James I. Packer (1991:2) formulates the three elements of faith, defining faith as “a whole-souled reality with an affectional and volitional aspect as well as an intellectual one.” Packer announces that “[i]t is, as the seventeenth-century analysts put it, *notitia* (factual knowledge), *assensus* (glad

acceptance), and *fiducia* (personal trust in a personal Savior), as well as in His promises). Wayne Grudem (2007:709-712) uses the English word equivalents: “knowledge, approval, and personal trust.” But ranks the first two, knowledge and approval, as being insufficient for salvation, and only when combined with the third, personal trust, can a person be granted “forgiveness of sins” and “eternal life with God.” Grudem (2007:710) suggests using “personal trust in Christ” rather than “just belief in facts about Christ.” Because saving faith engages this personal trust, “the word ‘trust’ is a better word to use in contemporary culture than the word ‘faith’ or ‘belief’” (Grudem 2007:710).

In conclusion, we observe that the majority of Reformers emphasise *fiducia* (trust) as the heart of saving faith. In the Reformed tradition *fiducia* (trust) is emphasised above and beyond either *notitia* (knowledge) or *assensus* (assent). In other words, trustful self-commitment was viewed as the very essence of faith. But some controversy erupted mostly within the sphere of dispensationalism. Dispensationalists agree that faith involves not simply intellectual assent, but disagree that *fiducia* (trust) should be included in the definition of faith. They emphasise assent to the propositions: “the inward conviction that what God says in the gospel is true” (Zane C. Hodges); “giving assent to the truth of those facts is also a part of faith” (Ryrie); “the assent to the facts about Jesus Christ” (Anderson); “acceptance of the propositions” (Clark). They insist that if trust or obedience is added to faith, it perverts the Reformation slogan of *sola fides, sola gratia*. The answer of most Reformers to the question that the “something more” is required for saving faith, beyond simply “assenting to the true propositions about Jesus,” is that only such an assent to the facts of the gospel is not enough to grant eternal life with God. The claim of Strange (2004:224) is that “I do not know a Reformer or Puritan who in the whole of his teaching would maintain that such a bare assent to the facts of the gospel is to be equated with saving faith in Christ.” Faith, therefore, involves knowledge and assent. But true saving faith includes wholehearted trust, reliance upon and resting in Jesus Christ. Further Hoekema (1989:143), Strange (2004:223), and Thielman (2005:697-698) insist that faith must lead to obedience to the word of God as well.

Briefly, (1) the majority of Reformers agree that saving faith is composed of three essential components: *notitia* (knowledge), *assensus* (assent) and *fiducia* (trust), so the faith must be shown by obedience to the words of God as well. (2) But some argue that *fiducia* (trust) is not included in the definition of faith.

### 1.1.3 Problem Statement

The research above shows that most Reformed scholars agree that one enters into salvation by grace through faith, and that saving faith will inevitably produce works as well. The Scripture itself proclaims that God justifies a sinner through faith alone, but faith does deliver works as the inevitable fruit of a genuine living faith.

Some debates, however, remain regarding the nature of the saving faith. Most Reformed scholars agree on its essential components: *notitia* (knowledge), *assensus* (assent), and *fiducia* (trust). They emphasise wholehearted trust as the core of faith and some even add obedience to the *fiducia* (trust). Some, however, reject that *fiducia* (trust) is to be included in the definition of faith, thereby reducing the elements of faith to two components: *notitia* (knowledge) and *assensus* (assent); the argument is that if we insist that works are connected with the initial faith, as the inevitable fruit of faith, it seems to distort the gracious nature of salvation and to result in a logical inconsistency.

Thus: (1) there is a debate on the nature of faith; (2) the majority of scholars agree that one enters into salvation by grace through faith, but the saving faith inevitably produces works as well. But no scholars provide how faith produces the works of faith.

The problem statement of this dissertation can therefore be presented in two questions: (1) What is the nature of faith? And (2) How does faith produce works in various situations?

## 1.2 Hypothesis

Given this problem statement, it is evident that the nature of faith as portrayed in James needs further investigation. To study “the nature of faith,” this thesis will explore the whole letter of James briefly and investigate Jas. 4:13-5:20 closely, focusing on how faith works.

The reasons why Jas. 4:13-5:20 is chosen for the study of “how faith works” are as follows:

1. On the one hand, it is widely agreed that James presents a form of moral exhortation, i.e. referring frequently to works (Adamson 1989:104; Perkins 1995:84-85; Brown 1997:728; Wall 1997b:552; Culpepper 2000:25; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:499-502; Bauckham 2003:1484; Conti 2004:540; Johnson 2005:297). On the other hand, the concept of works in James is understood as the result or fruit of faith (Saucy 1990:44). McCartney (2009:57) asserts that “although the word faith is not used throughout, it lies at the root of

the whole of James's exhortation." Hartin (1999:96) argues that the purpose of the Letter of James is to offer a way of being in the world and to show believers how to lead their lives as members of the twelve-tribe kingdom. Hiebert (1978:224) also proposes that the "test of a living faith is indeed the unifying theme of the epistle and ... provides ready access to its contents." Thus James takes pains to show how faith must be acted out during the believer's life (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:43; 2009:36). For James "the works" are works of faith that prove the saving faith (cf. Hartin 2009:31). In other words, such works are "works done in faith, works of faith" (Bauckham 2002:121), "the working out of faith" (Johnson 2005 [1995]:60), works "performed from a faith" (Stein 2000:7), "acts of faith that specifically show that men and women are personally open to a new (and renewing) spiritual relationship with God" (Felder 1998:1794), "outcome[s] of faith and prayer" (Knowling 1922 [1904]:lxxv). We can then say that the works in Jas. 4:13-5:20 link with faith, and the works are the works of faith.

2. As a letter that conveys many biblical and pastoral exhortations,<sup>23</sup> James uses the imperative mood<sup>24</sup> frequently, especially in 5:7-20, where a rehearsal and recapitulation of the themes of the Letter is given; be patient, don't complain to one other, do not swear, do pray, turn a sinner from the error, etc. James also gave reasons (theology/truth) in the form of the indicative<sup>25</sup> as a basis for the works. The section in 5:7-20, therefore, is regarded as the letter-closing.<sup>26</sup>
3. Before the closing exhortation, the repetition of "come now" in the two paragraphs (4:13; 5:1) suggests that it is to be read as a single unit, and James poses a certain serious warning in 4:13-5:6. Both paragraphs 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 criticize "people of the world" for leaving God and his values out of their way of life. Therefore, the section of 4:13-5:6 strongly draws the reader's attention to the closing statement. It is valuable to compare this section as works from the worldly mind (unfaith or dead faith) with works from faith.

From the above observation, we will aim to understand more clearly the nature of faith through an

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<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 3.1.9.

<sup>24</sup> Be patient (7, 8), strengthen (8), do not complain (9), take an example (10), do not swear (12), let your yes be yes, and your no, no (12), let him pray (13, 14), let him sing (13), let him call for the elders (14), confess your sins (16), pray for one another (16), let him know that (20).

<sup>25</sup> The farmer waits for (7), the coming of the Lord is near (8), the Judge is standing at the door (9), we consider these blessed who endured (11), the Lord is very compassionate and merciful (11), you may not fall under judgment (12), the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up (15), he will be forgiven (15), you may be healed (16), the prayer of the righteous has great power (16), Elijah was a human being like us (17), he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins (20).

<sup>26</sup> See Batten (2009:16). After introducing many scholars' research about the structure of the letter, Batten concludes that "there is considerable agreement that 5:7-20 (again, the specific boundaries are disputed) functions well as a closing."

investigation of Jas. 4:13-5:20, that is, to try and formulate how faith works in James. It is trusted that this research could contribute further toward understanding whether the idea of works is linked to the initial faith, and whether the faith implies submission to the Lord.

My hypothesis regarding how faith works in Jas. 4:13-5:20, can be broken down into the following components:

1. James is talking about the nature of faith in relation to spiritual salvation.
2. It is the message of James that if the believers have faith “in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1 NRSV), it inevitably effects evidential works of faith in the believer’s life.
3. James provides many exhortations according to various situations as works of the faith to live as faithful believers.
4. When James gives an exhortation, he also explains the reason, by offering some knowledge of the word of God/Jesus.
5. If one really has the true faith in God/Jesus, some element of a will oriented towards obedience to the word of God is involved, as the very essence of saving faith,
6. Since James provides exhortations in some contexts on a basis of knowledge of God/Jesus, we can understand “how faith works” by analyzing the relations: situation, the knowledge, and works (exhortations).
7. Unless we are prepared to say that this is a totally new element added to the nature of sanctifying faith that was not present in any aspect in the saving or justifying faith, it would seem that we have to acknowledge some aspect of obedience as inherent in the saving faith as well.

In short, the hypothesis of this dissertation is that through investigating the situation, the argumentative content, and exhortations in Jas. 4:13-5:20, we can understand how faith works in the specific situation of the letter, so that we might understand more clearly what faith is and how faith relates to works.

Our investigation of Jas. 4:13-5:20 is focussed on the nature of faith with the aim of providing a reading of faith commensurable with the letter’s thrust.

## 1.3 Methodology

### 1.3.1 Presuppositions

It is generally accepted that presuppositions inform exegetical decisions. Unfortunately, such presuppositions are not always consciously acknowledged. In the following sections, I briefly present my most important presuppositions relevant to the theme as well as investigation of this dissertation.

#### 1.3.1.1 The Bible

The Bible was “generated by a specifically religious movement, and were written by and for adherents of that movement” (Johnson 1999:6). Fitzmyer (2008:76) can thus claim that “the Bible is the Church’s book”<sup>27</sup>. Christians have continually sought a faithful response to God in their everyday affairs, when struggling with questions of what sort of person God wants them to be. Biblical interpretation would not be possible if we did not presuppose that “God speaks consistently” (Wolterstorff 1997:46). In the midst of this, the Bible has recommended the Word of God as the guide for Christians’ life (Birch & Rasmussen 1987:9-10).<sup>28</sup> The Bible as canon<sup>29</sup> means that its texts are “the norm or rule to which we will conform our faith, practice and worship” (Fowl & Jones 1991:37; Fowl 2002:2). I agree with Wolterstorff (1997:29) that “God not only reveals but speaks,” that “God literally speaks,” that “God speaks by authorizing Scripture.” As Bartholomew mentions, it is a central tenet in Christianity that the God speaks to us through “the canon of Scripture by the Holy Spirit” (Bartholomew, Greene & Möller 2000:xxiii).

The greater percentage of Christians in South Korea agrees that the Bible is the Word of God.<sup>30</sup> The church’s confession is that the Bible has the authority for her faith and life (see Verhey 1984:4). Calvin also says: “Scripture is needed as guide and teacher for anyone who would come to God the Creator” (Calvin 1960:1.6.1.). Christians have lived by the Bible. Therefore, “it is the task of the

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<sup>27</sup> The church, for Fitzmyer (2008:75), means: “[T]he Christian Church, Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant.”

<sup>28</sup> We may say that there are three views on the Bible regarding the word of God: (1) “The Bible *is* the word of God”; (2) “The Bible *becomes* the word of God”; (3) “The Bible *testifies to* or *contains* the word of God” (See McCartney & Clayton 2002:31-32). Being somewhat of a Calvinist myself, I welcome the first one: “The Bible is the word of God.”

<sup>29</sup> As Fowl (2002:3) explains, “when Christians call the Bible authoritative scripture they are implicitly, at least, claiming that the final form of the biblical texts, rather than any of the reconstructed stages its textual transmission, is the canon - the normative standard for faith, practice, and worship.”

There are, however, various types of ambiguity in the notion of the “final form” of the biblical text. One of these ambiguities is a different order from discussions about reconstructed traditions of textual transmission (ex. the final form of Mark’s Gospel and John’s). “They are, however, arguments about what the authoritative form of Mark ought to look like, not about the authority of Mark.” “Moreover, Christians disagree with each other over the contours of the canon depending on whether one is Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant” (see Fowl 2002:4).

<sup>30</sup> According to the research by G&M, 75 percent of Christians in South Korea believe that the Bible is the Word of God. See “Christiantoday Magazine” in <http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/news/301403> (6 June 2017).

interpreter to make that Word audible and relevant to the believers of his or her own time. But interpretation of this kind can go forward on the basis only of exact and methodical exegesis of the text” (Neill & Wright 1988:223).

While God might have been the ultimate “author” of the text, God used the verse and prose forms native to Hebrew and Hellenistic cultures. Similarly, while the Bible may be part of God’s revelation and self-disclosure to humanity, it is a revelation expressed in human language. This literary quality requires interpretation (Tate 1991:61). Schneiders claims that “the biblical text as meaningful is the sacrament of the word of God, that is, of the mystery of divine revelation. It is sacrament in the fully actualized sense of the word only when it is being read, when it is coming to event as meaning through interpretation” (Schneiders 1999:43). When we say that God speaks to us through the Bible, it is closely linked to the interpretation of the text. The proper interpretation of the text, then, is very important for a Christian’s life because Christians live by the interpretation of the Bible.

### **1.3.1.2 The rule of faith**

The Rule of Faith, according to Treier (2008:59), is “a basic summary of the biblical story centered on identifying God to be triune—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” We can see the basic content of the Rule in the Nicene Creed or the Apostles’ Creed.

In settling interpretive disputes with heresies, the early church’s primary norm was the rule of faith. “According to Tertullian and Irenaeus, Scripture is rightly understood only in the context of the living tradition handed down via apostolic succession” (Vanhoozer 1998:411). The early Christians, according to Treier (2008:59), saw “the Rule of Faith as a form of moral restraint, against human tendencies to twist the Scriptures in self-interested ways.”

Benjamin Jowett rejects this suggestion. The Bible, he argues, should be read “like any other book” (Jowett 1860: cf. 375, 377-378, 404), as the “master principle” of interpretation. His assumption, says Vanhoozer (1998:378) is that “the critic who stands apart from traditional beliefs and practices is in a superior position to see what is really going on in the text.”

Stanley Hauerwas (1993:9, cf 33-34), at the other extreme, argues that the Bible should not be read like any other book: “[t]he Bible is not and should not be accessible to merely anyone, but rather it should only be made available to those who have undergone the hard discipline of existing as part

of God's people." What is needed, says Hauerwas, are not scholarly tools, but rather "saintly practices" (Hauerwas 1993:38; Vanhoozer 1998:378).

Stephen E. Fowl and Gregory Jones (1991:21, 37) agree, considering faithful reading of Scripture as is a spiritual and ethical pursuit. To read Scripture well is to allow it to work its transforming effects on the struggling community to live faithfully before God.

No interpreting community is faultless. Vanhoozer (1998:378) insists: "[i]f we let the biblical text inform our thinking about the church as an interpretive community, we should rather say that it is a community of saints *and* sinners." He argues that "we should read every other book as we have learned to read the Bible, namely, in a spirit of understanding that lets the text be what it is and do what it intends."

Since the Bible is given to faithful believers, we should consider two elements for the understanding of the text. Firstly, the proper understanding of the Word of God is allowed only to the faithful Christian who is living according to the Word in an interpretive community. Secondly, the Bible should be read with good tools because the understanding comes from the correct interpretation of the text.

### **1.3.1.3 The role of the Holy Spirit**

The appeal to the role of Holy Spirit in interpretation, according to Vanhoozer (1998:415) takes two very different forms. Some believe that the Holy Spirit still works in the church "through discovering new meanings in the biblical text." In this view, the Holy Spirit is the creative power behind the text and the reader. The other considers "the Spirit as the minister of the Word, the one who leads the community into the single correct interpretation: the literal sense."

Most recent scholars (Vanhoozer 1998:421; Bartholomew, Greene & Möller 2000:xxiii; McCartney & Clayton 2002:75; Brown 2007:128; Fitzmyer 2008:72) agree that the Spirit is not the creator of new meaning of the text. The role of the Holy Spirit is to help us to relate the meaning of text to our own situations. Vanhoozer (1998:423) argues that "biblical relevance = revelatory meaning + relative significance." Hirsch (1967:8) distinguishes between "meaning" and "significance": *meaning* is what the author meant by his use of a particular sequence of linguistic signs. *Significance* is what names "a relationship between that meaning and a person, or a conception, or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable." Textual meaning does not change because it is fixed to what an author intended in the past. The significance of a text, unlike meaning, can change in

contemporary contexts. The Holy Spirit guides people to understand the text meaning and to apply the meaning in their situations.

As John says: “[b]ut the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (Jn. 14:26 NRSV); and “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come” (Jn. 16:13 NRSV). Yet a Spirit-guided reading does not mean that we will never misunderstand or misread the text. In addition, as Brown (2007:128) says, “the Spirit’s presence with me as I interpret does not excuse me from the hard work of cross-cultural reading required by the Bible’s ancient context.” The Holy Spirit does not replace our hard work of interpretation, but makes our works effective.

## **1.3.2 The recent trends in hermeneutics**

### **1.3.2.1 A brief historical note on modern hermeneutics**

Since the Reformation, reading correctly implied understanding the author’s intention. Consequently, for most part of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, historical criticism was the dominant method of New Testament interpretation. When this approach ceased to be the only or even dominant approach, the existential dimension of biblical hermeneutics became prominent through the development of dialectical theology, first by Barth, then by Bultmann and his pupils.

Advances in linguistic and literary theory during the seventies focused attention on the structural dimension of biblical hermeneutics, insisting on the autonomy of texts as analytical objects. The task of the scholar then became to uncover the original meaning of the Bible by means of linguistic and historical analysis. This task demanded that the interpreter brackets all biases so as not to distort the Bible’s original meaning with modern questions (Levison & Pope-Levison 1995:329).

Interpreters have also come to recognize that the author is not present for consultation and that no interpreter can understand any text objectively. Roland Barthes pronounced the author “dead.” Reader-response scholars insist that the author’s intention is a projection of reading (Vanhoozer 1995:303). What the reader receives, according to Ricoeur, is not the author’s intention but the “world of the text” (Ricoeur 1980:100). With the advent of structuralism, the text itself becomes the central point. Concentration on the text “tends to isolate the text as a self-contained world which should then be analysed on its own terms without recourse to ‘external’ factors” (Lategan 1984:3).

The most striking feature of the 1980s in the field of hermeneutics is the movement toward the reader (Lategan 1984:4). Reader-response criticism, according to Resseguie (1984:307), “focuses attention on the reader’s actions involved in responding to a text. An examination of the text in-and-of itself is replaced by a discussion of the reading process, the interaction of reader and text.” Resseguie suggests that there are three kinds of reader-response critics: “Some critics focus on the reader in the text (e.g. Genette, Prince)”; “Other forms of reader-oriented criticism give the reader complete dominance over the text (e.g. Holland, Bleich)”; “Still others see the act of reading as a dialectical process. An ‘implied’ reader (e.g. Iser) or an ‘informed’ reader (e.g. Fish) interacts with the text” (Resseguie 1984:307). Lately, scholars prefer the model of conversation. The text represents the first horizon, and the context of the interpreter is the second horizon. The ultimate goal of this model of interpretation as conversation is to fuse these horizons in a way that is true to the past and relevant to the present (Levison & Pope-Levison 1995:329).

### **1.3.2.2 Recent approaches**

#### **1.3.2.2.1 The revival of historical approaches**

The historical approaches to the interpretation of the Bible have come under fire in recent years by New Testament scholars. Bray (1996:480-481), borrowing Gerhard Maier’s words (1977), pointed out that:

1. Historical criticism is analytical rather than synthetic.
2. Historical criticism has failed to develop a coherent system of thought.
3. Historical criticism relies on inadequate data.
4. Historical criticism concentrates on the accuracy of the biblical text as a factual record

Mcknight and Fitzmyer find that the problem of the critical approaches lies in their presuppositions. The historical nature of the critical method, according to Mcknight (1985:xiv) was influenced by geological discoveries and ideas stemming from Darwinian evolution principle, which placed the Bible as resorting under the broad “sweep of history.” Fitzmyer (2008:66, 67) confirms that one reason why the historical-critical approach has failed is that “it was tainted at an important stage in its development with [rationalist] presuppositions...”, and therefore attack traditional Christianity, especially in its supernatural aspects. A common complaint about the historical method is that the historical critics destroy the Bible and “have taken the Bible away from the church” (Barton 2007:137).

In short, Maier (1977:47-48) and Barton (2007:141) declare that the historical-critical method is “bankrupt” and ended “by hostility to the very text—the Bible—that it should be serving, for the sake of the church’s faith.”

However, Fitzmyer (2008:67) argues that “what was at fault was the presupposition with which the method was used, and not the method itself. ... The historical-critical method is in itself neutral, it can then be used with such faith presuppositions.” Some (Collins 1990:15; Brueggemann 2000:343; Barton 2007:187-190; Fitzmyer 2008:68-69) believe that new approaches to interpretation are suggested occasionally, but none of them is a replacement for the historical-critical method. They declare that “our response should not be to forsake historical criticism; we should reform it and get it back on track” (Bartholomew, Greene & Möller 2000:xxiii-xxv).

Crossley (2010) recently introduced contemporary historical approaches to the New Testament in his work, *Reading the New Testament: Contemporary approaches*. He first delineates traditional historical approaches (source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism and literary criticism) and social scientific criticism. He then provides postcolonial criticism as one of contemporary historical approaches, saying: “Issues of race, ethnicity, and blurred identity boundaries bring us to the heart of an increasingly popular approach to New Testament texts in the past decade.” Postcolonial criticism points out that “the Bible has been used in the context of more recent European or American imperialisms.” Postcolonial readings argue forcibly that we should not use biblical texts as “supportive of modern empire and imperial power, or at least the power structures of imperialism,” but read the texts in their original historical contexts (Crossley 2010:39).

Such an undertaking is very important for understanding the text properly, but there are other aspects which must be considered. Integrated approaches that consider many other dimensions together are therefore proposed.

#### **1.3.2.2.2 Integrated approaches: Robbins and Tate**

Lategan (1988:68) rightly lists the three basic features of the text, which are “its historical, structural and theological or contextual aspects.” He claims that a persuasive exegetical approach has to consider all three of these dimensions adequately (1988:69).

Even though the weight of the interest on the three worlds of the text is not equal (Schneiders 1999:113-114), biblical interpreters have recently suggested some integrated approaches that combine investigation into the world behind the text, the world of the text, and the world before the

text. For instance, Robbins suggests that the advantage of a socio-rhetorical interpretation is that it will “bring practices of interpretation together that often are separated from one another.” Robbins proposes five different angles from which to explore the multiple textures within texts as follows; inner texture; intertexture; social and cultural texture; ideological texture; and sacred texture (Robbins 1996:1-3).

From a different, broader approach, methodologically speaking, W. R. Tate has also produced an integrated approach, a model of communication in which three realities converge; those of the author, the text and the reader. Tate rightly observes that “in written discourse, an author intends to convey meaning through the text to a reader. The text is the result of an action performed by an author, and as such it is conditioned by the conventional codes that affect anything produced in that particular culture.” He argues, therefore, that the locus of meaning is not to be found exclusively in either world or in a marriage of any two of the worlds, but in the interplay between all three (Tate 1991:xx).

### **1.3.2.2.3 Communication approaches**

Speech-act theory, in Brown’s perspective, has influenced interpreters to understand the biblical text as communication. From its conception by J. L. Austin speech-act theory was developed further by scholars including John Searle and William Alston (Brown 2007:32; see Vanhoozer 1998:208-209). According to speech-act theory, three actions are associated with communication; locutionary acts (uttering sentences or writing book reviews), illocutionary acts (the acts we perform by means of locutionary acts—like asking, asserting, commanding, promising, reminding, cautioning, threatening, rebuking, etc.) and perlocutionary acts (the hearer’s response to the verbal action) (Vanhoozer 1998:209; Brown 2007:33).

The movement toward a model of communicative approaches for biblical interpretation can be seen in works of a number of recent writers. Nicholas Wolterstorff (1995), for example, uses the language of “authorial discourse” to express the communicative characteristic of Scripture. His approach is based on speech-act theory, and he focuses not on locutionary actions as “actions of uttering or inscribing words,” but only on such actions as can be what Austin called “*illocutionary actions*”— such as e.g. ordering, promising or declaring” (Wolterstorff 1995:37; see Austin 1971:98-99). Wolterstorff’s focal attention is connected with discovering “how to go about reading a text to find out what God might have said or be saying with that text” (Wolterstorff 1995:38). He defends a hermeneutic that he calls “authorial-discourse interpretation” for this purpose, with the

purpose of uncovering the specific illocutionary acts which God performs through biblical words, as well as the normative stance which may be imputed to God (Griffiths 1996:519).

Trevor Hart similarly expresses that the Bible is communication by emphasizing the need for readers to presume the presence, of both the human author and the divine author, in the text (Hart 2000:201). Leith and Myerson have introduced the concept of “address” to focus attention on the necessity of imagining both authors and readers within the communicative process; “language is always addressed to someone else, even if that someone is not immediately present or is actually unknown or imagined” (Leith & Myerson 1989:xii).

Tate (1991) provides a model of a communication approach in which author, text, and reader are integrated. Brown (2007) recently developed and justified the model of communication approach for the interpretation of Scripture and offered practical assistance for applying the model to diverse aspects of the interpretation process. The model of communication is based on the belief that “Scripture’s meaning can be understood as the communicative act of the author that has been inscribed in the text and addressed to the intended audience for purposes of engagement” (Brown 2007:14). She thus seeks a model that does justice to the three domains of “author, text, and reader” and so views “Scripture fundamentally as communication” (Powell 2008:826).

Brown would suggest, then, a “threefold movement between reader and text in conversation.” The first movement is the world of the text. It focuses on “the linguistic expression of the text: locution/illocution and explicit/implicit meaning within the specific genre chosen by the author.” The second important movement is “the textual world with a particular focus on background-contextual assumptions” that is involved in “historical analysis and reconstruction of the original setting of the text in question.” The third movement is “the conceptual tools of implied author and reader and point of view to the task of discerning the normative stance of the text.” Through these movements, today’s reader may be “drawn into step with the implied reader discerned from the text’s normative stance.” In this way, the intention of the author (or, at least, that of the implied author) is fulfilled (Brown 2007:49-51).

#### **1.3.2.2.4 Theological approach**

Modern biblical interpretation, according to Adam, Vanhoozer and Watson, fails to account for the theological significance of Scripture in two ways. Firstly, it limits meaning to the human author’s one literal sense rather than including the literal meaning of the divine Author. It ignores the Bible’s divine-human uniqueness and its attendant multiple senses. Secondly, modern biblical interpretation

focuses on the text alone—on interpretation, translation, and exegesis; it sits immobilized in its “words about words about words”; it stops short of the Bible’s ethical demands of the reader and its spiritual transformation of the reader (Adam, Vanhoozer & Watson 2006:12). “They argue that modern biblical interpretation ends at the text rather than pursuing the Bible’s divine-human goal of changed lives” (Kreider & Hebert 2009:109). Richard R. Topping (2007:3-4, 79, 158) is also concerned about the fact that the most dominant current theological interpretations of what should happen when Christians read Scripture all demonstrate that they are unsatisfactory, because they leave God out of the depiction and lack a “thoroughly theological account of God’s Word” for the life of the church.

Treier (2008:54) thus suggests that “from the ancient masters we can recover a way of integrating Scripture study with piety that has been virtually lost in much of late modern Western culture.” Theological interpretation of Scripture, in his view, does not pursue “doctrine as a rationalist enterprise”; “instead, it focuses on the arduous but rewarding journey of communing more faithfully with God and others in concrete circumstances” (Treier 2008:89). He argues that interpretation is beyond simply redescribing the intentions of historical authors in an original context; “we must engage a passage in light of its potential, implications and points of interface with other texts or contexts” (Treier 2008:154).

Bryant (2010:234) summarizes Vanhoozer’s affirmation on the following principles: “1) theological interpretation is a joint enterprise of multiple disciplines, not just biblical scholarship; 2) theological interpretation should be marked by an overarching concern to understand the character and work of God; and finally, 3) theological interpretation must allow for differing approaches” (see Vanhoozer 2008:18-22).

Bartholomew (2000:27-29) introduces Watson’s theological hermeneutic:

First, a theological biblical hermeneutic means that our focus will be on the final form of the biblical text.

Secondly, a theological hermeneutic in biblical interpretation will mean that exegesis is oriented towards specifically theological questions.

Thirdly, a theological hermeneutic will not deny the possibility of criticizing the biblical text.

Fourthly, a theological hermeneutic will not be unhappy to draw on secular insights.

Fifthly, a theological position can itself function as a hermeneutic.

Sixthly, such a theological hermeneutic will be practiced in community.

What makes biblical interpretation theological, according to Vanhoozer (2008:22), is “a function of the aims and interests of the community of readers for which the Bible is ‘Scripture’”. The focus

here is on the world of the Christian community and its members, who seek to live before God and to worship faithfully.”

Motyer (2000:158) defines biblical theology as “that creative theological discipline whereby the church seeks to hear the integrated voice of the whole Bible addressing us today.”

### **1.3.2.3 Recent scholars’ consensuses**

Recently various scholars (Tate 1991:xxi; Fowl & Jones 1991:21; Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:147; Green 1995:9; Patte 1995:56; Brueggemann 1997:63; Westphal 1997:60-61; Lyon 1997:103; Vanhoozer 1998:300, 378; Schneiders 1999:153; Turner 2000:54; Mason 2000:120; Sundberg 2000:67-68; McCartney & Clayton 2002:6; Gersternberger 2002:16-17; Brown 2007:125-126) have begun to acknowledge some important hermeneutical tendencies, which include the assertions that reading without presuppositions is not possible; there is no one correct interpretation of a text and no one method can claim to provide the one authentic understanding of any given New Testament text. Green (1995:9) affirms: “[d]ifferent readers interpret a text differently. So any hermeneutical model must make allowances for a certain subjectivity, incompleteness, and open-endedness.”

While we may agree that there is no complete, definitive, and absolutely correct interpretation of a text, it does not necessarily follow that there are no better or worse interpretations, interpretations more or less complete, more or less accurate, more or less an approximation of a “best” reading (Donald Keesey 1987, cited in Tate 1991:4). As Westphal states: “It will not be the case that interpretation is wholly arbitrary, that anything goes, that all interpretations are equally valid” (Westphal 1997:60-61).

### **1.3.2.4 Conclusion**

We might summarize the three movements discussed so far by drawing on a frequently-used analogy. The search for authorial intention as defined in the nineteenth century might be compared to approaching the text as a window. The text was understood as a means toward understanding the world of the author (history) and the mind of the author (personality or psychology). Textual autonomy, however, understands the text to be a picture, a work of art to be studied and appreciated in its own right, rather than for what it can reveal about the situation or intention of the author. Finally, a singular focus on the reader’s role has been likened to the text as mirror. In the end, the

interpreter does not see a pure text, but the reader's own reflection in relation to the text (Brown 2007:69).

Influencing the strong role of the reader, two trends arose recently from among the integrated approaches. One is historical criticism and the other is theological criticism. While scholars assent to the subjective element in all interpretations of a text, many (cf. Vanhoozer 1995:308; Mason 2000:120; Brown 2007:126) reject that we can discover no meaning except for the meaning imposed upon the text by each reader. In the absence of absolute meanings, Vanhoozer (1995:308) argues that "the interpreter can still hope to produce *attractive* readings."

Readers are actively involved in the interpretation of texts. It is clear that "reading the Bible is a social activity" (Smit 1998:311). Although readers often do create something that is not part of author's intention and call it meaning, "this action should not be the goal of reading" (Brown 2007:124-126).

In the desire for the adequate interpretation of a text, historical criticism suggests not to forsake historical criticism, but to use that approach correctly. But because we cannot revive the original author in order to discover his/her intention, communication approaches suggest three steps that focus more on the world of the text with historical analysis and the original setting of the text, then move to the point of view of the implied author and reader. In this way, in Powell's (2008:826) words, "the intention of the author (or, at least, that of the implied author) is fulfilled."

Another important recent development is the effort to revive a *theological* hermeneutic in biblical studies. Scholars point out the lack in studies on the divine authorship and a theological account of the Bible for the life of the church. We should, as Hart says (2000:201), "consider not only with a human but also with a divine presence encountering us through these texts."

For an exegetical-theological interpretation on James, this researcher will adopt three steps: first, analysing the original background of the Letter of James; second, analysing the world of the text; third, analyzing theological accounts of the topic "faith and works" in the Letter of James.

### **1.3.3 Meaning**

When we define the word "meaning" briefly and generally, meaning, according to Brown (2007:22), is "what we are trying to grasp when we interpret." Tate (2006:208) also defines "meaning" as a

reader's understanding of a text. Meaning, for Hirsch, is essentially the pattern of what an author intended to communicate, conveyed through the text's linguistic signs based on shareable conventions (Hirsch 1967:8).

Ricoeur rejects the assumption that to understand a text is to understand the intention of the author, or, alternatively, to grasp the text's meaning as it was grasped by the first hearers or readers who shared the author's cultural situation (cf. Mudge 1980:100). What is finally to be understood in a text is rather the sort of "world of the text." According to Ricoeur (1980:100) the world of the text designates "the reference of the work of discourse, not what is said, but about what it is said." Hence, the issue of the text is the object of hermeneutics; the world of the text that unfolds before itself.

The so-called New Criticism of the 1940s lost interest in the author and focused on the texts' formal features instead (i.e. the text, the whole text, and nothing but the text). In the 1960s critics turned their attention to certain deep structures that were thought to lie behind all forms of human life and thought. "Structuralist" critics study the integrity of the text's linguistic and literary conventions rather than the intentions of the historical author or the text's historical context. Text-oriented methods of interpretation aim to describe the immanent sense of the text. The goal here is to *explain* the text's form and structure (e.g. knowledge *about* the text), rather than to understand its reference (e.g. knowledge of what the text is *about*) (Vanhoozer 1998:26).

Fish's "Copernican Revolution" in interpretation theory entails that *interpretation does not conform to the text, but the text conforms to the interpretation*. With this revolutionary move, the vaunted semantic autonomy of the text effectively disappears: "[t]he entities that were once seen as competing for the right to constrain interpretation (text, reader, author) are now all seen to be the *products* of interpretation" (Fish 1980:16-17). Fish's point is rather that *what* we see in texts—the structured patterns, the sense—is an effect of our interpretive acts. Far from being autonomous, then, the text is at least partially *constituted* (not simply actualized) by our interpretations. All our descriptions of the text are conditioned by our questions and context. The determinate sense of the text is a function of the determinate situation of its interpreters (Fish 1980:198).

For many postmodern critics, then, "the author's intended meaning" is simply the name we give to the interpretations we like best. It would be preferable to speak not of "reconstructions" but simply of "constructions." After all, the only person who now speaks for the author is the interpreter. There

is no author's intention to be found apart from the process of interpretation itself (Vanhoozer 1998:79).

On one side of the spectrum, some say that the only correct meaning of a text is that single meaning that the original author intended it to have. On the other side stand those who argue that meaning is a function of readers, not authors, and that any text's meaning depends upon the readers' perception of it. Between the two stand other options. Perhaps meaning resides independently in the texts themselves, regardless of what the author meant or of what later readers understand from them (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:6).

On "Resurrecting the Author", Vanhoozer argues that texts are extended speech-acts performed by authors, and as such, have determinate meaning (propositional content, illocutionary force and related intended effects). The author does not abandon his text by setting it in writing, but intentionally extends his speech-act in location and time. The task of interpretation is to discern the author's intended meaning, as long as this is suitably defined. With respect to biblical writings, the Christian reader, who recognizes them as Scripture, must, of course, give adequate account of two levels of authorship; that of the human author and that of the divine. But these must not be played off against each other. The divine author's meaning is only to be perceived: (a) through and behind the human author's "intention" and (b) in the light of the canon taken as a "unified communicative act" (Vanhoozer 1998:265).

Recent attempts to break away from these earlier modern influences have led, however, to another dangerous extreme; the search for the sense of the text without regard for the intent of the author. Wolterstorff proposes an authorial discourse interpretation. In his view, the interpreter searches for what the author intended in authorizing the text. An author says things "by means of texts" (Wolterstorff 1997:44).

What Tate (1991:xx) proposes is that meaning results from a conversation between the world of the text and the world of the reader; a conversation informed by the world of the author. The author communicates some message to an audience through the medium of the written text. The way readers actualize this communication is the primary concern of interpretation (Tate 1991:4-6). The text is the result of an action performed by an author, and as such, it is conditioned by the conventional codes that affect anything produced in that particular culture. Behind every literary text, there lies a view of life, a view that has been conditioned by the author's real world. An author can imagine a world and express it textually only through the real historical, cultural, literary and

ideological setting (Tate 1991:6-7). The way speakers formulate their intentions and the linguistic registers they choose depend very much on the social situation in which communication takes place (Deist 2000:32). Even among scholars with different interests and ideas, there has been a growing confidence that, to a large extent, the “meaning” of texts in the New Testament can be recovered when they are seen to function within specific cultural and linguistic contexts. The writings of the Christians, as Garrett (1989:108) insists, are to be viewed “as records of dynamic social interchange among persons who lived in specific communities at particular times and places.”

Once speech is inscribed as text, the meaning of the discourse is no longer governed completely by the intention of the author. The text now means whatever it can mean by virtue of the semantic range of its language and structures (Schneiders 1999:143). Complete authorial meaning is unobtainable, since it is the product of the author’s individual consciousness. Textual meaning is the cultural specificity of the author’s original object of consciousness. Biblical interpreters today, according to Barton (1996:220-221), agree with structuralist critics that “the job of the exegete is to explicate the text itself, not the reality to which the text is supposed to refer, nor the ideas in the mind of its author.”

As stated earlier, in the absence of the author with whom we might consult, we are unable to assert with absolute confidence that we have understood precisely an author’s intention in a given text. Nor can we in any way determine the extent to which a text was originally understood. We set as our goal the meaning of the resulting text in view of all we can discover about the original circumstances of its formulation; consequently, we must deal in probabilities. Given all the evidence and all the factors at our disposal, we must ask more appropriately: which interpretation is more likely to represent the text’s original meaning? Which interpretations fall within the reasonable limits of a text’s current meaning for various faith communities? To verify an interpretation requires weighing two types of evidence; evidence pertaining to the text itself and evidence involving the interpreters (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:145-146).

In the absence of absolute meanings, the interpreter can still hope to produce *attractive* readings (Vanhoozer 1995:308). Although one may never completely understand all dimensions and nuances of a specific message, normally the goal of the recipient in communication is to understand what the author/speaker intended. Yet, when we read a literary text or listen to an oral message, we cannot read the author’s or speaker’s mind; we can only work with the written or verbal message. In biblical interpretation, when we have only the written text to study, our goal is to understand the meaning of that text. Each individual text was written at some time in history in a specific culture

by a person with a personal framework of preunderstandings. The author or editor intended to communicate a message to a specific audience. Our goal is to discover that message in the text (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:117-118).

Meaning is the communicative intention of the author, which has been inscribed in the text and addressed to the intended audience for the purposes of engagement. The kind of intention does not simply mean what an author hopes to communicate (intention as wish or motive), but also what an author actually does intentionally communicate in a text (communicative intention). The latter is accessible to the reader of the text; the former is not.

### **1.3.4 Methodology**

Proper meaning emerges when the text, which has been birthed within historical, cultural, literary, linguistic, and ideological systems, is being read and interpreted by the reader. The reader must therefore pay attention to all of the various aspects of those systems. However, when one interprets a text, his/her “interpretive interests, interpretive practices, and the choice of interpretive method” influence the interpretation (Punt 1999:xxxii).

We cannot avoid our interests and presuppositions, and indeed “prejudices” in reading, “as the interplay between text and reader through which meaning is produced” (Patte 1995:56). If we cannot avoid our presuppositions, as we discussed above, it is desirable to have faith presuppositions rather than others informing our understanding of the text. We should also pay attention to another important recent development, namely the effort to revive a theological approach, the “appreciation for and engagement with Scripture as the word of God” (McFarland 2008:365) and a theological account of God’s Word for theological questions, specifically “faith and works” in the Letter of James.

A good methodology for this dissertation about faith and works in the Letter of James is therefore the theological approach on the basis of exegetical analysis with the information of the historical and cultural background. We will continue to discuss this theological methodology for accounting for faith and works in the Letter of James in following sections.

#### **1.3.4.1 Historical and cultural background**

To carry out a critical analysis of the text under consideration, it is necessary to begin with an investigation of the historical issues surrounding the text such as the date, place, originating

circumstances, audience, and authorship (cf. Tate 1991:28). In addition, attention will be paid to the prevailing social and cultural context in Jas. 4:13-5:20 with regard to the rich and the poor (Jas. 5:1-6), agricultural practices (Jas. 5:7), climate (Jas. 5:7), commercial practices (Jas. 4:13) within their first or second-century Mediterranean context and, in particular, within the matrix of first-century Judaism (cf. Johnson 1999:5).

Historical and cultural information may be internal (information found within the text) or external (information found outside the text). Often, both internal and external information must be used in the reconstruction of the text's life situation. For Tate (1991:29), the internal information is primary, while external information serves a supportive and verifying role.

We should bear in mind Luke Johnson's suggestion that the information about historical and cultural elements and their linguistic codes are "not only alien but also only partially available to us" (Johnson 1999:6). Nevertheless, it is obvious that the possible information of the historical and cultural background of the Letter of James helps us to understand the Letter, especially to establish the situation of the recipients for the theological analyses of Jas. 4:13-5:20.

#### **1.3.4.2 Exegetical analysis**

Tate (1991:12-19) suggests that, at the level of the text, the interpreter must heed the identification and description of details such as the phonemes (word sounds), morphemes (word forms), lexical items (words and their meanings), and the syntax (word relationships). Tate (1991:64) also emphasizes that "hermeneutics must concern itself not only with the content, but also with the form of the text."

According to Thurén (1995:265), James is "to be seen as a tool for persuading the addressees, or modifying their attitudes, opinions, and behaviour." Additionally, Thurén (265) remarks: "[i]t is likely that he is also aware of certain epistolary and rhetorical conventions used for persuasion, such as techniques to affect the audience by organizing the text." Therefore, in order to discern continuity and arrangement in James, we cannot rely only on the signals on the syntactic or semantic levels, but we should also focus on the pragmatic level and look for rhetorically purposeful, conventional sections in the text. A rhetorical disposition is "not identical with the architecture of the text, but displays the development of the rhetorical situation and the interaction between the writer and his audience" (Thurén 1995:269).

In the past, theologians and ethicists have often attended only to the content of texts, and not their literary forms. In doing so, they have missed important clues to meaning that located in the texture of contents and forms (Bailey 1995:211). Therefore, in order to interpret Jas. 4:13-5:20 more clearly, we shall investigate the content and the form together, as well as the syntactic or semantic levels and rhetorical devices. Progress can be made in understanding James, firstly, by examining not only the thematic contents, but also the linguistic constructions; and secondly, by focusing on the communicative and interactive conventions therein, and seeking the function and purpose of such phenomena. Thereafter the contents can be assessed in a new light (Thurén 1995:266).

### 1.3.4.3 Theological analysis

Martin Dibelius (1976:3)<sup>31</sup> designates the Letter of James as a loose collection of sayings, “which have no real relationship to one another.” He concluded that “it is not possible to construct a single frame into which they will all fit” (1976:11). He proclaims: “*James has no ‘theology’*” (1976:21). This view influenced scholars for many decades (See Hartin 2009:29). But Davids (1980) introduces some scholars who do find theological ideas and units in the epistle of James. Mussner (1964) “argued for theological unity in the epistle, discussing its theological ideas in a series of excurses” (Davids 1980:97). Furthermore, Francis (1970:110-126) has found a literary form into which the epistle as a whole fits. Similarly, R. Hoppe (1977:1-17) argues that there are larger unities in the epistle than Dibelius believed and that the two themes of wisdom and faith appear as the great theological contributions of the work. Hiebert (1978:224, emphasis in original) proposes that “*tests of a living faith* is indeed the unifying theme of the epistle.” Recently, Elliott (1993:71-81) and Hartin (1999) have showed concern for “perfection”, which they indicate as the overall theme of the Letter of James. Bauckham (1999 [2002]:177-206) develops four theological aspects of James; wholeness and integrity, solidarity with the poor, speech ethics, and prayer. McCartney (2009:57, 68) understands faith as the root of the epistle and suggests four important topics in James’ theology; the fatherhood of God, Christology, eschatology, and ethics. Hartin (2009:26-30) also devoted his study to “six aspects that lie at the foundation of James’s theological vision, namely faith, God, Christ, eschatology, prayer, and social concern.” Lockett (2012:35-37) argues that there are “major unifying themes threaded through the text”; theocentrism, the relationship between the “rich” and the “poor”, suffering trials and the testing of one’s faith, and “perfection” or “wholeness.”

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<sup>31</sup> Dibelius’ work is translated from a German edition of 1964.

Batten (2009:16) concludes that “although there is no consensus whatsoever about the structure of James, Dibelius’s claim that the text is a loose string of sayings with minimal coherence is no longer upheld by the majority of scholars. James is generally understood to be an ordered letter.”

The noun πίστις (“faith”) occurs sixteen times in James (1:3, 6; 2:1, 5, 14[twice], 17, 18[3 times], 20, 22[twice], 24, 26; 5:15), while the verb πιστεύω occurs three times (2:19[twice], 23). Therefore, the theme of faith seems to be the key that “unlock[s] the contents of the epistle of James” (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:224). Just as in Paul, faith is central for the Letter of James as well (Hartin [1999] 96).

James’s rhetoric, as Hartin (2009:29) says, did not focus on giving a well-developed theoretical doctrine. “His purpose is practical rather than doctrinal” (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:223). James is mainly concerned about “practical theology,” which indicates that “the author’s interest is in the application of theology to lifestyle” (McCartney 2009:68).

James was probably aware of the danger that some of his readers, complacently priding themselves on their monotheistic belief, neglected practical works of charity. They need not have professed the doctrinal view that their faith was sufficient to justify them, but they behaved as though this were the case (Bauckham 2002:125-126).

The rhetorical purpose of the Letter is “to offer a way of being in the world and to show believers how to lead their lives as members of the twelve-tribe kingdom” (Hartin 1999:96). The letter of James thus provides an illustration of the way in which faith produces works in the life of believers.

James admonishes his audience that the behaviour of Christians who profess faith in Christ must include the demonstration of faithful deeds in specific situations. The goal of this theological analysis is to consider how faith affects a believer’s behaviour in specific situations in Jas. 4:13-5:20, and to investigate two kinds of works; that is, works from faith (or living faith) and works from “unfaith” (or dead faith). To carry out this investigation, this researcher will divide the paragraphs according to different situations or themes, and build up a theological interpretation about “how faith works” on the ground of all the information from the previous analyses, which will include the historical and cultural background and exegetical analysis.

#### **1.3.4.4 Sequence of the argument**

The aim of this dissertation is to get the answer to the questions: (1) “what is the faith?” and (2) “how does faith works in a situation?” An appropriate methodology for this dissertation about faith

and works in Jas. 4:13-5:20 is the theological approach integrated with exegetical analysis and the research into the historical and cultural background. This dissertation will examine Jas. 4:13-5:20, focusing on exhortations as to the works of faith (exegetical), situations (historical and cultural), and knowledge (theological) to achieve the aim.

The sequence of the argument is as follows: (1) historical and cultural analysis (Chapter 2), (2) exegetical analysis (Chapter 3), (3) theological analysis (Chapter 4), and (4) Conclusion (Chapter 5).

In Chapter 2 (historical and cultural analysis) we will search for canonicity of the Letter of James, the author, the recipient, historical and cultural background. In Chapter 3 (exegetical analysis) we will analyse the genre, structure, and exegesis of Jas. 4:13-5:20. In Chapter 4 (theological analysis) this dissertation will proceed as follows: (1) the meaning of the faith in the whole letter of James; (2) we will show how James' exhortations are related to the faith; (3) finally, we will examine section by section of Jas. 4:13-5:20, focusing on situations (historical and cultural background), knowledge (in James and the Old Testament or the New Testament), and exhortations (exegetical). And In Chapter 5 we finally reach the aim of this dissertation: what is the nature of faith and how does faith work as the conclusion.

#### **1.4 Aim and Contribution**

One cannot emphasize the importance of understanding the relationship between faith and works too strongly. The New Testament states that one is saved by faith. Thus, if some misunderstood this to mean that one needs only faith for salvation and that good works are unnecessary, they would live according to their own notions. Both James and Paul confronted a situation in which people in the Jesus follower groups were professing faith in Christ but felt no need for moral purity or ethical living (Jas. 2:14-26; Rom. 5:19-6:3).

The aim of the proposed research is to answer two questions: (1) "what is the nature of faith?" and (2) "how does it produce works?" according to the book of James in the New Testament.

## Chapter 2 Historical and cultural background of James 4:13-5:20

### 2.1 Historical background

Research into the historical and cultural background of the first century Palestine and Mediterranean is presumed to promote a better understanding of the text and situations depicted in Jas. 4:13-5:20. Since the problem of faith-works in James is linked closely to Paul, if the message in James is found to conflict with Paul's instruction, the authority of Scripture may be compromised. The issue is related not only with debates within dogmatic theology, but also with the authority of James as Scripture. Before investigating the faith-works in the epistle of James, therefore, we should establish clarity on whether the epistle of James was accepted as Scripture at the time of the canonising of the Bible. From that vantage point we will proceed to the historical issues (e.g. the author, the recipient, and the date) and cultural background (e.g. commercial activity, agricultural practices, sickness and healing system).

#### 2.1.1 Canonicity of James

The Epistle of James was accepted as Scripture rather slowly by the church (Brown 1997:743; Grieb 2002:177; Johnson 2005:297). According to Brown (1997:744), we are uncertain why James was "so slow in finding acceptance" but Grieb (2002:177) suggests that the reason is "early doubts about its apostolic origins."

The clearest early use of James comes from the Eastern Church (Baker 2005:347). In the early third century, Origen, although he acknowledged the Letter as one of the disputed books, cited it thirty-six times (or twenty-four times)<sup>32</sup> and attributed it to James the apostle, the brother of the Lord. In the early fourth century, Eusebius (AD 265–340) still considered it a disputed book. By the late fourth century, however, Athanasius gave evidence of the acceptance of James in the Greek-speaking churches of the East (Burdick 1981:163; Brown 1997:743; Baker 2005:347).

In the Western church, "not even the name of the Epistle appears till the year 180" (Adamson 1989:147). However, James seems to be used in some writings (e.g. *1 Clement* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*) before the middle of the second century AD (Johnson 2005:297). Baker (2005:347) notes that the use of similar language "such as 'double minded' (a term unique to James in the NT), suggests possible knowledge of James in early Western writings, such as *1 Clement*, *Shepherd of*

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<sup>32</sup> Whereas Baker (2005:347) insists that Origen cited the Letter thirty-six times, Brown (1997:743) argues that it was twenty-four times. Regardless of who is correct, the point remains that Origen cited the Letter numerous times.

Hermas, the *Didache*, and the *Letter of Barnabas*.” Concerning the expression, Adamson (1989:148) comments that O. J. F. Seitz and others insist that James, 1 and 2 Clement, and Hermas “derived it from the Jewish concept of the *yēšer*,” and that “neither James nor Hermas was dependent on the other, but that each drew from a common source and betrays knowledge only of that source.” Adamson (1989:148) also points out that, “yet, especially in view of the parallel to Jas. 4:5 in Mand. 3.1, ‘the spirit which God caused to dwell in this flesh,’ we are not fully persuaded that we can entirely exclude the possibility that somehow a copy of the Epistle of James may have already reached Rome and been read by Hermas.” Further, Adamson (1989:148) also recalls Irenaeus’ citation of James: “[h]e believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God, which is clearly a verbatim quotation from Jas. 2:23.”

In the view of Brown (1997:743):

James is not mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment, which was thought to represent the Scriptures of Rome at the end of the 2nd century. The Old Latin translation of James found in the Codex Corbeiensis (9th century preservation) and placed with the extracanonical writings raises the possibility that James was translated into Latin in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (and perhaps later than other Catholic Epistles).

Similarly, Adamson (1989:150) states that:

In spite of its absence from the Muratorian Canon and the pervading ignorance or neglect of the Epistle of James in the West, knowledge of the Epistle was gradually filtering in from the Greek world, as is proved by the translations and occasional quotations that were being made.

In the earliest clear references to James in the west Hilary of Poitiers (writing in AD 356–8) and Ambrosiaster (d. AD 382) each quote James once in the middle of the fourth century. Jerome played an important role in the final acceptance of James in the western church. The letter of James was included in his Latin translation, the Vulgate, and Jerome often cited the epistle in his writings (Moo 2015:29).

In Africa Augustine accepted the Epistle of James, inserting it as the last one of the Catholic Epistles, and offering a commentary on the epistle. Nevertheless,

The Epistle failed to receive authoritative recognition (e.g. in the Cheltenham or Mommsenian Canon and at Carthage in 369) until the third and fourth Councils of Carthage (397 and 419), on Augustine’s insistence, admitted it to the Western canon. This canon, which was also accepted by the Donatists and by Pope Innocent in

a letter to Exsuperius of Toulouse (405), was thus now in line with that which Athanasius and Gregory Nazianzus made for the Orthodox Greek Church (Adamson 1989:152).

Thus, we can conclude that until Origen, the circulation of the Epistle of James was not obvious in the Eastern Church. It became better known after Origen but it still struggled to be accepted as Scripture. In the West, the Epistle of James was not considered as canonical until the third and fourth Councils of Carthage (AD 397 and 419).

The ancient disagreements about James contributed to new doubts in the Reformation period. “Erasmus accepted it but questioned its attribution to the Lord’s brother” (Brown 1997:744). From Luther’s famous statement that the epistle of James is “an epistle of straw”, the epistle was questioned about its fitness as Scripture (Ong 1996:1). However, the epistle was accepted as Scripture without doubt by “Calvin and the Reformed churches” (Riesner 2007:1257).

In sum, although the formal canonization of James was relatively late, shared terminologies in some other writings indicate that James might have been used in those writings (e.g. *I Clement* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*) before the middle of the second century AD. Largely through the enthusiastic support of Origen, it became part of the church’s collection, first in the East and later, by the end of the fourth century, also in the West. Despite Luther’s scathing epithet (as the “epistle of straw”) and ignoble placement in his famous German New Testament translation (Riesner 2007:1257), the Letter was accepted without reservation by Calvin and the Reformed churches. But, as Moo (2015:29) emphasises, “it is important to stress that James was not *rejected*, but *neglected*.”

If the investigation of the history of its canonicity shows that the Epistle of James was considered to be Scripture, it stands to reason that attempts can be made to find an appropriate way to understand the faith-works in Paul and James in a way that does not conflict with the authority of Scripture.<sup>33</sup>

### 2.1.2 The author of the Epistle

Determining the date of James in history is important in discussing the background of the book. In the case of this epistle, the authorship is related to its date, because if James the Just, the Lord’s brother, wrote the letter, one must date it in its present form within the lifetime of that historical

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<sup>33</sup> Some scholars consider the authority of Scripture as an unimportant matter. However, it is very important to all Christians who consider the Bible as Scripture and live according to the Word. See Chapter 1.3.1 for the authority of the Bible.

person. Therefore, regarding the Epistle of James, the discussion of date and that of the authorship should be done in close relationship with each other (Davids 1982:2).

### 2.1.2.1 Who is the “James” referred to in Jas. 1:1?

The opening verse directly claims authorship for “James, servant of God and of Jesus Christ” (Jas. 1:1). Yet the author’s identity remains a contested issue in modern scholarship. Two critical issues are at stake: “Who is the ‘James’ referred to in the letter’s address, and is he necessarily the author of the book?” (Wall 1997b:545-546). The New Testament identifies at least five different men named James:

1. *James, the son of Zebedee and brother of the apostle John and also one of the Twelve.* He was called to be a follower of Jesus early in his ministry (Mk. 1:19). James, along with his brother John, and Peter, became the apostles closest to Jesus (cf. Mk. 3:17; 5:37; 9:2; 10:35; 14:33; Lk. 6:14; Acts 1:13). This James was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:2, cf. McKnight 2011).
2. *James, the son of Alphaeus, one of the Twelve.* He was also one of the twelve and is mentioned only in the lists of the apostles (Mt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13).
3. *James the Lesser or Younger, son of Mary wife of Cleopas.* He is mentioned as “James the younger” or “lesser” in Mk. 15:40 (simply “James” in the parallel Mt. 27:56). Mary is identified as the mother of James (Mk. 15:40; 16:1; Lk. 24:10) and wife of Cleopas in Jn.19:25.<sup>34</sup>
4. *James, the father of Judas.* This Judas, who is distinguished from Judas Iscariot (see Jn. 14:22), is identified as one of the twelve in Lk. 6:16 (see also Acts 1:13) and is probably to be identified with Thaddaeus in Mt. 10:3 and Mk. 3:18.
5. *James, “the Lord’s brother”* (Gal. 1:19; Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3). Jesus’ brothers did not believe in him during his earthly ministry (Jn. 7:5; cf. Mk. 6:3), but James quickly became prominent in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9, 12; 1 Cor. 15:7; Jude 1:1).

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<sup>34</sup> Some identify James son of Alphaeus with James son of Mary, the wife of Cleopas (cf. Moo 1985:19; Guthrie 2006:199; Swindoll 2010:15; McKnight 2011:14).

The James named in the epistle's first verse is not elaborated on further, even though it recurs several times in the New Testament (Painter 2001:10). The use of the name by itself in a letter written with such authority implies that the author was a well-known figure, who would probably not have gone unmentioned in the New Testament. Of the five individuals named James in the New Testament, only the son of Zebedee and the Lord's brother stand out as prominent candidates. James, the son of Zebedee, however, died a martyr's death in AD 44 (Acts 12:2) and it is unlikely that the epistle was written as early as that. We are left, therefore, with James, the Lord's brother, as the most likely author of the epistle. With regard to the issue, "who is the James in Jas. 1:1", a very large group of contemporary scholars agree that the James identified in the text is James, the brother of Jesus (cf. (Moo 2015:34; Allison 2013:4; Lockett 2012:11; McKnight 2011:23; Swindoll 2010:16; Stevenson 2010:3; Batten 2009:29; Riesner 2007:1256; Johnson 2005:300-301; Bauckham 2003:1483; Grieb 2002:176; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:492; Moo 2000:11; Culpepper 2000:26; Felder 1998:1787; Brown 1997:725; Wall 1997a:6; Davids 1996:542; Perkins 1995:83; Patterson 1991:743; Adamson 1989:19; Martin 1988:lxxvii; Scaer 1983:26; Davids 1982:21; Burdick 1981:161; Mayor 1954:i; Cadoux 1944:32).

### **2.1.2.2 Was James a full brother of Jesus?**

Painter (2001:12-21; 1999:199-223) introduces the question, "Who was James?" in the Early Church history. The answer to the question allows five positions (cf. Painter 2001:12-13):

- (1) Some hold that James was a full brother of Jesus.
- (2) Some affirm that James was a half-brother of Jesus. Jesus was a child of Mary, while James was a child of Joseph and Mary.
- (3) Some think that James was a child of Joseph (but not Mary) by a previous marriage.
- (4) Jerome believes that James was a child of the sister of the mother of Jesus, whose name was also Mary.
- (5) Eusebius asserts that Clopas was the brother of Joseph and that Symeon (son of Clopas) was a cousin of Jesus and the second bishop of Jerusalem.

There are three major views among these five positions: Helvidian, Epiphianian and Hieronymian. The Helvidian view is that Jesus' brothers were sons of Joseph and Mary, after the birth of Jesus. The Epiphianian view is that the brothers were Joseph's children by a former wife, whom he had married prior to Mary. The Hieronymian view is that they were cousins of Jesus (see Bauckham 1996:18-19; Painter 1999:199-223; Painter 2001:12-21).

The Epiphonian view is the canonical position of the Orthodox Church, namely that the brothers and sisters were the naturally-born children of Joseph and a wife prior to Mary. Thus, they were not directly related to Jesus or Mary, and Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus. Advocacy of this view can be found in the Gospel of Peter (Painter 2001:12). Origen was a supporter of this view. Commenting on Mt. 13:55-56, he wrote: “[t]hey thought, then, that He was the son of Joseph and Mary. But some say, basing it on a tradition in the Gospel according to Peter, as it is entitled, or *‘The Book of James,’* that the brethren of Jesus were sons of Joseph by a former wife, whom he married before Mary” (Origen, Commentary on Mt. 10.17.). Painter suspects that the Epiphonian view was probably used “by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 7.16.93) and perhaps by Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 78.5)” (2001:13-14).

The Epiphonian view is not based on the New Testament, but rather on the apocryphal work, the Gospel of Peter and the *Protevangelium of James*. Mt. 1:25 says: “Joseph was not knowing her until she gave birth to a son.” Mt. 1:25 seems to imply that he was knowing her after the specified period of time.

The Hieronymian view was developed by Jerome, whose Latin name is “Hieronymus,” which is why this perspective is called the “Hieronymian” view. Augustine of Hippo supported this interpretation, and it became the traditional Western Catholic view (Bauckham 1996:19; Painter 2001:16-17; McCartney 2009:12). The fundamental idea of his view is that “the terms ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ need not refer to those who were strictly brothers and sisters but could also be used of other relatives in a more general sense—in this case, cousins.” Jerome showed that “the term ‘brothers’ was used in the Scriptures in four different senses: of actual brothers; of kinsmen; of those of common nationality; and of those related by friendship or sympathy” (Painter 1999:216). The result of Jerome’s investigative work on Mt. 27:56, Mk. 15:40, and Jn.19:25 leads to the conclusion that brothers and sisters of Jesus were the children of Mary, the sister of the mother of Jesus, which would make them cousins of Jesus (Painter 1999:216; 2001:18-19; McCartney 2009:12).

There is no doubt that the term “brother” does not necessarily refer only to a full blood-brother. However, Joseph A. Fitzmyer (2004:3) writes: “Jerome thought that adelphos (ἀδελφός) could mean ‘cousin,’ but this is almost certainly to be ruled out as the NT meaning, since there was a good word for ‘cousin,’ *anepsios* (ἀνεψιός), found in Col. 4:10.” Patrick J. Hartin (2004:32) notes further: “[o]ne thing, however, is sure, and that is that this term does not designate a cousin, as Jerome understood this term. Greek has a specific word for cousin (*anepsios*). If a cousin were

intended the New Testament writers would surely have used the Greek word *anepsios*. See, for example, Col. 4:10.” McCartney (2009:12) also explains: “[s]ince Greek has a perfectly good word for ‘cousin’ (ἀν[ε]ψιός, *an[e]psios*), and because never is ἀδελφός used unambiguously to mean ‘cousin,’ Jerome’s view looks a great deal like special pleading.” Bauckham (1996:19) manifests that the second-century writer Hegesippus evidently distinguished between the two relationships, “brother” and “cousin.” Hegesippus<sup>35</sup> “calls James and Jude ‘brother[s] of the Lord’, calls Simeon the son of Clopas the ‘cousin of the Lord’.”

Helvidius argued that those described as brothers and sisters of Jesus were the children of Joseph and Mary, born after the birth of Jesus. The Helvidian view has roots in the language of Paul, the Gospels, and Acts, which is understood in its natural and straightforward sense. Painter (1999:214-215; 2001:21) gives five main points of substantiation for the Helvidian view:

1. He argued that Mt. 1:18, 25 implies that, following the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary had other children. That Mary was found to be pregnant through the action of the Holy Spirit “before they [Joseph and Mary] came together” was taken by Helvidius to mean that subsequently they came together. The assertion that Joseph did not “know” Mary “until she bore a son” was taken to mean that he did come to “know her,” that is, have sexual intercourse with her, subsequently (see *Against Helvidius [Adv. Helvidium de Perpetua Virginitate B. Mariae]* 3).
2. He also appealed to Lk. 2:7, which refers to Jesus as Mary’s “firstborn son,” arguing that it implied subsequent children (see *Against Helvidius* 9).
3. Helvidius further listed the various passages in which the evangelists mention and sometimes name the brothers and sisters of Jesus (see *Against Helvidius* 11).
4. He appealed to the older Western tradition (see *Against Helvidius* 17), in which the brothers and sisters of Jesus had been mentioned in a way consistent with his views and specified by Tertullian (see his *Adv. Marc.* 4.19; *De carne Christi* 7; *De monog.* 8) and Victorinus of Pettau. The reference was apparently to his now lost commentary on Matthew, which was referred to by both Origen (*Homilies on St. Luke*, preface) and Jerome (*Commentary on St. Matthew*, preface).
5. Finally, he argued that it was no dishonour that Mary was a real wife to Joseph since all the patriarchs had been married men and that child-bearing was a participation in the divine creativity (*Against Helvidius* 18)

In conclusion, we have no reason to think anything but that Jesus and his brothers and sisters were children of Joseph and Mary. The Epiphonian view is not based on the New Testament, but rather on the apocryphal work, the Gospel of Peter and a heretical work, the *Protevangelium of James*.

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.4; 3.11; 3.20.1; 4.22.4.

The Hieronymian position is based on Jerome's imagination. He could find no precedent for his theory in the writings of the earlier Church fathers. The authors of the New Testament (Paul, Mark, Matthew, Luke, John) tell us that Jesus had brothers; there are no hints that Joseph was married to another woman before Mary; or that "ἀδελφός" means "cousin." We then reach the conclusion that the brothers and sisters of Jesus are the children of Mary and Joseph, and therefore James is a younger brother of Jesus (cf. Moo 2015:33-34).

This James, a brother of Jesus was a respected leader of the Jesus followers in Jerusalem.

### **2.1.2.3 James as the leader of the church**

#### **2.1.2.3.1 The evidence from New Testament**

Peter is considered to be the first leader of the church in Jerusalem under the tradition of Rome, following the Acts' description about Peter's leadership at the beginning of the church. But, Painter (2001:31) insists, "there is no tradition concerning Peter's leadership of the Jerusalem church."

The Gospels describe Peter as the spokesperson among the twelve. A case can then certainly be made for Peter's leadership of "the twelve." Even though described in terms of the leadership of "the twelve," it does not mean that he was also the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

Acts undoubtedly depicts Peter in a leadership role, especially on the day of Pentecost. Painter (2001:31) argues: "[i]n what follows in Acts, Peter is portrayed as the leader in mission to those who were not believers." In Gal. 2:7-8 Paul describes Peter as the one entrusted with the Gospel for the circumcised and an apostle to the circumcised just as he (Paul) had been entrusted with the Gospel for the uncircumcised and an apostle to the Gentiles. "This parallel description of the missions of Peter and Paul suggests that neither of them was the leader of a single church. Rather, each of them was leader of one of the two missions" (Painter 2001:31).

Many scholars (McKnight 2011:23; Swindoll 2010:16; Stevenson 2010:3; McCartney 2009:9; Batten 2009:29; Riesner 2007:1256; Johnson 2005:300-301; Bauckham 2003:1483; Grieb 2002:176; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:492; Moo 2000:11; Culpepper 2000:26; Felder 1998:1787; Brown 1997:725; Wall 1997a:6; Davids 1996:542; Perkins 1995:83; Patterson 1991:743; Adamson 1989:19; Martin 1988:lxxvii; Scaer 1983:26; Davids 1982:21; Burdick 1981:161; Mayor 1954:i; Cadoux 1944:32) agree that it is James, the brother of Jesus, who is recognized as the leader of the church in Jerusalem by the New Testament, especially in Acts and

Paul's letters<sup>36</sup>. The leadership of James and the value of his letter have recently been attracting considerable attention. Varner (2010:200-207) has argued persuasively that "a careful reading of Luke's account in Acts and Paul's comments in Galatians fully support the idea that James was not just a significant leader in the early church, nor was he just the leader of the Jerusalem church, but that he was *the leader of the church*"<sup>37</sup> (Varner 2010:200).

Acts 12:17 is normally taken to mean that James took over the leadership after Peter's flight from Jerusalem. Painter (2001:31) argues that "we should understand Peter's message in the context of his report back to James, the leader of the Jerusalem church. Nothing is more natural than that Peter should report to the leader." He points towards James's role in the assembly of the Jerusalem church. He also finds that "if Peter's leadership was interrupted by his forced departure from Jerusalem, we then need to face the general recognition of James's leadership of the Jerusalem assembly (Acts 15), although Peter was again present in Jerusalem" (Painter 2001:31-32). McCartney (2009:9) affirms that "after Peter is miraculously delivered from prison, Peter tells the people to 'inform James and the brothers' of what has happened (Acts 12:17), which in all likelihood indicates this James is already a prominent leader of the church."

The events in Acts 15, sometimes called the Apostolic Council, make it still more likely that James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem. The apostles and elders came together in Jerusalem to decide whether or not Gentile believers need to be circumcised and to observe the law of Moses (15:1,5). After much debate, Peter stood and shared with them his experience with Cornelius accompanied by the Spirit's work (15:7-11). Then Barnabas and Paul "related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles" (ESV Acts 15:12). Varner (2010:202) points out well, "James, however, does not base his argument on experience but on how the prophets affirm this Gentile conversion with a citation from Amos 9:11, 12 and Isa. 45:21." It is James who sums up (Acts 15:13-21) and gives *his judgment* (ἐγὼ κρίνω, 15:19), which was accepted by the gathering of apostles and elders with the whole church (15:22). Varner (2010:203) emphasises "the crucial language attributed to James as he introduces his concluding decision in Acts 15:19a: (διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω)." The transitional conjunction διὸ indicates the conclusion to the argument. The pronoun ἐγὼ, which is not needed in Greek, is added for particular prominence and emphasis - "I." Then the verb κρίνω describes James' verdict, because this verb carries the sense of a judicial verdict or decision (see BDAG, Louw & Nida). Painter (2001:32) makes clear that "Acts records no debate concerning his judgment and there is no debate among contemporary scholarship

<sup>36</sup> Acts 12:17, 15:13, 21:18-25; 1 Cor. 15:5-7; Gal. 1:18-19; Gal. 2:9; Gal. 2:12

<sup>37</sup> Here the church is used to refer to the whole church, including the church in Jerusalem and all other churches outside Jerusalem.

concerning the leadership of James at this point.” When James wrote a letter to the Gentile believers, he added certain practices that were especially offensive to Jews. When Paul went from town to town, he delivered the Letter for observance of the decisions as he had been instructed to do by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem (see Acts 16:4).

James’s leadership of the church continues to be portrayed in the story of Paul’s final visit to Jerusalem (see Acts 21:17-26). In Acts 21:18-26 Paul is again doing what James asks him to do in regard to ending the vows with four men. “Paul probably thought that such an action was not necessary, but out of deference to James, **Paul did what James told him to do**” Varner (2010:203, the bold types are original).

The evidence for James’ leadership in the church is found not only in Acts, but also in Galatians and 1 Corinthians. Paul mentions that the risen Lord appeared to James, then to all the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7). James is named before all the apostles. In Gal. 2:1-10 Paul names, as the reputed pillars of the Jerusalem church, James, Cephas and John, in that order. Painter (2001:32) argues: “[n]amed as the first of the supposed pillars in the context of the dispute over the rules applied to mission is a clear indication of the leadership of James among the pillars.” Varner (2010:202) also points out that “the order of these ‘pillars’ should not be overlooked.” In Gal. 1:18-19 Paul mentions that three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and while he was staying with Peter, he saw only James, the Lord’s brother. This is confirmed by Peter’s response to the messengers from James (Gal. 2:12). Paul does not explain their exact relationship to James nor the exact reason for their visit. But it is clear that their appearance caused Peter to withdraw from eating together with Gentiles. The episode in Gal. 2:11-14 indicates that Peter clearly respected James’s authority.

In conclusion, in 1 Cor. 15:5-7, Paul records James as the witness of an appearance of the risen Jesus. Paul explains his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion as he saw only two of the “apostles”, Peter and James! (Gal. 1:18-19). “From his statement about James in 1 Cor. 15 and Gal. 1:18-19, it appears that Paul classed James with the apostles” (Varner 2010:201). Paul’s naming James as the first of the pillars in Gal. 2:1-10 implies an indication of the leadership of James among the pillars. Later, Paul relates that “certain men came from James” to Antioch (Gal. 2:12). Their coming to Antioch affected Peter to desist from eating together with Gentiles. As mentioned, this action indicates that Peter clearly respected James’s authority. At the Jerusalem consultation (Acts 15), James sums up and makes the final decision and everyone agrees with it! James wrote to the whole church, showing “the role of the diaspora encyclical written by the number one man in

Jerusalem” (Varner 2010:207) while Paul wrote to individual churches and individuals. This does not weaken Paul’s weight, but it does establish the leadership of James over the whole church. In these reports from Paul and in Acts, it is clear that James, the brother of Jesus, was the leader of the early church in Jerusalem.

### **2.1.2.3.2 The evidence from early documents**

We find that the early church in later centuries recognized James’ primacy. It is supported by both Jewish and Christian writers, from the second through the early fifth centuries (Varner 2010:203).

Varner (2010:203) emphasises that while “Josephus described vividly the martyr death of James which took place in 62 AD”, he never mentions either Peter, John or Paul. According to Varner (2010:203): “[a]part from a statement about ‘the tribe of Christians’ in the controversial ‘Testimonium Flavianum’ about Jesus, the only early Christian that Josephus mentions is James!” It suggests that the leading role of James was recognized even outside of Christianity.

According to Painter (1999:6), Eusebius acknowledges that Peter was not in the position of leadership over the Jerusalem church. Eusebius does indicate Peter as the leader of all the apostles who brought the treasures of the Gospel from the East to Rome during the reign of Claudius (*H.E.* 2.14.6), but argues that “the authority of Peter is identified with Rome in a time too early (the reign of Claudius) and in a tradition too late (Eusebius) to be historically credible. But there is no suggestion that Peter was the leader of the Jerusalem church.” Eusebius (*H.E.* 4.5.3; cf. 7.19.1) provides a list of the bishops of the first-century church of Jerusalem that begins with James:

First was James, called the Lord’s brother, and after him Symeon was the second. Third was Justus, fourth Zaccheus, fifth Tobias, sixth Benjamin, seventh John, eighth Matthias, ninth Philip, tenth Seneca, eleventh Justus, twelfth Levi, thirteenth Ephres, fourteenth Joseph, and fifteenth and last, Judas (Maier 2007:266)

Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.1.3) quotes Clement of Alexandria (*Outlines*, Book 6) as saying, “Peter, James, and John, after the Savior’s ascension, did not contend for the honor because they had previously been favored by the Savior, but chose James the Just as Bishop of Jerusalem” (Maier 2007:58). Eusebius also quotes from Hegesippus’s account of the martyrdom of James (*H.E.* 2.23.4-18), where Hegesippus (*Memoirs*, Book 5) reports:

[Administration of] the church passed to James, the brother of the Lord, along with the apostles. He was called “the Just” by everyone from the Lord’s time to ours, since there were many Jameses, but this one was consecrated from his mother’s womb. ... Because of his superior righteousness he was called the Just and Oblias

– meaning, in Greek, “Bulwark of the People” and “Righteousness” – as the prophets declare regarding him (Maier 2007:81).

The Gospel of the Hebrews in Jerome’s *Illustrious Men 2* records the following after the Saviour’s resurrection:

“But when the Lord had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, he went and appeared to James. For James had taken a vow not to eat bread from the time he drank the cup of the Lord until he should see him raised from among those who sleep.” And soon after this it says, “The Lord said, ‘Bring a table and bread.’” And immediately it continues, “He took the bread and blessed it, broke it gave it to James the Just, and said to him, ‘My brother, eat your bread. For the Son of Man is risen from among those who sleep’” (Ehrman & Pleše 2011:219).

Statements about the leadership of James are also echoed in a number of pseudepigraphal “Gospels” such as “the Apocryphon of James” and “the Gospels of Thomas.” The Gospel of Thomas, quotes Saying 12: “[t]he disciples said to Jesus, ‘[w]e know that you will leave us. Who will be great among us?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Wherever you have come, you will go to James the Righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came to be’” (Ehrman & Pleše 2011:313).<sup>38</sup>

To sum up: James, the brother of Jesus, became a popular and respected figure in the early church, especially among Jewish Jesus followers. Josephus’ reference to James but no other apostles suggests that the leading role of James was recognized even outside of Christianity. The leadership of James in the early church is found in various expressions. According to Clement of Alexandria, the leadership was dependent on his choice by Peter, James, and John, while “Eusebius speaks of appointment by the apostles (*H.E.* 2.23.1), from the Savior and the apostles (*H.E.* 7.19.1), and of appointment to the throne of Jerusalem (*H.E.* 3.5.2-3)” (Painter 2001:34). Eusebius (*H.E.* 4.5.3; cf. 7.19.1) provides a list of the bishops of the first century church of Jerusalem that begins with James. The *Gospel of the Hebrews* suggests that the James’ leadership was based on the appearance of the risen Jesus to him. The *Gospel of Thomas* takes his leadership from Jesus as an answer to the questions of the disciples. Hegesippus’s accounts about James affirms his leadership.

### 2.1.2.3.3 A new perspective on the Letter of James

Since the sixteenth century, the Letter of James was devaluated by Christians and scholars due to Luther’s disfavour with James and his placing the Letter of James after Paul’s letters and Hebrews.

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<sup>38</sup> This is mentioned, not to claim that Jesus actually said this, but because these and many other sayings about James’ role reflect an attitude that actually prevailed in the early church.

More recently, Varner (2010:205-207) has insisted on a new perspective on the Letter of James. He argues that Luther slighted the Letter of James because of its apparent “lack of order (at least to him!) and nothing of the nature of the gospel,” but “John Calvin did not share this pessimism about the Letter of James, but expounded the book at length and published a commentary on it” (Varner 2010:206). Varner (2010:206) points out that “first we must look at the position of James in our current New Testament, which is following the Pauline epistles and Hebrews, heading what is often called the ‘General’ or ‘Catholic’ Epistles.” He argues that “pride of place has gone to Paul’s epistles after the Book of Acts and heading the other writings of the apostles. However, this was not the case for over 1000 years of church history.” He further testifies that the Codex Vaticanus, as our oldest NT, as also the Codex Alexandrinus, places James before the Gospels, Acts and the Pauline Epistles. Painter (2009:162) also argues that “in almost all Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, the catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem (348 CE), and the fifty-ninth canon of the Council of Laodicea (360 CE),” the Catholic Epistles follow Acts and were located before Paul’s letters. The Eastern Orthodox Church, in terms of James, “still has maintained this order in their Bibles and the earliest editions of the Greek NT (Tischendorf, Tregelles and Westcott/Hort) also adopted this ancient order” (Varner 2010:206, cf. Bauckham 2002:115). English versions in the West and the current critical Greek texts (NA27; UBS4), according to Verner (206), rearranged “the ancient order to the order in the Vulgate, which has been reflected in our New Testaments since the 16th century.” He emphasises that throughout the Middle Ages, James and the General Epistles had been listed after Acts in Greek New Testaments (cf. Fulford 1901:21; Tasker 1956:16; Gaebelein 2009:2).

The claim of Varner (2010:207) is that like James, the leader of the early church, should not be disregarded, so the Letter of James should also not be disregarded. McKnight (2011:10) supports this, saying: “[t]hose of us in the Reformed, Lutheran, or evangelical traditions perhaps need to be warned that James may have had a louder voice than Paul’s at times and that his letter is not a relic from that quaint era before theologians got everything figured out.”

#### **2.1.2.3.4 Conclusion**

Careful perusal of the New Testament shows that James, the brother of Jesus, is recognized as the leader of the church, especially by Acts and Paul’s letters. A natural reading of Peter’s message to be reported to James, in Acts 12:17, is that the report was to be handed to the leader. It is confirmed when we read about the Jerusalem assembly in Acts 15. While Peter plays *a leading role*, it is James who sums up (15:13-21) and gives *his judgment* (ἐγὼ κρίνω, 15:19), which was accepted by the gathering of apostles and elders with the whole church (15:22). James’ leadership of the

Jerusalem church continues to be portrayed in the context of Paul's final visit to Jerusalem (see Acts 21:17-26).

The evidence for James' leadership in the church is found not only in Acts, but also in Galatians and 1 Corinthians. As stated earlier, Paul mentions that the risen Lord appeared to James, then to all the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7). James is named before all the apostles. In Gal. 2:1-10 Paul names, as the reputed pillars of the Jerusalem church, James, Cephas and John, in that order. In Gal. 1:18-19 Paul mentions that three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and during his stay with Peter, he saw only James, the Lord's brother. This is confirmed by Peter's response to the messengers from James (Gal. 2:12). The episode in Gal. 2:11-14 indicates that Peter clearly respected James's authority.

We can also find recognition of James' primacy in the early church in later centuries. It is supported by Jewish and Christian writers. Josephus's vivid descriptions of the martyr death of James suggests that the leading role of James was recognized even outside of Christianity. Eusebius does not acknowledge Peter's leadership of the Jerusalem church, but instead James' leadership. Hegesippus's description of the martyrdom of James confirms the leadership of James in the early church. Clement of Alexandria (*Outlines*, Book 6) mentions the appointment of James the Just as Bishop of Jerusalem by the risen Jesus.

Statements about the leadership of James are also echoed in a number of pseudepigraphal "Gospels" such as "the Gospel of the Hebrews", "the Apocryphon of James" and "the Gospel of Thomas."

The information from various sources lead us to conclude that James, the brother of Jesus, was the leader of the early church. Historically he had a louder voice than other apostles such as Peter, John, and Paul. The ancient manuscripts witnessed to James at the head, with the Letter of James always placed in its proper place immediately after Acts, before the Pauline Epistles. The Letter of James should then not be marginalized, as much as James the leader should not be marginalized.

#### **2.1.2.4 The life of James according to literary sources**

##### **2.1.2.4.1 Was James an unbeliever during Jesus' ministry?**

It is commonly assumed that "James, like the other three brothers of Jesus, was not a follower of Jesus during Jesus' ministry, and indeed did not believe in Jesus' mission from God" (Bauckham 2001:106). It is supposed that since the risen Jesus appeared to James (1 Cor. 15:7), James came to

believe in Jesus as the Messiah. This view has been challenged by John Painter (1999:11-34; 2001:24-31), who argues that the Gospels provide no evidence that James, along with his mother and brothers, were not adherents of Jesus throughout his ministry. Evidence for the view of James as an unbeliever during Jesus' ministry is based on the Gospels of Mark and John. Especially two texts seem to support this view: the first is the treatment of the family in Mk. 3:20-35, and the other is John's description of the unbelief of the brothers of Jesus, in Jn. 7:3-5.

#### **2.1.2.4.1.1 Mark 3:20-35**

The treatment of the family in Mk. 3:20-35 is described at the event where Jesus returns "home" and encounters the crushing crowd that makes it impossible for him and the disciples even to take a meal. News of this causes the family to set out to restrain Jesus (3:21 NRSV, but see RSV) and his mother and brothers arrive (3:31).

Painter (2001:25) poses a question. He points out, first, the reference to "his family (οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ)" in 3:21. Most English Bibles [NRSV, NET, ESV, NLT, CEV, NIV] translate the text (οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ) as "his family." But the literal translation of "οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ" is "those (who are) from him." Painter argues that it has much more general expression (οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ), which has a wide range of possibilities and can just as easily mean "his friends" (RSV) or "associates" as "his family" (NRSV). There are other translations, such as "His own people" [NASB], "his friends" [KJV] and "his relations" [NJB]. Why has the recent trend of interpretations then moved to read this as "his family"? Many commentators, says Painter (2001:25), "appeal to the characteristic Markan sandwich structure formed by 3:20-21 and 3:31-35."

But Painter (2001:25-27) reasons that if Jesus' family arrives only at 3:31, it is then unnatural to assume the "οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ (those from him)" means "his family", which has not been mentioned yet. The disciples have been chosen to be with Jesus in 3:13-19; hence it seems natural to think that it refers to the disciples. Immediately after Jesus has chosen their election (3:13-19). He asserts that we should "return to an older reading of *hoi par autou* (in 3:21) understanding it to mean 'his friends' (RSV) or 'his associates,' that is, his disciples" (Painter 2001:26).<sup>39</sup>

Painter (2001:27) further argues that "there is nothing in this narrative that suggests any hostility on the part of the family." They wait patiently outside the house, sending a message to Jesus who is inside. Even when the negative evaluation seems to be constrained to the brothers, "scholars

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<sup>39</sup> See Painter (2001:26-27) for more detail about why the disciples act in such a negative way toward Jesus.

generally do not include the mother of Jesus in their negative evaluation, though she is present in 3:31-35.”

In conclusion, the “οἱ παρ’ αὐτοῦ” in Mk. 3:21 can refer to the disciples. Even though this passage may refer to his family, we cannot find any suggestions of the family’s hostility toward Jesus when we consider that there is the mother of Jesus, who is generally not included in the negative evaluation and their restraining him can be considered as behaviour aimed to protect Jesus. Consequently, the negative conclusions drawn concerning the family from this passage are ill-founded.

#### **2.1.2.4.1.2 John 7:3-5<sup>40</sup>**

More explicit indication of James’s opposition to Jesus is the reference to his brothers in Jn. 7:3-5. This text is taken to mean that his brothers did not believe in him. But Painter (2001:27) suggests that we need to notice John’s special point of view (see also 2:1-11, 12; 19:26-27) and John’s two levels of belief. Bauckham (2001:107) explains that “John’s portrayal of the unbelief of the brothers of Jesus belongs to his quite complex account of belief and unbelief, inadequate and more adequate belief.”

When the disciples saw Jesus’ first sign, turning water into wine, John writes that they believed in him (Jn. 2:11). But in Jn. 14:10-11 Jesus indicates that the disciples do not have belief, because Jesus says: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and Father is in me?” (14:10, NRSV), “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (14:11, NRSV). In Jn. 16:29-31 it is confirmed by Jesus’ saying: “Do you now believe?” According to Jesus, the belief of the disciples is questioned when the belief is about the relation between Jesus and the Father. They are not believers yet in the full Johannine sense.

Although the disciples were early believers they do not seem to have progressed beyond a first level of belief, as Jesus explains: “[u]nless you see signs and wonders you will not believe” (Jn. 4:48, NRSV). In Jn. 10:37-38 Jesus addresses the Jewish leaders, challenging them to see in his works that the Father is in him, and he in the Father (see also 5:17 and 10:30-36). Jesus also said to his disciples: “[b]elieve me” (14:11). The disciples were not yet true believers until Jn. 16:31, when they achieved the second level of belief in the Johannine sense.

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<sup>40</sup> Jn. 7:3-5: So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” For not even his brothers believed in him [NRSV].

John shows at least two levels of belief in the disciples. Yet, even though the disciples' belief is questioned by Jesus, "Do you now believe?", and this seems to be apply similarly to Jesus' brothers.

Although the narrator says suspiciously of them, "not even his brothers were believing in him," there is an obvious indication that the brothers acknowledged that Jesus' signs, revealed when the brothers suggested Jesus to go to Jerusalem "so that your disciples may see your *works* which you do." Painter (2001:27) points out that "Here the brothers use the more positive term *works* which, in John, also covers the signs but frequently draws attention to Jesus' relation to the Father (see 5:17, 36)."

Painter (2001:28) also provides "*five factors*" common to this story (Jn. 7:3-5) and Jesus' first sign story at the wedding in Cana in Galilee (2:1-11):

- (1) Both concern the family of Jesus, his mother in 2:1-11 and his brothers in 7:3-9.
- (2) In each story, the family makes an implicit or explicit request.
- (3) In each case, Jesus apparently rejects the request.
- (4) The words with which Jesus "turns down" the request bear a close resemblance in each case. In the first, "Woman, what is there between you and me, *my time has not yet come*"; in the second, "*my time is not yet but your time is always ready . . . my time is not yet fulfilled.*"
- (5) In each case, Jesus actually complies with the request. He deals with the lack of wine and goes up to Jerusalem on the Feast, even if secretly and not openly as his brothers requested (7:4, 10).

All of this, as Painter (2001:28) says, shows that "the brothers were believers but their belief sought a different goal for Jesus than the one to which he was committed, according to John."

The surprising order of the names in Jn. 2:12 also draws our attention. After the first sign at Cana, *Jesus* "went down to Capernaum with *his mother, his brothers, and his disciples*; and they remained there a few days" (NRSV, emphasis added). The role of the family is certainly emphasised among the groups of Jesus. We can say that the brothers of Jesus were followers, even though they had not understood Jesus' own plan of his mission.

Acts 1:14 also supports this view by describing those who were "devoting themselves to prayer, together with women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers" (ESV). Again, the brothers of Jesus are grouped together with the mother of Jesus and their place is amongst his followers.

### 2.1.2.4.1.3 Conclusion

The usual view about the faith of James is that he was not a follower of Jesus during Jesus' ministry. The evidence for this is based on texts in the Gospels of Mark and John. The meaning of "οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ" in Mk. 3:21 can also refer to the disciples, however. It is unnatural that the "οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ (those from him)" would mean "his family", which is only mentioned at 3:31 and has not been mentioned yet. A more obvious deduction would be that it refers to the disciples immediately after Jesus has chosen them to be with him (3:13-19). Even though the "οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ (those from him)" may mean "his family", we cannot find any grounds for the brothers' hostility toward Jesus when we consider the mother of Jesus, who is generally included in the positive evaluation.

Although John says suspiciously, "not even his brothers believed in him" (NRSV), Painter and Bauckham suggest that John's portrayal of the unbelief of the brothers of Jesus should be understood in John's quite complex account of belief and unbelief, which includes at least two levels of belief.<sup>41</sup> There is an obvious indication that the brothers acknowledged that Jesus had performed signs. Indeed, Jn. 7:3 describes the brothers using the more positive term *works* which, in John, also frequently draws attention to Jesus' relation to the Father. The five common factors between this story in Jn. 7:3-5 and the story of Jesus' first sign at Cana (2:1-11) provide the explanation for the brother's belief. The order of the names in Jn. 2:12 also shows that the role of the family had significance among the groups of Jesus.

John recounts that the disciples believed in Jesus after the first sign at Cana (2:11), but Jesus questioned their faith by asking "Do you now believe?" (Jn. 16:31). Nevertheless, no one would suggest that the disciples were not believers. This seems to apply also in the case of the brothers of Jesus.

Acts 1:14 also supports this view by describing that his brothers were devoting time to prayer together with the followers of Jesus. We find that both Mark and John delineate the family and disciples of Jesus in similar terms. Whatever critical decisions are drawn concerning the brothers must also be drawn concerning the disciples. Therefore we reach a conclusion that the negative view of the brothers of Jesus during his ministry is unjustified.

### 2.1.2.4.2 James as a religious man

In the New Testament the book of Acts provides the major information about James, the brother of Jesus. In Acts 1:14, he is included among those waiting with the apostles for the gift of the Holy Spirit. At the apostolic council (Acts 15:1-29) it is James who makes the final decision, with which

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<sup>41</sup> Hartin (2009:17), following Painter, agrees with John's illustrating "different aspects of belief in Jesus."

everyone agrees, that they lay on Gentile Jesus followers no greater burden than abstaining “from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality” (Acts 15:28-29, ESV).

On Paul’s final trip to Jerusalem, Paul, together with his mission fellows, is brought into the presence of James and the elders (21:18). He explains “what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry” (21:19, NET). The elders respond by glorifying God (21:20). This means “they express approval of God’s activity through Paul in the Gentile mission” (Johnson 2005:97). The apostolic decision issued for the Gentiles is confirmed by James and the elders (21:25). Johnson points out that on the one hand, no obligations beyond the judgment in 15:23-29 are added. “On the other hand, Paul’s own fidelity to his Jewish identity is questioned, not by James or the elders, but by some of the Jewish believers ‘zealous for the law’ who claim that Paul has told *Jews* to stop circumcising their children or practicing the law (21:20—21)” (2005:97-98). James and the elders suggest that Paul perform a ritual act in the Temple to show his allegiance to the people (21:24). Several of Johnson’s arguments are worth noting here:

First, the entire speech comes from the board of elders as a whole, “they said to him”; James is portrayed simply as one of the group. Second, the charges against Paul come not from the leadership but from the zealous law-observers. Third, the charges have to do not with the validity of the Gentile mission in any fashion, but exclusively with Paul’s teaching and practice as a Jew in the diaspora. Fourth, both the narrative of Acts (16:3; 18:18; 20:16) as well as Paul’s own letters show the charges to be a canard: Paul *never* advocated Jews’ abandoning their ancestral customs; he only resisted the demand that Gentiles adopt them (Johnson 2005:98).

In summary, James is pictured in Acts as one of the followers of Jesus (1:14) and as a crucial decider at the apostolic council (15:23-29) and a law-observer among Jews (21:20-25).

Although we are not informed much about the life of James, the brother of Jesus, in the NT, ancient historians like Josephus and Eusebius report the memories of James well “because he was viewed as the model of a pious man” (Lockett 2012:12). “Tradition of the martyrdom of James is known to us in Josephus (*Ant.* 20.197-203) and Christian traditions gathered by Eusebius from a variety of sources of which Clement of Alexandria and Hegesippus are named” (Painter 1999:5).

Hegesippus describes James as a holy man from his birth; he drank no wine and ate no animal food; he did not have his hair cut; he did not smear himself with oil, and he took no baths; he alone was allowed to enter the sanctum. Given that he spent so much time in the temple kneeling in prayer for the people, he was nicknamed “Camel Knees” (Swindoll 2010:19), and for “his superior righteousness” he was called “the Just” (*H.E.* 2.23).

It is obvious that James remained faithful to the whole law, as Acts and historians report. Dibelius (1976:17-18) considers him as a “strict legalist” or “Christina ritualist.” Allison (2013:19-20), following Kümmel, contends that James, the brother of Jesus, could not have spoken of “the perfect law of freedom” (1:25) or that he could not have concrete illustration to the Law in ethical commands (2:11f) without reference to ritual requirements. No doubt the law in the Letter of James pays much attention to moral demands rather than ritual laws. “It focuses on the love of neighbour, and explicates that love through specific attitudes and actions prescribed by Torah” (Johnson 2004:9). But the Letter of James is consistent with Acts and Eusebius’s notes. As Bauckham (2002:23) says, there is no reason why James as “a Palestinian Jew” should not remain faithful to the whole law, while drawing his attention to moral demands when he writes the Letter to the Jesus followers who are mostly Jews scattered among the nations; but Gentiles were not to be excluded, for certainly some Gentiles had become Jesus followers, like in the church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26). As Doriani (2007:6) argues, the same fervour is evident in James’s epistle. At the Jerusalem Council, although James resolved not to trouble those Gentiles who had turned to God (15:19), he specified abstinence of some things of distinctively Jewish law (Acts 21:19-21), and at Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem he and elders suggested that Paul perform a ritual act in the Temple (21:24); yet it seems that “his goal was peaceful relations in early church life as Jew and Gentile learned to live together as the family of God.”

In conclusion, James had a passion to live as a pious man, abstaining from drinking wine and eating certain kinds of food, and keeping his body natural. He spent much time in prayer for the people. He adhered to observance of the whole of the law as a Palestinian Jew, but focused on the moral laws rather than simply on ritual laws. James acquired the title “James the Just” because of his lofty righteousness.

#### **2.1.2.4.3 The death of James**

The legend of the death of James is told by Josephus (*Ant.* 20.197-203) and “Christian traditions gathered by Eusebius from a variety of sources of which Clement of Alexandria and Hegesippus are named” (Painter 1999:5).

Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, writes of the death of James:

And now Caesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea, as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also

himself called Ananus. ... But this younger Ananus, who, ... took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews ... ; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. ... he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned (*Ant.* 20.9.1).

According to Josephus, James died in 62 AD.<sup>42</sup> The Sanhedrin assembled by the High Priest Ananus (Annas) II condemned James and some others to be stoned. Josephus does not describe the offence of which James and the others were accused (Bauckham 1999:218). Josephus's account is the earliest evidence of James's death we possess. The earliest Christian account is to be found in the tradition transmitted by Hegesippus. He writes, in Book 5 of his *Memoirs*:

Representatives of the seven sects among the [Jewish] people, which I previously described (in the Memoirs), asked him what "the door of Jesus" meant, and he replied that he was the Savior. Because of this, some believed that Jesus was the Christ. The sects mentioned above did not believe in a resurrection or in One who is coming to reward each according to his deeds, but those who did believe did so because of James. Now, since many even of the rulers believed, there was an uproar among the Jews, scribes, and Pharisees saying that the whole populace was in danger of expecting Jesus as the Christ. So they assembled and said to James: "We call on you to restrain the people, since they have gone astray after Jesus, believing him to be the Christ. We call on you to persuade all who come for the Passover concerning Jesus, since all of us trust you. We and the entire populace can vouch for the fact that you are righteous and take no one at face value. So do persuade the crowd not to err regarding Jesus, since we and all the people respect you. So stand on the parapet of the temple, where you can be clearly seen from that height and your words be heard by all the people with all the tribes, and Gentiles too, gathered for the Passover."

So the scribes and Pharisees made James stand on the temple parapet, and they shouted to him, "O righteous one, whom we all ought to believe, since the people are going astray after Jesus who was crucified, tell us, what does 'the door of Jesus' mean?" He replied with a loud voice, "Why do you ask me about the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven at the right hand of the Great Power, and he will come on the clouds of heaven." Many were convinced and rejoiced at James's testimony, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Then the scribes and Pharisees said to each other, "We made a bad mistake in providing such testimony to Jesus, but let us go up and throw him down so that they will be afraid and not believe him." And they cried out, "Oh, oh, even the just one has gone astray?" This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "Let us remove the just man, for he is unprofitable to us. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their works."

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<sup>42</sup> The journey of Luceius Albinus is the period following the death of Porcius Festus, and Luceius Albinus, the new Roman Procurator of Judea, held that position from 62 AD to 64 AD (Brunar & Marchant 2015:415). Because Albinus' journey to Alexandria might have finished no later than the summer of 62 AD, the date of James' death can be designated some time around that year (Painter 2005:136).

So they went up and threw down the righteous one. Then they said to each other, “Let us stone James the Just,” and they began to stone him, since the fall had not killed him. But he turned and knelt down, saying, “I implore you, O Lord, God and Father, forgive them: they do not know what they are doing.” While they were pelting him with stones, one of the priests among the sons of the Rechabites, to whom the prophet Jeremiah bore witness, cried out, “Stop! What are you doing? The righteous one is praying for you.” Then one of them, a laundryman, took the club that he used to beat out clothes and hit the Just on the head. Such was his martyrdom. They buried him on the spot by the temple, and his gravestone is still there by the temple. He became a true witness to both Jews and Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ (*H.E.* 2.23).

Clement [of Alexandria], in *Outlines*, in Book 7, says about him:

After the resurrection the Lord imparted the higher knowledge [*gnosis*] to James the Just, John, and Peter. They gave it to the other apostles, and the other apostles to the Seventy, one of whom was Barnabas. Now there were two Jameses: one, James the Just, who was thrown down from the parapet [of the temple] and beaten to death with a fuller’s club; the other, the James who was beheaded [Acts 12:2] (*H.E.* 2.1.3-6, translated by Maier 2007).

Clement’s report is simple. James was thrown down from the parapet (of the Temple) and beaten to death with a fuller’s club. Clement does not mention the stoning of James, which is common to the accounts of Josephus and Hegesippus.

According to Hegesippus, the scribes and Pharisees (not Ananus II in Josephus) threw James from the pinnacle of the temple. He began to pray for the people since the fall had not killed him. They then began to stone him while he was praying in words reminiscent of Jesus’ words from the cross (Lk. 23:34) and of Stephen (Acts 7:60), and one of them clubbed James the Just to death with one blow.

In Clement, James was thrown down from the pinnacle of the Temple and clubbed to death. In Josephus, Ananus II assembled the Sanhedrin and accused James and some others as breakers of the law, and delivered them to be stoned. It seems that Hegesippus joined both narratives. According to Hegesippus, James was thrown from the pinnacle, stoned, and then killed by a club. Eusebius joins “the brief quotation from Clement with the extended account of Hegesippus and the less detailed account of Josephus” (Painter 2005:158).

There are irreconcilable conflicts in these three accounts: (1) According to Hegesippus, the opponents are “the scribes and Pharisees” who put him to death, but Josephus reports that it was Ananus II with the Sanhedrin who opposed James<sup>43</sup>, while Clement omits it. (2) As Painter (2005:116) points out, “[w]hile Hegesippus mentions the fuller’s club, in his account James was

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<sup>43</sup> According to *the Second Apocalypse of James*, the opponents were the priests (Bauckham 1999:202).

dispatched by a single blow, whereas by Clement's account (James was beaten to death) implies repeated blows." (3) The reason for the execution of James is said to be the witness of James to Jesus reported by Hegesppus. Josephus simply accounts that it is for transgressing the law that James was condemned and stoned to death, without identifying the alleged offence. Clement makes no mention to any official action or a charge against James. Myllykoski (2007:67-68) summarizes what his survey of the reason of James' execution:

- A. Some scholars argue that the Sadducean high priest Ananus did not have James executed because of his proclamation of Christ but because of his religious and political opposition to the priestly aristocracy.
- B. Some scholars suggest that James died because of his confession of Jesus Christ and his active and influential leadership of the Jewish-Christian community

Scholars favour the account of Josephus above the other contentions. Painter explains that the version offered by Hegesippus has an ideological basis (2001:54), but that influential scholars J. B. Lightfoot (1865, 348-50) and Johannes Weiss (1917) consider the account of Josephus historically more reliable and therefore the more convincing.

### **2.1.2.5 Challenge to the traditional view: Pseudonymous authorship**

Many scholars (Moo 2015:49; Vlachos 2013:5-6; Gaebelein 2012; McKnight 2011:38; Stevenson 2010 [2008]:3; Stulac 2010 [1993]:16-17; Swindoll 2010:11; Varner 2010:199; Gaebelein 2009 [1920]:4; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:36; McCartney 2009:32; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:35; Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:24; Carson 2007:998; Riesner 2007:1257; Watson 2007:120; Witherington III 2007:401; Gunderson 2006; Guthrie 2006:201; Baker 2005:349-350; Johnson 2005 [1995]:121; Kent 2005:11-12; Baker & Ellsworth 2004:4-5; Brosend 2004:5; Phillips 2004:10; Scaer 2004 [1983]:29; Bauckham 2003:1483; Bauckham 2003:1483; Bray 2000:1; Bailey 1999:4; Lea 1999:251; MacArthur 1998:5; Kistemaker 1996 [1986]:19; Ong 1996:26; Penner 1996:277; Johnson 1995:186; Hughes 1991:15; Patterson 1991:743; Adamson 1989:34; Motyer 1985 [1995]:22; Burdick 1981:162; Johnstone 1977:9-10; Ladd 1974; Knoch 1969:128; Sidebottom 1967 [2010]:11-13; Sidebottom 1967 [2010]:19-20; Mitton 1966:9; Stevenson 1966:13; Robertson 1959:4; Tasker 1956 [=1983. 1980]:32-33; Mayor 1954 [1892]:i; Lenski 1946:503; Cadoux 1944:32; King 1941:9-10; Loyd 1939; Knowling 1922 [1904]:xxxvii; Knowling 1922 [1904]:xxxvii-xxxviii; Knowling 1922 [1904]:xxxviii-xxxix; Robertson 1915:35-36; Hort 1909:xxiv-xxv; Zahn 1909:148; Plummer 1903 [1891]:31-42; Plummer 1903 [1891]:60-62; Fulford 1901:21; Bartlet 1899:233; Carr 1896:xxv-xxviii; Dale 1895:5; Plumptre 1890:42; Deems 1888:25;

Winkler 1888:9; Stier 1864; Neander 1852:13-14; Manton 1840) have confidence in the traditional attribution that James, the brother of the Lord, wrote this book. Others (Allison 2013:29; Boring 2012:443; Hartin 2009:25; Ringe 2009 [2007]:370; Byron 2007:461-462; Conti 2004:540; Harner 2004:9; Isaacs 2002:176; Burchard 2000; Sleeper 1998:39-40; Brown 1997:726; Wall 1997b:547; Perkins 1995:85; Laws 1980:40-41; Richard Kugelman 1980:12; Dibelius 1976 [1964]:3; Reicke 1964:6; Moffatt 1928:1-2; Ropes 1916 [2009]:49; Bacon 1900:13) consider James to be a pseudonymous composition. As a third alternative there are scholars (Painter 2012:25; Painter 2006:249; Barclay 2003 [1975]:30-31; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:493; Culpepper 2000:27; Felder 1998:1787; Davids 1996:542; Wheeler 1995:92; Chester 1994:14; Townsend 1994:xxxiii; Davids 1989:9; Martin 1988:lxvii; Davids 1982 [2013]:22; Blackman 1957:31) who have suggested a two-stage theory where an unknown editor has taken material from James and reworked it into its present form.<sup>44</sup>

The reasons against the traditional authorship of the Letter of James, which have persuaded many scholars, can be summarised briefly as follows:

1. The language and the cultural background of the Letter (see Bauckham 2003:1483; Johnson 2005:300; Adamson 1989:34; Moo 2000:24-25; Conti 2004:540; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:493; Brown 1997:741; Perkins 1995:84-85; Martin 1988:lxvii; Davids 1982:10-13);
2. The relationship of James to Paul (see Bauckham 2003:1483; Johnson 2005:300; Adamson 1989:34; Moo 2000:27-30; Culpepper 2000:27; Davids 1982:19-21);
3. The author ignores the ritual law, and has a “liberal” approach to the law (see Bauckham 2003:1483; Moo 2000:25-26; Culpepper 2000:27);
4. The epistle’s late acceptance into the canon (see Bauckham 2003:1483; Adamson 1989:34);
5. No reference to his special relationship to the Lord (see Moo 2000:23-24; Culpepper 2000:27);

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<sup>44</sup> There are some other opinions on the author of the Letter of James:

(1) Calvin (1959 [1999]:vi); Nelson (1872); Adam (1867:3); Lange & van Oosterzee (1867:16); Jacobi (1838:1-2) understand that the author is James, the son of Alphaeus.

(2) Bassett (1876:xxxvi, 1) favours St. James, the brother of John and the son of Zebedee as the author of the letter.

6. Similar to 1 Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas and 1 Peter, dated late in the first century (see Allison Jr. 2013:7; Davids 1989:4).

Of these reasons, the main arguments centre around (1) the language and cultural background of the letter, and (2) the inconvenient problem of the debate between James and Paul.

On the issue of language and cultural background, it has been noted that the author uses Hellenistic literary devices such as the diatribe (Jas. 1:13; 2:14-17; 3:2-5), an imaginary opponent (2:18-26); a Stoic paradox (2:10), and Stoic expressions (1:25; 2:12). Other devices include phrases from secular Greek (2:15-16), Greek metaphors (3:3-4, 7; 4:14), Greek sayings (4:15), and Greek philosophy and religion e.g. “the cycle of nature” in 3:6 (Conti 2004:540; Moo 2000:24).<sup>45</sup>

Many scholars, therefore, have serious doubts about the authorship of James. J. N. Sevenster has investigated the subject with great thoroughness and he concludes:

It has now been clearly demonstrated that a knowledge of Greek was in no way restricted to the upper circles, which were permeated with Hellenistic culture, but was to be found in all circles of Jewish society, and certainly in places bordering on regions where much Greek was spoken, e.g. Galilee (Sevenster 1968:190).

He also writes about the possibility of the author of the epistle of James being James, the brother of Jesus and contends that “in view of all the data made available in the past decades the possibility can no longer be precluded that a Palestinian Jewish Christian of the first century A.D. wrote an epistle in good Greek” (1968:191).

Riesner (2007:1256) also states that “with our deeper insight into the Hellenization of Judaea the argument of Greek language and style has lost much of its force.” Johnson (2005:301) further shows that, “research over the past thirty years has decisively demonstrated that Palestine was as thoroughly Hellenized with regard to language as was the diaspora.” In the words of Moo (1985:25):

Greek was widely used in Palestine (particularly in Galilee) and many Palestinians, even from poor families, would grow up with fluency in the language... The philosophical and religious concepts that are found in James are all in the nature of widespread, popular concepts that would have been familiar to decently educated people in Palestine, where Hellenistic ideas were very widespread.

The point is that it is questionable whether James received the kind of education that would have

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<sup>45</sup> See also a discussion of the genre of James in Chapter 3.

enabled him to write the letter. There are two significant arguments for James' authorship, however, which are linked with the Greek language. On the one hand, Bauckham (2003:1483) shows: "[w]hile it is difficult to judge what James could have learned in Nazareth, in Jerusalem he had every opportunity and good reason (preaching and teaching to visiting and resident diaspora Jews) for improving his Greek." Hengel (1989:10) estimates some 10-20 per cent of the population in the city of Jerusalem were Jews whose vernacular or mother tongue was Greek. These Jews had come from the Diaspora and settled permanently in Jerusalem (Bauckham 2002:24). Within the NT itself, as Townsend (1994:xxxiii) points out well, "there are strong hints of a multi-cultural society." According to Jn. 19:19-20, Pilate ordered the charge against Jesus on the board of cross to be written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Acts 6:1 also indicates "Hellenists" and "Hebrews" already present at the period in Jerusalem itself. The term "Hellenists" refers to Jewish Jesus followers whose mother tongue was Greek, or in cases probably only tongue was Greek. It is apparent from Acts 6:9 that at this stage Jerusalem had at least one Greek-speaking synagogue in, and that there were pockets of "Hellenistic" Jews forming part of Palestinian life and culture (Townsend 1994:xxxiii). In addition to the large part of the population of the city who spoke primarily Greek, "there were also, for several weeks every year, thousands of pilgrims from the Diaspora, many of whom could speak Greek and little or no Aramaic" (Bauckham 2002:24). The church in Jerusalem would probably have preached the Christian message to these visitors. James had every opportunity and very good reasons for developing good skills in Greek. "He would be quite used to using the Septuagint Greek version of the Scriptures in evangelism, discussion and worship with Greek-speaking Jews" (2002:24).

On the other hand, "since even the Jewish historian Josephus, who was certainly fluent in Greek, employed secretaries to polish his literary Greek," we cannot entirely exclude the possibility that the author of James might have done the same (Bauckham 2003:1483). Nonetheless, because of his position as the head of the Jerusalem church and the "Hellenistic" element of that church (cf. Acts 6:1), it is quite reasonable that the Lord's brother could have written this epistle. It can be presumed, therefore, that language is not a determining obstacle in the authorship debate of James.

My conclusion on the language issue is that there is sufficient evidence that James could have known Greek and could have had sufficient proficiency in Greek, at least with the help of an amanuensis.

Concerning the incongruity of James with Paul, some scholars argue that since the relationship between faith and works, and law and liberty are found neither in Jewish sources nor in the earliest

Christian traditions of the New Testament, the author might have been responding to ideas in Paul's writings. The response must have taken place only after publication of the writings towards the end of the first century, when they came into wider circulation. Since James the Just was most likely executed in 62 AD by the Sadducee high priest Ananus II, these same scholars further presume that he could not have written the Epistle of James (Wall 1997b:547). Like Luther, James' insistence that works are taken into account in justification (2:14-26) is often seen as a direct contradiction of Paul's proclamation of justification by faith "alone." Most scholars now agree, however, that the two cannot be said to be in direct contradiction on this issue (Moo 2000:27). There are three possibilities to resolve this conundrum:<sup>46</sup>

1. Each is unaware of what the other is saying; that is, the passage in James does not come from Paulinism (Beyschlag 1897:7<sup>47</sup>; Plummer 1903:143-147; Zahn 1909:1.124-25; Knowling 1922 [1904]:xli-xlv; Cadoux 1944:28-29; Schlatter 1956:7; Mitton 1966:99; Richard Kugelman 1980:31-32; Laws 1980:129; Davids 1980:102; Kistemaker 1986:60; Kistemaker 1996 [1986]:15-16; Davids 1989:78; Adamson 1989:33; Sleeper 1998:81-82; MacArthur 1998:125; Lea 1999:295; Davids 1999:52-53; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:127-131; Bauckham 2003:1488; Brosend 2004:9; Johnson 2005 [1995]:114; Riesner 2007:1259-1260; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:140; McCartney 2009:55; Hartin 2009:4; Varner 2010:116; Stulac 2010:16-17).
2. Paul is responding to James (Deems 1888:135; Winkler 1888:43; Spitta 1896:217; Mayor 1954 [1892]:x; Maclaren 1910:419; Robertson 1915:35-36, 128; King 1941:53; Scaer 2004 [1983]:91; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:35-36).
3. James is responding to a misunderstanding of the Pauline Epistles (Hort 1909:xxiv-xxv;

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<sup>46</sup> There are more options on the relation between James and Paul; Mitchell (2007:77-79) introduces 7 options and suggests another eighth option, as follows:

1. James and Paul were completely independent (any alleged overlaps are mere coincidence).
2. James and Paul both reflect 'Hellenistic Judaism' or 'first generation Jewish [Christianity]' (without direct connection to one another).
3. Paul knew the Epistle of James and wrote against it in his letter(s), especially Galatians (and/or Romans).
4. James did not know Paul's letters but had heard something (accurate) about Paul.
5. James did not know Paul's letters but had heard something (inaccurate) about Paul.
6. James depends on the Pauline letters (especially Galatians, perhaps Romans) and writes against them because he understands how radical Paul's teaching is on justification and wishes to combat it.
7. James depends on the Pauline letters (especially Galatians, perhaps Romans) and writes against them, but 'misunderstands' Paul's true teaching on justification and wishes to combat it.
8. The author of the Letter of James knows some collection of Paul's letters, and writes *from within Paulinism* (rather than in opposition to Paul), creating a compromise document which has as one of its purposes reconciling 'Paul with Paul' and 'Paul with the pillars'.

<sup>47</sup> The three scholars, Beyschlag (1897:7); Zahn (1909:1.124-25); and Schlatter (1956:7), are cited from McCartney (2009:54).

Ropes 1916:205; Reicke 1964:34; Stevenson 1966:54-55; Knoch 1969:183; Sanders 2012 [1975]:121; Dibelius 1976:166; Moo 2000:27; Adamson 1989:35; Felder 1998:1795-1796; Culpepper 2000:34; Dowd 2000:202; Isaacs 2002:209; Baker 2005:350; Popkes 2005:138; Guthrie 2006:241; Andria 2006:1512; Mitchell 2007:77-79; Doriani 2007:94; Ringe 2009:371; McKnight 2011:261, 263; Boring 2012:442).

4. James is responding negatively to Paul or Paul's teaching (Allison Jr 2013:452, 496).

As we observe from the above, many scholars favour the third situation, that James is reacting to a misunderstood Pauline theology. This is because the slogan "justification by faith" which James deals with is difficult to trace to any source other than the preaching of Paul, who has made it a distinctive part of his message. On this basis, then, it is claimed that the Letter of James could not have been written by James of Jerusalem, because this James would have been very well-acquainted with the teaching of Paul. The two were key participants in the first "council" of the church (Acts 15), and met at a later date, when some of these basic theological issues must have been discussed (Acts 21:18-25). The letter of James must have been written late in the first century, when Paul's theology was no longer understood in its proper context. Moo (1985:28), however, rightly points out that, "we know also that already during Paul's ministry his preaching on justification by faith was being misunderstood (cf. Rom. 3:5-8)." Peter also mentions that some people who are ignorant and unstable distort some difficult teaching in the Letter of Paul (2 Pet. 3:15-16). It is not at all improbable, then, that James corrects the misuse of Paul's teaching.

Recently, more scholars argue that James and Paul are writing about justification within their own different contexts independent of one another and they insist that "James should be read on its own terms rather than as a reaction to Paul or Paulinism or at least prior to making a judgment whether it is a reaction to Paul" (McCartney 2009:54). Because of the linguistic parallels<sup>48</sup> and discussions of Abraham by Paul and James and whether he was *justified by faith without works of the law* or *by works and not by faith alone* in both Paul and James, many consider James to be either responding to Paul or *vice versa*. Scholars who suggest that James is writing independently from Paul, provide the following reasons: (1) both James and Paul use the key terms differently, (2) "[t]he respective value for salvation of faith and works was not a new question when James wrote" (Cadoux 1944:27). James' idea of faith and works, and his understanding of Abraham can be explained with the Old Testament, Jewish literature and the preaching of Jesus without Paul's teaching.

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<sup>48</sup> See Nienhuis (2009:186) and Allison (2013:445-446) for the linguistic parallels between James and Paul.

First, on closer examination, it is obvious that James and Paul use the linguistic words and the example of Abraham differently. As Kistemaker (1996 [1986]:15) says: “[b]oth James and Paul develop the topic *faith and works*, each from his own perspective, and each for his own purpose.” Both James and Paul quote Gen. 15:6 (Jas. 2:23; Paul, Rom. 4:16-22; Gal. 3:6), but while Paul uses the story of Abraham for the justification by faith with works, James appeals to the case of Abraham for the justification by works. Laws (1980:129) also observes that “whereas Paul interprets the justifying faith of Abraham in relation to the immediate context of the promises of God (quoting Gen. 15:5), James links it with the offering of Isaac (alluding to Gen. 22:2, 9).” It is precisely evident that James’ definitions of each of the three critical terms, πίστις, ἔργον and δικαίωσις, especially in the passage Jas. 2:14-26, as well as his use of the Abraham example, differs from Paul.<sup>49</sup> Knowling (1922:xliv) contends that “it is strange that he should quote the same passage Gen. xv. 6 which St Paul employs, Rom. iv. 1-8, and that he should simply content himself with drawing from it his own conclusion, without seeking to invalidate St Paul’s deductions by any explanations.” Knowling (1922:xliv) also points out that “[t]here would also still remain the strange fact that in writing to Jewish-Christians on such a subject as the possible perversions of St Paul’s teaching, St James should make no reference to those ‘works of law’ which played so prominent a part in St Paul’s own exposition of his doctrine.”

Secondly, some scholars (e.g. McCartney 2009:55; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:122-124; Penner 1996:56-65; Blondel 1979:148; Cadoux 1944:27-29; Knowling 1922 [1904]:xlii-xliv; Plummer 1903 [1891]:143-147; Kistemaker 1986:55-56) further argue that the ideas regarding justification, faith and works are in close proximity with Jewish tradition and the sayings of Jesus. For Cadoux (1944:27-29), when James wrote: “Yea, a man will say . . .” 2 Esdras IX. 7 speaks of “every one that shall be saved, and shall be able to escape by his works, or by faith. ....” Knowling (1922 [1904]:xlii-xliii) introduces some passages in the *Testament of Abraham*, *Apocalypse of Baruch* and *2 Esdras* to support the argument that the passages in James can have their origin in Jewish literature. He insists that “it would certainly seem that both Baruch and Esdras help us to draw the same inference, viz. that the question of salvation by faith or works was not [being] raised for the first time in the New Testament.”

Bauckham (2002 [1999]:122-124) focuses on the example of Abraham, for “picking up James’ allusions to the Genesis narrative and reading them in the light of the Jewish interpretations of Abraham’s faith which form the background and context of James’ discussion.” He (2002 [1999]:122-123) provides two key points from Abraham’s life in the Jewish literature:

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<sup>49</sup> See Chapter 1 for the different use of the terms in James and Paul.

Two key points in this life are singled out by James. In Genesis 15:4-5 God promises Abraham, whose wife is barren, a son and heir through whom Abraham will have innumerable descendants. There follows the verse James quotes: ‘Abram believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness’ (Gen. 15:6 LXX). Allusions to this verse are frequent in Second Temple Jewish literature (Neh. 9:8; Jub. 14:6; 1 Macc. 2:52; Philo, *Leg. All.* 3.228; *Quis Her.* 90-95; *Mig.* 43-44; *Quod Deus* 4; *Mut.* 177-178, 186; *Abr.* 273; *Virt.* 216; cf. LAB 23:5-6). It could be applied both to earlier (Philo, *Virt.* 216; LAB 23:5) and to later (1 Macc. 2:52; cf. Jub. 17:15-18; 18:16; 19:8-9; Sir. 44:20) events in Abraham’s life, because it was taken to characterize Abraham’s relationship with God throughout his life, but this does not mean that its context in Genesis 15 was neglected. There it characterizes Abraham’s faith as unswerving confidence in God’s promise in spite of all appearances.

The second event in Abraham’s life to which James refers (2:21) is the Aqedah (Gen. 22), equally well-known in Jewish literature. Following Genesis 22:1 (“God tested Abraham”), it was considered the most difficult and most important of the tests (sometimes reckoned as ten: Jub. 17:15-18; 19:8; m. ’Avot 5:3) to which God subjected Abraham to prove his faith and obedience (Judith 8:26-27; Sir. 44:20; Jub. 17:15-18:16; 1 Macc. 2:52; LAB 40:2, 5; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.223, 233; Philo, *Som.* 1.194-195; Heb. 11:17). It was often related to Genesis 15:6 (1 Macc. 2:52; Philo, *Quod Deus* 4; *Abr.* 273). The command to sacrifice Isaac tested severely Abraham’s trust in God’s promise of innumerable descendants. But unhesitatingly he obeyed the command, and consequently (“because you have done this thing”, “because you have obeyed my voice”) God renewed the promise (Gen. 22:15-18). By means of this “work” Abraham’s faith in God stood the test.

Bauckham (2002 [1999]:122) concludes:

We could say that Abraham’s works, by which he passed God’s tests of his faith, proved his faith to be faithfulness. That Abraham was ‘found faithful’ (ἡμαρ, πιστός) can be said both with reference to Genesis 15:6 (Neh. 9:8: ‘you found his heart faithful before you’) and with reference to the Aqedah (1 Macc. 2:52; Sir. 44:20; 1 Clem. 10:1) and other tests (Jub. 17:18; 19:8, 9). In all these cases the phrase is fundamentally an interpretation of ‘Abram believed (ἠμαρ, ἐπίστευσεν) God’ in Genesis 15:6. There is no real distinction between faith and faithfulness here

Bauckham (2003:1488) makes clear that “James’s understanding of Abraham and Gen 15:6 is fully in line with Jewish tradition, while Paul’s is innovatory.” Penner (1996:65) also finds that “Consequently, 1 Macc. 2.51-52 would provide a much closer functional parallel to the text of James 2 than any of the Pauline passages.” Plummer (1903:145) finds evidence of this in the Apocrypha itself: “Abraham was a great father of many people ... and when he was proved he was found faithful” (Ecclus. xlv. 19, 20). “Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness?” (1 Macc. ii. 52). He (1903:145) then asserts that “the interrogative form of sentence may have suggested the interrogation of St. James.” Furthermore, Plummer (1903:145-146) observes that “with Philo faith and the faith of Abraham are common

topics. He calls it ‘the queen of the virtues,’ and the possessor of it ‘will bring a faultless and most fair sacrifice to God.’” Plummer’s (1903:146) deduction is that “these suffice to show that the nature of faith, and the special merit of Abraham’s faith, were subjects often discussed among Jews, and were likely to be familiar to those whom St. James addresses.”

Kistemaker (1986:55-56) maintains that “James depends on the preaching of Jesus, discusses the topic of faith and works independently of Paul’s teaching, and writes on submission to God in a more elementary form than that which Peter presents in his epistles.” From a literary point of view, in his view (1986:56), “scholars generally acknowledge that James is not quoting from but alluding to the synoptic gospels ... so that it is safe to say that James relies on the spoken word and conveys allusion to the written gospel.” On the basis of many allusions to the teaching of Jesus, Kistemaker maintains that “James had heard Jesus preach on many occasions and therefore had become familiar with his teachings. With ‘eyewitnesses and servants of the word’ (Lk. 1:2), James participated in receiving and delivering the message of Jesus.” McCartney (2009:55) emphasises that “if one reads the Gospels, one can find plenty of cases where Jesus berates his fellow Jews precisely for failing to do the kinds of works that are most important to God, focusing instead on Sabbath observance or food laws (e.g. Mt. 12:1-7; 23:25-26).” He explicates that “[t]he scribes and the Pharisees that Jesus so readily calls ‘hypocrites’ were devoid precisely of those ‘works’ that James insists are a necessary correlate of real faith, even though those same scribes and Pharisees undoubtedly would have vigorously proclaimed their ‘faith’ in one God.”

In conclusion, on the basis of a series of correlations between James and Paul, especially the usage of “δικαιόω in the passive + instrumental ἐκ” (Allison 2013:445) and using the same vocabulary in a similar structure (Gal. 2:16, Jas. 2:24) (Nienhuis 2009:186), which are rare expressions before Paul and other literature, many insist that James is responding to Paul. But when we examine this more closely, it is clear that James’ usage of the three key terms, πίστις, ἔργον and δικαιόω as well as his using of the Abraham example, are quite different from Paul’s. Scholars also find that the ideas of justification, faith and works in James are not new because James’s understandings of the justification and the nature of faith are fully in line with Jewish tradition and the teaching of Jesus. As Sleeper (1998:82) declares: “James is much closer to the Jewish tradition; Paul’s view is an aberration.” McCartney (2009:55) summarizes it well:

It thus appears that James has features that can be linked to Greco-Roman moral exhortations, and to OT wisdom and poetry, and to OT prophetic material, and to Jewish Second Temple literature, and to certain other NT writings, both Gospels (especially Matthew) and other NT writings (especially 1 Peter).

We can conclude that James wrote his letter independently of Paul's letters. But it is improbable that James would not be acquainted with the misunderstandings of Paul's teaching because as the leader of the church in Jerusalem he would have received the perverted teaching of Paul on justification by faith, which was already being misunderstood during Paul's ministry (cf. Rom. 3:5-8; 6:1-2, 12-15; Gal. 5:13-14).

#### **2.1.2.6 Conclusion: The author of James**

In view of the above arguments, we can summarize that Hellenistic ideas and language were very widespread in Palestine, therefore language is not a final obstacle when we consider especially the position of James as the head of the Jerusalem church, and the "Hellenistic" nature of that church (cf. Acts 6:1). Because James's exhortation on the justification and the nature of faith are closely connected with Jewish tradition, the Old Testament, and the saying of Jesus and seeing as that Paul's teaching on justification by faith was already being misunderstood during Paul's ministry (cf. Rom. 3:5-8), it is quite probable that James wrote his letter independently of Paul. It is also not improbable that James corrects the misuse of Paul's teaching. We conclude, therefore, that the epistle contains nothing that James, the Lord's brother, could not have written.

#### **2.1.3 Date and place of the writing of James**

Determining the date of James in history is important in discussing the background of the book. In the case of this epistle, the authorship is related to its date, because if James the Just, the Lord's brother, wrote the letter, one must date it in its present form within the lifetime of that James. Therefore, regarding the Epistle of James, we cannot separate the discussion of date from that of the authorship (Davids 1982:2).

As for the date of James, opinions are remarkably diverse. The following list summarises some of the prominent opinions on the matters:

**Table 1 The date of the Letter of James**

Name year <sup>50</sup>	Opinions on the date of the Letter of James			
	James, the Just	two-stage	pseudonymous	others
Aymer 2017 [2015]	between 40-60			
Moo 2015	around 45-47			
Utley 2013	before 62			
Vlachos 2013	mid to late 40s			
Allison 2013			100-120	
Davids 2013 [1982]		55-65 or 75-85		
Gaebelein 2012	around 45			
Grant 2012	very early date			
Boring 2012			the end of the first century or early in the second century	
Painter 2012			in the 80s or 90s	
Lockett 2012				unclear
McKnight 2011	in the 50s			
Broer 2010* <sup>51</sup>			70-100	
Sidebottom 2010 [1967]	as early as 60			
Stevenson 2010 [2008]	around 45-50			
Stulac 2010 [1993]	earlier than 50			
Swindoll 2010	around 45-49			
Varner 2010	before 62			
Gaebelein 2009 [1920]	around 45			
Hiebert 2009 [1979]	about 46			
McCartney 2009	in the mid to late 40s			
Hartin 2009			in the late of the 60s	
Ringe 2009 [2007]			the end of the first century or early in the second century	
Ropes 2009 [1916]			75-125	
Batten 2009				unclear
Blomberg & Kamell 2008	about 44-62			
Morgan & Ellenburg 2008	between 46 and 49			
Carson 2007	in the 40s			
Nienhuis 2007*			the middle of the second century	
Riesner 2007	the middle of the 40s			
Watson 2007	in the 50s			
Witherington 2007	in the 50s			
Byron 2007			the end of the first century or early in the second century	
Gunderson 2006	the earliest epistle			
Guthrie 2006	in the mid to late 40s			
Painter 2006		70-130		
Baker 2005	very early date			
Johnson 2005 [1995]	in the 50s			
Kent 2005	in the 40s			

<sup>50</sup> Years here are the published years that the books were published and the order of lists is published years.

<sup>51</sup> Sources marked with "\*" are mentioned in Allison (2013:28-29).

Baker & Ellsworth 2004	the earliest epistle			
Brosend 2004	in the 50s			
Phillips 2004	between 44-50			
Scaer 2004 [1983]	around 45-47			
Conti 2004			the end of the first century	
Fabris 2004*			70-100	
Harner 2004				never know
Bauckham 2003	very early date			
Barclay 2003 [1975]			after 62	
Isaacs 2002			the end of the first century	
Grieb 2002				never know
Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001		within his lifetime or very shortly after his death		
Bray 2000	the earliest epistle			
Burchard 2000			the late first century	
Culpepper 2000		middle of the 60s		
Bailey 1999	before 62			
Calvin 1999 [1959]	61			
Lea 1999	in the 50s			
MacArthur 1998	44-49			
Sleeper 1998			between the mid-70s and the mid-80s	
Felder 1998			in the late 80's or 90's	
Hahn-Müller 1998*			not before the last third of the first cent	
Brown 1997			the 80s or 90s	
Wall 1997b			the late first century	
Nystrom 1997				unclear
Kistemaker 1996 [1986]	in the middle of the 50s			
Ong 1996	between 40-62			
Penner 1996	40-60 CE			
Dauids 1996		50-70		
Webber 1996*			late first or early second cent	
Johnson 1995	the middle of the first century			
Motyer 1995 [1985]	before 62			
Perkins 1995			after 62	
Wheeler 1995		in the mid-to-late first century		
Chester 1994			in the 80s or 90s	
Frankemölle 1994*			the last quarter of the first century or beginning of the second century	
Townsend 1994		within his lifetime or very shortly after his death		
Floor 1992*	40-50			
Hughes 1991	before 49			
Patterson 1991	as early as 48			
Adamson 1989	40-45			
Dauids 1989			62-66	
Dschulnigg 1988*	60			

Martin 1988		middle of 50-70		
Burdick 1981	between 45 and 50			
Laws 1980			after 62	
Richard Kugelman 1980			80-100	
Johnstone 1977	not long before 50			
Dibelius 1976 [1964]			80-130	
Ladd 1974	before 62			
Cantinat 1973*			the last decades of the first century	
Knoch 1969	before 62			
Mitton 1966	before 62			
Stevenson 1966	before 62			
Reicke 1964			around 90	
Elliott-Binns 1962*	40-50			
Robertson 1959	before 62			
Harnack 1958*			120-50	
Blackman 1957		70-130		
Easton 1957 <sup>52</sup>			between 80 and 100	
Tasker 1956	circa 60			
Mayor 1954 [1892]	before 62			
Young 1948*			117-38	
Lenski 1946	between 40-50			
Cadoux 1944	before 62			
King 1941	before 62			
Loyd 1939	before 62			
Enslin 1938*			70-125	
Marty 1935*			late first, early second century	
Meyer 1930 <sup>53</sup>			80-90	
Moffatt 1928			between about 70 and 90	
Chaine 1927*	57-62			
Knowling 1922 [1904]	about 46-47			
Robertson 1915	between 40-50			
Hort 1909	60 or a little after			
Zahn 1909	circa 45-50			
Plummer 1903 [1891]	45-49 or 53-62			
Fulford 1901	before 49			
Bacon 1900			between 75 and 95	
Bartlet 1899	44-49			
Carr 1896	before 49			
Spitta 1896	before 50			
Dale 1895	before 62			
Massebieau 1895*	before 50			
Plumptre 1890	between 44-50			
Deems 1888	AD 53-62			
Winkler 1888	around 45			
Bassett 1876	before 44			
Nelson 1872	uncertain but before 64			
Adam 1867	before 62			
Lange & van Oosterzee 1867	uncertain but before 62			
Stier 1864	before 62			
Neander 1852	before 62			

<sup>52</sup> Referred to in Harner (2004:13).

<sup>53</sup> Referred to in Harner (2004:9).

Manton 1840	after the heresies were developed, and before the decline of Jerusalem			
Jacobi 1838			after 62	

The traditional scholarly view was that the epistle of James was written by James, the brother of Jesus, prior to his death in 62AD. Recently, some scholars<sup>54</sup> have concluded that the epistle is a pseudonymous work, however, written in the name of James late in the first century.

Presently the traditional view is still strongly maintained by many scholars. Riesner remarks that the “new defenders” (Stulac 1993; Johnson 1995; Bauckham 1999) insist that the Letter was written from Jerusalem, where James resided, either before or after the Apostolic Council of 48 AD, while following earlier voices (Mayor 1913), some scholars (e.g. Moo 2000:33-35) argue that the Letter should be dated even earlier (Riesner 2007:1257).

As we have shown in the previous section, if James, the brother of the Lord, wrote the letter, it must be dated sometime before AD 62,<sup>55</sup> when James was martyred (Bauckham 2003:1483; Moo 2000:33-34; Culpepper 2000:26-27; Brown 1997:726; Perkins 1995:83-85; Patterson 1991:743; Adamson 1989:48). The traditional position has not lacked defenders, but it has split into two distinct camps; that is, that James the Just wrote the Letter (1) late in his life, AD 60-62 or (2) early in his life, AD 40-47. Davids (1982:5) explains that some scholars (e.g. Parry and Tasker) claim that James the Just wrote the work late in his life, AD 60-62 on the grounds that Jas. 2:14-26 argues against a distorted form of Paulinism, suggesting that it is probably later than Galatians and Romans. In the same camp, other scholars argue on the basis that James shows many similarities to 1 Peter (Moo 2000:33). Alternatively, following Mayor and Kittel, many scholars (e.g. Moo 2000:33-35; Penner 1996:276-277) support an early dating by arguing that James the Just wrote the work early in his leadership of the Jerusalem church. As Davids (1982:5) suggests, a probable date would be just prior to the Jerusalem Council.

There are about three arguments to consider for dating the Letter of James: (1) Whether James is

<sup>54</sup> The list of scholars include: Allison (2013:29); Boring (2012:443); Hartin (2009:25); Ringe (2009 [2007]:370); Byron (2007:461-462); Conti (2004:540); Harner (2004:9); Isaacs (2002:176); Burchard (2000); Sleeper (1998:39-40); Brown (1997:726); Wall (1997b:547); Perkins (1995:85); Laws (1980:40-41); Richard Kugelman (1980:12); Dibelius (1976 [1964]:3); Reicke (1964:6); Moffatt (1928:1-2); Ropes (1916 [2009]:49); Bacon (1900:13). The two-stage theory advocates: Painter (2012:25); Painter (2006:249); Barclay (2003 [1975]:30-31); Achtemeier, Green & Thompson (2001:493); Culpepper (2000:27); Felder (1998:1787); Davids (1996:542); Wheeler (1995:92); Chester (1994:14); Townsend (1994:xxxiii); Davids (1989:9); Martin (1988:lxxvii); Davids (1982 [2013]:22); Blackman (1957:31). See also the section, 2.1.2.5 Challenge to the traditional view: Pseudonymous authorship.

<sup>55</sup> Some, like Riesner (2007:1257), dates the death of James to 61 AD.

responding to Paul; 2) The late acceptance of the Letter of James in canon; 3) Similarities between this Epistle and other early writings.

The most important consideration in this matter is whether the author is responding to controversial elements of Paul's teaching, including the relationship between faith and works, and law and liberty. According to Wall (1997b:546-547):

Since these combinations are found neither in Jewish sources nor in the earliest Christian traditions of the NT, some scholars assume the author is responding to ideas found in Paul's writings and only after their publication toward the end of the first century when they came into a wider circulation (Holtzmann, Dibelius, Laws, Aland).

As we argued in the section on authorship, Jas. 2 implies awareness of Paul's slogan, "justification by faith", but may suggest that Paul's teaching was not understood correctly. Paul undoubtedly began preaching shortly after his conversion (about AD 33). How soon Paul seized on and proclaimed his distinctive emphasis on justification "apart from works of the law" is impossible to know for certain; but the earliest Pauline letters presume the full development of the concept. We know also that during Paul's ministry, his preaching on justification by faith was already being misunderstood (Richard Kugelman 1980:31-32, cf. also Rom. 3:5-8; 6:1-2, 12-15; Gal. 5:13-14). It is not at all improbable, then, that some Jesus followers who had been exposed to Paul's preaching may have – intentionally or not – perverted Paul's doctrine as an excuse for spiritual passivity (Moo 2000:28). Moo insists that we can surmise that Paul's preaching in Antioch, beginning around AD 45 (Acts 11:25-26), was heard and misunderstood by some Jewish Jesus followers in the same area (see Acts 11:19). Since these Jewish Jesus followers may well have looked on the Jerusalem church as their "home" church, it is quite possible that the head of that church, James, would have got wind of this perverted form of Paul's teaching and responded accordingly (Moo 2000:34).

The second reason for suggesting the pseudonymous authorship of James is that James came to be recognized as canonical Scripture rather late. Eusebius placed the James' letter among the 'disputed books' (*antilegomena*) (*H.E.* 3.25.3). Eusebius sharply distinguished the *antilegomena* from spurious works that were categorically rejected. As Plummer (1903 [1891]:15) emphasises: "Do not let us forget what the epithet 'disputed,' applied to these and one or two other books of the New Testament, really means." It does *not* mean rejected or regarded with suspicion. "Rather it means that these books were *not universally accepted*; that although they were, as a rule, regarded as canonical, and as part of the contents of the New Testament (*ἐνδιάθηκοι γραφαί*), yet in some quarters their authority was doubted or denied" (1903 [1891]:15-16). Hartin (1993:61) affirms that "[t]he authority of Scripture implies that those writings considered as part of the canon do have

relevance and importance for the Church at all times.”<sup>56</sup> As Johnson (2004:4) asserts, “[i]f Paul’s authority even in his own communities was never to be taken for granted, even by him, James’s authority, even outside Jerusalem, is never in doubt.”<sup>57</sup>

Thirdly, many have attempted to trace a connection between the Letter of James and the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, the New Testament, Jewish Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and early Christian literature. The numerous resemblances<sup>58</sup> are showed by many scholars in comparison between James and especially Proverbs, Ben Sirach, the Book of Wisdom, the Synoptic Gospels, Romans, 1 Peter, 1 Clement, and the Shepherd of Hermas. On the basis of the parallels between the Letter of James and other literature, many insist on some form of inter-dependence. For example, Allison (2013:29) argues that since the Letter of James “shows a likely knowledge of at least Romans and 1 Peter, it was likely not composed before 100.” But Spitta (1896:202-224, cf. Knowling 1922 [1904]:xlv; Mayor 1954 [1892]:xciii; Robertson 1915:35-36; King 1941:53; Scaer 2004 [1983]:91; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:35-36) nevertheless argues that Paul depended on James.

As Richard Kugelman (1980:4) argues, “none of these parallels is conclusive for postulating a

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<sup>56</sup> See “2.1.1 Canonicity of James” above for a full discussion on the canonicity of James.

<sup>57</sup> For the reasons of the slow recognition of the Letter of James, see Moo (2000 [1985]:17-18); Hiebert (2009 [1979]:16); Kent (2005:3); Brown (1997:744); Tasker (1956 [1980]:19); Lenski (1946:513-514); Knowling (1922 [1904]:liii-liv); Carr (1896:ix-x); Plumtre (1890:12-14).

<sup>58</sup> For parallels between the Letter of James and Proverbs (1:7; 2:6; 22:4), Sirach (1:1, 14, 26; 19:20), and Wisdom (1:6; 7:15), see Johnson 2005 [1995]:32-34.

For James and Gen. xvii. 5, Lev. 19:18c, Tob. 14:9, see Achtemeier, Green & Thompson (2001:501).

For James with Deut. 28, 4 Bar. 6, Proverbs, Ben Sirach, the Book of Wisdom, the Epistle of Aristeas, Philo of Alexandria, and so on, see Sidebottom (1967 [2010]:4).

For James with (1) Canonical Books of the Old Testament (2) Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (3) Philo (4) Greek Philosophers, see Mayor (1954 [1892]:cix-cxvi).

For James with Jewish literature: a. The Pirke Aboth, b. Qumran: IQS, CD, c. The Sentences of the Syriac Menander, d. The Letter of Aristeas, e. 4 Maccabees, f. The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides, g. Philo [20BC~50AD], h. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, see Johnson (2005 [1995]:34-46).

For James with New Testament writings: Johannine Writings; First Letter of Peter; Synoptic Tradition, see Johnson (2005 [1995]:48-57).

For James and the teachings of Jesus, see (Burdick 1981:164); Batten (2011:382-87); Stevenson (2010 [2008]:4-6); Hartin (2009:55-70); McCartney (2009:49-52); Doriani (2007:11); Kloppenborg (2007:121); Witherington III (2007:394-395); Baker (2005:349); Painter (2005:259); Cheung (2003:104-121); Bauckham (2002 [1999]:93); Achtemeier, Green & Thompson (2001:504-505); Bauckham (2001:116-117); Davids (1999:49-50); Sleeper (1998:20); Brown (1997:734-735); Sidebottom (1967 [2010]:14-15); Fulford (1901:26).

For James with Acts, see Allison (2013:6-7); Lockett (2012:11-12); Painter (2012:43); Batten (2009:39); McCartney (2009:25-27); Doriani (2007:5); Motyer (1985 [1995]:20-22); Oesterley (1956); Tasker (1956 [1980]:25-27).

For James with 1 Peter, see Konradt (2009:110); McCartney (2009:52-53); Julian (2000:42); Sleeper (1998:27-28); Kistemaker (1986:61); Sidebottom (1967 [2010]:6); Sidebottom (1967 [2010]:14-16); Mayor (1954 [1892]:cii-cvii); Knowling (1922 [1904]:xlv-xlviii); Plummer (1903 [1891]:59).

For James with Hebrews: Knowling (1922 [1904]:xlviii-xlix); Mayor (1954 [1892]:cviii-cix).

For James with Jude, see Mayor (1954 [1892]:cviii). For James with Revelation, see Mayor (1954 [1892]:cix).

For James with 1 Clem. 11-12; Bam. 19.1; Justin, 1 Apol. 16.8; Origen, Dial. Heracl. 8; Evagrius, Exh. 2.39; Chrysostom, Jn. 31.1; Augustine, De fide et op. 15.25; Maximus the Confessor, Cent. 1.39, see Allison (2013:497-498). For 1 Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, First Peter, First John, see Richard Kugelman (1980:3-4); Penner (1996:103); Knowling (1922 [1904]:xlix-liii); Mayor (1954 [1892]:cxxi-cxxiv); Oesterley (1956:385-391); Tasker (1956 [1980]:27-28); Knowling (1922 [1904]:lii-liii).

literary relationship between the two writings.” In a number of cases, according to Burdick (1981:164), “it is uncertain who influenced whom. In other instances, the similarities prove no literary reliance of any kind.” Ropes (2009 [1916]:21) also contends that “the most important parallels ... prove nothing.” Knowling (1922 [1904]:liii) also asserts that “we may at least conclude that in no one instance has the literary dependence of St James been proved.” The claim of Oesterley (1956:385-386) is that it is “precarious to build too much upon the fact that similarities of thought and expression are found between this Epistle and other early writings.” Penner (1996:104) further suggests that “there is a high degree of similarity in thought and expression between James and a variety of early Christian texts. It is difficult in any of these cases, however, to show direct literary dependence of one upon the other.”

We are convinced, therefore, that if James, the brother of Jesus, wrote this letter, we have an early date before 62 because James died in 62 AD. It is a bit difficult to determine the date of the epistle – whether it was written in 40s-50s or later in James’ life in 60-62. But some pieces of evidence provided above lead us to narrow the date, to around 45-47. First, James’ exhortation about “justification by works and not by faith alone” indicates that this letter was written after Paul’s preaching, “justification by faith.” Second, the evidence that they are using the same term “δικαίωω” differently on the same issue about “faith and works”, shows that James had not yet had an opportunity to get Paul’s letters or to learn from Paul himself by meeting (e.g. the Jerusalem Council which took place AD 48 or 49). In the light of the argument and evidence provided above, our conclusion is that the epistle of James was written between 45 and 47 before his death in 62, by James, the brother of Jesus.

#### **2.1.4 The readers of the Letter of James**

Since the Letter does not offer many clues to the circumstances of the first readers (Johnson 2005:300), their precise identity is indeterminate and opinions remain divided. Jas. 1:1 contains the greetings: “[t]o the twelve tribes in the Dispersion.” If this opening phrase is taken at face value, the readers are probably Jewish Jesus followers outside of Palestine. However, the original readers could also be regarded as those who are spiritual heirs to Israel and who are sojourning away from their heavenly homeland (Johnson 2005:300; Wall 1997b:548). Three interpretations of that opening phrase have been advanced: (1) all Jews living outside of Palestine; (2) Jesus followers conceived as the fulfilment of Israel; and (3) Jewish Jesus followers living outside of Palestine who still looked to Jerusalem for leadership. The first interpretation has largely been abandoned because the epistle is clearly addressed by a Jesus follower leader to other Jesus followers (Culpepper

2000:26).

‘The twelve tribes in the Dispersion’ is a rather ambiguous designation. After the exile of many Jews to Assyria and Babylonia, Israel’s historical twelve tribes no longer existed in a physical sense. Already at an earlier stage, the term became a popular way of describing the re-gathered and spiritually renewed Israel that would be brought into being in the last days (Isa. 49:6; Ezk. 47:13, 21-23; 48:29; Eccl. 36:11; 2 Esdras 13:39-40) (Moo 2000:32). Neither does the use of the term “Jewish” settle the question of the identity of the readers, since the New Testament gives ample evidence elsewhere of the redefinition of the people of the Messiah, both Jew and Gentile, as bearing the marks and responsibilities of the “Israel of God.” (Achte-meier, Green & Thompson 2001:497). Paul contends that the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) is a spiritual epithet rather than an ethnic people (cf. Rom. 9-11; Gal. 3-6) who belong to Christ (Rom. 9:1-18) and are the true heirs of the biblical promise of salvation (Gal. 3:21-4:7; cf. Jas. 2:5; Wallb 1997:548).

The second element of the address, the word *diaspora* (“the Dispersion”), can also be interpreted in several possible ways. Taken from the Greek verb that means “to scatter” or “disperse”, the word was used to describe Jews who were living outside of Palestine among Gentiles (Ps. 147:2; Isa. 49:6; 2 Mace. 1:27; Jn. 7:35) and, by extension, the place where those who had been dispersed lived. The term “diaspora,” therefore, could refer to the geographical location of the addressees; they lived outside Judea (Perkins 1995:95). The metaphorical use of “diaspora”, however, is also attested to in Jewish literature as a reference to believers who live in Palestine, but are cut off from social and religious support systems (Maynard-Reid 1987:9-10). In this case, a reference to *diaspora* Jews need not place them in a geographical location, but rather in a specific social world (Wall 1997b:548-549).

Since the name “Israel” is used to refer to a spiritual rather than an ethnic people in the New Testament, some scholars (e.g. Wall 1997b:548-549) insist that James’ audience consists of those whose primary identity appears religious and eschatological rather than ethnic and national. In other words, they form a spiritual group whose life is guided by God’s word and whose destiny is the realization of God’s promised blessing. Thus, they read the expression, “diaspora” metaphorically.

“The twelve tribes in the Dispersion” could then be applied metaphorically to Gentile Jesus followers (1 Pet. 1:1). However, because of the evidence of the Letter and the historical situation mentioned in Acts, many scholars strongly suggest that the primary readers that James had in mind were Jewish Jesus followers who were scattered and lived outside of Palestine. The reference may

also include some other Gentile Jesus followers who lived outside of Palestine (Bauckham 2003:1483; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:497; Culpepper 2000:26; Brown 1997:728; Davids 1996:542; Perkins 1995:85; Adamson 1989:13; Moo 2000:32; Scaer 1983:28; Burdick 1981:162).

The letter is thoroughly imbued with the spirit and imagery of the Old Testament and Judaism. For instance, as Moo (1985:30) indicates:

James' use of the feminine 'adulteresses' (*moichalides*) in 4:4 would make no sense to anyone who was not well acquainted with the Old Testament tradition likening the Lord's covenant with his people to a marriage relationship. The simple and unexplained way in which James refers to the 'law' presumes that his readers are familiar with this law and have no questions about its relevance to them.

Similarly, the description of their congregation or meeting place as "*a synagogue*" (2:2), the use in 5:4 of the Hebrew title *kyriou sabaoth* ("Lord Almighty"; lit., "Lord of hosts"), as well as the letter's affinities with Jewish wisdom literature, respect for the law, and resolutely theocentric ethic, all point to a link with the Old Testament (Burdick 1981:162; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:497-498).

Given the portrayal of James in the New Testament, the contents of the letter, and the address to the readers, it seems best to conclude that the readers whom James had in mind was first and foremost a group of Jewish Jesus followers.

Regarding the geographical location of these Jewish Jesus followers, it has been suggested that they were the believers who had been forced to leave Jerusalem during the persecution that followed Stephen's death. These Jewish Jesus followers spread out over Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1), and even as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Syrian Antioch (Acts 11:19; Burdick 1981:162; Stulac 1990:94). "Those who were scattered" (Acts 8:4) engaged in the first large-scale missionary work outside of the city of Jerusalem. The word "scattered" (*διασπερο, διασπορα*), as in Acts 8:1, 4; Jas. 1:1, might have well become a technical term for those first Jewish Jesus followers who fled Jerusalem for fear of persecution. Later, it would apply to any persecuted Christian, Jew or Gentile (1 Pet. 1:1; cf. Scaer 1983:28). As Stulac (1990:94) notes, they were experiences "confusion, fear, loneliness, anger, sorrow, poverty, hardship," that is, "trials of many kinds," as James acknowledges in 1:2.

Josephus quotes the geographer Strabo as saying: "[t]here were four classes of men among those of

Cyrene; that of citizens, that of husbandmen, the third of strangers, and the fourth of Jews. Now these Jews are already gotten into all cities; and it is hard to find a place in the habitable earth that hath not admitted this tribe of men, and is not possessed by them” (*Ant.* 14.7.2). Philo also spelled out how Jews were spread and where Jewish people lived:

While she, as I have said, is my native city she is also the mother city not of one country Judaea but of most of the others in virtue of the colonies sent out at divers times to the neighbouring lands Egypt, Phoenicia, the part of Syria called the Hollow and the rest as well as the lands lying far apart, Pamphylia, Cilicia, most of Asia up to Bithynia and the corners of Pontus, similarly also into Europe, Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth and most of the best parts of Peloponnese. And not only are the mainlands full of Jewish colonies but also the most highly esteemed of the islands Euboea, Cyprus, Crete (*Legat.* 281-282).

Just as Jews who were living outside of Judea would look to Jerusalem as their spiritual mother city, so Jewish Jesus followers would also continue to look toward Jerusalem and Palestine as their spiritual homeland. Jewish people living in the Diaspora maintained their ties with the mother city “by sending a yearly Temple tax to Jerusalem and by going to Jerusalem once in their lifetime to offer sacrifice in the Temple” (Hartin 2009:26).

When we consider the date and evidence of the texts and the historical circumstances from Acts, there is no reason to assume that the term is purely metaphorical. As Perkins (1995:95) reminds us that the Jewish Christian readers had been scattered across Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1) and even into Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Syrian Antioch (Acts 11:19), hence mainly Jewish and Gentile Jesus followers living outside of Palestine among Gentiles.

### **2.1.5 Historical context in Palestine and Rome (from A.D. 33-66)**

As we have argued, if James the brother of Jesus wrote this letter, it must be dated before AD 62 and we conclude that the Letter of James was more likely written around 45-47. When we investigate the historical context, we will limit it to the apostolic age about AD 33-66 (Reicke 1964:xv). It was the period in which James, the brother of Jesus, was the leader in the church at Jerusalem and Peter was an apostle to the Jews. It is also the period in which Paul worked as an apostle to the Gentiles. The beginning of the apostolic age corresponds with the crucifixion of Jesus, the date of which is generally gauged around AD 30-33 (Holladay 2017:409; Reicke 1964:xv).

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Jesus’ followers who were mostly Jews were severely persecuted at the hand of Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Almost all of the Jesus followers

(except for the apostles such as James) had scattered to other places and dwelled among foreigners. “Almost all of them had likely lost homes or possessions or normal means of income; they had been separated from relatives and friends” (Stulac 1990:94).

During the procuratorship of Fadus (44-46), there was no considerable disruption in Galilee and Judaea when direct Roman rule was re-imposed. However, a false prophet named Theudas deluded a great number of people by telling them that he would divide the river Jordan on his own command. Fadus prevented his attempt by sending a troop of horsemen (*Ant.* 20.5.1).

The next procurator was Tiberius Alexander (46-48), a nephew of Philo. “He executed the bandit sons of Judas the Galilaeen, who had been active in 6 CE” (Harding 2003:88). A famine in about A.D. 46-47<sup>59</sup> caused serious economic difficulties and was accompanied by a surge of banditry during the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander (46-48 CE) (cf. *Ant.* 20.2.5, 20.5.2; *H.E.* 2.9; Moo 2000 [1985]:34; Harding 2003:88; Martin 1988:162; Knowling 1922 [1904]:xxxvii; cf. Acts 11:28; Horsley & Hanson (1985:67).

Harding (2003:88-89) notes two serious conflicts during the procuratorship of Cumanus (48-52), between the Roman officials and the Jewish residents. First, During Passover, a Greek soldier from Judaea showed himself to the Jewish people from the battlements. The crowds of Jews replied to this outrage by stone-throwing. Many died as a result of the disturbance. Bandits attacked an imperial slave about 12 miles north of the city. Cumanus sent in the troops, who struck the nearby villages suspected of concealing the bandits. “A soldier extricated a Torah scroll from a burning synagogue. In full view of the Jews, he tore it in half and threw it on the fire. Cumanus had the offending soldier beheaded.” Second, Samaritans killed a number of Galilaeans on their way to a feast, but Cumanus had been bribed not to take any action to prevent this from happening. The Jerusalem mob then took revenge, causing Cumanus to send in his troops once again. Finally, the Syrian legate was called in and deposed Cumanus. Two high priests and some Samaritan prisoners were sent to Rome. Josephus observes that at this time the land was haunted with bandits.

Felix (52-59), the next procurator, appears in the Bible in Acts 24. There was a great increase in banditry during his affairs of Judea. Josephus (*Ant.* 20.8.5) provides that “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.” Felix caught and put to death many of those impostors and

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<sup>59</sup> The date of the famine described by Josephus is uncertain. Eusebius (*H.E.* 2.9) notes that Tacitus reports a famine during the reign of Claudius among the events of AD 51 (*Ann.* 12.43) but scholars conclude that the famine occurred in about AD 66-67.

robbers every day, while many were bound and sent to Rome. Horsley and Hanson (1985:68) point out that “the sheer number of brigands must have been considerable in the years following the famine, a period during which both Cumanus (48-52) and Felix (52-60) devoted great energy to the suppression of banditry.” Josephus observes that the false prophets increased (*Ant.* 20.8.6; *J.W.* 2.13.5).

The last three procurators were Festus (60- 62),<sup>60</sup> Albinus (62-64), and Gessius Florus (64-66). The problem of banditry was not resolved satisfactorily during either of their procuratorship. Albinus displaced the high priest Ananus (Annas) II, who had killed James, the brother of Jesus, during the journey from Alexandria.<sup>61</sup> According to Josephus (*Ant.* 20.11.1), the wicked Florus abused his authority violently, plunging the nation into misery – circumstances which the unhappy Jews sought to escape; they were forced to take up arms against the Romans.

The end of this period is discernible by the following three circumstances:

- 1) According to tradition, James was killed in 62 and Peter and Paul about 65: these events were results of the political difficulties the church experienced in the later years of the emperor Nero (54—68).
- 2) As a consequence of the same political troubles, the apostolic congregation moved from Jerusalem eastward about AD 65. and so lost its central importance for the church.
- 3) The primary cause of these political difficulties was zealous Jewish nationalism which, in 66, led the Jews of Palestine to an open revolt against Rome and which, four years later, brought about the fall of Jerusalem and the end of Judaism as a political factor. Inevitably this changed the attitude of the church to the people of the old covenant (Reicke 1964:xv-xvi).

Moo (2000 [1985]:34) points out that “[t]his period witnessed some severe economic disturbances (there was a famine in Judea in about 46; cf. Acts 11:28) and the beginning of the serious social-political-religious upheavals that would culminate in the Jewish war of 66-70.” Mary Smallwood (1976:257) further observes that “[t]he story of the period 44-66 is largely the story of the progressive breakdown of law and order throughout the province.” Harding (2003:88) summarizes that “[t]he period witnessed the slide into anarchy which eventually overwhelmed the province in 66. There was trouble with bandits throughout this time.”

In conclusion, it is obvious that the apostolic period (33-66) witnessed the persecution of Christian Jews from Jewish people, the suffering from severe economic difficulties, the serious social-political-religious disruptions, and the confusion as to their faith and identity. It would be

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<sup>60</sup> Festus appears in Acts 25.

<sup>61</sup> See section 2.1.2.4.3 “The death of James.”

appropriate to this historical background “that James would be writing primarily to poor Jesus followers and that one of his goals would be to instruct and encourage them” (Stulac 1990:94).

### 2.1.6 The circumstances of the recipients

Dibelius claims that the Letter of James is an almost random collection of exhortations, lacking any continuity, not from any specific situation or context (Dibelius 1976:1-11). As McCartney (2009:37) illustrates, there are some questions: “[a]re the situations described in James 2 (showing favoritism, neglecting those in need), James 4 (traveling merchants, bickering among brethren), and James 5 (withholding wages) purely hypothetical examples, or do they reflect real situations?” According to Lockett (2012:13), recent research has questioned the discontinuity and the lack of historical context. Scholars have discovered a greater level of coherence and purpose in such writings that actually address certain real social contexts. Johnson (2004:37) observes that “[t]he way to the real readers is blocked above all by the general character of James’s moral exhortation. He is certainly detailed enough, but his lively vignettes appear as situations that might apply to all communities, rather than a single church.” Bauckham (2002 [1999]:26) also claims that “James addresses not specific but typical situations, such as he knows it is quite likely his readers in many parts of the Diaspora might encounter, and rebukes typical failings, such as he might think likely to occur in many Jewish Christian communities in the Diaspora.” McCartney (2009:37) concludes cogently:

Since James is a “circular” letter without specific addressees, there is a “generalized” quality to the whole of it that may suggest that the situations implied in the letter are simply hypothetical or constructed. However, the vividness with which some of the situations are described, such as the man dressed in fine clothes with gold rings (2:2), or the brother or sister without adequate food or clothing (2:15), or the merchants taking mercantile journeys without reference to the Lord’s will (4:13) suggest something more than general hypothetical situations. James appears to have heard some disturbing news, and he is addressing real problems.

The circumstances of James’ composition are the most difficult to determine and have been the cause of considerable debate within critical scholarship (Johnson 2005:300). But clearly they are believers (Jas. 1:2) who are members of a Jewish Christian synagogue (Jas. 2:1-2). The Jesus followers meet in assemblies (2:2) led by *elders* (5:14) (Culpepper 2000:26). The readers are mainly poor people who are called into God’s kingdom (2:1-6) (Johnson 2005:300; Moo 1985:30). They are a congregation of “humble” means (Jas. 1:9-11; cf. 4:6-10), composed of members from the working-class poor (Jas. 5:1-6) and from other social groups who are most the neglected (Jas. 1:27; cf. Acts 6:1-6), the most oppressed (Jas. 2:1-7; cf. Gal. 2:9-10), and the poorest (Jas. 2:5, 14-

17) (Hartin 2009:38; Sleeper 1998:33; Wall 1997b:549; Stulac 1990:94; Davids 1980:101; Knoch 1969:130;). Most of them might be peasants who work for unfair wages (5:4). According to Herzog, “the largest population group in agrarian societies is the peasant class, which comprises about 70 to 80 percent of the population” (Herzog 2000:98).

The readers are facing trials of many kinds (Jas. 1:2). A measure of their current suffering is due to their poverty (Wall 1997b:549). The economic struggle of Jesus followers who are in need is a recurrent theme in the book, and indeed at its centre (Conti 2004:539). Externally, there are rich people who indeed, have become “outsiders” (Jas. 2:6-7) to God’s reign (Jas. 2:5), who no longer belong to “the twelve tribes” and cannot look forward in joy to their complete restoration (Wall 1997b:549). They are not sharing their wealth, but only hoard wealth and live in luxury and self-indulgence and fatten themselves. They even condemn and murder innocent men who are no threat to them (Jas. 5:2-3, 5-6). They exploit the working-class poor, not paying the wages to the workmen who mow their fields (Jas. 2:6, 5:1-6). They drag the poor into court, and use their political power to demand favourable verdicts against the poor (2:6), generally slandering the noble name of the Lord (2:7).

Beside the outside pressures, a misunderstanding on justification by faith (Jas. 2:14-26) has created crucial problems. Assuming that works are not required by faith, they pursue worldly desires (Jas. 1:14-15; 4:4), selfish ambition (Jas. 3:14, 16; 4:3) and friendship with the world (Jas. 4:4). They seek to be called religious and wise by others (Jas. 1:26-27; 3:13) and to make gain even at all costs (Jas. 4:2, 13). The worldly desire within them (Jas. 4:1-2) gives rise to desire at the cost of their relationship with God (Jas. 4:6-12) and neighbour (Jas. 4:3-5). As Wall (1997b:550) says, “Spiritual failure results from theological deception” (Jas. 1:17-21; 2:12-13; 3:14-16; 4:11-12).

The conflict that rages between believers manifests in several forms: some disregard their poor in favour of the rich and powerful outsiders (Jas. 1:22-2:26); abusive speech between rival teachers undermine their teaching ministry and the congregation’s spiritual formation (Jas. 3:1-18); and hostilities between believers (Jas. 4:1-2) and finally toward God (Jas. 4:7-10) have their source in their frustration of not having the material goods they passionately desire (Jas. 4:3-6).

The readers are suffering from many difficult trials: the pressures from the outside, and destructing conflicts with one another. The primary reasons that the Letter indicates for trouble between the members of congregations and the their relationship with God include: faulty understanding on justification by faith (Jas. 2:14-26), misconception of religion (Jas. 1:26-27), incorrect view of the

image of God (Jas. 1:13), and forgetting the Lord's coming (Jas. 5:7-8) and the Judgment (Jas. 2:13; 3:1; 4:11; 5:9, 12). As a result of their wrong understanding of justification by faith, along with the economical difficulty, the believers seek to satisfy their worldly desires at all cost. They want to have a friendship with the world, as well as with God (Jas. 1:7; 4:4). The Jesus followers, therefore, are tempted by their own selfish ambition (Jas. 1:14), so they are in great peril. There are dangerous conflicts among them, even murder, that threatens the believer's communities. Leaders and rich people neglect the poor and in so doing are failing to love God and neighbour. Both groups may have been subject to anger, misuse of the tongue, envy, doubt and wavering, and an ultimate failure to trust in God. As Moo (1985:31) says, "James' concern is with the world getting into the church."

## **2.2 Cultural context**

As our brief survey above pointed out, the recipients of this letter were mostly Jews who followed Jesus, and were living outside Palestine, to which end the Letter of James then has both Jewish and Hellenistic tones. Especially in Jas. 4:13-5:20 the readers are admonished in cultural context: commercial activity (4:13-17), the rich landowners and the peasants (5:1-6), the farmers and agriculture (5:7), sickness (5:14-16).

### **2.2.1 Jewish and Hellenistic culture in the Letter of James**

Many scholars point out that the Letter of James contains Jewish features and elements of Hellenistic culture together. As Townsend (1994:xxx) observes, "[o]n the one hand, there are the markedly Jewish features, pointing strongly to a Palestinian provenance. On the other hand there are many things which point to the world of Hellenistic culture, especially in language and imagery." After explicating many scholars' opinions, Penner (1999:285) concludes that the Letter is a meaningful and coherent piece of literary expression that, as with the Pauline texts, "has literary and cultural affinities with particular trajectories of Jewish and/or Greco-Roman intellectual and cultural backgrounds."

The Judean heritage of the epistle seems clear enough: the repeated references to "the law" by which Jesus followers are to live (1.25; 2.8; 2.12; 4.11-12); the mention of the "synagogue" as a Christian gathering (2.2); the writer's confidence that the readers will know all about Rahab without detailed description (2.25); "James can also refer to 'our father Abraham', which suggests a Jewish Christian writing to Jewish Jesus followers, whereas when Paul does the same to a Christian community at the heart of the Roman Empire he needs to add 'our ancestor by natural descent' (Rom. 4.1)"; the reference to the "early and late rains" (5:7) certainly refers to a weather

phenomenon typical of Palestine in the late Autumn and early Spring (Batten 2009:41; McCartney 2009:7, 31; Culpepper 2000:41; Moo 2000 [1985]:168; Kloppenborg 1999:780; Rogers & Rogers III 1998:564; Sleeper 1998:32; Johnson 1995:183; Townsend 1994:xxxii; Martin 1988:190; Sidebottom 1967 [2010]:18, 26); additionally we find James' treatment of the themes of poverty and wealth, particularly his picture of farmers and hired labourers (5.1-6) (McCartney 2009:31; Culpepper 2000:41; Moo 2000 [1985]:168; Townsend 1994:xxxii).

The letter also reflects elements of Hellenistic culture: Townsend (1994:xxxii) claims that "by an examination of 'consistent clusters and patterns' of words, *topoi* (subjects which are the commonplaces of Greek rhetorical writing) can be traced in James as clearly as in Hellenistic moral philosophy." For Townsend, the literary idioms and conventions in the Letter certainly reveal the influence of Greek thought.

### **2.2.2 Commercial activity (4:13-17)**

The first century was a period of great commercial activity, and especially the Hellenistic cities of Palestine (the Decapolis, for instance) were heavily involved in commerce of various kinds (Moo 1985:154). Syria was important to the Roman Empire, especially because of its position as a centre for trade and industry (Maynard-Reid 1987:73). Throughout the Palestinian regions of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, commercial activities were also on the upswing during Roman rule. Palestine was a great land-bridge between Asia to the east and Europe (as well as Africa) to the west, and between Arabia and Egypt to the south and the Euphrates and Mediterranean world to the north, thus increasing commerce and trade throughout the Jewish lands (Maynard-Reid 1987:74). The city of Jerusalem, despite her unfavourable position, was rich in trade and commerce. Most of the trade, however, involved imports rather than exports. Travellers went to Jerusalem from all over the known world. The merchant profession was held in great respect in Jerusalem, and even priests engaged in commerce. The high priest's family carried on a flourishing trade in the city, and even the Temple became an important factor in the commerce of Jerusalem (Maynard-Reid 1987:76-77), serving as their power-base, the economic and political centre of the country (Wright 1992:210). Recent excavations in Jerusalem near the Temple Mount have revealed the great luxury in which the rich lived. The temple was therefore not only a religious and political institution; it was a major economic force, controlling massive amounts of money, while continuing to accumulate more (Herzog 2000:137-139). In fact, to a large degree, trade and commerce were limited to a small segment of the society and in particular, to the Sadducees (Maynard-Reid 1987:76), who influenced the rich Jews of the first century (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.293-98 cited in Martin 1988:161). So James'

reproof of the godless merchants may well be directed against merchants throughout Syro-Palestine who, with Sadducee support, engaged in commercial enterprises and were consumed by a search for more wealth (Martin 1988:162).

What we have attempted to demonstrate briefly thus far is that James did not speak in a vacuum when he wrote in 4:13 regarding those who travel to trade and get gain. James's speech is based on the socio-economic realities of his milieu, which had its commercial roots in the Hellenistic times and which could find analogies throughout the Roman world of the first century (Maynard-Reid 1987:77).

The aphorism of "if it is the Lord's will" in Jas. 4:15, has no precise parallel in the Old Testament, but its equivalent, "if the gods are favourable", is a commonplace in Hellenistic moralists such as Epictetus (Martin 1988:161).

### **2.2.3 The rich landowners and the peasants (5:1-6)**

James turns to more direct charges against the rich for violating the law by withholding the wages of their labourers. James' extensive use of traditional material that sets the rich against the poor and God against the rich has led some to conclude that he may not actually be depicting a real situation in James' church (Davids 1982:177-178). But a feasible historical context (e.g. the oppression of the poor at the hands of the rich) suggest that James is citing actual events (Maynard-Reid 1987:85; Martin 1988:179. Perkins 1995:132).

The use of wealth (πλοῦτος), garments (ἱμάτια), and gold and silver (χρυσὸς καὶ ἄργυρος) suggests the general picture of worldly goods in the ancient world. The first noun (πλοῦτος) may specifically mean food, although it may simply refer to the general matter of wealth (5:1), with the reference to clothes and precious metals as an explanation of the wealth in mind (Martin 1988:176). James uses a paradoxical verb, "to rust", for, strictly speaking, gold does not rust or corrode; but the point made is a general one, namely, "even the most permanent earthly treasure has no lasting value" (Ropes 1973 [1916]:285).

The rich people pictured in Jas. 5:4 are clearly the big landowners (Moo 1985:159; Maynard-Reid 1987:85). In first-century Palestine, the aristocracy of landowners was made up of both leaders in religious life and rulers of the land. They were the big possessor, the large merchants, and "the major party of the propertied class in Israel."

According to Herzog, peasants comprised about 70 to 80 percent of the population in the first century (Herzog 2000:98). Herzog's claim is that "the rendering of tithes and offerings, as well as Roman and Herodian tribute and tax, was between 28 percent and 40 percent (to take Sanders's low estimate and Horsley's high estimate) of the peasants' subsistence stores" (Herzog 2000:122). The peasants who live at the subsistence level, were barely able to survive from one planting season to next. In perpetual debt and at the point when the failure to pay off a loan, their financial ruin could be pictured (Herzog 2000:101). Hence peasants were being alienated from their land, and ruling elites were redistributing wealth to an indigenous ruling class while creating bureaucracies to mediate their power and manage their control (Herzog 2000:62).

The day labourers were an important section of the poor. They did not have their own land, so were "employed a day at a time on the estates of others and paid their wages at the end of each day's work." They were in the most helpless situation and their employment could be ended at a few hours' notice, leaving them entirely unemployed. Their wages were too small to make saving possible. The day labourer and his family lived from hand to mouth, and withholding his wages even until the next morning was a serious matter (Bauckham 2003:1490). Jewish law required that labourers be paid at the end of each day, since some depended on the day's wage for food (Culpepper 2000:40-41). "Wages were not controlled by law but only, to some extent, by custom and precedent" (Adamson 1989:243).

To be unemployed or not to receive one's wages was very serious indeed (Adamson 1989:243). The poor are portrayed as helpless to support themselves (Martin 1988:lxxxvi; Malina 1993:106). Legal redress in the courts was not possible when the judges themselves were the big landowners who "had a reputation for oppressive and venal verdicts" (MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations*, 39-40 cited in Martin 1988:174). The rich people had become so captivated by their greed that they were blind to honest obligations (Martin 1988:175). A fourth-century Mediterranean proverb says: "[e]very rich person is either unjust or the heir of an unjust person," or "Every rich person is a thief or the heir of a thief." The sentiment was the same in the first century (Malina 1993:104).

#### **2.2.4 The farmers and agriculture (5:7-12)**

James draws an illustration from the life of the small farmer, who awaits the precious fruit from the earth, on which his livelihood depends (Herzog 2000:192-193). He sows his cautiously saved seed, hopes, waits, and enlarges his properties and foods—everything depends on the harvest (Culpepper

2000:41).

*The early and late rains* are characteristic of the climate of Palestine. The early rains came in October and November, the late rains in April and May. After planting his seed, the farmer waits for the rains which will ensure the success of the harvest (Culpepper 2000:41). Without rains at the appropriate times, they would be ruined, for drought was the great enemy of the peasant smallholder (Herzog 2000:123).

The example of the farmer is fitting as a means of expanding the thought of Jas. 5:7a. The farmer must exhibit patience during the period of waiting, which might include hard times and privations and most likely hunger (for him and his family). Yet, no matter how much hunger and shortage plague the farmer's life, he must remain patient and expectant. There is absolutely nothing he can do to speed up the process of rainfall and the subsequent harvest. They will take place, but only in the due processes of nature. Everything has its appointed time. Likewise, the Jesus followers of James' church must exercise patience, even in the midst of suffering. The Parousia will come (and shortly, it may be) but only in terms set by God's timetable (Martin 1988:190).

### **2.2.5 Sickness (5:13-18)**

In Jewish tradition it is assumed that sickness may often, although not always, result from sin (Bauckham 2003:1491). In discussing the cause of diseases in the ancient world, according to Albl (2002:133), anthropologists distinguish between "naturalistic and personalistic" as two spread out areas of causation: "[a] naturalistic etiology looks for the cause of disease within the framework of the 'natural' system of the body, while a personalistic etiology identifies personal forces, such as spirits or deities, as the causes of disease."

Chronically ill persons were isolated both from the temple and from the community just as families were separated from their chronically ill members (Avalos 1999:45). It was not easy to get drugs and to see doctors that were of uncertain quality. Illnesses were not cured easily (Karris 2000:208). Furthermore, medical attention was very expensive and it normally took three days to get a diagnosis from the physician (Karris 2000:210). An illness was a real threat to ordinary people and the poor (Karris 2000:208).

James instructs the ill to call for the elders and to ask them to pray and anoint them with oil (Jas. 5:14). The anointing with oil was widely recognized as the medicinal treatment for patients in the

ancient world. The anointing was also understood as a ritual in ancient Mediterranean values, especially in Hellenistic Jewish settings (Albl 2002:137). Oil was used in precisely ritual contexts to distinguish people or objects as sacred. In an ancient Jewish setting, anointing signals a person or object as especially chosen by God. Oil more generally symbolized well-being and health (Albl 2002:137-138). Besides these applications anointing has an eschatological dimension in Hellenistic Judaism. In Second Temple Jewish writings, according to Albl (2002:138), “anointing signifies not only the transition from physical illness to physical health but also the movement from the ills of ordinary human life to eschatological salvation.”

## 2.3 Conclusion

Although the Letter of James was accepted slowly in canonization, it was received as Scripture by the church, first in the East through the support of Origen and later also in the West by the end of the fourth century under guidance of Jerome and Augustine. Though James was neglected sometimes, the book was not rejected.

Our investigations about the “James” who is identified as the author of the Letter (Jas. 1:1) conclude that the identification of “James” in Jas. 1:1 is the James who was the brother of Jesus and the first leader of the Jerusalem church. He was a follower of Jesus and a pious man, titled “James the Just.” His influence as the leader of Jerusalem extended to the whole church.

The traditional assumption that James, the brother of the Lord, wrote this epistle has been challenged, especially on two grounds: (1) the high level of the Greek language and Hellenistic literary devices in the letter, and (2) the inconvenient problem of the debate on justification between James and Paul. But we find that Hellenistic ideas and Greek language were widespread in Palestine, so that it is not improbable that James, as the leader of the Jerusalem church, could have achieved this level of Greek. Our examination of the relationship between James and Paul shows that James wrote his letter independently of Paul or misunderstood Paul’s teaching, because James had not had an opportunity to discuss this with Paul or to obtain Paul’s letters. Paul’s teaching on justification by faith was already being misunderstood during his ministry (Rom. 3:5-8, cf. 2 Pet. 3:15-16). We conclude, therefore, that James, the brother of the Lord, wrote the Letter around AD 45-47 to the mainly Jewish Jesus followers who were living outside of Palestine among Gentiles, including Gentile Jesus followers.

The analysis of the historical context of the epistle of James reveals that the recipients were firstly suffering from, severe economic difficulties because of famine, banditry, and exploitation by the

rich, and secondly, the confusion as to their faith and identity under the false prophets from outside. The recipients were also struggling with partiality, abusive speech, misconceptions about God and faith, seeking worldly desires at all cost, and quarrelling among themselves. James exhorts the recipients to live as faithful believers in these various difficult situations.

## Chapter 3 Exegetical analysis of James 4:13-5:20

### 3.1 Genre of the Epistle of James

Determining the exact genre is an important element toward understanding a text. If, as Verseput (2000:96) states, “we were to read the maxim of, say, Jas. 1:19 as a piece of traditional paraenesis regarding human conduct in common situations, our response would not be the same as if we were to see it as an epistolary exhortation to a gathered community.” Hartin (2009:1) adds, the Letter of James is among “the most enigmatic writings of the New Testament.” Many have tried to identify the genre of James, especially scholars such as Ropes (1973 [1916]) and Dibelius (1976). In the first section of this chapter, we will investigate the suggestions of scholars and then draw a conclusion about the genre of James.

#### 3.1.1 James as a Greek Diatribe

Before Dibelius, Ropes had proposed that the Epistle of James could be considered to be a diatribe, a popular form of Hellenistic moral discourse, because parallels in phrases and vocabulary, especially in the essays of 2:1-5:20 (cf. 2:14-26), are abundant “from Philo, the author of 4 Maccabees, Clement of Rome, and Hermas, writers of the first and second centuries after Christ” (Ropes 1916:19-20).

Malherbe (1986:129) is correct in pointing out that the ancients did not regard diatribe as a literary genre, but only as an educational activity of teachers and students. He finds that it is better to describe it as a mode rather than a genre. Hartin (2009:12) observes that “[i]t is not a literary genre, but rather a written style that encompasses a way of exhorting the hearers/readers.” According to Cheung (2003:8-9), “[t]hough James does use diatribe (2:18-20), it has yet to be determined whether the influence is direct or indirect (e.g. via Hellenistic Jewish writings), or whether such parallels in ideas are nothing more than universal human concerns.” Edgar (2001:14) also points out that “[t]he epistle ... exhibits significant differences from many of the preserved Graeco-Roman diatribes. Many of the stylistic features which Ropes cites as examples of this style are not exclusive to the diatribe.”

In summary, even though James uses diatribe literary devices, “diatribe” not really being a genre, identifying diatribe elements in James does not adequately resolve the question about its genre.

### 3.1.2 James as a Hellenistic Paraenesis

The most influential voice in the early part of this century regarding the genre of James' epistle was that of Dibelius: he designates it as *paraenesis*, by which a text "strings together admonitions of general ethical content" (Dibelius & Greeven 1976 [1964]:3). Such texts have no overall governing theme, no structural coherence as a whole, and no single recipient or any concrete situation. For Dibelius, the characteristic of James is the lack of continuity (1976 [1964]:5), no "theology" (1976 [1964]:21), and no specific situation (1976 [1964]:4).

Perdue (1990:27) argues that "paraenesis reflects two models of social organization: order and conflict." James can be understood as an "apocalyptic paraenesis" in which apocalyptic tradition is as a secondary within paraenesis (Wall 1990:21). In his taxonomic study of wisdom literature, John G. Gammie (1990:45) suggests that paraenetic literature is a secondary literary genre of the major genre of wisdom literature, and paraenesis is a sub-division of paraenetic literature. Paraenesis, therefore, "cannot be properly classified as a major literary type or even as a secondary genre" (1990:41).

Berger (1984:147) disagrees with Dibelius's view due to aspects of the Old Testament form and a common theme in the Letter of James. He suggests that James is a symbolic composition, not a paraenesis. Stowers points out that paraenesis has been considered too narrowly in New Testament studies, since it is not just the collection of traditional precepts and exhortations, but also contains "not only precepts but also such things as advice, supporting argumentation, various modes of encouragement and dissuasion, the use of examples, models of conduct, and so on" (Stowers 1986:23). Davids challenges Dibelius's understanding of paraenesis in terms of its supposed lack of coherent structure and unity in theme. He argues that "Dibelius' position, which prevents him from seeing any purpose or theme in James as a whole, has long been abandoned. Most writers on James since the 1960's have argued for its being a unitary work, although they have not agreed on the nature of this unity" (Davids 1999:39). Penner (1999:267) observes that "Davids' work signalled the beginning of a larger shift in research on James. Numerous scholars, many not even intentionally following Davids's lead, have come to similar conclusions in the 15 or so years hence." Edgar's (2001:17) claim is that "[i]n the end, the classification of the Epistle of James as paraenesis is unsatisfactory. The text does not meet the criteria, which, according to Dibelius, are characteristic of paraenetic literature." Cheung (2003:14) concedes that "[t]hrough the suggestion of Dibelius and Greeven that the literary form of James is basically paraenesis earns wide acceptance, later scholars have criticized their literary and form-critical analysis of paraenesis ruthlessly." Batten (2010:93)

also further declares that “Dibelius’s fundamental description of James as paraenesis placed limitations upon the document that are no longer acceptable to many today.”

### 3.1.3 James as a Protreptic Discourse

The distinction between protreptic and paraenetic discourse was suggested by Stowers (1986:92). He defines *protreptic* as “hortatory literature that calls the audience to a new and different way of life, and *paraenesis* as “advice and exhortation to continue in a certain way of life.” Gammie (1990:52) also emphasises the distinction between paraenesis and protreptic. He calls paraenesis “hortatory confirmation literature” and protreptic “hortatory conversion literature.” Following Stowers and Gammie, Perdue (1990:23) affirms that paraenesis refers to “the process of confirming the validity of the moral life undertaken and exhorting the audience to continue in this path” and protrepsis to “the process of converting the audience to a new way of life, or exhorting one to take up the responsibilities and virtues required of a new stage or social role.” He (1990:24) also points out that protrepsis and paraenesis refer “to two distinct, but connected stages along the way to virtue: entrance to the path of life and continuance in the course undertaken.”

Johnson (2005 [1995]:24) argues that the Letter of James is “best understood as a form of protreptic discourse in the form of a letter: James seeks to persuade the readers to live up to the profession to which they have committed themselves—namely, the faith ‘in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ’ (2:1 NRSV).” McCartney (2009:43) agrees with Johnson’s decision to classify James as “protreptic discourse in the form of a letter.” In his view (2009:43), like protrepsis James aims “not merely to present a convincing case for the truth or error of a position, but to persuade the audience to make a change in behavior or make a new commitment.” Hartin (2009:15-16) concludes that James should be considered as a protreptic discourse in the form of a letter to Diaspora Christian communities who follow Jesus.

### 3.1.4 James as Jewish and Christian wisdom

Another striking feature of James is the affinity of James with wisdom literature, as has been pointed out by numerous scholars (Moo 2015:52; McCartney 2009:45-48; Watson 2007:119; Doriani 2007:8-9; Botha 2006:104-105; Conti 2004:540; Bauckham 2003:1484; Cheung 2003:14-15; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:499-502; McCartney 2000:51-54; Culpepper 2000:25; Hartin 1999:45; Wall 1997a:20; Hartin 1997:977).

Hartin (1997:977; 1999:45) argues that James, while conforming to the features of a letter, belongs to the literary genre of wisdom literature. He (1997:970) compares James to texts from wisdom literature, especially Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Ben Sirach, to illustrate similarities in terms of the forms and themes found in them. For him, wisdom literature aims to provide instruction for the well-being of life under the sovereignty of God. Hartin (1997:977) insists that the comparison of these wisdom forms (sayings, admonitions, beatitudes, and woes) all demonstrate the Letter of James' roots in the wisdom tradition. Hartin (1999:45) also argues that the Letter of James deals with similar themes to those of traditional Hebrew wisdom, "such as testing of one's faith (Jas. 1:2; Prov. 27:21; Job 1-2), control of the tongue (Jas. 1:26; Sir. 5:13) and concern for the poor (Jas. 1:27; Prov. 19:17; 31:9)." Gray (2004:406-424) and Doriani (2007:8-9) also observe that there are significant thematic parallels between James and the Testament of Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs, and other Jewish wisdom writings.

After examining Proverbs, Job, Qoheleth, Sirach, and The Wisdom of Solomon, McCartney (2000:52) acknowledges that there is no question that there are several similarities between wisdom literature and the Letter of James. He first introduces E. Baasland's eight "wisdom" elements in James: (1) there are some echoes of Proverbs. (Jas. 4:6 = Prov. 3:34, Jas. 5:20 = Prov. 10:12. Jas. 4:13-16 = Prov. 27:1); (2) James mentions the term "wisdom" directly in 1:5 and 3:13-18; (3) There are at least 40 of the 108 verses of similarities between James and wisdom literature; (4) The language and style of James manifest wisdom character; (5) The highly pictorial language in James is similar to Sirach and other wisdom writers; (6) James, alone among NT writers, provides Job as a model to be followed; (7) James' transitional manner from one general subject to another (Jas. 1:4-8, 27; 4:6; 5:19) is a typical device of wisdom tradition; (8) Many themes of James are also central themes in wisdom (e.g. the themes of concern for widows and orphans, speech, the brevity of life and caution regarding planning for the future).

McCartney (2000:52-53) adds further points of contact to this list, especially the relationship of James to Sirach: "the dangers of the tongue (Sir. 19:6-12, 20:5-8, 18-20, 22:27, 28:13-26, 35:7-9), the notion that wisdom is a gift from God (Sir. 1:1-10), the danger of pride (10:7-18), and the warning against blaming God for sin (Sir. 15:11-20)."

Several studies focus on the similarities between James and specific instances of Jewish wisdom literature. For example, Donald E. Gowan (1993:145-153) draws parallels between the presuppositions of Jas. 1:2-5 with those of 4 Maccabees. Donald J. Versepunt (1998:691-707) further observes the structural similarities with one of the wisdom texts found at Qumran (4Q185).

But as Verseput (1998:693) also warns, “the pervasiveness of wisdom elements throughout all the literature of the Second Temple period suggests that the Epistle of James cannot be accurately grouped among the wisdom documents by merely pointing out sapiential motifs or by imprudently associating its structure with wisdom instruction.” James definitely has some features that are not relevant to the wisdom pattern. McCartney (2000:53-54) lists some striking contrasts. First, the Letter of James is based on certain Christian presuppositions (Jas. 1:17-18, 21, 19; 2:5, cf. 2:1,14; 2:14-26; 5:14) that have no parallel in wisdom literature. Second, James is not concerned much with the intellectual search for wisdom. He is concerned rather with an active, socially practical wisdom over against a false kind of wisdom. This distinction between true wisdom and false wisdom is rare in wisdom literature. Third, James does not fit into the literary categories of wisdom literature: “proverb, riddle, allegory, hymn, dialogue, autobiographical narrative, noun lists, and didactic narrative.” But the most considerable distinction is that James is deeply concerned with real existential problems, not just universal truths. The rebuke for fighting (4:1-3) and the instruction to anoint and pray for the sick (5:14-16) have no parallels in wisdom literature, and the exhortation against partiality in Chapter 2 conveys the vivid trace of real events.

McCartney (2000:54) also provides five characteristics of the Letter of James on wisdom issues: “(1) True wisdom is a divine gift (and therefore related to faith); 2) true wisdom is primarily ethical rather than intellectual; 3) wisdom is eschatologically motivated; 4) wisdom is spiritual in nature; and (5) true wisdom is the wisdom of Jesus.” He asserts that the first three of these can be found in some Jewish wisdom, but the last two are found uniquely in James.

Achtemeier, Green and Thompson (2001:502) point out that the themes dealt with by James and others are the common matter of everyday life. Themes such as communal interaction, power, money, speech, testing and suffering are treated by James as they are dealt with through the prophets, the wisdom literature, and the Hellenistic moralists. But what we must not miss is that the most significant source for James is the traditions of Jesus’ teaching. This claim is supported by the many commentaries on or studies of James that provide lists of similarities between James and the sayings of Jesus (e.g. Lockett 2012:16; Batten 2011:382; Kloppenborg 2010:37-38; Stevenson 2010 [2008]:4-6; Hartin 2009:70; Kloppenborg 2009:71-100; McCartney 2009:49-52; Doriani 2007:11; Kloppenborg 2007:121; Witherington III 2007:394-395; Botha 2006:101; Baker 2005:349; Painter 2005:253-259; Johnson 2004:29-30; Cheung 2003:104-121; Baker 2002:51-52; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:93; Achtemeier, Green & Thompson 2001:502-505; Bauckham 2001:116-123; Sleeper 1998:20; Brown 1997:734-735; Townsend 1994:xxx; Kistemaker 1986:55-56; Richard Kugelman

1980:8-9; Sidebottom 1967 [2010]:4-15; Fulford 1901:26).

In both form and content, for Hartin (1999:45), the Letter of James clearly demonstrates that it is “at home” in the tradition of wisdom literature. Grieb (2002:177) describes James as “Christian wisdom literature” because its character of short admonitions and encouragements mixed with longer instructions look like “the discourse form of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and the teaching aphorisms of Proverbs, Sirach, and Wisdom.” As Bauckham (2003:1484) also contends, “[t]here is nothing un-Jewish in his teaching, any more than there is in that of Jesus, but the particular shape and character, emphases and concerns of James’s wisdom have been determined by the corpus of the sayings of Jesus.”

Cheung (2003:14) claims that on the issues of the genre of James,

Similarities between James and Jewish wisdom literature have been recognized by previous studies. Yet most of these studies tend to emphasise the vocabularies, literary forms and wisdom traditions or themes that James shares with Jewish wisdom instructions, rather than the generic characteristics, the style and literary features of wisdom instruction itself. In determining the genre of a particular work, one is concerned not merely with the presence of the smaller literary form units such as beatitude, prophetic oracle or diatribe, but with the work as a whole. It is necessary to analyse the literary features and styles of the entire work by comparing them with the characteristic features of the genre to which it may belong.

Moo (2015:53) argues that similarities are apparent between James and the wisdom literature, “but we are not convinced that they are pervasive enough to justify labelling James as a ‘wisdom’ book.” He points out that “[m]uch depends on how broadly we understand ‘wisdom’; some contemporary scholars have a tendency to subsume a great deal under that rubric. Only a very broad definition of ‘wisdom’ would enable us to categorize James as a whole as wisdom; and we are not convinced that so broad a definition is justified.”

### **3.1.5 James as rhetorical discourse**

There is increasing agreement that the epistle of James clearly has a rhetorical character (e.g. Lockett 2012:33; Batten 2010:98; Batten 2009:16-26; Wachob 2007:153; Watson 2007:100; Witherington III 2007:391; Johnson 2005 [1995]:8-9; Painter 2005:238; Edgar 2001:38; Wachob 2005 [2000]:11; Kloppenborg 1999:759; Thurén 1995:268; Watson 1993:94).

Baasland (1988:3648) explains that in the nineteenth century, J. D. Schulze (1802), C. G. Kuchler

(1818), C. G. Wilke (1843), and J. A. Bengel (1877) applied rhetorical insights in their analyses of James (cf. Wachob 2005 [2000]:54). After a period of decline in the rhetorical examination of James, it reappeared with the publication of Wilhelm Wuellner's "*Der Jakobusbrief im Licht der Rhetorik und Textpragmatik*" in 1978, and was followed by Ernst Baasland (1988), who proposed the need for further research into rhetorical analysis of James. John H. Elliott (1993:71-81) also develops his rhetorical analysis on the Letter of James based on Wuellner's work, but he uses both rhetorical and social-scientific insights together. Recent rhetorical analysis of the entire epistle of James is that of Lauri Thurén (1995), who argues that the Letter seeks to reinforce existing values that the recipients already possess (1995:277). Thurén (1995:282) emphasises further that "[i]n the light of this rhetorical understanding, the Letter of James appears to be a consistent, carefully constructed text with a clear target. Traditional material is utilized, but always in a purposeful way." He also explains the obscurity of the rhetorical structure on the surface level of the epistle as a subtle rhetorical approach to avoid making his rhetoric too obvious, because the author knows that if he is "too skillful in covering his actual purposes, the plan will collapse" (Thurén 1995:283).

Some scholars have focused especially on specific sections of James. J. D. N. van der Westhuizen (1991:89-106) attempts a close analysis of Jas. 2:14-26 to show the ways in which "the stylistic techniques" could possibly meet "the rhetorical situation" (1991:106). Duane F. Watson has published two rhetorical studies, on Jas. 2 and 3:1-12, respectively: "James 2 in light of Greco-Roman schemes of argumentation" and "The rhetoric of James 3:1-12 and a classical pattern of argumentation" in 1993. Watson (2007:102) himself explains his two previous articles by stating that "all of James 2.1-3.12 is deliberative rhetoric aimed at advising the audience to take certain courses of action and dissuade it from others." He shows that there are three sections in Jas. 2:1-3:12 that use the Graeco-Roman pattern of elaboration for complete arguments: partiality is inconsistent with faith (2:1-13), faith without works does not profit (2:14-26) and not many should become teachers (3:1-12). Certain patterns are used to elaborate each of these propositions: "*propositio* (proposition), *ratio* (reason for the *propositio*, *confirmatio* (proof of the *ratio* by comparison, example and amplification), *exornatio* (embellishment of the *confirmatio*) and *complexio* (conclusion drawing the argument together)" (Watson 2007:104). Wachob (2007:154) also contends that James uses deliberative rhetoric to persuade the reader to believe the message or to believe it more profoundly. He concentrates upon "the letter prescript (Jas. 1.1), the *exordium* (1.2-13), *narratio* (1.13-27) and the first and fundamental argument in the *confirmatio* (2.1-12)" (Wachob 2007:155). Lastly, Patrick J. Hartin (2009 [2003]) observes rhetorical patterns throughout the Letter of James. He argues that 2:1-13, 2:14-26, 3:1-12, and 3:13-4:10 each accede to these patterns. He argues that the most complete and perfect argument comprises five parts: "the

*propositio* (proposition), the *ratio* (reason), the *rationis confirmatio* (proof of the reason), the *exornatio* (embellishment), and the *complexio* (résumé)” (Hartin 2009 [2003]:126-127).

The work of the scholars mentioned above suggests that there are obvious rhetorical elements in James. As Batten (2010:98) notes, “there is an emerging agreement that this text is informed by Graeco-Roman rhetorical practices insofar as these practices pervade the culture and society of the day.” Wachob (2005 [2000]:11) claims that “[t]he high literary quality and rhetorical character of James are readily acknowledged by most scholars.” The fact that the Letter of James has a rhetorical structure means: (1) James seeks to persuade an audience to believe the message or to think and act in particular ways; 2) These rhetorical analyses provide evidence for the intentional structured text, and for a thematic and literary coherence that is organized by the author; 3) The letter involves the rhetorical situation that the author is facing. Although rhetorical approaches do not enable us to determine the definitive and concrete historical situation that the reader was facing, it is obvious that this rhetorical situation relates, at some level, to the historical circumstance of the reader.

However, there is considerable disagreement regarding exactly how to read these conventions in James and how to describe this elusive strategy (cf. Batten 2010:98; Watson 2007:120). As we have seen regarding James and rhetoric, some scholars observe an overall rhetorical structure, while others believe it can only be found in some sections of the document (Batten 2009:26).

### 3.1.6 James as prophetic literature

James also appears to make use of the prophetic tradition in his letter (Allison 2013:76; Doriani 2007:10-11; Wachob 2007:153; Johnson 2005 [1995]:32; Johnson 2004:27; Bauckham 2003:1484; Hartin 1997:993-994; Penner 1996:255).

Doriani (2007:10) especially claims that though the Letter of James is not essentially prophecy, when James warns the rich about their self-indulgent lives (Jas. 1:11; 5:5), he can sound like a prophet of the Old Testament and Jas. 5:1 and 5:4-6 are reminiscent of the prophets Isaiah and Amos. Johnson (2005 [1995]:32) contends that “James makes explicit reference to the prophetic tradition in 5:10,” where he advises his readers to take as an example (ὕπόδειγμα) of suffering (κακοπαθίας) and patience (μακροθυμίας) “the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord” (NRSV). Johnson (2005 [1995]:32) provides the full implications of these prophetic voices in Jas. 1:12; 2:5-7; 5:1-6, including Job among the number of the prophets (5:11), as well as Elijah (5:17-

18). Johnson draws some comparisons between James and prophets Amos and Isaiah, e.g. comparings “come now” in 4:13 and 5:1 with Isa. 43:5-6; earthly wealth of a flower that fades in 1:9-11 with Isa. 40:6-7; the condemnation of the oppressive rich in 5:1-6 with Amos 2:6-7, 3:10, 4:1, 8:4-6, Isa. 3:14-15, 5:8-9; the identification of “pure religion” in 1:27 with Isa. 1:17, 23. He continues to point out that the use of “adulteresses” (μοιχαλίδες) in 4:4 is an echo of the prophetic tradition that symbolizes “the relationship between Yahweh and the people in terms of a marriage covenant, so that ‘adultery’ becomes equivalent to the idolatrous breaking of covenant (Hos 3:1; Ezek 16:38; 23:45; Isa 57:3; Jer 3:9; 13:27).” Hartin (1997:993-996) shows a usage of similar traditional material between the Epistle of Enoch (92-105) and James.

As we observed above, we can find some prophetic echoes in the Letter of James; but it is difficult to identify the Letter of James as a prophecy because it contains only a few of the echoes of the prophetic tradition. That is why most commentators rarely view the genre as a prophetic letter.

### **3.1.7 James as apocalyptic discourse**

Sloan (1986:23-24) observes that the contexts of 5:1-6 and 5:7-11 are clearly eschatological (see also Brown 1997:740; Edgar 2001:17). The miseries that are coming upon the wicked rich (1), “in the Last Days (5:3),” and “the Lord Sabaoth (4f),” have eschatological character. The oppressed “brethren” are then encouraged (5:7-11) to “be patient ... until the coming of the lord ..., for the coming of the Lord is at hand ... behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.” Sloan finds further an allusion to Mt. 7:2 in Jas. 2:13, where both passages suggest that the demand against judging will be eschatologically necessitated by a final judgment that corresponds to mercy. He points out that the eschatology of the early Jesus followers have both present and future elements, but the eschatology of James is that the blessings of heaven are already being experienced: “blessed is a man who perseveres under trial” and yet awaits a final consummation, “he will receive the crown of life” at the “coming (παρουσία) of the Lord (1:12; 5:7)” (Sloan 1986:9).

Particularly Todd Penner (1996, 1999) shows that the eschatological dimension permeates the whole of the epistle. Penner argues that an inclusio structure of the opening section of the main body (Jas. 1:2-12) and closing section (Jas. 4-6-5:12) can be understood best within an eschatological framework. For Penner (1996:210), “[t]he themes of steadfastness and testing are evidently understood within a Christian eschatological context.” In trials the believers are urged to keep steadfast to demonstrate the whole-hearted commitment to God and they may avoid the judgment at the last time. The testing itself purifies the believers for participation in the

eschatological community. The promise of deliverance and imminent reversal for the humble motivates believers toward steadfastness and endurance. Penner's conclusion is that "Jas. 1.2-12 forms an excellent complement to 4.6-5.12, and both function to form an eschatological inclusio for the main body of the letter."

After examining 1 Enoch (92-105) together with the Letter of James and following the definition of the genre of an apocalypse given by Collins (1992:4)<sup>62</sup>, Patrick Hartin (1997:992) asserts that the Letter of James does not belong to this genre of (see also Bauckham 2001:111). Hartin (1997:994) claims that "wisdom provides the unifying force in bringing together the prophetic and the eschatological material, while distancing itself from the apocalyptic." For Hartin "the Wisdom tradition controls the prophetic and eschatological elements found in James" (Lockett 2005:132).

Recently, scholars (e.g. Lockett 2005:148; Cheung 2003:48-49; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:33; 2001:111; McCartney 2000:55) have argued that wisdom and eschatological elements are not pitted against one another, but that they coexist and are both incorporated. Richard Bauckham (2002 [1999]:33) is a good example of an exponent of this approach; he argues:

It is essential to realize that in the later Second Temple period, the types of Jewish literature — such as wisdom, paraenesis, law, apocalypse — are distinguished by literary genre and religious function, not by world-view. Of course, there is not a monolithic, unvarying Jewish world-view in the literature of this period. But the differences are not between, say, wisdom literature and apocalyptic literature. They are between, say, some apocalypses and others, or between, on the one hand, this wisdom text and this apocalypse, and, on the other hand, that wisdom text and that apocalypse. And in varying ways and to varying degrees, virtually all Jewish thought of the period has an eschatological dimension.

An eschatological orientation is "to be expected in wisdom instruction from the first century C.E." (Bauckham 2001:111). Cheung (2003:49) also argues that "the presence of eschatology in James is no objection to identify it as such since both eschatological and wisdom elements are found to be present in the recently discovered Qumran wisdom texts such as 4QSap A." Lockett's (2005:148) claim is:

In spite of the fragmentary nature of 4QInstruction it appears that the eschatological elements again undergird the entire document similarly functioning as motivation for ethical conduct. Therefore, to pit wisdom and eschatological elements against one another or to postulate an overarching framework within which one element

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<sup>62</sup> Collins (1998 [1984]:5) defines the genre of an apocalypse: "a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world."

(eschatology) brackets the other (wisdom, again, cf. Penner) does not fit what we know about wisdom teachings from Qumran. Such moves betray an assumption that the elements are not compatible. Rather, we must think of a continuous spectrum, a sliding scale, in which elements of traditional wisdom and eschatological world-views are intermingling.

We can therefore conclude, first, that elements of an eschatological worldview prevail also in James and are incorporated with traditional wisdom themes, and second, that eschatological elements provide motivation for wisdom or moral exhortation.

### **3.1.8 James as an encyclical letter**

The other important designation of the literary genre of James is that the book is a letter. Obviously, such a classification involves a rejection of the arguments of Ropes and Dibelius, who oppose the presence of epistolary characteristics in the Epistle of James. Francis (1970:110-126), in particular, demonstrates the possibility that the epistle may exhibit features of epistolary convention, with particular attention to the opening and closing paragraphs, and shows parallels with some features of other New Testament and Hellenistic letters. Martin (1988:186) agrees with Francis that the Epistle of James can be treated as an epistolary document, in particular saying that “taking 5:7–20 as marking the letter’s close seems well grounded.”

Adamson (1989:113) emphasises that:

The best bridge between us and the Epistle of James is not diatribe, parenesis, or any other specific type of protreptic composition to which the Epistle of James may show certain points of resemblance or even obligation, but some of Paul’s comparable Epistles, such as Galatians or, above all, 1 Corinthians.

Even though Perkins (1995:85) points out the lack of specific greetings at the conclusion, she concludes that it is apt to refer to James as a letter, for “the concluding instructions on communal relationships (5:12-20) reflect a common practice of concluding letters with assorted instructions to the addressee.” Wall (1997b:551) also maintains that:

James may also be studied as epistolary literature. Even though omitting many features of the Pauline (or Hellenistic) epistolary form, the structure of James is still vaguely parallel to other NT letters: it opens with an address (Jas 1:1) followed by a thesis statement (Jas 1:2-21) that both clarifies the letter’s occasion and introduces the author’s advice.

We can find several scholars who agree that the book of James is an encyclical letter. One example is Verseput (2000:110) who considers James a letter, pointing out that “it was intended to be read as

a ‘covenantal letter to the Diaspora,’ offering consolation and instruction in view of the hope of the expected restoration.” For Edgar (2001:18), the Letter of James is composed of exhortation within the form of a letter. Bauckham (2003:1483) contends that “it [is] entirely plausible that this letter is an encyclical from the head of the mother church to all Jewish-Christian communities.” Conti (2004:540) insists that “the book of James is one of the so-called Catholic (i.e. universal) Epistles, since it is not addressed to a particular church.” For Johnson (2005:297), “James presents itself as a letter, although after the greeting (1:1) it lacks specifically epistolary elements.” Riesner (2007:1255) affirms that “James is an encyclical letter to an unknown number of Greek-speaking (Jewish) Christian churches.” The claim of Painter (2009:171) is that “James may be a circular letter (an encyclical) to Jewish believers in the Diaspora, utilizing epistle and discourse forms.” Hartin (2009:15-16) concludes that “[t]he author sent this protreptic discourse in the form of a letter to Diaspora communities of followers of Jesus who had originated from the world of Israel.” Batten (2010:92) further declares that “[m]any today consider James to be a ‘literary’ letter which was not addressed to a private individual but probably to a number of communities, as indicated by the initial reference to the ‘twelve tribes in the diaspora’ (1:1).” Lockett (2012:15-16) mentions a tradition where people sent official letters “from Jerusalem to diaspora communities in Babylon and Jews living in Egypt (2 *Macc* 1.10-2.18),” and Baruch’s letter was sent “to the nine and a half tribes which were across the river (2 *Bar.* 78–86; cf. 4 *Bar.* 6.19-23).” He argues that James belongs to the tradition of wisdom literature thematically, but it was sent as a diaspora letter. Allison (2013:76) agrees that “reading James as a diaspora letter communicates much.” As Moo (2015:50) notes, “James has used the epistolary form to bring spiritual exhortations and comfort to Christians living in a broad area.”

The differentiation between “real letter” and “literary epistle” goes back at least to Deissmann (1927:233-245). In his opinion, real letters are private and address concrete situations with a definite purpose, and literary epistles are public, have no definite addressees or peculiar situations, but a “catholic” circle of readers and “artistic expression.” But McCartney (2009:40) argues that “the distinction between ‘real’ and ‘literary’ letters is unclear.” His question is, “How ‘specific’ does an audience have to be for a letter to qualify as ‘real’?” John L. White (1988:88-101), who studied ancient Greek letters, maintains convincingly that the Greek “letter” was a very common genre in late antiquity and was used for a great variety of purposes (e.g. diplomatic, military, and administrative purposes) in an array of forms (e.g. petitions, applications, and contractual/legal documents). McCartney’s (2009:40) claim is that the specificity of the audience could range “from a single intended recipient to only the vaguest of general audiences.” Like the “diaspora letter” type has the intended real recipient, James also obviously does show at least some real problems of his

audience and he is responding at least to some potential situations of readers (c.f. Quitslund 1991:140; McCartney 2009:40).

In conclusion, many support that the book of James can be considered an encyclical letter from Jerusalem to diaspora communities who were experiencing some real problems.

### **3.1.9 Concluding remarks on the genre of James**

As Ropes mentions, James has justifiably been compared to the Greco-Roman diatribe, because of its lively and dialogical style, especially in Jas. 2:1-5:20. Since it conveys traditional moral instruction, it has also been thought of as paraenesis or protreptic. The Hellenistic rhetorical influence in James is clear – the aim is to persuade the readers. One of the interesting features of James is its combination of many distinct traditions: the Old Testament wisdom, the saying of Jesus, prophecy, and eschatology.

James is then best understood as a homily in the form of an encyclical letter. Of recent, many scholars agree that James can be considered a letter, although after the greeting (1:1) it lacks specific epistolary elements. For instance, there is no prayer for grace and peace, no declaration of thanksgiving or pronouncement of a blessing on God. James seeks to persuade the readers to live up to being worthy of the profession of their faith. We can therefore consider James a letter that conveys various biblical and pastoral exhortations, using rhetorical devices and prophetic warnings with eschatological motivation. If the composition of the Epistle of James is a real letter, it must be considered to understand the Letter appropriately: the writer, the readers, the date, and the context of the readers. In the case of this epistle, as we surveyed in the previous chapter, James the Just, the brother of Jesus wrote this letter to mainly Jewish Jesus followers outside Palestine in Jerusalem AD 45-47. The fundamental purpose of the Letter is to persuade not an individual, but rather a specific community or communities to live up to the profession of their faith (Johnson 2005:297). In the subsequent section, we will examine the Letter of James as exhortations, by observing other devices (e.g. rhetorical, eschatological, prophetic and wisdom elements). Before exegesis of Jas. 4:13-5:20, it is important to find proper sections within the whole structure of James because we will analyse James' exhortations section by section.

## **3.2 Structure of James**

In the twentieth century scholarship started veering towards approaching James as an “unstructured composition” (Taylor 2004:86), largely due to the persuasive arguments of Martin Dibelius, who

asserted that the content of the epistle consists of loosely connected pericopes with little, if any, integration and no unifying train of thought (Dibelius 1976:2). One influential position, therefore, argues that James has no real compositional structure, but is a collection of separate traditions only loosely joined together. The exegetical implication of this position is that “each verse must be interpreted separately without reference to its immediate context” (Johnson 2005:297).

Dibelius’ contribution sparked renewed interest in the structure of James and some scholars have found considerable coherence in James, demonstrating in general that the document shows an intentional structure and more thematic coherence than Dibelius thought (e.g. Lockett 2012:31-33; Batten 2009:26; Johnson 2005:297-298; Taylor 2004:87; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:61-62; Perkins 1995:84-85). Taylor (2004:90) explains that the modern discussion of the structure of James was informed by Fred Francis in 1970 in his ground-breaking article, “*The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and I John.*” Peter Davids (1982:2-22) takes up Francis’s basic concept and posits a highly organized structure for James in his 1982 commentary. Others have since found that the oversight of neglecting the considerable coherence and proper structure in James has implications for exegetical and theological investment.

We will search the various comments on the structure of James so that we might find the sections on which most scholars agree, and the flow of exhortations from the beginning to the end of the letter.

### **3.2.1 Rhetorical structure of James**

Although there is no consensus concerning the details of the structure of the book, James is now widely acknowledged as a letter with an intentional structure. As discussed in the previous chapter, rhetorical analyses have been provided by many scholars (e.g. Hartin 2009 [2003]; Watson 2007; Wachob 2007; Thurén 1995; Westhuizen 1991; Baasland 1988; Baasland 1988; Wuellner 1978; Bengel 1877; Wilke 1843; Küchler 1818; Schulze 1802). Some demonstrate a rhetorical structure of the whole letter, but some focus rather on sections of James: Jas. 2:14-26 (Westhuizen 1991), Jas. 2 and 3:1-12 (Watson 2007), Jas. 1:1-2:12 (Wachob 2007), 2:1-13, 2:14-26, 3:1-12, and 3:13-4:10 (Hartin 2009 [2003]).

Especially Thurén (1995:282) analyses the rhetoric of the entire letter according to Graeco-Roman classifications, paying particular attention to the purposeful rhetorical way it is structured:

1:1-18 Exordium

- 1:1-4 The proper exordium: *perseverance and perfection*
- 1:5-11 Amplificatio with two examples: *wisdom and money*
- 1:12-18 Inclusio: *perseverance and perfection*

1:19-27 Propositio

- 1:19-21a Introductory exhortatio: *speech and action*
- 1:21b-25 Main thesis: *consistency between word and action*
- 1:26-27 Amplificatio with two examples: *speech and money*

2:1-5:6 Argumentatio

- 2:1-26 *Action/ money*: specific (2:1-7), general (2:8-13), theoretical (2:14-26)
- 3:1-4:12 *Speech/ wisdom*: theoretical (3:1-12), general (3:13-18), specific (4:1-12)
- 4:13-5:6 Climax: *speech and action/ money*

5:7-20 Peroratio

- 5:7-11 Recapitulatio: *perseverance, speech*
- 5:12-20 Conquestio

Some scholars (e.g. Cladder 1904:37-52; Reese 1982:83; Davids 1989:7-8; Crotty 1992:56; Conti 2004:540-541; Taylor 2004:111; Guthrie 2006:206; Taylor & Guthrie 2006:703-704) see a chiasmic arrangement in the letter. Conti (2004:540-541) shows how the book of James' order and coherence can be explained accordingly:

A (1:2-8) (a) joy in the midst of trial; (b) endurance; (c) asking in faith; (d) one who doubts; (e) will not receive anything; (f) a two-souled man; (a) unstable; (b) in all his ways

B (1:9-11) (the paths of the rich) (a) boasting; (y) exaltation; (z) humiliation; (b) (comparison) flower of the grass // grass (withers) flower (falls) (c) journeys of the rich

C (1:12-15) (a) problems because of lustfulness; (b) sin

D (1:16-25) (a) perfect gift; (b) from above; (c) all filth and abundance of evil; (d) with sweetness; (e) doing

E (1:26) (a) restraining; (b) the tongue

F (1:27) (a) religion in deeds; (b) helping those in need; (c) "orphans and widows"

XX (2:1-13) distinguishing between the rich and the poor (= transgression of the law)

F' (2:14-26) (a') faith in deeds; (b') helping those in need; (c') "brother or sister"

E' (3:1-12) (a') restraining; (b') the tongue

D' (3:13-18) (e') deeds; (d') with sweetness; (c') every evil action; (b') from above; (a') wisdom as a perfect gift

C (4:1-12) (a') problems because of lustfulness; (b') consequences of sin

B' (4:13-5:6) (the paths of the rich) (c') we shall journey; (b') (comparison) vapour; (a') boasting; (y') showing off; (z') humiliation

A' (5:7-20) (a1) patience in suffering; (b') Job's endurance; (c') prayer of faith; (d') Elijah did not doubt; (e') Elijah received; (f) one who converts the sinner from the deviation; (b') of his/her way; (a') will save his/her soul

Taylor and Guthrie (2006:683) latch onto James's use of *inclusio* as significant structural indicators

on structuring the Letter of James. They (2006:703-704) provide the chiasmic structure within the Letter body with the introduction and the conclusion, as follows:

- 1:1 The Opening of the Letter
- 1:2-27 Double Introduction: Living by Righteous Wisdom
  - 1:2-11 Handling Trials with Righteous Wisdom
    - 1:2-4 The Spiritual Benefit of Trials
    - 1:5-8 The Need for Righteous Wisdom
    - 1:9-11 Wise Attitudes for the Rich and the Poor
  - 1:12 *Overlapping Transition: 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 Do Not Be Deceived: God 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: Self-Deception Regarding Speaking and Acting*
- 2:1-5:6 Living the "Law of Liberty"
  - A 2:1-11 Body Opening: Violating the Royal Law through Wrong Speaking and Acting Inappropriately toward the Poor
    - B 2:12-13 *So Speak and So Act as One Being Judged by the Law of Liberty***
    - C 2:14-3:12 Wrong Acting and Speaking in Community
      - c1 2:14-26 Wrong Actions toward the Poor
      - c2 3:1-12 Wrong Speaking
    - D 3:13-18 **RIGHTEOUS VS. WORLDLY WISDOM****
    - CA 4:1-10 Prophetic Rebuke: A Call to Humility and Repentance
      - cA1 4:1-5 Rebuke of the Community: Wrong Speaking and Acting
      - cA2 4:6-10 A Call to Repentance
    - BA 4:11-12 *Do the Law, Do Not Judge It***
  - AA 4:13-5:6 Body Closing: Twin Calls to the Arrogant Rich (Presumption and Oppression)
    - aA1 4:13-17 A Rebuke of Arrogant Presumption
    - aA2 5:1-6 Judgment on the Arrogant Rich
- 5:7-20 Conclusion: Enduring in Righteous Living in Community
  - 5:7-11 The Need for Patient Endurance
  - 5:12 *Transition: An Exhortation against Oath Taking*
  - 5:13-20 The Need for Righteous Words in Community

These analyses demonstrate that the Letter of James has clear rhetorical elements and the rhetorical structures show that the author's purpose in writing is to persuade the recipients and that he composed the Letter with a careful structure. However, as Bauckham (2002 [1999]:63) mentions, the function of the structure of the Letter should help the first recipient to recognize the impact that structure effects. It is doubtful whether the structures proposed by rhetorical and chiasmic analyses do enable the recipient to find the functions in their rhetorical structure. As observed above, all the proposed structures differ from one another. These kinds of rhetorical analyses often tend to hide many the detail of verses while building a rhetorical structure, and thus they distort some the main content of the letter. Some scholars who find the problem of the rhetorical structure tried also to find the thematic structure of James.

### 3.2.2 The thematic structure of James

There are various thematic approaches to James.<sup>63</sup> Hiebert (1978:224-231) proposes that “tests of a living faith” is the key theme of the Letter and he provides the outlines:<sup>64</sup>

- 1:1 The opening salutation
- 1:2-18 Theme statements
- 1:19-27 Faith tested by its response to the word of God
- 2:1-13 Faith tested by its reaction to partiality
- 2:14-26 Faith tested by its production of works
- 3:1-18 Faith tested by its production of self-control
- 4:1-5:12 Faith tested by its reactions to worldliness
  - 4:1-12 *Worldliness manifested through strife and faction*
  - 4:13-17 *Worldliness manifested through presumptuous planning*
  - 5:1-11 *Worldliness manifested in wrong reactions to injustice*
  - 5:12 *Worldliness manifested in self-serving oaths*
- 5:13-18 Faith tested by its resort to prayer
- 5:19-20 Conclusion

Vouga (in Taylor 1984:19-20) proposes three divisions of James: 1:2-19a, the testing of faith; 1:19b-3:18, the obedience of faith; and 4:1-5:20, the fidelity of faith. Martin (1988:ciii) develops Vouga’s threefold categorization of faith further:

- I. Address and Greeting (1:1)
- II. Enduring Trials (1:2–19a)
  - 1. Trials, Wisdom, Faith (1:2–8)
  - 2. The Reversal of Fortunes (1:9–11)
  - 3. Testing: Its Source and Mischief—and Rationale (1:12–19a)
- III. Applying the Word (1:19b–3:18)
  - 1. The Obedience of Faith (1:19b–27)
  - 2. Problems in the Assembly (2:1–13)
  - 3. Faith and Deeds—Together (2:14–26)
  - 4. Warning about Teachers and Tongues (3:1–12)
  - 5. Two Types of Wisdom (3:13–18)
- IV. Witnessing to Divine Providence (4:1–5:20)
  - 1. Community Malaise and Its Antidote
    - i. False Hopes (4:1–10)
  - 2. Community Problems
    - ii. Godless Attitudes (4:11–17)
  - 3. Judgment on Rich Farmers (5:1–6)
  - 4. Call to Patience (5:7–11)
  - 5. Community Issues: Oath-taking; Reactions to Trouble, Sickness, and Sins (5:12–18)

<sup>63</sup> For saving space and time I will limit my remarks to themes of faith and eschatology which are related to my research.

<sup>64</sup> This figure of the structure is not original but has been simplified with only titles by this researcher

## 6. Final Words and Fraternal Admonitions (5:19–20)

Culpepper (2000:28-44) also divides sections of the Letter according to the key theme, “the obedience of faith.” In his view (2000:29), “[b]y *faith* James does not mean a saving belief but loyalty and commitment under trial, faithful living.” An outline can be drawn as follows:

- I. 1:1 Introductory Address and Greeting
- II. 1:2-27 The Obedience of Faith
  - A. 1:2-4 Testing Produces Joy
  - B. 1:5-8 Prayer Produces Wisdom
  - C. 1:9-11 Wealth Is Transient
  - D. 1:12-16 Sin Results in Death
  - E. 1:17-21 God Gives Perfect Gifts
  - F. 1:22-25 The Obedient Persevere
  - G. 1:26-27 The Obedient Care for the Oppressed
- III. 2:1-26 The Obedience of Faith in Worship and Works
  - A. 2:1-13 The Heresy of Partiality
  - B. 2:14-26 The Relationship of Faith and Works
- IV. 3:1-18 The Obedience of Faith in Words and Wisdom
  - A. 3:1-12 The Power of Words
  - B. 3:13-18 The Wisdom from Above
- V. 4:1-5:6 The Obedience of Faith in Community
  - A. 4:1-12 Faith as a Response to Dissension
  - B. 4:13-17 Faith as a Response to Presumption
  - C. 5:1-6 A Warning to the Rich
- VI. 5:7-18 The Obedience of Faith in Patience, Oaths, and Prayer
  - A. 5:7-11 A Call for Patience
  - B. 5:12 Rejection of Oaths
  - C. 5:13-18 The Power of Prayer
- VII. 5:19-20 Concluding Exhortation: Restoring the Wayward

Another thematic reading of James is Todd Penner’s proposition in 1996. He suggested that the opening and closing sections (1.2-12//4.6-5.12) be seen as an eschatological *inclusio* that frames the Letter and controls the reading of the whole letter (Penner 1996:133). He outlines the Letter as follows: “opening of the letter body (1.2-12); letter body proper (1.13-4.5); conclusion of the letter body (4.6-5.12); and the epistolary conclusion (5.13-20)” (1996:142-143).

These thematic structures show that the Letter can have coherent theological themes shaping the letter. But when the structure is analysed with just one theme it suffers a limitation and fails to account for the entirety of themes of the letter, because that there are several main themes proposed by scholars, such as faith, perfection, eschatology, wisdom, and so on. Some then propose mediating approaches to a structure of the Letter of James.

### 3.2.3 Mediating approaches to a structure of James

Bauckham (2003; 2002 [1999]) advocates the application of what Taylor (2004:105) called “a mediating approach.” For Bauckham (2002 [1999]:61-62), one should recognize that “carefully composed structure and coherence of thought are in principle distinct.” In other words, short sections that appear to be completely random could still be coherent in their content by virtue of the concerns and ideas of a single author. In Bauckham (2002 [1999]:62)’s view, there is a coherence of thought in James, but not the kind of coherent patterns that pursue an overall argument or major elements that encompass the whole letter. Bauckham (2002 [1999]:63) proposes a simple three-part outline: prescript (1:1), introduction (1:2-27) and exposition (2-5). Bauckham (2003:1490) also provides the 10 units of introductions (1:2-27), and twelve of exposition (2-5), as follows:

- 1:1 (Greetings)
- 1:2-27 (Topics of the whole book)
  - 1:2-4 The testing of faith leads to perfection
  - 1:5-8 Asking for wisdom
  - 1:9-11 Reversal of status
  - 1:12 The crown of life
  - 1:13-16 God does not tempt
  - 1:17-18 God does give new birth
  - 1:19-21 Receiving the implanted word
  - 1:22-25 Hearing and doing
  - 1:26-27 True religion
- 2:1:13 (Favoritism is transgression of the law)
- 2:14-26 (Faith without works is dead)
- 3:1-12 (The power of the tongue)
- 3:13-18 (The wisdom from above)
- 4:1-10 (Friendship with God and the world)
- 4:11-12 (Do not slander and judge others)
- 4:13-17 (God’s condemnation of the arrogant merchants)
- 5:1-6 (God’s judgment of the rich)
- 5:7-11 (Be Patient like the farmer, the prophets, and Job)
- 5:12 (Do not swear)
- 5:13-18 (Pray in suffering)
- 5:19-20 (Bring back the sinners)

Moo offered a similar position to Bauckham regarding the issue of structure. Moo (2015:54-55) argues that James should be considered as a homily in which one subject can follow after another, can sometimes be related to the previous one, sometimes to one earlier in the letter, and sometimes a wholly new topic can be introduced abruptly. For Moo (2015:55), it is not satisfactory that “that 1:2–27 functions as an opening statement that introduces the key issues of the letter.” Specifically, he identified 1:2- 5:11 as the body of the letter, which he divided into five sections (Moo 2015:73-74):

#### 1. ADDRESS AND SALUTATION (1:1)<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> The upper-cases of the titles are original.

2. TRIALS AND CHRISTIAN MATURITY (1:2-18)
  - A. Letting trials accomplish their purpose (1:2-4)
  - B. Wisdom, prayer and faith (1:5-8)
  - C. Poverty and wealth (1:9-11)
  - D. The reward for persevering in trials (1:12)
  - E. Trials and temptations (1:13-18)
3. TRUE CHRISTIANITY SEEN IN ITS WORKS (1:19-2:26)
  - A. An exhortation regarding speech and anger (1:19-20)
  - B. 'Do' the word (1:21-27)
  - C. Impartiality and the law of love (2:1-13)
  - D. The faith that saves (2:14-26)
4. DISSENSIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY (3:1-4:12)
  - A. The harmful effects of the uncontrolled tongue (3:1-12)
  - B. Overcoming dissensions through true wisdom (3:13-4:3)
  - C. A summons to repentance (4:4-10)
  - D. A prohibition of critical speech (4:11-12)
5. IMPLICATIONS OF A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW (4:13-5:11)
  - A. A condemnation of arrogance (4:13-17)
  - B. A condemnation of those who misuse wealth (5:1-6)
  - C. Encouragement to endure patiently (5:7-11)
- VI. CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS (5:12-20)
  - A. Oaths (5:12)
  - B. Prayer and healing (5:13-18)
  - C. A closing summons to action (5:19-20)

Varner (2011:117) applied “the techniques of *cohesion*, *prominence*, *peak*, and *grouping*” to his structuring of the Letter of James. He proposes that Jas. 3:13-18 is the peak of the Letter and the primary concerns of the author as a crucial passage. “Bold points indicate their prominent roles as the thematic and hortatory peaks of the discourse” (2011:128):

Prescript	1:1
1. Be Joyful in Trials	1:2-15
2. Do Not Be Deceived about God's Goodness	1:16-18
3. Become a Good Hearer/Doer of the Word	1:19-27
4. Do Not Show Favoritism	2:1-13
5. Show Your Faith by Your Works	2:14-26
6. Be Consistent in Your Speech	3:1-12
7. <b>Follow the Wisdom of God</b>	3:13-18
8. <b>Become a Friend of God</b>	4:1-10
9. Do Not Speak Against One Another	4:11-12
10. Do Not Plan Presumptuously	4:13-17
11. You Rich Should Treat the Poor Justly	5:1-6
12. Wait Patiently for the Lord's Coming	5:7-11
13. Do Not Swear but Pray	5:12-18
14. Convert the Erring Brother	5:19-20

As Taylor and Guthrie (2006:681) conclude, “no consensus has emerged concerning the details of the book's organization.” As we observe above, the suggestions are also not even similar. Yet, a majority view does exist regarding the introduction and conclusion of the Letter and we will discuss what the majority of scholars agree on regarding the issue of structure of the Letter of James in the

subsequent section.

### 3.2.4 General agreements on the structure of James

Recently many scholars (e.g. Hartin 2015 [1991]:30; Batten 2009:26; McCartney 2009:66-67; Ringe 2009 [2007]:372; Riesner 2007:1255; Taylor & Guthrie 2006:703-704; Johnson 2005:298; Conti 2004:540-541; Cheung 2003:61-67; Isaacs 2000:183-190; Sleeper 1998:19-20; Wall 1997a:34-35; Pretorius 1994:544; Cargal 1993:23; Davids 1989:7-8; Motyer 1985 [1995]:12-13; Reese 1982:83) have started suggesting that 1:2-27 works as an “*epitome* of the entire composition,” (Johnson 2005:298) functioning in the role of the introduction of James as a mini “table of contents” (Batten 2009:26) to the letter. It is quite evident that James introduces the Letter with a double introductory expression indicated by some scholars (Hartin 2015 [1991]:26-27; Taylor & Guthrie 2006:703-704; Wall 1997a:34-35; Pretorius 1994:544; Cargal 1993:23; Davids 1989:7-8; Reese 1982:83; Francis 1970:111-118). Francis (1970:111), who demonstrates a literary tendency where authors repeat themes in their opening verses in letters of the period. White (1988:86) also notes that ancient epistolary theorists recognized that the Letter had to be more comprehensible than actual conversation because the correspondent could not ask for clear meaning instantly. In the case of the letter, “though naturalness was important to letter writing, clarity was even more essential” (White 1988:86).

Taylor and Guthrie (2006:683) discovered four possible inclusions that help to establish a structure of the letter: “1:2-4/1:12, 1:12/1:25, 2:12-13/4:11-12, and 4:6/5:6.” As Taylor (2004:112) observed “there is virtually unanimous agreement that major blocks such as 2.1-13, 2.14-16, 3.1-12 and 4.1-10, and smaller units such as 1.2-4, 3.13-18 and 5.1-6 exhibit a discernible structure and a sustained treatment of a unified topic.”

In particular, Conti (2004:540) rightly points out that, generally, the structure of James appears to be somewhat disorderly at first sight, but it actually follows a precise scheme. In the first part, the author presents the topics that he develops in the rest of the text. As the topics are expounded in the opposite order, a concentric structure emerges. Even though this structure does not touch every detail, at least it shows the general design of the writing.

Following an epistolary composition, on the one hand, we can find three divisions within the structure of James: (1) opening (introduction), (2) body (main discourse), and (3) closing (conclusion). On a grammatical level, on the other hand, James uses many expressions in the

imperative mood<sup>66</sup> in 5:7-20, where a rehearsal and recapitulation of the themes of the Letter are given. Consequently, most scholars (Hartin 2015 [1991]:30-32; Batten 2009:26; Hartin 2009 [2003]:38; Ringe 2009 [2007]:372; Riesner 2007:1257; Taylor & Guthrie 2006:703-704; Conti 2004:540-541; Wall 1997a:37; Thurén 1995:282; Pretorius 1994:544; Cargal 1993:23; Davids 1989:7-8; Martin 1988:186; Motyer 1985 [1995]:12; Reese 1982:83; Burdick 1981:164) identify 5:7-20 as the last closing unit in the letter.

As we attempt to grasp the structure of the Letter better, we should consider rhetorical devices and thematic elements and contents or messages of each section. We will build a structure of Jas. 4:13-5:20<sup>67</sup> considering three dimensions: rhetorical devices, main themes (e.g. eschatology), messages of sections.

### 3.3 Structure of James 4:13-5:20

As mentioned in the previous section, a clearer structure emerges from investigating rhetorical devices,<sup>68</sup> main themes and messages of each section. James uses various rhetorical expressions like: ἄγε νῦν (come now), ἀδελφός (brother), imperative moods, positive and negative expressions. As one of the main themes in this letter, eschatological motivations are also used in Jas. 4:13-5:20. For finding main exhortations in each section we will examine key words that reveal the main theme of exhortation. We will subdivide the sections, one of which is the theme of exhortation, and which will allow us further insight into the issues, “what is faith” and “how does faith work” in the next chapter.

**Table 2 Structure of James 4:13-5:20**

	Interjections	Imperatives	Key words	Eschatology	Sections	Partition
4:13	<b>Come now,</b> you who say		<b>will go</b> and spend and make a profit		Condemnation of the arrogant merchants	Warning (evil, weep, miseries) warning the rich
14				disappear		
15			will live, do			
16			boast, boasting, evil			
17			to do, not do, sin			
5: 1	<b>Come now,</b>	κλαύσατε	<b>rich</b> people, weep,	the miseries	Judgment of the	

<sup>66</sup> Be patient (7, 8), strengthen (8), do not complain (9), take an example (10), do not swear (12), let your yes be yes, and your no, no (12), let him pray (13, 14), let him sing (13), let him call for the elders (14), confess your sins (16), pray for one another (16), let him know that (20).

<sup>67</sup> Because of limited time and space, we will restrict to 4:13-5:20. See Chapter 1.3 for the reason why the range is Jas. 4:13-5:20.

<sup>68</sup> This researcher will not use Graeco-Roman rhetorical elements as proposed by many scholars like: (a) repetitive; (b) progressive; (c) narrational; (d) opening-middle-closing; (e) argumentative; (f) sensory-aesthetic texture. (Robbins 1996:7); exordium, propositio, argumentatio, peroratio (Thurén 1995:282); proem, narration, inclusion (Watson 2007:102); exordium (1.2-4), narratio (1.5-11), propositio (1.12), argumentatio in five units (1.13-5.6) and peroratio (5.7-20) consisting of a recapitulatio (5.7-8) and a peroratio proper (5.9-20) because these rhetorical approaches seem to be not appropriate for this researcher’s exegetical-theological analysis of Jas. 4:13-5:20.

	you rich people	(Weep)	miseries	which are coming	unjust rich		
2			your riches				
3			gold, silver, treasure	the last days			
4			Wages, defraud				
5			luxury, pleasure, fattened,	a day of slaughter			
6			condemned, murdered				
7	<b>brothers</b>	μακροθυμήσατε (Be patient)	<b>patient, wait, patient</b>	the coming of the Lord	Be Patient without faulty speech	passive (patient, not ...)	exhortations
8		μακροθυμήσατε (Be patient) στηριζατε (Strengthen)	<b>patient,</b> <i>strengthen your hearts</i>	the coming of the Lord			
9	<b>brothers</b>	μη στενάζετε (Do not complain)	not <b>complain</b> (speak)	you may <i>not be judged</i> , the Judge is standing at the door			
10	<b>brothers</b>	υπόδειγμα λάβετε (Take an example)	suffering, <b>patience,</b> <b>spoke</b> in the name of the Lord				
11			<b>endured, endurance</b>	the end of the Lord			
12	<b>my brothers</b>	μη ὀμνύετε (Do not swear) ἦτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ (let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no)	not <b>swear, oath</b> (speak)	<i>not under judgment</i>			
13		προσευχέσθω (Let him pray) ψαλλέτω (Let him sing)	<i>suffering</i> , let him <b>pray</b> , cheerful, sing		Do pray and confess sins	active (prayer, save, power, turn back)	
14		προσκαλεσάσθω (Let him call for) προσευξάσθωσαν (Let him pray)	<i>sick</i> , let him <b>pray</b>				
15			the <b>prayer</b> of faith will save, <i>sick, sins</i> , forgiven				
16		ἐξομολογεῖσθε (Confess) εὐχεσθε (Pray)	confess <i>sins</i> , <b>pray</b> , the <b>prayer</b> of the righteous, power				
17			Elijah, <b>prayer, prayed</b>				
18			<b>Prayed</b>				
19	<b>my brothers</b>		<i>wander</i> from the truth, <b>turns</b> him back		Turn the error back		
20		γινώσκέτω (Let him know)	<b>turns</b> a sinner from the <b>error</b>	save his soul from death			

The outline of Jas. 4:13-5:20 can then be seen as follows:

#### I. Warning to the rich (4:13-5:6)

1. 4:13-17 God's condemnation of the arrogant merchants

(Do not be confident in Future Plans)

2. 5:1-6 God's judgment of the unjust rich

(God condemns the rich for injustice)

## II. Concluding exhortations (5:7-20)

1. 5:7-12 Be patient without faulty speech
  - a. 5:7-8 Be patient like the farmer
  - b. 5:9 Do not complain; that you may not be judged
  - c. 5:10 Take the examples of the prophets and Job
  - d. 5:12 Do not swear; so that you may not fall under judgment
  
2. 5:13-18 Pray and confess sins
  - a. 5:13 Pray in suffering (to individual)
  - b. 5:14 Call for the elders to pray for the sick (to community)
  - c. 5:15-18 Prayer has great power
    - (i) 5:15 The prayer of faith.
    - (ii) 5:16 The prayer of the righteous
  - d. 5:17-18 the example of Elijah
  
3. 5:19-20 Turn the error back

As we see in Table 2 above, stronger reasons for seeing 5:7 as introducing not only a new section but a final epistolary segment is that two things are changed radically from verse 7: (1) there is a sudden change of audience in 5:7. James calls on “you who say” or “you rich people” in 4:13-5:6. But James refers to the readers with an affectionate tone in 5:7-20, using “brothers” or “my brothers.” (2) The repetition of “come now” (ἄγε νῦν) in the two paragraphs (4:13; 5:1) suggests that it is to be read as a single unit, the unity of the topic, and James’s warning assumes a serious tone in 4:13-5:6. Alternatively, James also uses the imperative mood a number of times in 5:7-20, where a rehearsal and recapitulation of the themes of the Letter is given: be patient, don’t complain against one other, don’t swear, do pray, turn a sinner from his error. Therefore, on the one hand the use of “come now” (ἄγε νῦν) and the tone of calling the reader tie the two paragraphs as a single unit. On the other hand, the change to an affectionate tone from 5:7 and the use of “brothers” through 5:7-20, together with the continuing exhortations, using imperative moods indicate that 5:7-20 is another single unit. While the eschatological phrases link 5:1-6 with 5:7:12, it is rhetorically more sound that we consider 5:7-20 as a single section, in which James terminates the Letter with some exhortations after warning the rich. When James gives the closing lessons, the eschatological judgment provides a good basis for the exhortations.

### 3.4 Exegesis of James 4:13-5:20

A preliminary exegesis of the text on the basis of historical and cultural background information allows a proper understanding of the text, so that the sections of Jas. 4:13 – 5:20 can be examined.

#### 3.4.1 Warning to the rich (4:13–5:6)

We now focus more on section-by-section analysis by examining keywords and topics of contents to find main theme of exhortation. The two sections specifically involved are the evil lives of the rich whose actions do not identify them as faithful believers.<sup>69</sup>

**Table 3 Structure of James 4:13-5:6**

	KEY WORDS	TOPICS OF CONTENTS
4:13	<b>will go and will spend and will make a profit</b>	<b>the merchants' plan</b>
14		proposition: we do not know tomorrow, our life is like a mist.
15	will live, do	exhortation: if the Lord wills, will live and do.
16	boast, boasting, evil	blame 1: you boast, boast is evil.
17	to do, not do, sin	blame 2: it is evil not to do what you know to do.
5: 1	<b>rich people, weep, miseries</b>	the condemnation of the rich
2	your riches	charge 1: their selfish hoarding of wealth
3	gold, silver, treasure	
4	wages, defraud	charge 2: their defrauding of their workers
5	luxury, pleasure, fattened,	charge 3: their indulgence and reveling in luxury
6	condemned, murdered	charge 4: their oppression of "the righteous"

Normally commentators on James agree in regarding 4:13-5:6 as a single unit with two parallel paragraphs (e.g. Davids 1982:171; Moo 1985:154; Felder 1998:1799; Culpepper 2000:28; Conti 2004:540-541; Riesner 2007:1257; Hartin 2009:223; McCartney 2009:223; Allison 2013:649; Moo 2015:190, 196). The identical introductions to 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 (*ἀγε νῦν*) strongly suggest that James saw them as closely linked. Moreover, these sections are associated also by the theme of wealth. To be sure, those described in 4:13-17 are not explicitly said to be rich, but the extensive travel plans mentioned in verse 13 imply that they were well-off, and their intention is to "get gain" (Moo 2015:196). In Jas. 1:11, the link between the rich and their journey (*πορεία*) makes us consider the merchants as rich people as well (Batten 2013:16).

The tone of 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 certainly sends out a warning to the rich, the first against arrogant merchants, and the second against oppressive landowners (Felder 1998:1799). Both paragraphs criticize "people of the world" for disregarding God and God's values with their way of life.

<sup>69</sup> In the next Chapter, we will examine how faith is related to all the exhortations in the Letter especially with the sections in Jas. 4:13-5:20.

However, while the rich in 5:1-6 are utterly condemned, the businessmen in 4:13-17 are exhorted to change their attitudes (Moo 2015:196; Allison 2013:649-650).

The merchants are rebuked for their arrogant self-confidence (4:16), living their lives as though these were entirely within their own control (4:13), without reference to God (Bauckham 2003:1490). All four verbs are in the future—πορευσόμεθα (“will go”), ποιήσομεν (“will spend ‘time,’”), ἐμπορευσόμεθα (“will do business”), κερδήσομεν (“will make money”) (Martin 1988:165). James adds that value is noticeably missing from the merchants’ plans. He insists, by inserting ζήσομεν, “we will live,” that even their existence is dependent on God. This addition would be a strong reminder that even the continuation of human life is at the mercy of God (Martin 1988:161).

Most commentators agree that verse 17 is an independent aphorism that was incorporated into the text, because of the sudden switch from second person to third person and the somewhat awkward placement of this verse. But as Moo (2015:200) contends, “it does not mean that James is simply throwing into this context a saying that has no relevance to what he has been speaking about.” These days most scholars observe that the Letter of James has some clear rhetorical elements and consistent theological themes, so that the Letter of James has now become acknowledged extensively as a well-structured letter.<sup>70</sup> We can observe some parallels between 4:11-12 and 4:13-17. In 4:11-12 James contrasts the human being as a doer of the law, with God as lawgiver and judge: “but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy” (4:11c-12b). In 4:14-15 James uses the metaphor of a human life as a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes, while God remains the sovereign ruler: “for you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that’” (4:14c-15). In 4:12 James asks rhetorically: “who are you to judge your neighbor?” and in 4:14 “what is your life?” There is also a close connection to sin in the context 4:16 and 4:17: “all such boasting is evil” (4:16b) and “for him it is sin” (4:17b).

The passage 4:13-17 also clearly relates to the following paragraph (5:1-6) due to their identical openings (ἄγε νῦν 4:13; 5:1) and there are the nominative plurals οἱ λέγοντες and οἱ πλούσιοι in both 4:13 and 5:1. Hartin (2009 [2003]:231) even suggests that the theme of arrogance is continued from 3:13 to 5:6.

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<sup>70</sup> See above, Chapter 3.2 Structure of James.

It does appear that James intended this 4:17 to sum up what has just been said (cf. Moo 2015:200; Allison 2013:664; Painter 2012:152; McKnight 2011:367-368; Stulac 2010 [1993]:161; Hartin 2009:226; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:255; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:210-211; Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:165; Doriani 2007:162; Guthrie 2006:260; Brosend 2004:125; McCartney 2000:229; Perkins 1995:130; Davids 1989:113; Martin 1988:168). 4:17 is “a typical Jacobean summary” (Brosend 2004:125, cf. Perkins 1995:130), in the Letter (cf. 2:13; 3:18; 5:12). It can compare especially to 5:12 (Allison 2013:664). “James has simply moved from a particular problem to a general principle” (McCartney 2000:229). This is also the importance attached to οὖν (“therefore”). Moo (1985:158) suggests that James may be simply highlighting what he has just said and giving a theological basis for his condemnation. The passage 4:13-17 flows from an illustration of the problem, namely the merchant’s presumption (4:13), into James’s exhortation (4:14-17). McKnight (2011:368) deduces that the exhortation “begins with the brevity of life (4:14), the alternative to presumption (4:15), the fundamental problem with presumption (4:16) and a final warning (4:17).”

James continues to announce the condemnation of the rich landowners (5:1) and make a charge against the rich landholders on the basis of their selfishly hoarding riches (5:2-3), their swindling of their workers (5:4), their indulgence and revelling in luxury (5:5) and their oppression of “the righteous” (5:6) (Moo 1985:159).

With 5:1-6, James shifts both his target and his tone. He offers a sharp, prophetic warning to the rich landowners who oppress the poor. These are apparently not members of the community because he never calls them brothers (as in 5:7-11). He does not call them to repent; he laments the judgment on them. His primary concern, however, is to dissuade Jesus followers from succumbing to envy towards the power and privilege of the wealthy.

The call to weep and wail depicts a scene of utter despair and misery. The present participle vividly describes the scene as already occurring. In Jas. 5:2-3 James describes the effects of the judgment upon the wealth of the rich. Perfect tense verbs are used, as though the judgment has already been accomplished.

Their wealth is ruined, decayed, and rotten. We may have a list of three types of wealth: foodstuffs, garments and metals. The food (or wealth in general) is rotten; their garments are moth-eaten; their gold and silver have rusted. This last point is not literal for these precious metals of course, cannot rust. But all three images illustrate “the temporary and useless nature of worldly goods” (Martin 1988:177).

Moreover, the rich will be condemned by their wealth; the rust will bear witness against them that they did not use their wealth responsibly. The rust that eats at the metals is an awful turn of events that will end up eating at their flesh. The final irony of this verse is that they have been storing up treasure in the last days. Instead of preparing for the Lord's coming by living righteously, they have hoarded their goods and oppressed the poor. The goods they hoarded now condemn them.

Verse 4 describes the charges against landowners. The charge is that they have wrongfully withheld the wages from those who laboured in their fields. The wealth of the rich has been gained at the expense of the poor. The rich have lived a life of ease and pleasure, supported by the suffering and oppression of others. They have fattened their hearts like fatted calves that continue eating even on the day of their slaughter. Now the day of the Lord has come, and they themselves are the fatted goats (Culpepper 2000:41).

Verse 6 states the third and most serious offense. These landowners have condemned and killed the righteous. They have killed the righteous sufferer, perhaps by means of judicial proceedings. Some see it as an allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus or the martyrdom of James the Just. Neither is really called for, however (Culpepper 2000:41).

James provides exhortations for the wrong behaviour of the rich merchants and the rich landowner as inappropriate works that do not come from faith. Now James exhorts the recipients how to respond in various difficult situations.

### 3.4.2 Be patient without inappropriate speech (5:7-12)

In this section of 5:7-12 the main key words involved with exhortation are μακροθυμέω (be patient), ὑπομένω (endure), ὑπομονή (endurance), ἐκδέχομαι (wait for), στηρίζω (strengthen); στενάζω (grumble), ὀμνύω (swear), ὄρκος (oath). The key words can be divided into one of two themes: “Be patient” or “speech.” It indicates that endurance and the speech ethics are closely related as a proper response of the faith.

**Table 4 Structure of James 5:7-5:12**

	KEY WORDS	TOPICS OF CONTENTS
7	<b>Be patient, wait, Be patient</b>	Be patient until the Lord's coming like the farmer
8	<b>Be patient, strengthen your hearts</b>	
9	not <b>complain</b> (speak)	Do not complain against one another
10	suffering, <b>Be patience, spoke</b> in the name of the Lord	Biblical examples of patience and endurance: the prophets (v 10), Job (v 11)
11	<b>endured, endurance</b>	
12	not <b>swear, oath</b> (speak)	Do not swear

The previous section shows that the judgment of the rich was at hand. Now James turns back toward the Christian audience and counsels patience until the coming of the Lord. Patience is the major theme of 5:7–11, expressed by μακροθυμεῖν/μακροθυμία (5:7 [twice], 8, 10) and ὑπομένειν/ὑπομονή (“endure,” 5:11 [twice]). Although James associates “patience” (5:7, 8, 10) and “endurance” (5:11; cf. 1:2–4, 12), the terms carry different nuances. **Patience** is forbearance, putting up with things or people without complaint, and is frequently used of God’s patience with sinners. **Endurance** is more like active resistance to trying circumstances, remaining steadfast, holding out to the end (Martin 1988:190; Bauckham 2003:1491). Stylistically, the example of the farmer is placed between two commands to be patient until the coming of the Lord (Martin 1988:191).

James exhorts his recipients to be patient “until the coming of the Lord,” ἕως (until) which contains the idea both of purpose and time (Moo 1985:168). The term παρουσία is a technical term for the coming of Christ. Thus, the title “Lord,” used in 5:4 to refer to God, is probably understood here to refer to Jesus, and the phrase, the “coming of the Lord,” although connected with the discussion of judgment, refers to Christ’s parousia rather than God’s judgment. Here the Christian is to wait for the time when Jesus will come to set the oppressed free (Martin 1988:190).

The farmer must await the rains at the appropriate times. In any hunger and shortage, he must remain patient and expectant until the harvest. He cannot do anything to bring about the rainfall and the subsequent harvest. Likewise, the readers must exercise patience, even in the midst of distress. The παρουσία will come but only at its appointed time.

James emphasises again the importance of “personal speech ethics,” (Felder 1998:1799). He adds it in the middle and at the end of the section on patience. In doing so, he intends to illustrate that impatience is equal to faulty speaking. “Do not complain against one another” may mean that believers should not blame others for their difficulties (Moo 1985:170). Considering the example of Job, to complain that life brings its trials may be acceptable for James (but the better attitude is that in 1:1–2), but to complain against (or blame) one another (κατ’ ἀλλήλων) is not (Martin 1988:192). Everything in this section culminates in 5:12 (Felder 1998:1799), where James insists, overall, on plain speech without the taking of oaths (Johnson 2000:1167). Most Christians from ancient times to the present assume that the saying aims at the words of an honest speaker, and not the formal oaths required when we are involved in legal procedures (Perkins 1995:134).

Complaining against others and taking oaths are connected with judgment. In 5:9 and 5:12 James

indicates that if one complains against others or misuses the oaths, one may fall under judgment. The cause of the complaining and making oaths may be linked to uncertainty about judgment and doubt about the goodness of God (Perkins 1995:133).

James gives two examples to boost the readers' determination to remain steadfast, one general and the other specific. That the prophets suffered persecution (5:10) was well-known in Jewish tradition (Bauckham 2003:1491). In calling them "prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord," James is indicating that their suffering came from their service to God (Davids 1982:186). The biblical Job could hardly be said to be patient beyond Ch. 2 of his book (cf. Job 1:21; 2:10), although he could be said to have "endured" in his quest to know the truth of God and his position before God. The purpose of the Lord (5:11) may also be the outcome of the Lord's dealings with Job: his blessing in the end (Job 42:10-17), which provides a precedent for James's readers to expect the Lord's mercy at the parousia (Bauckham 2003:1491).

James exhorts the recipient to be patient without complaining against others and to eschew the taking of oaths, as appropriate response of the faithful in their trials. James continues to teach the audience how to overcome suffering.

### 3.4.3 Pray with confessing sins (5:13-18)

James teaches the hearer how to respond to the oppression of the rich. The response of the faithful is to be patient, which is a passive response. But now James encourages the recipient to pray in suffering, which is an active response of the faith.

**Table 5 Structure of James 5:13-18**

	KEY WORDS	TOPICS OF CONTENTS
5: 13	<i>suffering</i> , let him <b>pray</b> , cheerful, sing	In suffering, in cheerful, in sick
14	<i>sick</i> , let him <b>pray</b>	
15	the <b>prayer</b> of faith will save, <i>sick</i> , <i>sins</i> , forgiven	The power of the prayer: the sick is healed and sins are forgiven. Confess sins and pray for one another
16	confess <i>sins</i> , <b>pray</b> , the <b>prayer</b> of the righteous, power	
17	Elijah, <b>prayer</b> , <b>prayed</b>	The example of Elijah
18	<b>Prayed</b>	

Like so many other New Testament letter writers, James concludes his homily with an encouragement to pray, especially for one another (5:16b). Prayer is clearly the topic of this paragraph, both personal and congregational. Prayer is mentioned in every verse. James commends it to the individual believer and to the community as well, in the different kinds of circumstances that they may face (5:13-14). He encourages such prayer by underscoring the powerful effects of

prayers that flow from a righteous heart (5:15-16). Lest the reader object that such prayer is not possible for average people, James introduces the example of Elijah as a man “with the same nature” as us (Perkins 1995:138-139).

James sets out his thoughts on prayer in the context of suffering. In what are ostensibly difficult times, James is thereby not advocating an impassive response to adversity, but is allowing for a positive response to hardship (Martin 1988:205).

It may also be that James is reminding his readers that they must not forget God in the good times (a lapse exemplified in the merchant traders, 4:13–16). As Davids (1982:192) says, “turning to God in need is half the truth; turning to him in praise either in the church or alone when one is cheerful (whatever the situation) is the other half.”

James describes the prayer of a righteous person as “very powerful in its effectiveness”; *πολὴ ἰσχύει* (“very powerful”) has a practical force, emphasising that such a prayer “is able to do much.” James associates the prayer described in 5:16b with the righteous person (*δίκαιος*). This is probably not a reference to Elijah or a specific holy person in Judaism but “righteous person” may be a reference to some community member(s) (Martin 1988:211).

James’s readers are thereby reminded that their lives are bound by more than mutual affection, and above all by their shared relationship with God. The community is therefore to respond to threats of sickness or sin by gathering in prayer. When someone is physically ill, the elders of the church come together in prayer for the sick person. The confessing of sins, therefore, accompanied by prayers for each other, not only restores the deviant individual to spiritual health, but also heals the community as such (5:16) (Johnson 2000:1167).

The first point James makes about Elijah is that he “was a man with a nature like” the readers of the epistle. The term *ὁμοιοπαθής* denotes one with the “same limitations” as all human beings. James intends to reinforce the thought of 5:16 that any human being who is righteous can offer an effective prayer. This type of prayer, then, is not beyond the ability of the people of James’ church (Mayor 1954:179). Thus, James is describing the common bond between his readers and Elijah (Martin 1988:212). The figure of Elijah has been chosen by James to show that a righteous person of the church can call upon the grace of God so that sick members are healed. So the example of Elijah is used as a counterpoint to stress once again the need for a peaceful solution gained by prayer and submission to the divine will. The model of the farmer (in 5:7) whose patience is

rewarded when he awaits the “choice fruit” (τὸν τίμιον καρπὸν) of the harvest field in due season makes the same point (Martin 1988:213).

James instructs that prayer is a powerful weapon for the faithful believers. For James prayer is inseparable from the faith, to live as faithful believers. James especially emphasises the prayer of the faithful and righteous person, and the mutual prayer in the community. James now proceeds to the important role of community.

### 3.4.4 Turn back from wandering (5:19-20)

In the final section James is dealing with mutual correction with the key words: *πλανᾶω* (wander), *πλάνη* (wandering), *ἐπιστρέφω* (turn back).

**Table 6 Structure of James 5:19-20**

	KEY WORDS	TOPICS OF CONTENTS
5: 19	<i>wander</i> from the truth, <b>turns</b> him back	if anyone among you <i>wanders</i> from the truth, and someone turns him back
20	<b>turns</b> a sinner from the <i>wandering</i>	those who turns a sinner from the <i>wandering</i>

James closes the Letter by calling on us to take responsibility for wandering Jesus followers. Martin (1988:218) insists that the person who wanders (*πλανᾶν*) is not one who has accidentally or unconsciously departed from the truth, but that the term as used rather implies that the person is guilty of apostasy. To wander from the truth means, Culpepper (2000:43) says, “to turn aside from God’s will and live in moral corruption” (see also Davids 1982:199; Moo 1985:189; Martin 1988:219). James is not talking about converting an unbeliever, but restoring an erring brother or sister. He does not specify how this restoration takes place. The connotation of death here is that of eternal consequence rather than only a physical demise, the final result of sin (Burdick 1981:164; Martin 1988:219; Culpepper 2000:43).

The problem is determining who the subject of the promise in verse 20 is. Who is saved from eternal death and whose sins are covered? (1) Some explain that the person who is the reclamer (of the reclaimed) is pictured as saving his own soul. But while there may be a reward in mind for those who heed James’ command, it is not likely that the forgiveness of sin and the resulting salvation are meant to be made dependent on the action of the one who turns the sinner back to God. The one who reclaims the lost is assumed to have *already* experienced forgiveness of sin and received the assurance of eternal life; 2) Even less likely is the position of many commentators, that while the soul saved is that of the sinner, the sins covered are those of the one who turned the sinner back to

God. This appears to place an undue burden on the readers of James to have to sort out the promises made to two different persons; 3) It is more than likely that the “soul saved” and the “sins covered” are the two phrases referring to the sinner who was turned back to God (Davids 1982:201; Moo 1985:190; Martin 1988:220). But it is wise to note that the accepted interpretation does not rule out two important points, namely, that the Christian who is walking the way of righteousness is responsible for the “wanderer” (Davids) and that there is some type of blessing for the one who rescues the brother or sister from error. Although this should be done without thought of a specific recompense, James is hinting that the one who reaches out to the deviant neighbour will receive a blessing, possibly in bringing about a strengthened community reflecting the law of love (2:8) and peace (3:18) (Martin 1988:220).

James teaches the recipient that mutual correction is very important for believers to complete their salvation in the sinful world. James closes the Letter by emphasising the responsibility of believers for the wanderer in community so that all believers may keep walking on the way of truth.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

As we surveyed in Chapter One, it is important to be informed about the background of the Letter to understand the text better. Now we moved to another important world of the text. Determining the main genre illuminates subgenres which crucially affects our interpretation. If the book of James is wisdom or paraenesis, we do not need the real situations or the background of the recipient because the contents of those genres are general and universal ethical admonitions. James was understood as paraenesis or protreptic or wisdom, but recent research has agreed that James is best understood as a homily in the form of an encyclical letter. James, the brother of Jesus, wrote this letter to mainly Jewish Jesus followers outside Palestine in Jerusalem AD 45-47. James seeks to persuade the recipient to live a life according to the wisdom of God, and he informs the reader in the form of the Letter that conveys many biblical and pastoral exhortations by means of rhetorical expressions, prophetic warnings and eschatological motivations.

To investigate Jas. 4:13-5:20 properly, we first find sections that convey one main message and construe the whole structure of the letter. Only then can we see the flow of messages that run from the beginning to the end of the Letter and we can discover the many important themes or issues. Then we can interpret the sections more clearly.

Many have tried to set the structure of the Letter by various ways. The rhetorical structures show that the author has the purpose of writing to persuade the recipients, and composed the Letter with a

careful structure. However, it is doubtful whether the structures proposed by rhetorical and chiasmic analyses do enable the recipients to find the functions in their rhetorical structure. Thematic structures show that the Letter of James has coherent theological themes permeating the Letter. But the thematic structure analysed from the vantage point of just one theme has the limitation of failing to account for the entirety of all the whole sections of the letter, because several main themes have been proposed by scholars, and the author proceeds with various issues in the letter. Some then propose mediating approaches to delineate a structure of the Letter of James, but reach some consensus only regarding the introduction and conclusion of the letter. It is suggested that 1:2-27 can be considered as the introduction functioning as an epitome or table of contents and 5:7-20 is identified as the last closing unit in the letter.

To find a clearer view of the structure of the letter, we should consider rhetorical devices, thematic elements, contents or messages of each section, and also consider scholarly agreement regarding the introductions and conclusion. We have built a structure of Jas. 4:13-5:20 by considering three dimensions: rhetorical devices, main themes (e.g. eschatology), and messages of sections. We find five sections in Jas. 4:13-5:20: (1) 4:13-17; (2) 5:1-6; (3) 5:7-12; (4) 5:13-18; (5) 5:19-20.

The two sections of 4:13-17 and 5:1-6 can be tied to the title of “warning to the rich”, to the rich merchants (4:13-17) and the rich landowners (5:1-6). Especially the examples of two riches are provided as misspent lives that do not testify to noble works of faithful believers.

In the sections of 5:7-12, James exhorts the recipients how to respond in various difficult situations. The key words can be divided into one of two themes: “be patient” and “restrain speech” and they indicate that a proper response of the faith is endurance and the appropriate speech. The endurance and appropriate speech as the response of the faith are passive responses.

In the sections of 5:13-18, James encourages the recipient to pray in suffering, which is an active and powerful response of faith. James especially emphasises faith when we pray, and also the mutual prayer in the community.

In the final section of 5:19-20, James is dealing with mutual correction with the key words: *πλανάω* (wander), *πλάνη* (wandering), and *ἐπιστρέφω* (turn back). James awakens the recipient to realize the great value of turning a wanderer back from error. James closes the Letter by emphasising the responsibility of believers for the wanderer in the community so that all believers may keep walking in the way of truth.

## Chapter 4 Theological analysis of James 4:13-5:20

### 4.1 The meaning of faith in James

In order to understand the nature of saving faith in James, we need to begin a lexical word study to build a base from which to gain an understanding of these terms. It will help to investigate the Greek word-group πιστ- (πιστεύειν, πίστις, πιστός) to understand the term “faith.” The word-group, especially in Jewish usage<sup>71</sup>, is influenced by the Septuagint. Though the πιστ- group actually became and was understood not as a perfect match for אָמַן, we need to find the usages of the words in Septuagint which correspond closely to words from the Hebrew root אָמַן (Lindsay 1993:37; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:120). After a discussion of the meaning of the Greek word-group πιστ- in first century Jewish literature, we will observe the usages of the term of “faith” in the Letter of James: how does James use the term “πίστις”?

#### 4.1.1 Lexical meaning of word-group πιστ- (πιστεύειν, πίστις, πιστός)

Lindsay (1993) examines the πιστ-word group, tracing its “development” from representing the Hebrew אָמַן cognates, from classical Greek through the LXX and ben Sira to Philo. Lindsay observes that the sense of faith in the LXX refers to religious commitment. Philo who was more indebted to Greek usage, used πίστις as intellectual assent. Lindsay shows that Josephus uses πιστ- words in both biblical<sup>72</sup> and Greek senses, but the NT appeals only to the biblical sense that refers to religious commitment (cf. Mason 1996:352-353). Lindsay’s conclusion is that the history of the πιστ-word group demonstrates two kinds of faith, “the secular Greek kind of faith” which implies intellectual assent without personal commitment, and the “biblical kind of faith” which implies “the whole attitude of a life” lived by trust in God. While Josephus knew both these kinds of faith, the New Testament knows only the biblical kind of faith. “Building upon the foundation laid in the LXX (i.e. πιστ- = אָמַן) and utilizing elements of biblical theology, the NT authors further developed from the words of the πιστ- group the theological terminology to express the proper relationship of humankind to God” (Lindsay 1993:188-189; cf. Brehm 1995:59).

Bauckham (2002 [1999]:120) spells out that the verb πιστεύειν like the Hiphil of אָמַן (אָמַן), can refer to purely intellectual belief that a statement is true, but it can also refer to “trust in and commitment to someone or something.” The claim of Bartsch (1968:51) is that the word πιστεύειν

<sup>71</sup> The readers of James are mainly Jewish Jesus followers who were living outside of Palestine among Gentiles. See Chapter 2, The Readers of James.

<sup>72</sup> Lindsay use the term “biblical” as referring to the Old Testament.

in the Old Testament where the LXX translates  $\imath\mu\eta\imath\eta$  (*he'emin*) means “to say Amen to something, with all the consequences implied for both the object and the subject.” Faith and obedience are not separable. Faith must be proved by obedience. In the New Testament, the verb  $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$  occurs 241 times. It is usually translated into English as “believe (in)”, “have faith (in)” (with God or Christ as object); “believe,” “believe in”; “have confidence” (in someone or something), “entrust” (something to another) (Newman 1971).  $\Pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$  may also mean “to believe something to be true and, hence, worthy of being trusted”; “to believe, to think to be true, to regard as trustworthy”; “to believe in the good news about Jesus Christ and to become a follower”; “to entrust something to the care of someone” (Louw & Nida 1996). After an exhaustive investigation into the lexical meaning of  $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$ , Botha (1987:236) found five lexical meanings put forth by the various lexica: “Accept something as correct and truthful”; “to entrust somebody with something”; “to place trust on somebody or something”; and some included “to be a Christian” and “to obey.”<sup>73</sup> Lindsay (1993:37) provides the meaning of  $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\imath\nu$  in Classical Greek: “ $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\imath\nu$  could refer to faith in the gods in the sense of trusting in them or in their word or oracle. This trust was not simply an intellectual assent to the truth of the gods’ existence or the validity of their oracles, but also an active engagement—i.e. reliance upon and obedience to the god or the divine oracle.”

The noun  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  is used 243 times in the New Testament. In the overwhelming majority of cases, to borrow DeGraaf words, “these instances have been translated into English as ‘faith.’ However,  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  has a wide range of other possible senses, including ‘faithfulness’ (e.g. Rom. 3:3), ‘pledge’ (e.g. 1 Tim. 5:12), and ‘proof’ (e.g. Acts 17:31)” (DeGraaf 2005:738). Bauckham (2002 [1999]:120) finds that “ $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  can be the content of what is believed, or faith in the sense of trust and commitment, or faithfulness.” Lindsay (1993:98) maintains that while Josephus usually uses the  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  in the profane sense related to human relationships, and rarely in a religious context, “the NT understands  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  exclusively as religious faithfulness” (Lindsay 1993:98; cf. Chesnutt 1996:350). “ $\Pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  is also used (as is  $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\imath\nu$ ) in the context of an active confidence or faith in God, in the context of the person and work of Moses, in the context of the prophets, in the context of signs and wonders and in the context of faithfulness to the Law and the scriptures” (Lindsay 1993:155). According to Jeremy Punt’s (2017:4) investigation about Paul’s words in the influence of his cultural setting of Hellenism and Roman imperialism, Paul uses  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$  primarily as faithfulness or loyalty, including notions of trust, confidence and conviction.

Likewise, the adjective  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  “always occurs in a profane sense in Josephus’ writings” (Lindsay 1993:157) and simply means “faithful, loyal, trustworthy.” On the other hand, in the New

<sup>73</sup> Botha, however, does not agree with a fifth one, “to obey” as a validated meaning of  $\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$ .

Testament, according to Lindsay (1993:163), “the adjective should almost exclusively be interpreted in a religious sense, referring to God’s faithfulness to humankind or *vice versa*.” Πιστός occurs 67 times in the New Testament. DeGraaf (2005:737-738) observes that πιστός is translated in several different ways, depending on its context. It can be referred “faithful,” “trustworthy,” or “believing,” and can be used to relate to both God and human. Bauckham (2002 [1999]:120) emphasises that “πιστός can mean ‘believing’, but more often means ‘faithful’, as does the Niphal participle of אמו (האמו).”

After an extensive investigation of the relation between faith and obedience, and between unbelief and disobedience, in a wide range of Jewish writings from the last two centuries BC, Garlington (2009 [1994]:17) contends that in the OT and Second Temple Judaism, “faith and obedience are virtually synonymous. As represented principally by אמונה, ‘faith’ in the Hebrew Bible is two-sided: trust and a commitment (to the covenant) resultant from trust.” Faith, for Garlington (2009 [1994]:19), is “the acknowledgment that one ‘belongs’ to Christ, and as such it is an act of commitment to him.” Perry (1953:256) also insists that “trust inevitably expresses itself in action. ‘Trust in the Lord and do good’<sup>74</sup> are two aspects of the same act of will by which man is declared righteous.” Bauckham (2002 [1999]:120) emphasises the importance “to note, in both Greek and Hebrew, the closeness of faith (trust) and faithfulness.” “Faithfulness is trust and commitment maintained, over time and through testing circumstances.” Bauckham suggests that in contexts where the concern is not coming to faith, but continuing to live by faith, “faithfulness” can be a more suitable English translation than “faith.” Because in certain contexts, words in the πίστ-group carry a dimension of community that does not apply when these words are translated as “faith” or “believe,” DeGraaf (2005:755) also suggests that the πίστ-word group should rather be translated with the terms “loyalty” or “faithfulness” than with “faith.”

#### 4.1.2 The usages of πίστις (“faith”) and πιστεύω (“believe”) in James

The noun πίστις (“faith”) occurs sixteen times in James (1:3, 6; 2:1, 5, 14[twice], 17, 18[thrice], 20, 22[twice], 24, 26; 5:15). Five are found outside the pericope 2:14-26 (1:3, 6; 2:1, 5; 5:15) and the rest are contained within it. The verb πιστεύω (“believe”) occurs three times (2:19[twice], 23) and all of them are found in 2:14-24 passage.

In 1:3 the “faith” portrayed is one that will be tested in various trials which will be endured successfully. 1:3 indicates that faith is not enough with just a confession to the proposition; it

<sup>74</sup> E.g. Ps. 37:3 “Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.” (ESV)

involves in the believer's changed life. "The testing of your faith", for Hiebert (1978:224), seems to be the key to unlock the content of the letter. Hiebert's claim is that "tests of a living faith is indeed the unifying theme of the epistle and ... provides ready access to its contents." If someone really has faith, he or she will endure in suffering through his or her faith. True faith can be distinguished from a mere claim of faith by the test. Faith inspires "Christlike conduct" (Mitton 1966:99). If such conduct is not shown, it means that the faith is not real and the confession of being faithful is untrue.

In 1:6 it is "faith" that leads believers to ask God without doubting (μηδὲν διακρινόμενος)<sup>75</sup> their lack of wisdom and then receiving wisdom from God. In 5:15 it is also faith that, in the context of suffering and illness, manifests as prayer to God with confidence that God will respond to the prayer. When the person who prays does so with firm trust in God, the sick will be saved, and "the Lord will raise him up."

In 2:1 "faith" is found to be incompatible with acts of favoritism because believers have "the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ" (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης). In 2:5 the poor in this world who are heirs of the kingdom are described as those who have been chosen by God to be rich in "faith." In regards to πίστις τοῦ κυρίου ("the faith of the Lord") in 2:1 (also 2:5), there is a debate whether the genitive of τοῦ κυρίου is objective or subjective. It can be either objective genitive and translated as "faith in the Lord" or subjective genitive and translated "the faith which the Lord had." The majority<sup>76</sup> of commentators consider it an objective genitive. Many commentators (like Stulac 2010 [1993]:95; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:132; Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:90; Doriani 2007:61; Kent 2005:62; Brosend 2004:56; Phillips 2004:68; Barclay 2003 [1975]:71; Moo 2000 [1985]:99; Calvin 1999 [1959]:301; Lea 1999:280; Richardson 1997:108; Kistemaker 1996 [1986]:71; Townsend 1994:33; Hughes 1991:86; Davids 1989:56; Motyer 1985:80; Davids 1982:107; Burdick 1981:177; Johnstone 1977:141; Adamson 1976:102; Dibelius & Greeven 1976 [1964]:128; Knoch 1969:174; Manton 1968:157; Sidebottom 1967:37-38; Mitton 1966:82; Reicke

<sup>75</sup> After an extensive survey of all of the known examples of διακρίνω dating from 200 BC to AD 100, as well as a large number from the centuries immediately preceding and following these dates, DeGraaf (2005:735-736) insists that nowhere does διακρίνω mean "doubt." In general, according to DeGraaf, διακρίνω in the active voice can mean "to divide," "to separate," "to distinguish," "to choose" or "to judge," and can be applied to both things and people; in the middle voice it can be used "to express a reflexive or reciprocal sense of the meanings found in the active voice."

<sup>76</sup> Allison 2013:381; Vlachos 2013:68; Painter 2012:91; McKnight 2011:176-177; Stulac 2010 [1993]:95; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:132; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:106; Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:90; Doriani 2007:61; Guthrie 2006:231; Kent 2005:62; Brosend 2004:56; Phillips 2004:68; Barclay 2003 [1975]:71; Cheung 2003:246-248; Moo 2000 [1985]:99; Calvin 1999 [1959]:301; Lea 1999:280; Richardson 1997:108; Kistemaker 1996 [1986]:71; Townsend 1994:33; Hughes 1991:86; Davids 1989:56; Motyer 1985:80; Davids 1982:107; Burdick 1981:177; Johnstone 1977:141; Adamson 1976:102; Dibelius & Greeven 1976 [1964]:128; Knoch 1969:174; Manton 1968:157; Sidebottom 1967:37-38; Mitton 1966:82; Reicke 1964:26; Robertson 1959:75-76; Blackman 1957:76-77; Oesterley 1956:436; Tasker 1956:56; Mayor 1954 [1892]:211; Lenski 1946:563; Moffatt 1928:31; Ropes 1916:187; Robertson 1915:107-108; Maclaren 1910:407; Plummer 1903 [1891]:117-118; Dale 1895:60; Winkler 1888:32; Bassett 1876:29; Adam 1867:145; Neander 1852:70; Jacobi 1838:80.

1964:26; Blackman 1957:76-77; Oesterley 1956:436; Tasker 1956:56; Mayor 1954 [1892]:211; Lenski 1946:563; Moffatt 1928:31; Maclaren 1910:407; Plummer 1903 [1891]:117-118; Dale 1895:60; Winkler 1888:32; Bassett 1876:29; Adam 1867:145; Neander 1852:70; Jacobi 1838:80) simply assume the genitive case in an objective genitive sense here and do not even remark on the issue. However, some scholars find a subjective genitive here and translate it as: “Jesus’ own faith, what he believed, said and did as the exemplar” (Wachob 2007:167; Johnson 2005:220; Scaer 2004 [1983]:73; Wall 1997a:108; Hort 1909:47) or “the faith in God that Jesus Christ had” (Lowe 2009; Sleeper 1998:68) or “the faith which is derived from our Lord Jesus Christ” (Varner 2010:86; Huther 1882:99; Lange & van Oosterzee 1867:73) or “the faithfulness of Jesus” (Hartin 2009:128-129). Advocates of the subjective genitive in 2:1 provide two reasons: first, elsewhere faith is directed toward God (1:5-6; 2:19, 23). Second, the following context and the use of Jesus’ sayings throughout the Letter suggest a meaning like “the faith of Jesus in God as reflected in his teaching,” or perhaps “the faith that is from Jesus Christ,” in the sense “manifested by Jesus.” The faith of the Lord in 2:1 is involved later with the use of Jesus’ saying in 2:3, 5, as well as with the “royal law” of 2:8 (cf. Varner 2010:86 ; Lowe 2009:255-256; Johnson 2005:220). But Ropes (1916:187) and Robertson (1915:107) points out that this subjective genitive after πίστις is unusual and seems invalidated by similar uses of the objective genitive in Mark. 11:22 (ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ) as well as Acts 3:16 (τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ). Painter (2012:91) suggests that “this is a reference to faith in Jesus as the judge in waiting, who waits in glory but who will come—indeed, whose coming is near, at the door (5:7-9). It makes good sense that reference to faith in the imminently coming judge should be opposed to discriminatory behavior that favors the rich and disadvantages the poor.” For McKnight (2011:177), there are three objections regarding the view in favour of a subjective genitive reading:

First, while we cannot dismiss the observation often made that in James faith is directed to God (cf. 2:19, 23), when one calls Jesus Christ “Lord” and “Glorious” (2:1), faith in Jesus Christ is entailed at some level. A translation that sees here a reference to a person’s faith in Jesus Christ is therefore not at all impossible. Second, the actor in the “partiality” is a messianist who is doing two things simultaneously: holding faith and partiality in the same hand. This form of double-mindedness expects both faith and partiality to be performed by the same person. Third, we can develop this second point a little more completely. The overall picture must be observed: according to the simple Greek structure, we are to see that the “you” in the “you have faith” is the same “you” who has faith “in partiality.” It is much more difficult to suggest that this person holds “Jesus Christ’s own faith in partiality” than to think that he or she is holding two things at the same time: his or her own faith and own partiality.

Cheung (2003:247) observes that James uses “the use of the word ‘Lord,’ God and Jesus Christ” in very close proximity. James calls himself “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” in 1:1.

“Moreover, πίστις is never understood as a body of belief or teaching in James. However, faith in Jesus would involve faith-obedience to Jesus’ teaching. In this way, 2:1 can still be connected with the Jesus saying in 2:5, 8.” Cheung affirms that the idiomatic expression ἔχειν πίστιν in 2:1 is also found in 2:14, 18, where it means “in trusting obedience to” or “faithful commitment to.”

From the observation above, it is obvious that “the faith of the Lord” involves obedience to the royal law proclaimed by Christ and that faith is much more than just a claim to having faith. When we consider that for James, faith means not just intellectual assent but a faith that produces works, as James itself argues in Jas. 2:14-26, the concept of the objective genitive (the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ) generates no problem. We cannot deny the observation that in James faith is directed to God (cf. 2:19, 23), but when we consider multiple connections to the sayings of Jesus, and the fact that the readers of the Letter are Jesus followers (i.e. people who have faith in Jesus Christ), it is natural that “the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ” translates into “the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” It is important to consider the character of the genre of letter. White (1988:86) announces, “the letter had to be more articulate and studied than actual conversation because, like spoken conversation, a letter was subject to misunderstanding. And, in the case of the letter, the correspondent could not ask for immediate clarification.” The fact that the author uses the phrase, “the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ” to the Jewish Jesus followers in the Dispersion, indicates a deliberate ambiguity, referring to both objective and subjective understandings because for James the meaning of “the faith” includes both concepts: faith is to trust in God and live in reliance on Him with prayer and to act according to the word of God, as revealed through the life and sayings of Jesus. Davids (1982:41) observes that “[i]t has all the usual ambivalence of the early church in that lines are not clearly defined; what is attributed to God in one case may be a function of his Christ in another.” Moo (2015:58) notes that “there is indeed one God and one Judge; yet Christ somehow shares in this divine identity.” For James, to have the faith in Jesus and the faith (in God) are similar: this is what he believed, showed, and taught.

The depiction of “faith” in all these instances (1:3, 6; 2:1, 5, 14[twice], 17, 18[thrice], 20, 22[twice], 24, 26; 5:15) is portrayed positively. It shows that the “faith” is more than mere intellectual assent to the propositions. For James faith is to be tested, but faith must produce endurance and that leads to appealing to God with confidence, in the context of tribulation. Faith includes “commitment to God” and to what Jesus said and did in His life. In other words, the commitment to God is the same as commitment to Jesus by whom the word of God was proclaimed and showed in His life. Therefore the act of favouritism is incongruent to believers who confess to have the faith.

In 2:14-26 the term “faith” is used quite differently, and “it appears that the faith being discussed is that of a real or hypothetical opponent whom James has engaged in a diatribe” (Stein 2000:5-6). James shows that this hypothetical opponent’s understanding of faith is quite different from real faith: in 2:14a it is rather a faith that is confessed by someone whose works do not reveal commitment. In 2:14b it is a faith that cannot save; in 2:17 it is a dead faith that does not have works; in 2:18a it is a faith that is separated from works; in 2:18c the opponent’s faith is contrasted with a faith shown by works; in 2:20 it is a faith without works that is useless; in 2:22a it is contrasted with a faith that is working together with works; in 2:22b it is contrasted with a faith that is perfected by works; in 2:24 it is a faith that is alone, and in 2:26 it is a faith without works that is dead. The verbal cognate πιστεύω (“believe”) also helps us to understand the kind of faith possessed by James’s opponent. In 2:19a it is mere intellectual assent to the biblical proposition that God is one; in 2:19b it is a kind of faith that even demons possess and in 2:23 it is contrasted with the kind of faith Abraham possessed. McKnight (2011:225) summarises the opponent’s faith well with four words from the Letter itself:

Faith without works:

is *useless* (ὄφελος, 2:14, 16),

cannot *save* (μὴ δύναται σῶσαι, 2:14),

is *ineffective* (ἀργή, 2:20),

and is *dead* (νεκρά, 2:17, 26).

From the above discussion relating to faith in the Letter it is obvious that faith is used in at least two different ways in the Letter of James.<sup>77</sup> It is used positively in 1:3, 6; 2:1, 5; 5:15, and also negatively in 2:14-26. This distinction appears complicated by the overlap of usage in 2:14-26: the faith shown by works in 2:18c; twice in the sense of real faith in 2:22; and Abraham’s faith in 2:23. Clearly, James is contrasting two types of faith, one which is real and another which is false (Lea 1999:295). “There is a faith that makes us heirs of the kingdom (James 2:5), and there is a ‘faith’ that does not work and cannot save” (Dorioni 2007:83). “When James declares, ‘faith without works is dead!’ he is only emphasizing the obvious. Lip-service, head-assent are superficial” (Adams 2006:463). There is a “true faith which justifies before God must be evidenced by works” (Gaebelein 2009 [1920]:10). It is a false faith which assents to certain proposition as intellectual

<sup>77</sup> Cf. McKnight 2011:232; Gaebelein 2009 [1920]:10; Dorioni 2007:83; Kent 2005:79-80; Lea 1999:295; Sleeper 1998:80-81; Compton 1997:23; MacArthur 1990:26; Chester 1994:25; Knowling 1922 [1904]:65.

Some scholars argue that James does not draw a contrast between believers and unbelievers or real faith and false faith. For example, Radmacher (1990:38) insists that “James does not contrast counterfeit faith and authentic faith. Rather, he contrasts faith that shows itself in works and faith that does not show itself in works. Both are faith.” Laato (1997:65) also finds that “James basically does not set believers in opposition to unbelievers. He distinguishes rather between those who rightly and those who wrongly believe, between a living and dead faith (2:20-26 and already 2:14-17).”

assent. James rejects the possibility that faith and works are separable. True faith cannot exist apart from works. What James insists upon is “a living faith which manifests itself in works” (Gaebelein 2009 [1920]:10). What James was contrasting was true faith, which inevitably produces works, versus a mere claim to faith, which is only a professed faith and has no life-changing power. “It is not a faith that entrusts the soul to God’s provision of grace in Christ” (Kent 2005:80). “For James, then, there is no such thing as a true and living faith which does not produce works” (Davids 1982 [2013]:122). “James rejects a ‘faith’ that remains alone and produces no works. He insists upon a working faith” (Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:112). It is clear that for James, faith and works are inseparable. This is rendered evocatively as “[f]aith and works are like the wings of a bird” (Hughes 1991:111). James shows that “true faith is alive and active. Biblical faith is not just detached acceptance of an orthodox creed” (Kent 2005:92). James is warning his readers that “true faith is to be tested by its works and that only a faith that issues in works is genuinely saving faith” (Moo 2000 [1985]:43). “James’ point was that saving faith yields results. Otherwise, it was not real” (Kent 2005:97). “James starts with the professing Christians and insists that individuals must prove their Christianity by their deeds. We are not saved *by* deeds; we are saved *for* deeds; these are the twin truths of the Christian life” (Barclay 2003 [1975]:85).

### 4.1.3 Conclusion

We can conclude that for James “faith” is more than mere intellectual assent to propositions. The faith that James is proclaiming includes “to commit to God/Jesus” or “to obey God or what Jesus said and did.” True faith is to be tested by trials and produces endurance and confident prayer to God in the context of tribulation. Therefore the act of favouritism is incompatible with believers who confess to have the faith. James rejects a possibility of *such* faith foreign to works. Faith without works, as McKnight (2011:225) mentions above, is “*useless*” (2:14, 16), cannot “*save*” (2:14), is “*ineffective*” (2:20), and is “*dead*” (2:17, 26). In short, we can say, the saving faith which James is preaching means to accept the proposition offered by Jesus’s life and sayings, and to live by what Jesus did and said. If faith does not produce a change in behaviour, it is dead and cannot save the professed believer. We are saved *for* deeds by faith. The true faith is to produce good works. Faith and works are inseparable. Our speaking and actions in various contexts of life then prove the true faith. We can sum up the faith in James in five short propositions:

- (1) True faith is not merely a claim to faith, but inevitably produces works. Faith and works are inseparable. True faith must be shown by good works (2:14-26).

- (2) Faith is to be tested by various circumstances and it is revealed by behaviour. If someone really has the true faith, he or she will endure in suffering with his or her faith intact (1:3).
- (3) True faith in the context of suffering and illness emerges in prayer to God without a divided or double-minded heart (1:6; 5:15).
- (4) True faith is incompatible with acts of favouritism because believers have “the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1).
- (5) As presented in James, faith is as something that grows and matures. Perfection is the goal of such faith (1:2-4; 2:22).

## 4.2 Faith as a key theme throughout the Letter

### 4.2.1 The frequent occurrences of the terms “faith” and “work”

We have seen in the previous chapter that the term πίστις (“faith”) occurs sixteen times in James (1:3, 6; 2:1, 5, 14[twice], 17, 18[thrice], 20, 22[twice], 24, 26; 5:15). The verb πιστεύω (“believe”) occurs three times (2:19[twice], 23). As we observed in the preceding section, for James πίστις is inseparable from ἔργον. We now need to examine some other terms related to faith: the noun ἔργον (“work”), the noun ποιητής (“doer”), the noun θρησκεία (“religion”), the verb πείθω (“believe”, “persuade”, “obey”). The following Table 7 allocates the various options to their location in verses.

**Table 7** πίστις, πιστεύω, ἔργον, ποιητής, θρησκεία, and πείθω, as they occur in the letter

Chap	Ver	Content
1	1	
	2	
	3	τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς <b>πίστεως</b> καταργάζεται ὑπομονήν.
	4	δὲ ὑπομονὴ <i>ἔργον</i> τέλειον ἐχέτω,
	5	
	6	αἰτείτω δὲ ἐν <b>πίστει</b> μηδὲν διακρινόμενος·
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	
	11	
	12	
	13	
	14	
	15	
	16	
	17	
	18	
	19	
	20	
	21	
	22	Γίνεσθε δὲ <i>ποιηταὶ</i> λόγου
	23	εἴ τις ἀκροατῆς λόγου ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ <i>ποιητής</i> ,
	24	

	25	<i>ποιητῆς ἔργου,</i>
	26	τούτου μάταιος ἢ <i>θρησκεία</i> .
	27	<i>θρησκεία</i> καθαρὰ καὶ ἀμίαντος
2	1	... μὴ ἐν προσωπολημψίαις ἔχετε τὴν <i>πίστιν</i> τοῦ κυρίου ...
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	... τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ πλουσίους ἐν <i>πίστει</i> ...
	6	
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	
	11	
	12	
	13	
	14	ἐὰν <i>πίστιν</i> λέγη τις ἔχειν <i>ἔργα</i> δὲ μὴ ἔχη; μὴ δύναται ἡ <i>πίστις</i> σῶσαι αὐτόν;
	15	
	16	
17	ἡ <i>πίστις</i> , ἐὰν μὴ ἔχη <i>ἔργα</i> , νεκρά ἐστὶν καθ' ἑαυτήν.	
18	... σὺ <i>πίστιν</i> ἔχεις, κἀγὼ <i>ἔργα</i> ἔχω· δεῖξόν μοι τὴν <i>πίστιν</i> σου χωρὶς τῶν <i>ἔργων</i> , κἀγὼ σοὶ δεῖξω ἐκ τῶν <i>ἔργων</i> μου τὴν <i>πίστιν</i> .	
19	σὺ <i>πιστεύεις</i> ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ... τὰ δαιμόνια <i>πιστεύουσιν</i> καὶ φρίσσουν.	
20	... ἡ <i>πίστις</i> χωρὶς τῶν <i>ἔργων</i> ἀργή ἐστὶν;	
21	Ἀβραάμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐξ <i>ἔργων</i>	
22	... ἡ <i>πίστις</i> συνήργει τοῖς <i>ἔργοις</i> αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν <i>ἔργων</i> ἡ <i>πίστις</i> ἐτελειώθη,	
23	... ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραάμ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην	
24	ἐξ <i>ἔργων</i> δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ <i>πίστεως</i> μόνον	
25	Ῥαὰβ ἡ πόρνη οὐκ ἐξ <i>ἔργων</i> ἐδικαιώθη	
26	ἡ <i>πίστις</i> χωρὶς <i>ἔργων</i> νεκρά ἐστὶν.	
3	1	
	2	
	3	εἰς τὸ <i>πειθεσθαι</i> αὐτοὺς ἡμῖν,
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	
	11	
	12	
	13	δειξάτω ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς τὰ <i>ἔργα</i> αὐτοῦ
	14	
15		
16		
17		
18		
4	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	
	11	οὐκ εἶ <i>ποιητῆς</i> νόμου ἀλλὰ κριτῆς.
	12	

	13	
	14	
	15	
	16	
	17	
5	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	
	11	
	12	
	13	
	14	
	15	καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς <b>πίστεως</b> σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα.
	16	
17		
18		
19		
20		

As we can see above, the term faith occurs in the introduction, Chapter 1 (twice) and the conclusion Chapter 5 (once) and most often in Chapter 2 (16 times). Moo (2015:54) insists that “these are not dominant enough to serve as organizing heads.” It seems that the “faith” is not an overall theme in the Letter of James. But we do find that James mentions the term “faith”/ “believe” and the related terms like “work”, “doer”, and “religion” quite often in the introduction, intensively in the section of “faith and works” (2:14-26), and we should not neglect the term “faith” which occurs in the conclusion section with *πειθῶ*, *ἔργα* once each in Chapter 3 and *ποιητῆς* once in Chapter 4. In addition to that, we will investigate other main themes like “perfection”, “eschatology”, and “wisdom/law/word” as many scholars propose, and some important key words like *πειρασμός/δοκίμιον* (“test”), *ὑπομονή* (“endurance”), *αἰτέω* (“ask”)/*προσεύχομαι* (“pray”)/*εὐχή* (“prayer”)/*προσευχή* (“prayer”). We will show how the other main themes and key words are connected to the true faith. We then will examine the exhortations (the works of faith or the fruit of faith) in which James teaches the reader to act as true believers.

#### 4.2.2 Other major themes: perfection, eschatology, wisdom/law/word

Many recognise perfection, eschatology and wisdom as main themes in James. The three themes are closely related to the faith. The goal of faith is the perfection that can be reached by the way of wisdom/law/word of God with eschatological motivation. It is useful to deal with the three themes together.

### 4.2.2.1 Perfection

The importance of the idea of “perfection”, “wholeness”, “completeness”, or “maturity” in James has been widely recognized by many scholars (Lockett 2012:26-28; Coker 2007:43; Cheung 2003:177-194; Tamez 2002 [1990]:67-68; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:67, 165, 177-185; Moo 2000 [1985]:vi-vii; Hartin 1999:10; Rhoads 1998:479-480; Richardson 1997:105; Baker 1995:20; Elliott 1993:71-81; Adamson 1989:321-324).<sup>78</sup> James emphasises the idea of “perfection” throughout the letter. The adjective τέλειος (“perfect”) occurs 19 times in the entire New Testament, of which five appear in James: ἔργον τέλειον (“perfect work”) and ἦτε τέλειοι (“you be perfect,” 1:4a, b); δῶρημα τέλειον (“perfect gift,” 1:17); νόμον τέλειον (“perfect law,” 1:25) and τέλειος ἀνὴρ (“perfect man,” 3:2). The verb form τελειοῦν occurs twice in 2:8 (Εἰ μέντοι νόμον τελεῖτε βασιλικόν, “But if you fulfill the royal law”) and 2:22 (ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἡ πίστις ἐτελειώθη, “the faith was perfected by works”). The noun τέλος is used once in 5:11 (τό τέλος κυρίου, lit. “the end of the Lord”). The synonymous term ὁλόκληρος (“complete”) with τέλειος (“perfect”) is also found in 1:4. As Cheung (2003:178) notes, “the word ὅλος (‘whole’) having the same root as ὁλόκληρος occurs four times in James (2:20; 3:2, 3, 6) with the first time referring to the whole law (ὅλον τὸν νόμον) and the others to the whole body (ὅλον τὸ σῶμα).”

Knowling 1922 [1904]:lxxviii) notes that “in this Epistle of St James we may hear from end to end not only the bracing call of duty, but the call to go on to perfection: ‘ye shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.’” Especially Elliott (1993:71-81) argues that the notion of “perfection” in the introduction of the Letter indicates the overall theme of the text. The claim of Hartin (1999:10) is that “James’s frequent use of the adjective ‘perfect’ provides another such overarching principle.” Hartin shows that “James’s concept of perfection operates as a unifying theme by giving meaning to the other themes developed throughout the letter.” According to Cheung (2003:162), “[t]he importance of the perfection/wholeness theme in James has been grossly neglected among English-speaking scholars, but has been well articulated by many German scholars.” Coker (2007:43) notes that throughout the epistle James is pleading for a diligent practice in striving for purity with the object of reaching perfection.

Many scholars recognize the connection between perfection and faith.<sup>79</sup> Faith is presented in James

<sup>78</sup> Bauckham (2002 [1999]:177) and Cheung (2003:162) cite further German scholars: Konradt 1998:267-86; Tsuji 1997: 53-54, 100-104; Klein 1995; Mussner 1989:58-59, 422-23; Martin 1988: Ixxix-lxxxii; Popkes 1986:45-46; Frankemölle 1985, 1989, 1990, 1994; Zmijewski 1980; Hoppe 1977, cf. also Peterson 1982; Obermüller 1972:238.

<sup>79</sup> See Moo 2015:68; Gleason 2003:60; Cheung 2003:179, 193; Seifrid 2000:38; Rhoads 1998:480; Richardson 1997:105; Baker 1995:20; Knowling 1922 [1904]:lxxviii; Neander 1852:47.

“as something that grows and matures” (Jas. 1:2-4) (Gleason 2003:60). Jas. 2:22 says, “βλέπεις ὅτι ἡ πίστις συνήργει τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἡ πίστις ἐτελειώθη,” (“you see that faith was working with his works, and faith was perfected by works”). As Richardson (1997:105) emphasises, “[f]aith must become mature. Faith must manifest itself in true religion in order to be acceptable before God. Immature faith is marked by double-mindedness and foolishness. Mature faith is necessary because of the trials believers must endure in the world.” Cheung (2003:179) contends that “[t]he relationship between faith and works in James is best understood in terms of wholeness/perfection.” Faith itself, in terms of Rhoads (1998:480), “needs to come to maturity.” “Perfection is the goal of such faith” (Cheung 2003:193, cf. Moo 2015:68; Isaacs 2000:185; Baker 1995:20<sup>80</sup>). That goal, as Isaacs (2000:185) notes, is amplified by the phrase “ὀλόκληροι ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι” (“complete, lacking in nothing”) (Jas. 1:4).

#### 4.2.2.2 Eschatology

The role of eschatological themes was neglected somewhat in discussions of the main theme of the Letter of James because eschatological themes occur only in the introduction and conclusion of James (1:1-18 and 5:9-20) (Chester 1994:16). But recently their importance has been emphasised by some scholars.<sup>81</sup> Penner (1996:121-212) provides an extensive analysis of the opening and closing eschatological framework, arguing that the opening (Jas. 1:2-12) and the closing (4:6-5:12) of the Letter form an *inclusio* for the main body and act as the key themes of the framework. Thus although “the key themes of the framework of the main body occur very rarely in that body, ... the main body provides the means and content which are understood, in light of the framework” (Penner 1996:212). While eschatology does not dominate, its significance exceeds its relatively scarcity of direct references (Chester 1994:16).

Hartin (1997:981-985) offers three eschatological functions in the Letter of James: (1) “the present acts as the beginning of the end time” (1:1; 18); (2) “the present acts as the preparation for the end time” (5:7-11, 17); (3) eschatology as introduced as the motivation for ethics (1:12, 25; 2:5, 24; 5:20). Hartin (1997:985) considers the eschatological context as providing “an encouragement to patient endurance: ‘Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord’ (1:12, 25; 2:5, 24; 5:20). James links encouragement to endure with eschatological hope.” Wachob (2002:165-170) examines the topics, “[t]he *parousia* and the judgment of the Lord.” He extracts that Jas. 1:2-12 (*exordium*) and Jas. 5:7-20 (*peroratio*) in the Letter provide “several apocalyptic topics” (2002:165),

<sup>80</sup> Baker (1995:20) says perfection is “a desirable ethical goal for James.”

<sup>81</sup> See Moo 2015:58-59; Davids 2013 [1982]:38-39; Cheung 2003:249-271; Wachob 2002:165-185; Hartin 1997:981-994; Penner 1996:121-212; Chester 1994:16; Wall 1990:14-22; Richard Kugelman 1980:9-10.

of which the *parousia* and judgement of the Lord are the most evidently apocalyptic. The *parousia* occurs twice in 5:7 (“the *parousia* of the Lord”) (5:7) and in 5:8 (“the *parousia* of the Lord is at hand”). The indication of the judgment follows without delay: “the judge is standing at the doors” (5:9). The Greek noun παρουσία occurs twenty-five times in the New Testament and the eleven instances clearly refer to the eschatological coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8). Furthermore, the coming of the Lord Jesus is often related to eschatological judgment (e.g. 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 5:2, 23; 1 Jn. 2:28; 2 Pet. 3:4, 12 [“the *parousia*” of “the Day of God”]; cf. Acts 10:42; Heb. 10:25). For Cheung (2003:271) eschatology is “not peripheral to James.” The “diaspora of the twelve tribes” is messianically the renewed people of God who are “the fulfilment of Israel’s eschatological hope of restoration.”

Cheung (2003:249-271) also argues that the eschatological reversal motivates the eschatological community to live the “way of truth” and to seek to restore the members from their sins (5:19-20). As Moo (2015:58) mentions, “[t]he fact and basis of this judgment function repeatedly as a means of motivating believers to holy living, pleasing to the Lord (1:10—11; 2:12—13; 3:1; 5:1—6, 9, 12).” Hartin (2009 [2003]:35) also reckons that “[t]he coming of the Lord provides the motivation for James’s advice on how to conduct life in the present and gives the ethical advice [for] meaning and direction.” Concerning eschatology in James, in accordance with Baker (1995:18), “James’ presumption of the Lord’s imminent return (5:7) and his eschatological judgment (5:9)” act as important motivational factors for ethics. The eschatological motivation undergirds the moral exhortation in the Letter of James (cf. Richard Kugelman 1980:9).

#### 4.2.2.3 Wisdom, law, and word

The terms “wisdom”, “law”, and “word” that relate to the faith are used very closely as synonyms in James.

##### 4.2.2.3.1 Wisdom

The noun σοφία (“wisdom”) occurs 4 times (1:5, 3:13, 15, 17) and the adjective σοφός (“wise”) occurs once (3:13). In 1:5, James encourages his readers to ask God for wisdom if anyone needs it and James portrays God as granting wisdom generously and without reproach. In 3:13-18, James instructs his readers about who is really wise and what true wisdom is. James considers true wisdom as not being determined by “intellectual ability”, but by “godly behavior” (cf. Schreiner 2000:2; Julian 2000:46). James contrasts two kinds of wisdom: (1) the “earthly, unspiritual,<sup>82</sup> demonic”

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<sup>82</sup> Greek ψυχική is translated normally by “unspiritual” (ESV, NRSV, NIV, NLT, GNB) or “natural” (NET, NASB).

wisdom that is characterized by jealousy, selfishness, boasting, lying, disorder, evil practices, partiality and hypocrisy; 2) the true wisdom from above that is characterized by good conduct, gentleness, humility, purity, peaceableness, gentleness, mercy, good fruits, impartiality and sincerity.

As we observed about wisdom in the Letter in Chapter 3,<sup>83</sup> although James is not categorically to be identified as a “book of wisdom”, it is obvious that there are similarities between the Letter of James and wisdom books, especially Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ben Sirach, Job, Qoheleth, and The Wisdom of Solomon, in form and content (cf. Doriani 2007:8-9; Gray 2004:406-424; Bauckham 2003:1484; McCartney 2000:52-55; Hartin 1999:45, 1997:977). There are also significant differences. McCartney (2000:55) points out James’ three differences from Jewish wisdom: (1) James’ exhortations arise from his consciousness of “real existential problems, not just generalized truths”; 2) James’ wisdom is spiritual in nature: and (3) true wisdom in James is the wisdom of Jesus. For Moo (2015:69-70), wisdom in Jewish writings was “sometimes identified with the law, the Torah, and took on more metaphysical connotations. James shows no contact with this background.”

We can summarize five characteristics of the true wisdom according to James:

- (1) Wisdom is “a divine gift” which is given to the believers who ask God and is therefore related to faith (1:5).
- (2) James emphasises showing wisdom in good works (3:13)
- (3) Wisdom is not earthly but spiritual in nature (3:15)
- (4) Wisdom is “primarily ethical rather than intellectual”: the true wisdom from above is characterized by good conduct, gentleness, humility, pureness, peaceableness, gentleness, mercy, good fruits, impartiality and sincerity (3:17).
- (5) True wisdom in James is the wisdom of Jesus in form and content: according to Jesus, it is the wise man who “hears these words of mine and does them” like “a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Mt. 7:24).

As we can see above, the wisdom in James is closely connected to faith because true wisdom comes “from above” and it is given only to the believers who ask God in faith without “divided”<sup>84</sup> or “double-minded” attitudes (1:5-8, 3:17). We also note the relationship of true and false wisdom in

<sup>83</sup> See Chapter 3.1.4 James as a Jewish and Christian wisdom.

<sup>84</sup> DeGraaf (2005:742) suggest a possible translation of Jas. 1:6: “Let him ask in faith, free from divided motives and divisive attitudes, for such a person is like an ocean wave. . . .”

3:13-17 to true and false faith in 2:14, 18:

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

Jas. 2:18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works (ESV).

Jas. 3:13-17 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere (ESV).

Just as true faith is shown in good works, true wisdom must be shown in good works.

#### 4.2.2.3.2 Law

James uses the term νόμος (“law”) eight times in the following phrases.

1:25 But the one who looks into **the perfect law, the law of liberty (νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας)**, and continues, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

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

2:9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted **by the law (ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου)**.

2:10 For whoever keeps the **whole law (ὅλον τὸν νόμον)** but fails in one, he has become guilty of all.

2:11 if you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of **the law (παραβάτης νόμου)**.

2:12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by **the law of liberty (νόμου ἐλευθερίας)**.

4:11 The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against **the law (νόμου)** and judges **the law (νόμον)**. But if you judge **the law (νόμον)**, you are not a doer of **the law (νόμου)** but a judge.

In addition, James refers once (4:12) to the “one Lawgiver,” using the term νομοθέτης.

Four points are valuable in discerning James's intent with these references to the law. First, James does not connect the conception of *law* to ritual observance like circumcision. James uses the *law* consistently with the moral law (cf. Moo 2015:65-66; Davids 2013 [1982]:47; Stulac 2010 [1993]:19; Johnson 2005 [1995]:30; Painter 2005:250). Second, as we noted earlier the fact that the Letter is drafted through with the teachings of Jesus, the content of James's *law* is closely connected to the teachings of Jesus. Davids (2013 [1982]:50) concludes that "for James it is not the gospels, but the words of Jesus himself that form the new law; indeed, Jesus' pervasive influence underlies the whole of James's teaching." For James, the Old Testament moral law has been fulfilled in the teachings of Jesus (cf. Moo 2015:66-67; Stulac 2010 [1993]:19). Third, James qualifies the law in three ways: "perfect", "royal", and "liberty." James calls the law in 1:25 "the perfect law, the law of liberty" (ESV, NRSV, ASV) and in 2:12 "the law of liberty": "the law as a perfect guide for life" (Davids 2013:47) and the "law that gives freedom" (NIV, cf. NLT, CEV, GNB). In 2:8 he calls it the "royal law", citing Leviticus 19:18, which can mean "the sovereign law or the law as interpreted by Jesus" (Davids 2013:47). Moo's (2015:66) view is that since the "love command" of Leviticus 19:18 which Jesus portrayed as the summary of the law, is quoted here, "there is probably some allusion to Jesus' own teaching." Cheung (2003:99) explains that "the phrase νόμος βασιλικός ('royal law,' cf. 2:5; βασιλεία, 'kingdom') is understood as first promulgated by Jesus who proclaimed God's kingdom and its law," so the law is the "law of the kingdom." The principal elements of the law seem to be love (ἀγαπάω, 2:8) and mercy (ἔλεος, 2:12-13) (cf. Brosend 2004:68). Fourth, James emphasises the law as something that should not only be "gazed into" but also "fulfilled" in 1:25 and "kept" both in its parts and as a whole in 2:10. If one fails to keep the law, he or she is a "transgressor of the law" (2:11). In 4:11-12 James reminds the reader to become a doer of the law rather than a judge (cf. Stulac 2010 [1993]:20; Johnson 2005 [1995]:30; Brosend 2004:68; Johnson 2004:8-9). We can depict the law in James in four short statements:

- (1) The conception of law in James concerns not with ritual observance, but the moral law.
- (2) The content of James's law is closely connected to the teachings of Jesus.
- (3) James qualifies the law in three ways: "perfect", "royal", and "[providing] liberty."
- (4) James emphasises the law as something that should not only be looked into but also "kept" both in its parts and as a whole (2:10) and "fulfilled" (1:25). The believers must become doers of the law rather than judges (4:11-12).

#### 4.2.2.3.3 Word

James uses the term λόγος ("word") five times, of which four instances (1:18, 21, 22, 23) refer to the word of God, one (3:2) refer to a person's speech, in the following (ESV) phrases.

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

1:21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the **implanted word** (τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον), which is able to *save your souls*.

1:22 But be **doers of the word** (ποιηταὶ λόγου), and not hearers [of the word, λόγου] only, deceiving yourselves.

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

1:24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

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

3:2 For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes **in speaking** (ἐν λόγῳ) is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle.

James uses “the perfect law, the law of liberty” in 1:25 in a context where it replaces the preceding term “word” (1:22-23) (cf. Moo 2015:66). The believers are given “birth” by “the word of truth” (1:18) and saved when they receive the implanted word with meekness (1:21) and become a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (1:18). In 1:22-23 James urges his readers to be doers of the word rather than hearers only. It is similar to the phrase, “a person is justified by works and not by faith alone” in 2:24. His appeal to his readers to become a doer of “the law” in 1:25, 2:9-12, 4:11 is reiterated repeatedly. We can sum it up in three points:

- (1) James uses “law” as replacement of the term “word” (1:22-23, 25).
- (2) The believers are given “birth” by “the word of truth” (1:18) and saved when they receive the implanted word with meekness (1:21) and become a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (1:18).
- (3) James urges his readers to be doers of the word rather than hearers only (1:22-23).
- (4) We can see the parallels between 1:22 and 2:24: “doers of the word” and “by works”; “hearers only” and “by faith only.”

#### 4.2.2.3.4 Wisdom/law/word as terms related to faith and work

As we observed, in James the terms wisdom, law, and word are so closely interconnected as to operate as synonyms. Baker (1995:19) examines:

The “perfect law of liberty” appears in 1:25 as a redesignation of the “implanted word” (which is to be humbly accepted) in 1:21, which in turn is called earlier the “word of truth” (by which God brings men forth) in 1:18. The original antecedent of the “word of truth” can be traced through the “good and perfect gift” (which comes from above) to “wisdom” (for which one is encouraged to ask God in order to be complete) in 1:5, which further connects to the “wisdom which comes from above” in 3:17. This brings one to 3:13 and the necessary relationship made between good deeds and true, godly wisdom.

As observed, the concepts of “wisdom”, “law”/”word” are used very closely in James, and their relation can be tabulated as follows:

**Table 7 Comparison of the terms: faith, wisdom, law/word.**

Faith	Wisdom	Law/word
(1) True faith (πίστις) must be shown by good works (ἔργα) (2:14-26).	(1) James emphasises showing wisdom (σοφός) in good works (ἔργα) (3:13)	(1) James here urges his readers to be doers of the word (λόγος) rather than hearers only (1:22-23); James emphasises the law (ἔργον) as something that should not only be looked into but also “kept” both in its parts and as a whole (2:10) and “fulfilled” (1:25); The believers must become doers of the law (ἔργον) rather than judges (4:11-12).
(2) The faith (πίστις) that does not have works (ἔργα) cannot save us (2:14). “A person is justified by works (ἔργα) and not by faith (πίστις) alone.” (2:24).	(2) Wisdom (σοφός) is “a divine gift” which is given to the believers who ask God (1:5) for it; Wisdom (σοφός) is not earthly or unspiritual, but spiritual in nature (3:15)	(2) The believers are saved by “the word (λόγος) of truth” (1:18, 21); a doer who adheres to the perfect law (ἔργον) of liberty will be blessed in his doing (1:25).
(3) The faith (πίστις) of the Lord Jesus Christ (2:1).	(3) True wisdom (σοφός) in James is the wisdom (σοφός) of Jesus in form and content (see above about wisdom).	(3) The content of James’s law (ἔργον) is strongly connected to the teachings of Jesus (see above about word).
(4) Faith (πίστις) will be tested and the believer is to endure it (1:3): The true faith (πίστις) is incompatible with acts of favouritism (2:1): Faith (πίστις) must be mature (1:2-4); this entails the prayer with faith (πίστις) for wisdom (σοφός) (1:5-6), the prayer of faith (πίστις) for the sick (5:15).	(4) Wisdom (σοφός) is “primarily ethical rather than intellectual”: true wisdom (σοφός) from above is characterized by good conduct, gentleness, humility, pureness, peaceableness, gentleness, mercy, good fruits, impartiality and sincerity (3:17): If any of you lacks wisdom (σοφός), let him ask God with no divided or double-minded heart (1:5-8).	(4) The concept of law (ἔργον) in James concerns not ritual observance, but moral law (ἔργον); “if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law (ἔργον) as transgressors as a sin of law (ἔργον) breaker rather than a doer of the law (ἔργον)” (2:9).

First, just as true faith must be shown by good works (2:14-26), true wisdom is also revealed in good works (3:13) and James urges readers to be doers of the word or law rather than just hearers or judges (1:22-23; 4:11-12). Second, James teaches the recipient how to be saved: a person is saved or justified by the faith that produces works (2:14, 24); wisdom is given to the believers who ask

God for it and live spiritually (1:5; 3:15); the believers are saved by the word of truth and blessed in doing the perfect law of liberty (1:18, 21, 25). James has similar expressions on saving, introduced with the concepts of faith, wisdom, and law/word. Third, James mentions that the believers have the faith of Jesus (2:1). It can mean that they have the faith of Jesus himself who believes in God or the faith from Jesus, or the faith in Jesus. The faith is absolutely connected to Jesus. Wisdom and law/word are closely connected to the sayings of Jesus. Fourth, the true faith is revealed in good works. It is explained further that the faith will be tested, the test must be endured, and perfected through the prayer of faith, therefore not resulting in acts of favouritism (1:2-6; 2:1). James explains that wisdom, law, and the word are involved in moral and good conduct, not intellectual wisdom or ritual observance. We therefore conclude that true faith is tested, but it produces endurance and the believers may become perfect by means of wisdom, law, and word.

#### 4.2.3 Key words connected to faith: “test,” “endurance,” “prayer”

As we observed above, faith is related not only to wisdom/law/word, but also to “test,” “endurance,” “prayer.” The word-group “test” (πειρασμός, δοκίμιον, πειράζω) occurs seven times (1:2, 3, 12, 13 thrice, 14). The word-groups “endurance” (ύπομονή, ύπομένω) and “patience” (μακροθυμέω, μακροθυμία) occur nine times (1:3, 4, 12; 5:7 twice, 8, 10, 11 twice), and the word-group “prayer” (εύχή, δέησις) or “ask” (αἰτέω, εὔχομαι) occur eight times (1:5, 6; 4:2, 3 twice; 5:15, 16 twice).

The word “πειρασμός” has two basic meanings in the New Testament. First, it can mean the inner enticement to sin, “temptation.” Second, it can denote an attempt to teach the character of something or external afflictions, “test” or “trial.” In 1:2 most commentators and the English Bible opt for the translation, “trial” because the noun πειρασμός is used positively and the use of περιπίπτω (lit. “fall into”) indicates an “unexpected encounter.” The noun δοκίμιον occurs only twice in the New Testament, here in 1:3 and 1 Pet. 1:7. The word δοκίμιον can refer to: (1) “the tested” or “genuine.” In 1 Pet. 1:7 δοκίμιον clearly means “genuine” or “proven character”; (2) “testing”<sup>85</sup> (McKnight 2011:77-78; Varner 2010:46; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:65; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:49; ESV, NET, NRSV, NKJV, NIV, NASB)); or (3) “means of testing” (Moo 2015:81; Allison 2013:150-151; Hartin 2009 [2003]:57-58). James encourages the recipients to consider it pure joy, whenever they face trials (or tests) of various kinds (1:2). James then explains the reason: “because you know that the *testing of your faith* produces endurance”<sup>86</sup> (1:3, emphasis added). In 1:12 James further reminds the readers of who is blessed: “blessed is the man who endures testing

<sup>85</sup> Many commentators and most English Bibles translate this as “the testing of your faith.”

<sup>86</sup> The translation and italics are mine.

(Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν), because when he has proven to be genuine (ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος),<sup>87</sup> he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him (λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς ὃν ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν)” (1:12). James shows that “trials are the agents that test their faith and reveal its true nature” (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:65). Thus, James exhorts believers to consider the testing of their faith a benefit (1:2) because the means of testing (i.e. sufferings or trials) allows faith to prove itself as being genuine by producing the quality of endurance. 1:2-4 and 1:12 contain the general idea of “tests” or “trials” to prove character, but in 1:13-14 James turns the meaning of the verbal form “πειράζω” to “temptations” to sin. In 1:13 πειράζω can be two possible meanings: (1) as both “test” and “tempt”: no one, when tested, should say, “I am being *tempted* by God”; (2) as “tempt” only, No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being *tempted* by God.”<sup>88</sup> In 1:14 James explains the origins of temptations: “[b]ut each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire” (ESV). James insists that faith will be tested in various trials and “the *testing of your faith* produces endurance” (emphasis added). The true faith is proved by endurance under the testing of faith. If one failed to endure testing and is tempted by his or her own desire, it shows that the faith was not true and therefore the “believer” will not receive the crown of life. We can then find that it is an acknowledgement of “faith” to be tested by trials. The word “test” is also related to “faith.”

The noun ὑπομονή (“endurance”) occurs three times in 1:3, 4, 5:11 and a similar notion is expressed by μακροθυμία (“patience”) which occurs once in 5:10. The verb μακροθυμέω (“be patient”) occurs three times in 5:7, 8 and ὑπομένω (“endure”) twice in 1:12; 5:11. As we observed above, In 1:3-4, 12 James instructs that the true faith produces endurance under the testing and when anyone’s faith has been proven to be genuine by endurance, he or she will receive the crown of life. In 5:7-11 James again exhorts the audience to be patient, for the Lord’s return is near. James then gives some examples – the farmer who is patient for the precious fruit of the ground until it receives the early and late rains, the prophets, and Job. Endurance, for Julian (2000:43), is “the inevitable result of genuine faith under trial, because such faith stays the course and thereby shows itself to be genuine.” Blomberg & Kamell (2008:49) depict that endurance as “faith stretched out.”

<sup>87</sup> Ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος: The ὅτι “because” (NET, NIV) or “for” (ESV, NASB, ASV) introduces the reason that the one who successfully endures testing is blessed. Γενόμενος (agreeing with the subject of λήμψεται) is a temporal adverbial use of the participle. With an aorist participle, the time of the action is usually antecedent to that of the main verb. The adjective δόκιμος usually means “approved (by test),” “tried and true,” “genuine”; “respected,” “esteemed” (BDAG 2000:256). “The phrase δόκιμος γενόμενος, a restatement of ὑπομένει in the first clause” (Vlachos 2013:39) and is translated: “when he has proven to be genuine” (NET, cf. NASV, ASV) or “when he has stood the test” (ESV, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>88</sup> McKnight (2011:115) prefers the first one, “when tested” which sums up 1:2-12 and “tempted by God.” But most commentators and English translations view both of “πειράζω” as “tempted.”

The verb αἰτέω (“ask”) occurs five times (1:5, 6; 4:2, 3 twice), a synonym προσεύχομαι (“pray”) occurs four times (5:13, 14, 17, 18), and εὔχομαι (“pray”) once in 5:16. The noun εὐχή (“prayer”) occurs once in 5:15 and δέησις (“prayer”) once in 5:16. The “prayer” word-group occurs in three sections (1:5-6, 4:2-3, 5:13-18). In 1:5-6 James encourages the believer to ask God, on the basis of the knowledge of God “who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him” (ESV). But there is a condition: the prayer should ask in faith without a divided heart. In 4:2-3 James explains that the reason the believers do not have what they desire, is that they do not pray or because they ask wrongly, prompted by their own passions. James’ exhortations here in 4:2-3 are highly evocative of two previous items of knowledge: (1) God is a generous giver (1:5); (2) all good things are from above, from the Father of lights (1:17). In 5:13-18 the “prayer” word-group occurs seven times. James provides concrete examples of prayer in several situations, and advises the readers to pray amidst suffering (5:13), to call for the elders of the church to pray among the sick (5:14), and to confess sins to one another and pray for one another, when someone has committed sins (5:15-16). James also teaches that the prayers which will be answered effectively: the prayer of faith (5:15), the prayer of a righteous person (5:16), and the prayer of Elijah (5:17-18). We note several points on prayer in James. First, prayer is an important part of the believer’s life both individually and communally, and in all circumstances (cf. Moo 2015:69; Perkins 1995:91). Second, prayer is based on the knowledge of God as the generous giver of all good things (1:5, 17) (cf. Bauckham 2002 [1999]:205-206). Third, there are some conditions on which God will answer prayers: (1) it must be the prayer of faith (1:6, 5:15) or the prayer of a righteous (5:16), and not the double-minded prayer (1:6-8); (2) it must not be motivated by selfish desires (4:3) (cf. Hartin 2009 [2003]:36; Bauckham 2003:1491; Bauckham 2002 [1999]:206). Fourth, there are some functions of prayer: (1) to ask for wisdom (1:5); (2) to obtain material goods (4:2-3); (3) to be saved from suffering (5:13) or sickness (5:14-15); or (4) to be forgiven sins (5:15-16) (cf. Davids 2013 [1982]:56). Fifth, the role of prayer in the faith community is very important (5:13-18). The communal prayer will bring the sick not only physical healing but also spiritual healing, the forgiveness of sins (5:16). Finally, much of James’ teaching on prayer is close to that of Jesus: “ask and it shall be given to you” (Mt. 7:7; Lk. 11:19). “Prayer should be made in faith (Mt. 21:21-22; Mk. 11:22-24; Jas. 1:5-8; 5:15); it should be according to God’s will (1 Jn. 5:14); it should be made in the name of Jesus (Jn. 14:13—14; 15:16; 16:23—24, 26; Jas. 5:14); and it should be made by a righteous person (1 Jn. 3:22; Jas. 5:15)” (Bauckham 2002 [1999]:206).

As we observed above, James emphasizes the prayer of faith in the believer’s life. We conclude that prayer is intrinsically connected to faith.

To sum up, James teaches that faith will be tested by trials and the true faith is proven by endurance with praying and a wholehearted commitment to God. James describes endurance as proving faith. For James test and prayer are inevitable parts of faith.

#### **4.2.4 Speech and love/mercy as the two important works of faith**

There are especially two themes among the many exhortations in James that are important: first is the exhortation about speech and the second concerns love or mercy which is normally involved with the rich and the poor.

##### **4.2.4.1 Speech**

The theme of speech occurs frequently throughout the Letter (1:19-20, 26; 2:12; 3:1-12; 4:11, 15; 5:9, 12, 16). James exhorts to “be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” in 1:19 and because “the anger of man does not achieve (ἐργάζεται, work) the righteousness of God” (1:20). James encourages recipients to be doers of the word/law as saved believers by the implanted word, and as blessed people in 1:22-25. In 1:26, James again emphasises the importance of controlling the tongue: “[i]f anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this religion is useless.” It is reminiscent of “faith apart from works is useless” (2:20). James also teaches that the true believers are those who are saved by the word and doers of the word/law/work and the first act of the perfect law is “controlling the tongue.” James concludes in 2:12: “[s]o speak and so act as those who are to be judged through the law of liberty.” James explains his emphasis on the control of the tongue in 3:1-12. It is that the effect of speaking is as powerful as a bit in the mouth of horse, i.e. to control the whole body, like a small rudder though which a large ship is moved, and like a fire which sets a large forest ablaze. The teachers who teach through speaking “will receive greater judgement” (3:1) because the far-reaching effect of their speaking. In 4:11 James says, “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.” James teaches that to speak evil against a brother means to speak evil against the law and judges the law. For James “if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.” He considers the one who speaks evil against a brother as failing to be a doer of the law but a judge, for he or she decided already that the brother is evil. James reminds the reader that “[t]here is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?” (4:12). This is the reason why James says in 2:12 that we are to speak as those who are to be judged through the law of liberty. James lastly exhorts again not to grumble against one another (5:9) and not to swear an oath, but “let your ‘yes’ be yes and your ‘no’ be ‘no,’ so that you may not fall under judgement” (5:12).

One noticeable exhortation about the tongue is the use of metaphors of a water spring and a tree: “Does a spring pour forth from the same opening the sweet and the bitter? Can a fig tree, my brothers, produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt spring produce sweet water.” (3:11-12). These sayings remind of the sayings of Jesus:

“You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits” (Mt. 7:16–20 ESV).

James mentions similarly: “the testing of your faith produces<sup>89</sup> endurance” (1:3); “faith that does not have works is dead” (2:14, 17); “faith apart from works is dead” (2:20, 26). The parallels agree that like the fig tree cannot produce olives, a salt spring cannot produce sweet water, a diseased tree cannot bear good fruit, so just as we can recognize trees by their fruits, we can recognize the true faith and true religion by their speech. If someone gets angry quickly, or speaks evil against brothers, or grumbles against one another, or swears easily, then he or she exposes his or her faith and religion as false.

In sum, James exhorts that we must be doers of the word/law because we are saved by the implanted word and will be judged through the perfect law of liberty by the only one Lawgiver and Judge. If we speak evil against a brother, grumble against one another, get angry easily, or swear by heaven or by earth, we are not doers of law and will be judged through the law. James emphasises the power of the tongue like a fire which sets a large forest ablaze and stains the whole [community of?] members. James encourages the readers to control the tongue. The uncontrolled tongue exposes a useless faith. For James speech is involved as one of the important works of the true faith as abiders by the law.

#### **4.2.4.2 Love and mercy toward the poor**

As we observed in the chapter 2, James has a special concern for the poor. He refers to most members of the community as poor people. Throughout the Letter James uses a negative term to indicate the rich (1.10, 11; 2.5, 6; 5.1), but he encourages the poor: “Let the lowly/humble brother boast in his height” (1:9); “Listen, my beloved brothers, Did not God choose the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?” (2:5).

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<sup>89</sup> Though the Greek words for “produce” are ποιέω in 3:12 and κατεργάζομαι in 1:3, the meaning of the terms being used are the same (cf. ESV, NET, NRSV, NKJV, NASB).

He even uses the term “the poor” in apposition with “you,” the recipient: “But you have dishonored the poor. Do not the rich oppress you, and do they drag you into court?” (2:6).

James teaches that the act of love and mercy toward the poor is a matter of primary importance in true religion (1:27) and true faith (2:15-17). When James explains what pure and undefiled religion is before God in 1:27, he says, “to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” He mentions the acts of love first. Moreover, where James instructs his readers about the true faith that produces works in 2:14-26, he give an example of someone who addresses the need to “being warmed and filled” but “does not give them the necessary of the body” (2:15-16) as a useless faith.

James also criticises the act of favouritism as behaviour incompatible with the faith of Lord Jesus Christ (2:1). He condemns those who dishonour the poor practising partiality in favour of the rich as not fulfilling the royal law, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself,” and committing sin (2:1-9). James then warns two arrogant rich people sternly in 4:13-5:6). In particular he announces the condemnation of rich landowners on the grounds of “their selfish hoarding of wealth (vv. 2–3), their defrauding of their workers (v. 4), their self-indulgent lifestyle (v. 5) and their oppression of ‘the righteous’ (v. 6)” (Moo 2015:202). It is noticeable that the rich will be condemned by their wealth which they failed to use responsibly for easing the need, and the rust will bear witness against them (5:3). In 2:13 James instructs, “For judgment is merciless to the one who did not show mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” The point is that those who did not show mercy will be judged without mercy. The merchants did not do good deeds even though they knew that they were bound to do so. What they did do which James mentioned in 4:13-16 is planning for making a profit (4:13) and boasting in their arrogance (4:16). It indicates that the merchants do not show mercy toward the needy.

For faith and judgement, the act of love and mercy toward the poor is a crucial matter. The acts of love and mercy are not only absent in negative deeds like “partiality”, “defrauding”, and “oppression”, but also failing to show love and mercy towards the poor, as seen in the actions of the merchant or the rich landowner.

#### **4.2.5 Summary**

As we have seen above, true faith is linked closely to works, to the extent that faith and works are inseparable. True faith must produce works of the faith, for without works faith is rendered “*useless*”

(2:14, 16), cannot “*save*” (2:14), is “*ineffective*” (2:20), and is “*dead*” (2:17, 26). Faith will be tested in various contexts and the true faith will be proven by endurance with a wholehearted commitment to God (1:3, 8). The endurance will make the believers complete, lacking in nothing (1:4). Faith must become mature, with perfection as its goal. Faith and works can be also understood in terms of perfection. For the perfections of faith we need the wisdom from above, the word, and the perfect law of liberty. Only through wisdom and word/law can the believers be perfect in the faith. There are two frequently mentioned themes as the important contents of the law, viz. speech and love/mercy for the poor. James reminds the audience that the power of the tongue is like the great fire from hell. The uncontrolled tongue is regarded as useless for faith and religion. James teaches that controlled speech is one of the important works of the true faith as doers of law. Another very crucial deed of faith is the act of love or mercy towards the poor. For James true faith is demonstrated in love toward God (2:5) and neighbours (2:8) expressed in concrete actions especially to the poor (1:27, 2:1-9, 15-17). For James the acts of love/mercy are not only related to unjust behaviour like “favouritism”, “defrauding, and “oppressing the poor”, but also related to doing nothing what is known to be right, like practised by the merchant and the rich landowner. Through the perfect law of liberty, the people of God are renewed, and keeping the law (especially control of the tongue and love of the poor) would make the believers grow toward perfection. To encourage the recipients to be doers of the word and law, James teaches them about the grounds of eschatological judgement and reversal as motivation for endurance and works of faith. For James, eschatological judgement and rewards are more valuable than riches in earthly life. James encourages the poor to boast in their eschatological height (1:9) and reminds them that “God chooses the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him” (2:5). However, James warns the rich landowner to “weep and cry aloud over the miseries that are coming upon [them]” (5:1). The coming of the Lord and eschatological judgement act as important motivation for doing works of faith. There is also an inevitable requirement for living by faith, “the prayer of the faith.” There are several reasons why we should pray to God: first, because we are lacking in wisdom (1:5) and in power of doing (5:13); second, because our life and everything needed for our existence depends on God (1:17; 4:14, 15); and, third, because “God gives generously to all without reproach” (1:5) if we ask in faith (1:6) and not for selfish pleasures (4:3).

#### 4.2.6 All exhortations in James as works of faith

As we observed above, the term πίστις (“faith”) and πιστεύω (“believe”) occur nineteen times in James (πίστις sixteen times and πιστεύω thrice). We also searched the term of ἔργον which is

inseparable from πίστις in James besides some other terms related to faith: the noun ποιητής (“doer”), the noun θρησκεία (“religion”), and the verb πείθω (“believe”, “persuade”, “obey”). We can find the major themes like “perfection”, “eschatology”, and “wisdom/law/word which are also related to faith and works. Further, speech and love/mercy towards the poor are the two important works of faith that are discussed thoroughly in the letter. Lastly we observed that there are key words which are intrinsically related to faith: test, endurance, and prayer. McCartney (2009:57) rightly observes that “although the word faith is not used throughout, it lies at the root of the whole of James’s exhortation.” For Swindoll (2010:21), the main theme of the Letter is that “real faith produces genuine works. In other words, the person who has truly found the way genuinely walks in it. ... When we realize this overarching theme, many of the individual sections and troublesome verses become clear.” For James, according to Botha (2006:111-112), “faith is only valid if it is clearly demonstrated in practice, like caring for the poor, perseverance, control of the tongue, obeying the law, etc. For James a dichotomy between faith and works cannot exist.” This conclusion is quite clear if we examine the whole letter and focus on exhortations and how faith is related to each – this can be illustrated in the following table:

**Table 8 Sections of exhortations in James**

Ch	Ver	Theme or Summary	Key Words	Implication related to Faith	
1	1	Author, recipient	James, the twelve tribes	A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (1)	
	2	Joy in the testing of faith, endurance, perfection	test (πειρασμός, δοκίμιον), endurance (ὑπομονή), perfect (τέλειος), whole (δολόκληρος)	The testing of faith produces endurance (3)	
	3				
	4				
	5	Ask God with faith, aware of lacking wisdom, not with divided heart	wisdom (σοφία), ask (αἰτέω), faith (πίστις), doubt (διακρίνω), double-minded (δίψυχος), unstable (ἀκατάστατος)	Let him ask on the basis of knowing (αἰτείτω παρὰ) (1:5) Let him ask in faith, without doubting (1:6)	
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9	Boast spiritual height, not riches	lowly (ταπεινός), boast (καυχάομαι), height (ὕψος), the rich (ὁ πλούσιος), humiliation (ταπεινώσει), pass away (παρελεύσεται), perish (ἀπόλλυμι), fade away (μαραίνω)	The boast is based on the faith of eschatological height and judgement.	
	10				
	11				
	12	Blessed man endures the test	endure (ὑπομένω), test (πειρασμός), genuine (δόκιμος) <sup>90</sup> , the crown of life (τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς)	The motivation of the endurance under test is the eschatological reward. Thus true faith produces endurance under the test (12)	
	13	Let no one say, “I am tempted by God”	Temptations do not come from God, but come from own desire that leads to sin and death	no one say that... (Μηδεὶς λεγέτω ὅτι...), tempt (πειράζω), God (θεός), desire (ἐπιθυμία), sin (ἁμαρτία), death (θάνατος)	The true faith produces endurance (1:3), but the false faith is tempted under the test by own desire.
	14				
	15				
	16	Do not be deceived	God is the giver of all good/perfect gifts and the regenerator of believers by the word of truth.	Do not be deceived (Μὴ πλανᾶσθε), all good gift (πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ), all perfect gift (πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον), from the Father (ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς), give birth (ἀποκύεω), the word of truth	One of reasons of being tempted is misunderstanding of God. *The right knowledge of God is indispensable for the faith because “by the word of truth we are regenerated as firstfruits of His
17					
18					

<sup>90</sup> See BDAG 2000: 256; Louw & Nida 1996: 73.4; NET

			(λόγος ἀληθείας), firstfruits (ἀπαρχή)	creatures” (18).	
	19	Know (this)	Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Put away all impurity and evil. Receive the implanted word which can save.	know (οἶδα), hear (ἀκούω), speak (λαλέω), anger (ὀργή), impurity (ῥυπαρία), evil (κακία), righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ), the implanted word (ὁ ἐμφυτος λόγος), save (σῶζω)	The anger does not achieve the righteousness of God (20). The implanted word which is able to save your souls (21). *”Can that faith save him?” (2:14); “faith apart from works is dead” (2:26): faith with works and word with doer of it can save souls. The faith with works is in apposition with doers of word.
	20				
	21				
	22	Be doers	Be doers of the word/work/law and not hearers only.	doer of the word (ποιητὴς λόγου), hearer of the word (ἀκροατὴς λόγου), doer of work (ποιητὴς ἔργου), the perfect law (νόμος τέλειος) blessed (μακάριος), doing (ποιήσις)	Be doers of the word and not hearers only (22); a person is justified by works and not by faith only (2:24).
	23				
	24				
	25				
	26	If anyone thinks	The religion with uncontrolled tongue is useless. True religion is to have mercy on the needy and keep oneself unstained from the world.	religion (θρησκεία), tongue (γλῶσσα), visit (ἐπισκέπτομαι), to keep unstained from the world (ἄσπιλον ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου)	not bridle his tongue..., this religion is useless (26): faith apart from works is useless (2:20). *The true believers are doers of the word/law/work: control tongue, * uncontrolled tongue, impurity, evil indicate just hearers of the word/law which, not doers * Just hearers cannot be saved and their religion is useless. *doers of word are in apposition with the faith with works
	27				
2	1	The faith of Jesus is inconsistent with partiality for rich; the faith is inevitably related to speaking and acting in accordance with the law of liberty, especially “love”, or “mercy”, the royal law.		partiality (προσωποληψία), distinction (διακρίνω), faith (πίστις), poor (πτωχός), rich (πλούσιος), love (ἀγαπάω), mercy (ἔλεος), law (νόμος), judge (κριτής), judgement (κρίσις), sin (ἁμαρτία), transgressor (παραβάτης), guilty (ἔνοχος)	“do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1). “If you fulfil the royal law ... you are doing well” (8). “if you show partiality, you are committing sin” (9a) and “become a transgressor of the law.” (11c) “So speak and so act as those who are to be judged through the law of liberty.” (12) “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (13b). *the faith is essentially involved in fulfilling the law, especially “love” in speech and action.
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26					
3	1	The power of the tongue (teaching, speaking)	tongue (γλῶσσα), teacher (διδάσκαλος), mouth (στόμα), fire (πῦρ), spring (πηγή), tree (συκὴ, ἐλαία), judgement (κρίμα), hell (γέεννα), perfect (τέλειος), small (ἐλάχιστος, μικρός), large (τηλικούτος, μέγας),	*It is based on the eschatological judgement: “Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will be received with greater judgement.” (3:1) “The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body,	
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	8			setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.” (3:6b)
	9			*It seems like the inseparable relation between faith and works:
	10			“Can a fig tree, my brothers,
	11			<b>produce</b> olives, or a grapevine
	12			<b>produce</b> figs? Neither can a salt spring <b>produce</b> sweet water.” (3:12). Cf. “the testing of your faith <b>produces</b> <sup>91</sup> endurance” (1:3); “faith that does not have works is dead” (2:14, 17); “faith apart from works is dead” (2:20, 26)
	13	Wisdom from above:	wisdom (σοφός), from above (ἄνωθεν), conduct (ἀναστροφή),	“Who is <b>wise</b> and understanding among you? By his good
	14	meekness, pureness,	work (ἔργον), truth (ἀλήθεια),	conduct let him <b>show</b> his <b>works</b>
	15	gentleness, submissiveness,	fruit of righteousness (καρπός	in the meekness of wisdom.”
	16	mercy, impartiality, sincerity,	δικαιοσύνης)	(3:13)
	17	and peace		*Jas. 2:18 “ <b>Show</b> me your <b>faith</b>
	18	Wisdom not from above:		... “the <b>wisdom from above</b> is first
		jealousy, selfish ambition,		pure, then peaceable, gentle,
		boast, lie		submissive, full of mercy and
				good fruits, impartial and sincere
				(3:17)
				*True wisdom from above must
				be shown by good works just as
				the true faith must be shown
				by good works.
				*The lists as the wisdom from
				above is like as the fruit of the
				Spirit in Paul (3:17; Gal. 5:22-
				23).
4	1	Friend of the world and	war/fight/battle/quarrel (πόλεμος,	*God is the great giver to the
	2	friend of God: Do not fight,	μάχη, στρατεύω, μάχομαι,	humble (6) and the lawgiver and
	3	but ask God, be a friend of	πολεμέω), murder (κριτής), desire	judge who is able to save and to
	4	God who gives greater grace	(ἐπιθυμέω), covet (ζηλόω), ask	destroy (12).
	5	and is also able to save and	(αἰτέω),	*James shows two kinds of people:
	6	to destroy, by submitting to	friendship (φιλία), friend (φίλος),	(1) Unbelievers or wrong believers
	7	God, drawing near to God,	enmity (ἐχθρα), enemy (ἐχθρός),	who have friendship with the world:
	8	humbling before God, and	world (κόσμος), devil (διάβολος),	they desire and covet more, and then
	9	doing the law	God (θεός), double-minded	fight or even murder to obtain, not
	10		(δίψυχος), proud (ὑπερήφανος),	ask God or ask wrongly, proudly,
	11		resist (ἀντιτάσσω, ἀνθίστημι),	double-minded, speaking evil
	12		humble (ταπεινός), submit	against, and not doers of the law.
			(ὑποτάσσω), draw near (ἐγγίζω),	(2) True believers who trust in God
			cleanse (καθαρίζω), purify	and have friendship with God: they
			(ἀγνίζω), speak against	ask God in faith, submit to God,
			(καταλαλέω), doer (ποιητής), law	resist the devil, draw near to God,
			(νόμος), judge (κριτής)	cleanse hands and purify heart,
				humble before the Lord, not speak
				evil against, and doers of law.
	13	The arrogant merchants: they	will do business and will make a	“Instead you ought to say, ‘If the
	14	think that they can plan and	profit (ἐμπορευσόμεθα καὶ	Lord wills, we will live and do this
	15	make a profit without God;	κερδήσομεν), you do not know	or that.” (15)
	16	they boast in their arrogance;	(οὐκ ἐπίστασθε), will (θέλω),	*our plan must be considered in
	17	even though they know what	boast (καυχάομαι), arrogance	faith of the fact that God controls
		is good to do, but they do not	(ἀλαζονεία), know (οἶδα), do	affairs and has specific wills for
		do it.	(ποιέω), sin (ἁμαρτία)	individuals.
				“therefore whoever knows what is
				good to do and does not do it, for
				him it is sin” (17).
				*“What benefit is it, my brothers, if
				someone says he has faith but does

<sup>91</sup> Though the Greek words for “produce” are ποιέω in 3:12 and κατεργάζομαι in 1:3, the meaning of the terms in their use here is the same (cf. ESV, NET, NRSV, NKJV, NASB).

				not have works? Can that faith save him?" (2:14) "So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself." (2:17)
5	1	The arrogant rich: They will be condemned to be in misery by the Lord of hosts because (1) they have stored up all materials and treasures, (2) deprived the wages of labourers, (3) lived in luxury, fattened their hears, and (4) murdered the righteous.	rich (πλούσιος, πλοῦτος), rotten (σῆπω), moth-eaten (σητόβρωτος), corroded (κατιόω), corrosion (ίός), store up (θησαυρίζω), deprive (ἀποστερέω), live in luxury (τρυφάω), live in self-indulgence (σπαταλάω), fatten (τρέφω), murder (φονεύω), weep (κλαίω), cry (ὀλολύζω), misery (ταλαιπωρία), last days (ἔσχατος ἡμέρα), a day of slaughter (ἡμέρα σφαγῆς), witness (μαρτύριον), eat flesh like fire (φάγεται τὰς σάρκας ὑμῶν ὡς πῦρ), the Lord of hosts (κύριος σαβαώθ)	"Come now, you rich! Weep and cry aloud over the miseries that are coming upon you." (5:1) *The condemnation of the rich: (1) their selfish hoarding of wealth (2) their defrauding of their workers (3) their living in luxury and in self-indulgence (4) their oppression of the righteous *"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well." (2:8) "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged through the law of liberty. For judgment is merciless to the one who did not do show mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." (2:12-13) *The living of the arrogant rich shows a typical life of the unbelievers who will be judged.
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
	6			
7	Be patient without faulty speaking	Be patient (Μακροθυμήσατε), wait for (ἐκδέχεται), suffering (κακοπάθεια), patience (μακροθυμία), endure (ὑπομένω), endurance (ὑπομονή), coming of the Lord (παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου), judge (κρίνω, κριτής), judgement (κρίσις), grumble (στενάζω), swear (ὀμνύω), oath (ὄρκος)	"Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord" (7a) "be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near." (8) "Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door." (9) "But above all, do not swear, ... so that you may not fall under judgement." (12) *Patience and endurance is possible on the basis of the faith of eschatological judgement. Cf. "the testing of your faith produces endurance." (1:3)	
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13	Do pray for one another with confessing sins	pray (προσεύχομαι), prayer of the faith (ἡ εὐχή τῆς πίστεως), prayer of a righteous person (δέησις δικαίου), prayer (προσευχή), suffer (κακοπαθέω), sick (ἀσθενέω), Lord (κύριος), sins (ἁμαρτία),	"the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." (15) *The prayer of faith will be answered by the Lord.	
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19	Turn back from error	wander from the truth (πλανηθῆ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας), turn back (ἐπιστρέφω), sin (ἁμαρτία), sinner (ἁμαρτωλός), save (σώζω)	"if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone turns him back, let him know that whoever turns back a sinner from his wandering path will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." (19-20) "if someone says he has faith but does not have works, can that faith save him?" (2:14) *the turning back from wandering to living by the truth can be considered as a living (work) of faith.	
20				

#### 4.2.7 Conclusion: the concept of faith in James

In Jas. 2:14-26, James uses the term “faith” with two meanings: mere confessional faith and working faith. He emphasises that the saving faith must produce works of faith. We discussed how the key terms and main themes are related with the faith throughout the letter. Finally we confirmed that faith is rooted in every exhortation in James as works of faith. From the observations above, we can find some more detail regarding the concept of faith in James:

First, faith will be tested in various contexts (1:2) and true faith produces endurance and becomes mature (1:3-4, 12).

Second, the right knowledge is essential for faith. James sometimes exhorts the audience on the basis that they have known already: “for you know that ...” (1:3); “let him ask (God) on the basis of knowing (παρὰ)...” (1:5); “Adulterers! Do you not know that ...?” (4:4). James sometimes corrects their wrong understanding: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.” (1:13-14); “Do you want to know, O foolish man, that ...” (2:20); “Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. All good gift and all perfect gift is from above, ...” (1:16-17). James sometimes urges the reader to know more: “Know this, my beloved brothers ...” (1:19); “Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that ...” (3:1); “yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? ...” (4:14); “let him know that ...” (5:20). We also observe the content of knowledge to which James refers, as grounds of acting out the faith: (1) the knowledge about eschatological judgment and reversal (1:9-11, 12, 25; 2:5, 12-13; 3:1; 4:11-12, 14; 5:1-6, 7-9, 12, 20); (2) the knowledge of God: God is the merciful and generous giver (1:5; 4:2, 6, 5:11) and will give generously wisdom and all good things to those who ask in faith, to the humble, to those who endure the test, to doers of the law/word/work, and those who love God (1:5-8, 12, 17, 25; 2:5; 3:17; 4:6, 10). God is the regenerator (1:18), lawgiver, judge (4:12), and ruler (4:15). So no life and no human activity can proceed without God.

Third, for James true believers are those who were born through the word of truth (1:21); they are steadfast doers of law/word/wisdom; become mature through doing the law/word/wisdom (1:3-4, 12, 22-25; 2:8, 17, 20, 26); and will receive the crown of life from God (1:12).

Fourth, the works of faith can be categorized in three sets of concepts: (1) thinking (1:2, 26; 4:15); (2) speaking (1:13, 19-20, 26; 2:12; 3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:9, 12); and (3) acting (1:27; 2:1, 8, 9, 12, 14-17, 21-23, 25; 3:13, 17-18; 4:8, 17; 5:3-6, 7, 11, 20).

Finally, prayer is an inevitable part of faith in the believer's life, both individually and communally, because we are lacking in wisdom and our lives and every good thing are under the control of God, who is the generous giver to the humble and faithful. James especially encourages us to appeal to God, when we lack wisdom (1:5) and have needs (4:2-3), when we are suffering (5:13), when we are sick (5:14-15), when we have committed a sin (5:15-16).

In short, we conclude that the faith in the Letter of James means "the wholehearted commitment" to the word of truth from Jesus and the guidance of God. We can tell therefore that the believers are those who were born by believing the word of truth, and those who are living according to the life of Jesus (2:1),<sup>92</sup> the word of Jesus/God, and the guidance of Jesus/God. Faith depends firstly on the message of truth and the knowledge of God. Faith will be tested in various trials and circumstances but true believers produce endurance and strive for perfection as the goal of faith, in the confidence of eschatological judgement and rewards. Faith means becoming more mature in doing the word/law/wisdom and in knowing God, while asking God in faith.

### **4.3 Theological analysis of James 4:13-5:20 on faith and works**

We confirmed above that James emphasises doers of the law or works of faith throughout the letter. James gives many exhortations to do the works of true faith, rather than being just a hearer or a knower. We can distinguish three elements in James' exhortations: the situation of the recipient, the knowledge of the word of God/Jesus, and an exhortation (to work) as the proper response of the faith to the situation on the basis of the knowledge. The works of faith are inevitably involved with a certain situation or context and the knowledge of the word of God that has an effect on the believer's thinking, speaking and acting. We will now examine closely the exhortations in 4:13-5:20, focusing on how the living faith produces works in various contexts with three steps: (1) context or situation of the recipient; (2) knowledge of the word of God/Jesus; (3) exhortation for the work of faith.

#### **4.3.1 James 4:13-17**

James gives the example of arrogant merchants to teach the audience how to act as believers, especially in business. In 4:13-17 James starts with an illustration of a certain situation, the merchant's presumption (4:13) and then he gives an exhortation (4:14-17).

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<sup>92</sup> As we mentioned before, whether the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ in 2:1 means that the faith from Jesus or the faith that Jesus has himself, the life of Jesus can be included in the meaning of faith. See Chapter 4.3.1 The usages of πίστις ("faith") and πιστεύω ("believe") in James.

### 4.3.1.1 Situation

James begins this section with the rhetorical summons, ἄγε νῦν (“come now”) by calling his readers to pay attention to his exhortations. As we deduced in Chapter 3.4.1, the merchants described in 4:13-17 seem to have been rich, judging by their wide-ranging travel plans (cf. Moo 2015:196; Batten 2013:16; Edgar 2001:198; Maynard-Reid 1987:71). One of the primary disputes of this section (4:13-17) concerns whether the merchants should be considered as Jesus followers or not, a point on which scholars are divided. Some (Hartin 2009 [2003]:223; Edgar 2001:198-199; Sleeper 1998:117; Maynard-Reid 1987:69) argue for their being considered to be non-Jesus followers, generally on the basis of three reasons: first, the repetition of ἄγε νῦν (“come now”) in 4:13 and 5:1 which seems to tie up the two parts (4:13-17 and 5:1-6) like a common rich group condemned by James; second, the lack of the salutation “brothers,” unlike the preceding unit (4:11) and the next section (5:7; also in 5:12, 19); third, the difficulties of imagining that the Christian community of that early stage could have been made up of big merchants (Hartin 2009 [2003]:223). Others (Moo 2015:198; Stulac 2010 [1993]:158; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:250; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:206; Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:160; Davids 1989:111; Perkins 1995:130; Martin 1988:167-168; Adamson 1976:179) argue that the merchants could have been members of the Christian community. In 4:13-14 James criticizes the merchants; in 4:15 he exhorts them to correct their attitudes, and again in 4:16 James rebukes their arrogance. There is no clear implication of shift in the audience from v. 13 to v. 16. It is more logical to understand the “ὐμᾶς” (you) in v. 15 (“ἀντὶ τοῦ λέγειν ὑμᾶς ...”, instead you *ought* to say ...) as referring to the same group previously addressed in v. 13 and supported with the second person plural verb “οὐκ ἐπίστασθε” (you do not know) in v. 14. James also continues using the second person plural verb in v. 16 (“νῦν δὲ καυχᾶσθε...”, But now you boast) to rebuke same group for their arrogance. It seems clear then that James condemns and exhorts the same addressees. Since he is advising them to change their attitudes, it seems logical to assume that they are professed members of the congregation. We can conclude that the merchants portrayed in Jas. 4:13-17 were lip-service Jesus followers who claimed to believe and knew what was correct action (v.17) but who practiced the sin of presumption (v.13) and the evil of boasting (v. 16). This conclusion accords with the message of the Letter as a whole. The double use of the verb ποιέω (“to do and does not do”) reminds of the earlier emphasis on being doers of the word (1:22-25) and the useless faith that does not produce works (2:14-16), “What benefit is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?” (2:24).

James’ portrayal of business people in 4:13 would have been familiar to his audience because the

trade of merchants was active in especially the Hellenistic-oriented cities of Palestine. Many Jews were active in these businesses and many people had stayed in cities throughout the Mediterranean world for trading purpose. It appears that this passage 4:13-17 “does not implicate modern capitalism or Christians who run businesses for profit” (Allison 2013:641); the long-term scheduling “would have stood out as far more unusual in James’s world than in ours” (Blomberg & Kamell 2008:212). The means of transportation and the business activities may differ in our modern world, but, as Moo (2015:197) notes, “in James’ day and ours, the ‘bottom line’ is the same – profit.”

The merchants’ claims in 4:13 are expressed in the future tense indicative verbs: (1) “we will go” (πορευσόμεθα), (2) “we will spend” (ποιήσομεν), (3) “we will do business” (ἐμπορευσόμεθα), and (4) “we will make a profit” (κερδήσομεν). Many agree that James does not condemn the merchants’ wealth or their practice of business, buying and selling, and making a profit, or their prudent planning (Moo 2015:196; Allison 2013:641; Bauckham 2003:1490; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:213; Doriani 2007:154; Culpepper 2000:39; Johnson 2000:1166; Felder 1998:1799). In 4:13 the merchants reveal strong four presumptions: first, “time is under their control”; second, “location is also under their control”; third, “the duration of their business dealings is in their hands”; fourth, “their labors and profits are under their control” (McKnight 2011:370). The merchants are condemned “for their arrogant self-confidence (4:16), treating their lives as though they were entirely within their own control (4:13), without reference to God” (Bauckham 2003:1490), and their failing to do what they know to be the good (cf. Allison 2013:664; Doriani 2007:154, 161; Culpepper 2000:39; Felder 1998:1799).

In summary, the situation in 4:13-17 is that James summons the arrogant rich merchants as an example of non-living faith: (1) they are making their business plans for profit, deliberating on when, where, for how long, and what to do (4:13); (2) but disregard the Lord’s sovereignty (4:14); (3) they do not consult God nor attend to God’s will (4:15); (4) they boast in their arrogance (4:16); and (5) they fail to do the good that they know they should do.

#### **4.3.1.2 Knowledge**

As we noted in the preceding section, the right knowledge is very important for faith and works. James sometimes tries to correct the reader’s incorrect understanding (1:13-14), sometimes he urges the audience to know more, “Know this, my beloved brothers ...” (1:19), “let him know that ...” (5:20), and sometimes reminds the readers of what they know already, “for you know that ...” (1:3); “Do you not know that...?” (4:4). When James intended to sum up the passage 4:13-16 by

4:17,<sup>93</sup> he deals with “knowledge” and “not doing”: “εἰδότες οὖν καλὸν ποιεῖν καὶ μὴ ποιοῦντι, ἁμαρτία αὐτῶ ἐστίν (lit., Therefore knowing *the* good to do and not doing it is sin for him). James quotes an independent maxim or proverb e.g. in 2:13 or 3:18, to sum up what he has said in 4:13-16. James here does not tell us what the good thing is in detail, but as we observed above it is linked to the merchants’ arrogant planning without acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty in 4:13-16.

There are many arguments about the translation of the first part in v. 14, “οἵτινες οὐκ ἐπίστασθε τὸ τῆς αὔριον ποία ἢ ζωὴ ὑμῶν·...” The NIV (along with ESV; NET; NRSV; CEB) divides the first part of the verse into two questions: a statement, “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow,” and a question, “What is your life?”; The NASB (cf. also NAB; HCSB; NLT) combines these into a single statement: “Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow.” Moo (2015:197) contends that “the decisive consideration seems to be the placement of *poios* (*what*), which is awkward if it is construed as the object of *epistasthe* (*know*). It is more naturally taken as the introduction to a separate question, as in the NIV.” McKnight (2011:372) also argues that “because so many early manuscripts add a ‘for’ between ‘will bring’ and ‘What is your life?’ and because this early instinctual reading of the text functions at least as commentary, it is most likely that ‘What is your life?’ is a separate sentence.” The Greek “τὸ τῆς αὔριον” is also somewhat ambiguous because there are only two articles before αὔριον (tomorrow). The “τό” is a neuter, singular, accusative article that appears to be the object of ἐπίστασθε (know), but the “τῆς” (the feminine genitive article) make us expect a feminine noun, which we do not find. So, the omitted feminine genitive noun can be inferred to be the word “ἡμέρας.” The translation can thus be: “You do not even know what will occur on the day of tomorrow” (cf. McKnight 2011:373). In 4:14 James reminds the audience by these words that our daily lives are not under our control and the duration of life is extremely short. James is emphasizing the transience of life and the fact that the merchants’ businesses are subject to the Lord (4:14-15).

The brevity and uncertainty of life is a frequent reference in Jewish wisdom literature. The entire book of Ecclesiastes makes abundant mention of it. Proverbs 27:1 warns: “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring” (NRSV). Job 7:7, 9, 16, Ps. 39:5, 62:9 describe life as a “breath.” Ps. 39:6 uses “a shadow” and Ps. 144:4 uses both “a breath” and “a passing shadow” for human life: “They are like a breath; their days are like a passing shadow” (NRSV). Ps. 90:5, 103:15, and Isa. 40:6-8 portray life as “grass,” or “a flower of the field.” Ps. 102:11 suggests life as an evening shadow and grass: “My days are like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass.” Ps. 102:3 explains life like smoke: “For my days pass away like smoke,

<sup>93</sup> We noted that Jas. 4:17 is considered as a summary of the section. Cf. Chapter 3.4.1

and my bones burn like a furnace” (NRSV). Ps. 89:47 reminds us of the brevity of life: “Remember how short my time is— for what vanity you have created all mortals!” (NRSV). Proverbs and the prophets also exhort that human plans and their ways are under the providence of God: “The human mind plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps” (Prov. 16:9, NRSV); “All our steps are ordered by the LORD; how then can we understand our own ways?” (Prov. 20:24, NRSV). The prophets, too, warn of presumption: “I know, O LORD, that the way of human beings is not in their control, that mortals as they walk cannot direct their steps” (Jer. 10:23, NRSV). Ps. 104:28–29 describes human life as subject to the will of God: “when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust” (NRSV). The saying “If the Lord wills” (4:15) is common also in Hellenistic writings (Moo 2015:198-199; Davids 2013 [1982]:173; Culpepper 2000:39; Hartin 2009 [2003]:225; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:209). Allison (2013:659) provides many sources:

Ecclus 39.6 (ἐὰν κύριος ὁ μέγας θελήσῃ); 1 Cor. 4.19 (ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ); Plato, *Alcib.* 135D (ἐὰν θεός ἐθέλῃ—in answer to the question, ‘What should I say?’); Demosthenes, *Or.* 25.2 (ἐὰν θεός θέλῃ); Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.6.21 (ἂν ὁ θεός θέλῃ); Corp. Herm. frag. 2A 2 (ἐὰν ὁ θεός θέλῃ); Plautus, *Cap.* 455 (*si dis placet*); Sallust, *Jug.* 14.19 (*dis volentibus*); Minicius Felix, Oct. 18.11 CSEL 2 ed. Halm, 25 (*si deus dederit* is ‘the natural discourse of the common people’); etc. Note also T. Iss. 4.3: ‘the single-hearted person does not make plans to live a long life but awaits only the will of God’. There are no close rabbinic parallels.

We can conclude that the merchants and the audience already knew the nature of human life: It is very short and transient; their life is not in their control, but under the control of God; and the plans of human beings and whatever happens are under the sovereign control of God.

#### 4.3.1.3 Exhortation: Works of faith

James gives further instruction (4:14-17) about the merchants’ arrogant business plans (4:13). James does not condemn their wealth, nor their business dealings, like buying, selling, and making a profit, or even their future plans (cf. Moo 2015:196; Allison 2013:641; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:213; Bauckham 2003:1490; Culpepper 2000:39; Johnson 2000:1166; Felder 1998:1799). There are rich people who are good men, like Arimathea Joseph who asked Pilate for the body of Jesus and laid it in his own new tomb (Mt. 27:57-60). Joseph, the son of Jacob, also proves that planning is required for efficient community life (Gen. 41:33-36) (Allison 2013:641-642). What James condemns is their attitude of arrogant confidence without considering God’s sovereignty, thus neglecting the will of the Lord.

The exhortation begins by reminding the audience that the lives of humans are under the control of God and that human life is extremely short (4:14). Then he exhorts, “you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that’” (4:15). Saying “If the Lord wills” as intended by James is not idle speech,<sup>94</sup> but expressing the attitude toward God and the awareness of God (Stulac 2010 [1993]:160; Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:163). James points out that even living another day is not ensured but is under the will of the Lord, and the results of our daily affairs in the future depend on the Lord’s will. The appropriate response to our visions of the future is a humble attitude implicit in the conditional clause “if the Lord wills.”

We also find frequent references to the will of God in the New Testament: for example, “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother” (Mk. 3:35; cf. Mt. 12:50) and the Lord’s Prayer (Mt. 6:10). “The will of God” occurs nineteen times (Mk. 3:35; Jn. 1:13; Rom. 8:27; 12:2; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:5; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:1; 6:6; Col. 1:1; 4:12; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18; 2 Tim. 1:1; Heb. 10:36; 1 Pet. 2:15; 4:2; 1 Jn. 2:17). “The will of my Father” is found most frequently in Matthew (7:21; 12:50; 18:14; 21:31) and once each in Jn. 6:40 and Gal. 1:4. “God’s will” is used five times (Jn. 7:17; Rom. 1:10; 15:32; 1 Pet. 3:17; 4:19). Elsewhere “the will of the Lord” is found twice (Acts 21:14; Eph. 5:17). The phrase of “if the Lord will” occurs in 1 Cor. 4:19; “if the Lord permits” in 1 Cor. 16:7; “if God wills” in Acts 18:21; and “if God permits” in Heb. 6:3.

The will of the Lord is to be acknowledged as the condition under which Jesus followers embark on something in the future. Even though Paul and the other apostles do not always confess this condition, Paul often shows this attitude, as he explains his plans for the future: “I will return to you, if God wills,” (Acts 18:21); “asking that by God’s will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you” (Rom. 1:10); “I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills” (1 Cor. 4:19); “I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits” (1 Cor. 16:7); cf. “we will do this, if God permits” (Heb. 6:3). We observe that “they had it as a principle fixed in their minds, that they would do nothing without the permission of God” (Calvin 1999 [1959]:340). What James encourages is “a sincere appreciation of God’s control of affairs and of his specific will for us” (Moo 2015:198-199).

James now warns against the presumption of the merchants in two ways, using the words “evil” and “sin”: (1) “All such boasting is evil” (4:16b)<sup>95</sup>; 2) “therefore whoever knows what is good to do and

<sup>94</sup> This expression was common in the Greco-Roman world and featured often as a Hellenistic pious formula to be repeated mindlessly. (cf. Allison 2013:660; Stulac 2010 [1993]:160; Hartin 2009 [2003]:225; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:209).

<sup>95</sup> The phrase, “ἐν ταῖς ἀλαζονείαις ὑμῶν” can be either the object of *καυχᾶσθε* or adverbial as describing the manner of the boasting. The first option is preferred on the grounds that when ἐν (in) follows *καυχᾶσθαι* (boast) everywhere else in the New Testament, it always refers to the object of one’s boast. The boast is related to the merchants’ business

does not do it, for him it is sin” (4:17). James condemns the merchants’ attitude by which they assume that they can control time and make a profit, disregarding the providence and sovereignty of God. James declares that their presumptuous planning is “evil boasting, a pride based only in empty arrogance” (Johnson 2000:1166). Jas. 4:17 conclusively characterizes their attitude as sin because they are aware of the brevity of human life and God’s sovereignty. The definition of sin is failing to do good things that one knows one should do. The double use of the verb ποιέω (*to do and not doing*) reminds of the earlier emphasis on doing the word of God (1:22-25). The picture of one who “knows what is good to do and does not do it” (4:17) recalls the earlier picture of one who just “says he has faith but does not have works” (2:14) and one who finds the brother or sister in need but does not give anything to ease the needs of the body (2:15-16).

James concludes that the living faith manifests in living according to the knowledge of the truth in daily lives. As we pointed out in the research above, it was common knowledge for the merchants and the audience that the span of human life is very short and that human life is under the providence of God. Jesus makes clear, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt. 7:21). Hence, if the merchants do not acknowledge God’s providence and guidance in all that they do, say, and particularly think, they fail to live their faith truly and commit sin instead. As James stated earlier, “faith apart from works is dead” (2:26), so the living faith is closely aligned to acting in accordance with the knowledge of God, even in thinking. True faith is to live within sight of the sovereignty of God, with the humble attitude and saying, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that” (4:15). This is the living faith: to live in humility and in submission to God’s will.

### 4.3.2 James 5:1-6

James turns to more harsh condemnations against the rich landowners (5:1) on the basis of their selfish heaping up of wealth (5:2-3), their depriving of the labourers who mowed their fields of their wages (5:4), their earthly lives of luxury and self-indulgence (5:5), and their murder of the righteous person (5:6). Moo (2015:210) claims that “James 5:1-6 is one of the clearest and strongest comments about riches that we find in the New Testament” and it brings the issue of the rich and poor to a climax.

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planning without any reference to God (cf. Allison 2013:662; McKnight 2011:377; Hartin 2009 [2003]:226; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:210; Doriani 2007:161; Bauckham 2003:1490; McCartney 2000:228-229; Martin 1988:167).

### 4.3.2.1 Situation

In this section James addresses rich landowners who are non-Jesus followers.<sup>96</sup> The assumption that the rich in 5:1-6 are not members of the Christian community, but outsiders who were brutal toward the labourers (5:4) and the righteous person (5:6), is based on the lack of any references to “brothers” unlike the beginning of the next section (cf. 5:7, 12, 19), and the harsh condemnation, unlike the address to the merchants in 4:13-17 who are urged to correct their arrogant attitude. The rich people illustrated in 5:1-6 are clearly wealthy landowners (Moo 2015:201; Batten 2013:8; Vlachos 2013:158; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:224-225; Bauckham 2003:1490; Culpepper 2000:40; Felder 1998:1799; Perkins 1995:131; Maynard-Reid 1987:85)<sup>97</sup>. In James’ background, we may imagine particularly Palestinian Jewish landowners who owned large lands and employed labourers (Moo 2015:201). The picture of landowners in 5:1-6 would not confuse the readers who live outside of Palestine since “it is not only in Palestine where wage labourers were employed; such workers were hired in a variety of contexts throughout the Roman Empire” (Batten 2013:15). The day labourers were a quite big group of the poor in the first century.<sup>98</sup> They were in the most difficult situation. They were often unemployed and their employment could be terminated easily. Their very small wages forced the day labourers and their families to live from hand to mouth (Bauckham 2003:1490), while dependent daily on their day’s wage for food (Culpepper 2000:40-41). To be unemployed or not to receive one’s wages was very serious indeed (Adamson 1989:243).

James unfolds this section of 5:1-6 by announcing the condemnation of these rich landowners (5:1) and he justifies his condemnation on the following grounds: first, their selfish accumulation of wealth (5:2-3); second, their cheating of their labourers (5:4); third, their living “in luxury and in self-indulgence” (5:5); and fourth, their oppression of “the righteous” (5:6).

First, James accuses the rich landowners of selfishly hoarding wealth in Jas. 5:2-3. Their wealth (πλοῦτος) is described with three perfect tense verbs: “have rotted” (σέσηπεν), “has become moth-eaten” (σητόβρωτα γέγονεν), “have corroded” (κατίωται) (5:2-3). Many commentators (Allison 2013:672-673; Hartin 2009 [2003]:227; Rogers & Rogers III 1998:563; Martin 1988:177; Davids 1982:175; Adamson 1976:185; Mayor 1954 [1892]:154) take these perfect tense verbs as prophetic perfects because the description seems not to be “historical record” (Adamson 1976:185) and the changing of tenses does not indicate a change in point of view since the preceding v.1 and

<sup>96</sup> Most commentators agree that the rich in Jas. 5:1-6 are outsiders of the community members and non-Jesus followers on the ground of James’ sharp condemnation without reservations and exhortations to change their attitudes (cf. Moo 2015:196; Vlachos 2013:158; McKnight 2011:381; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:259; Cheung 2003:264; Wachob 2005 [2000]:153; Sleeper 1998:117; Penner 1996: 272; Martin 1988:176).

<sup>97</sup> Allison (2013:667) sees the rich as “the landed aristocracy who employ serfs.” McKnight (2011:381) considers them “a group of rich farmers.”

<sup>98</sup> See Chapter 2.2 for further details.

following v.3b are eschatological (Allison 2013:673). The destruction of the rich's wealth in the future can be described vividly and realistically as already present by the perfect. This usage is very common in prophetic language (cf. Isa. 44:23; 53:5-10; 60:1). A more regular way to read the perfect tense would be to view the perfect verbs as emphasizing a state of affairs, for the following reasons. First, there is the shift from perfect tense to the future tense with ἔσται (“will be”) and φάγεται (“will eat”) which indicates the perfect tense as emphasizing the present state of the wealth and the future as the expecting judgement (cf. Moo 2015:204; McKnight 2011:386; Ropes 1916 [2009]:284-285). Second, it is unfair to condemn the rich now for their future sinful state. The perfect tense is more appropriate for warning of coming judgement than as the present state of their sin. Third, in this section James clearly intends to rebuke the rich landowners for their present selfish hoarding of wealth, their indulgent living, and their oppression of the poor, so it is more reasonable that James figuratively depicts the rich landowners as selfish. The picture of rusted gold and silver in 5:3 supports the figurative view, considering that even James should know that gold does not rust (cf. Adamson 1976:185). The perfect tense verbs must be understood figuratively to refer to their earthly riches eventually becoming worthless (cf. Hiebert 2009 [1979]:261; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:220-221; Ropes 1916 [2009]:284).

There are also the specific forms of wealth depicted in 5:2-3a. James uses three kinds of nouns and verbs: “πλοῦτος” (riches or wealth), “ἱμάτια” (garments), “χρυσὸς” and “ἄργυρος” (gold and silver); “σέσηπεν” (have rotted), “σητόβρωτα γέγονεν” (has become moth-eaten), “κατίωται” (have corroded). Since the noun “πλοῦτος” (wealth) does not suit the verb “σέσηπεν” (have rotted), some interpret “ὁ πλοῦτος ὑμῶν σέσηπεν” (your riches have rotted) as a general statement which encompasses the category of clothing and money (Allison 2013:672; McKnight 2011:386). But because James sums up again in v. 3b “ἐθησαυρίσατε” (you stored up treasure) and the natural meaning of the verb, “σέσηπεν” (have rotted) “as implying that the form of wealth consists of perishable grain” (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:261), we may have a list of three categories of material goods: crops (Moo 2015:203) or foodstuffs (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:261; Culpepper 2000:40; Martin 1988:173; Adamson 1976:184), garments, and gold and silver. The food (or wealth in general) has rotted; their garments have become moth-eaten; their gold and silver have rusted. What James condemns is the hoarding of material things in itself and the rust of metals which will bear witness against the rich that they did not use their riches responsibly.

Jas. 5:4 describes the second charge against landowners: “Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which have been deprived by you, are crying out, and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts” (v.4). The situation pictured by James in this section is

true to life (Moo 2015:206; Maynard-Reid 1987:85; Martin 1988:179; Perkins 1995:132). The day labourers belonged to the poor group who were employed per day and were paid their wages at the end of each day's work. They were in the most helpless situation and they depended on the day's wage for food (Bauckham 2003:1490; Culpepper 2000:41). To be unemployed or not to receive one's wages was very serious matter indeed (Adamson 1989:243). Withholding the wages of a day labourer until morning could threaten his very life (Moo 2015:207).

In v. 5 James explains the third charge of the rich's wrongdoing. Three aorist indicative verbs<sup>99</sup> describe the rich's self-indulgent lifestyle: "you have lived in luxury" (ἐτρυφήσατε), "you have lived in self-indulgence" (ἐσπαταλήσατε), and "you have fattened" (ἐθρέψατε). The verb, "you have lived in luxury" (ἐσπαταλήσατε), which occurs only here in the New Testament, indicates "a life of luxury and self-indulgence, although it does not imply wanton vice" (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:266). It is reminiscent of the rich man in Lk. 16:19 who "was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day" (NIV). The second verb, "and [lived in] self-indulgence" (ἐσπαταλήσατε), enhances the thought of excessive and insatiable self-indulgence. The third verb ἐθρέψατε means "you have fattened",<sup>100</sup> comparing them to fattened animals that are being fed sufficiently in preparation for the day of their slaughter (Hartin 2009 [2003]:229-230; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:267; Culpepper 2000:40-41). "Just as an animal is force-fed before it is killed, so the rich are feeding themselves for the day of judgment" (Hartin 2009 [2003]:229-230).

The most serious final offense of the rich is that they "condemned and murdered the righteous person" (v. 6). "Some see it as an allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus or the martyrdom of James the Just. Neither is really called for, however" (Culpepper 2000:41; cf. Moo 2015:209). The reference to "the righteous person" is generally not perceived as indicating any individual but as a "collective" or "generic" or "representative" singular (cf. Moo 2015:209; Batten 2013:15; Allison 2013:685-687; Painter 2012:157; McKnight 2011:399; Hartin 2009:230; Byron 2006:262; Culpepper 2000:41; Martin 1988:182): "a generic reference to righteous people who are being persecuted by the rich. These people are 'poor and needy' and trust in God for deliverance. They are often pictured as being persecuted by the wicked rich" (Moo 2015:209). The καταδικάζω (to condemn) does not always imply condemnation by a court of law (Motyer 1985:168). The words "condemned" (κατεδικάσατε) and "murdered" (ἐφονεύσατε) can be used to describe the failure of the rich landowners to share their wealth and to pay the wages of their labourers, as Sirach 34:22 (LXX) claims: "To take away a neighbor's living is to commit murder; to deprive an employee of wages is

<sup>99</sup> The aorist is constative, "looking at the life of the landowners as a whole and is best translated with an English perfect: 'you have lived . . .'" (Vlachos 2013:163).

<sup>100</sup> Most commentators and English Bible translate the verb "τρέφω" to mean "fatten."

to shed blood.” (Sirach 34:26–27 NRSV). However, 2:6 “... you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court?” (NRSV) indicates a judicial term, and suggests rather that “these rich Jews controlled their Jewish courts or used their influence with pagan judges to secure an adverse verdict against the righteous” and “the condemnation secured has resulted in the death of the innocent” (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:267; cf. Moo 2015:209). McKnight (2011:399) observes the sudden shift from aorist tense verbs to a present tense of “ἀντιτάσσεται” (resist) similar to the shift to a present tense in 5:4: “cry out” and notes that “those who are crying out are the poor oppressed, those who are following Jesus and doing the will of God, in other words, the righteous. Thus, the tense shift connects the actor/subject of “does not resist” to those crying out in 5:4 and supports the *representative* view” (McKnight 2011:399).

#### 4.3.2.2 Knowledge

As we mentioned before, the knowledge of eschatological judgement and rewards functions as a very important means of motivating the audience to live in faith. In this section of 5:1-6 James repeatedly uses the image of eschatological judgement: “Weep and cry aloud over *the miseries that are coming upon you*” (5:1); “You stored up treasure in *the last days*” (5:3); “You have fattened your hearts in *a day of slaughter*” (5:5).

Moo (2015:202) comments that the two verbs, “weep” (κλαίω) and “wail” (ὀλολύζω) are “frequently used by the prophets to describe the reaction of the wicked when the Day of the LORD comes (cf. e.g. Isa. 13:6; 15:3; Amos 8:3)” and especially, ὀλολύζω (to wail, to cry aloud) does not occur except in James in the New Testament, but it is found only in the prophets (Isa. 10:10; 13:6; 14:31; 15:2–3; 16:7; 23:1, 6, 14; 24:11; 52:5; 65:14; Jer. 2:23; 31:20, 31; Ezek. 21:17; Hos. 7:14; Amos 8:3; Zech. 11:2) in the Old Testament and always in the context of judgment. This background indicates clearly that “the misery that is coming on” the rich refers to the punishment by God on the day of judgement (Moo 2015:202).

The phrase “day of slaughter” is also familiar to the biblical imagery of God who is executing judgment upon God’s opponents: e.g. “But you, O LORD, know me; You see me and test me—my heart is with you. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and set them apart for the day of slaughter” (Jer. 12:3 NRSV); “That day is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of retribution, to gain vindication from his foes. The sword shall devour and be sated, and drink its fill of their blood. For the Lord GOD of hosts holds a sacrifice in the land of the north by the river Euphrates.” (Jer. 46:10 NRSV; see also Isa. 30:33; Rev. 19:17-21). The rich who have fattened themselves at the expense of the poor and lived in luxury and in self-indulgence without sharing their wealth with the

needy are portrayed as food for the animals at the horrific eschatological feast of judgment (Ezek. 39:17-20) (Bauckham 2003:1490).

The images of the “cry” of the wages in Jas. 5:4<sup>101</sup> are also employed in a regular way in the Old and the New Testament. The inanimate substances cry out for justice when people do not or cannot: Gen. 4.10 (“your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground!”); Job 31.38 (“if my land has cried out against me”); Hab 2.11 (“The very stones will cry out from the wall”); Lk. 19.40 (“if these were silent, the stones would shout out”) (Allison 2013:679). Even though it is not agreed by others,<sup>102</sup> Byron (2006:262) even urges that “[i]f one listens closer to the statements found in 5:1-6 it is possible to hear an echo of the Cain and Abel story from Genesis 4:6-10.” These two “cries” (κράζω, βοή) may be “the combination of the pain related to hunger and the desire that God should act to vindicate his children (Gen 4:10; 18:20; 19:13; Exod 2:23; 1 Sam 9:16; Ps 12:5; Sir 21:5; 34:25–26; 35:21; Luke 18:17; Rev 6:9–10)” (Martin 1988:179).

The phrase “the Lord of hosts” (κύριος σαβαώθ) “combines majesty and transcendence” (Adamson 1976:186; Laws 1980:202-203) and describes “the LORD of hosts” as he who hears the petitions of his people (Isa. 5:9: ἠκούσθη γὰρ εἰς τὰ ὄρα κυρίου σαβαώθ ταῦτα) and comes to save them (Pss. 17:1–6; 18:6; 31:2; Lk. 18:17; Rev. 6:10), “especially those oppressed by owners of large estates (Isa 5:7–9; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47)” (Martin 1988:179).

Especially Leviticus 25 provides the Old Testament view about how the people of God apply their wealth and treat other people. Leviticus 25:23, 42-43, for example, asserts that the land and the people belong to God: “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants.” (Lev. 25:23 NRSV); “For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves are sold. You shall not rule over them with harshness, but shall fear your God.” (Lev. 25:42-43 NRSV). This view suggests that everything on earth belongs to God, as noted in Psalms and Isaiah: “The earth is the LORD’S and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it” (Ps. 24:1 NRSV); “For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills” (Ps. 50:10 NRSV); “The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them.” (Ps. 89:11 NRSV); “Thus says the LORD: Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is my rest place?” (Isa. 66:1 NRSV). In Lev. 25:17-18 God commends, “You shall not

<sup>101</sup> “Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.” (James 5:4 NRSV)

<sup>102</sup> See Allison (2013:679-680) on the matter: Byron (2006)’s observations about the link between the cry of wages in the 5:1-6 and an echo of the Cain and Abel story in Genesis 4:6-10.

cheat one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God. You shall observe my statutes and faithfully keep my ordinances, so that you may live on the land securely” (NRSV).

Considering and helping the poor was commanded in Deut. 15:11: “Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, ‘Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land’” (NRSV). When Israelites reap the harvest of their land, they should not reap to the very edges of their field but leave something for the poor (Lev. 19:9-10). The Proverbs continue the encouragement of being a generous person who gives a hand to the poor: “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it” (Prov. 3:27 NRSV); “A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water” (Prov. 11:25 NRSV); “Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor him” (Prov. 14:31 NRSV); “Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing, but one who turns a blind eye will get many a curse.” (Prov. 28:27 NRSV). Isa. 58:10 also promises a blessed life from the Lord to those who offer food to the hungry and the oppressed. God so condemned Israel who were cheating the needy and oppressing the poor (Amos 2:6-8).

Paying the labourers for their work on time was commanded in the law: “You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns. You shall pay them their wages daily before sunset, because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry to the LORD against you, and you would incur guilt” (Deut. 24:14–15 NRSV). Such ordinances are found elsewhere, for instance in Lev. 19:13: “You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning” (NRSV), and in Malachi 3:5, where, significantly, withholding the wages from labourers is related to oppression of “the widow and the orphan”: “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts” (NRSV; cf. Jas. 1:27) (Moo 2015:207).

#### **4.3.2.3 Exhortation: Works of faith**

A point of interest is why James included this message of condemnation of non-Jesus followers (5:1-6) in a letter addressed to the church members.<sup>103</sup> Martin (1988:176) develops what Adamson (1976:184) describes well: the structure of 5:1-11 is parallel to that of Ps. 58, “where the

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<sup>103</sup> See Chapter 2 about the readers of the Letter of James.

unrighteous are condemned (58:1–9), while the righteous are urged to remain confident that God will one day vindicate them (58:10–11).” James similarly encourages his audience that judgment is soon to come (5:1–6) upon the rich landowners (5:4) and that in contrast the poor righteous will be rewarded and vindicated (5:7–11). When the readers hear of the miserable end of the rich, they “might not envy their fortune, and also that knowing that God would be the avenger of the wrongs they suffered, they might with a calm and resigned mind bear them” (Moo 2015:202).

James has taken up the familiar theme of the eschatological judgment or vindication. He reminds the audience of the end of the rich by depicting a scene of hopeless desolation and misery. James provides four charges against the rich landowners as we have observed above: (1) their hoarding of wealth, although the rust of their riches will bear witness against them for not having used their riches responsibly (5:2-3); (2) their withholding the wages of day labourers (5:4); (3) their self-indulgent lifestyle (5:5); (4) their condemnation and murder of the righteous person (v. 6).

From the condemnation of the rich in this section of 5:1-6, James gives a clear lesson that the pursuit of the world’s materialistic wealth will result in serious judgement and put the wrongdoers in a horrible position with the Lord. The vivid rhetorical languages, “ἄγε νῦν οἱ πλούσιοι, κλαύσατε ὀλολύζοντες ἐπὶ ταῖς ταλαιπωρίαις ὑμῶν ταῖς ἐπερχομέναις.” (Come now, you rich! Weep and cry aloud over the miseries that are coming upon you) (5:1) and the two strong imaginary pictures, “φάγεται τὰς σάρκας ὑμῶν ὡς πῦρ” (it will eat your flesh like fire) (5:3); “ἐθρέψατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σφαγῆς” (you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter) make the message more effective.

We may summarize the condemnation of the rich into two lifestyles, according to the charges against the rich in this section, that faithful believers must avoid: (1) the self-indulgent life: it is hoarding of wealth and using it for pleasures only instead of applying it for the benefit of the needy; (2) the unjust life: it means defrauding the wages of the workers and oppressing the poor. “James does not condemn wealth as such, but the greed and injustice involved in creating it” (Johnson 2000:1166; cf. Blomberg & Kamell 2008:222; Hartin 2009 [2003]:229).

By the measure of the world, the rich’s hoarding of wealth may not be wrong, but by the standard of the law the self-indulgent lifestyle is real and serious sin. Opening up to the poor and helping the needy were commended (Deut. 15:11; Lev. 19:9-10). People are instructed to be generous, giving a hand to the needy because then they will be blessed by the Lord (Prov. 3:27; 11:25; 14:31; 28:27; Isa. 58:10-11). James also teaches, “Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to

visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (Jas. 1:27) and declares in a preceding section, “therefore whoever knows what is good to do and does not do it, for him it is sin” (4:17). The lifestyle of the rich man, drawn by Jesus in the parable of Lk. 16:19-31, is a vivid illustration of the rich landowners’ lifestyle that James condemns in 5:1-6. The servant who failed to use the money he had received (Lk. 19:11-27) and the “goats” who failed to care “for hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison” (Mt. 25:31–46) are condemned for what they failed to do (cf. Moo 2015:200). Mt. 6:19-20 uses the traditional image of earthly treasures destroyed by moths and rust to encourage storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth: “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Mt. 6:20 NRSV).

The unjust life, with actions like defrauding the labourer and oppressing the needy is explicitly condemned by law (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14-15). The rich landowners in 5:1-6 have violated the law by cheating the wages of their workers. The wealthy are not only hoarding of the wealth and not sharing with the poor, but also actually failing to give the workers what they deserve. They even kill the righteous person. “God cannot remain deaf to the cries of those who are victims of injustice (Ps. 17:1-6; 18:6; 31:2; Isa. 5:9)” (Perkins 1995:131).

James seriously condemns the practical outcome of the failure to share one’s possessions and to pay the wages of workers by the standard of the law, and reminds the audience of the eschatological judgement and rewards. As Scripture makes abundantly clear, James emphasises that “sins of *omission* are as real and serious as sins of *commission*” (Moo 2015:200). James exhorts that the faithful believer must use wealth responsibly, storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. James shows here that the life of the true faith is to earn profit by the right means and practice sharing possessions with the needy on the basis of the knowledge of the word of the Lord/Jesus. The knowledge is that the omission of what we have to do is a crucial sin and those who follow a self-indulgent lifestyle will be punished seriously by God, but those who follow a just and generous lifestyle are blessed by the Lord of hosts.

### **4.3.3 James 5:7-12**

In 4:13–17 James exhorts the rich merchants to change their arrogant attitude that neglects taking into account the brevity of this life and God’s sovereignty. In 5:1–6 James declares judgment on the rich landowners on the basis of their defrauding of worker’s wages and their greedy luxury lives without sharing their wealth with the needy. The two sections (4:13-17 and 5:1-6) are shown to be

quite similar through the identical introductions “Ἄγε νῦν”; the theme of wealth; the tones of the author (to the merchants in 4:13-17 and the landowners in 5:1-6) are similarly negative and critical; and James does not call them “brothers.” In the two previous sections James exhorts Jesus followers on what they must not do as believers, pleading with, “the brothers” in 5:1-6, how to live appropriately in the context of suffering. The term “οὖν” (therefore) shows that 5:1-5 and 5:7-12 are linked. 5:1-6 and 5:7-12 are also related thematically by the eschatological judgment of God (5:1,3,7-8), which appears as a warning to the greedy and unjust rich oppressors serves as a comfort to the faithful followers of Jesus.

#### 4.3.3.1 Situation

As noted above, the section of 5:7-12 is closely linked to previous section of 5:1-6, but there is a clear change in tone, from issuing “sharp prophetic warning to the rich oppressors” to “generous encourage[ment] to the faithful believers”, with frequent use of “brothers” as the salutation (vv. 7, 9, 10, 12). It indicates that the situations in 5:7-12, and the encouragement to endure them are related to the previous sections. The context in 5:7-12 is not unlike that of the oppressed poor in 5:1-6 and the exhortation to the audience is based on the prophetic and eschatological condemnation of the rich self-indulgent oppressors in 5:1-6. The contents of 5:7-12 confirm that view. James utters, “be patient” (μακροθυμήσατε) three times in vv. 7-8 (twice in v.7 and once in v. 8), “wait for” (ἐκδέχεται) in v. 7, “do not grumble” (μὴ στενάζετε) in v. 9, “an example of suffering and patience” (ὑπόδειγμα τῆς κακοπαθίας καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας) in v. 10, and “those who endured” (τοὺς ὑπομείναντας) and “Job’s endurance” (τὴν ὑπομονὴν Ἰὼβ) in v. 11. It clearly suggests that the context of the audience was one of poverty, suffering and possibly oppression. This relates to the circumstances in 5:7-12 with 5:1-6, where the audience is oppressed by rich people.

The situations pictured above are completely consistent with the other passages of the letter. At the beginning of the Letter James mentioned “trials of various kinds” in 1:2 and “endurance” twice in 1:3, 4. In 1:12 James proclaims, “Blessed is the man who endures the test, for when he has proven to be genuine, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” Jas. 1:2-12 implies that the recipients are in the straits of various trials. James also reminds the audience of some situations: “Do not the rich oppress you, and do they drag you into court?” (2:6); “You desire and you do not have, so you murder” (4:2).

The circumstances described above agree with the historical situation in the period of AD 33-66.

The apostolic period (33-66) witnessed suffering from severe economic difficulties.<sup>104</sup> As shown in the Chapter 2, owing to the tithes and taxes and an increasing concentration of land in the hands of a small group of very wealthy landowners, the peasants, who comprised about 70 to 80 percent of the population in the first century, could barely make a living.

The passages in this section and the rest of the Letter show the situation of the audience who suffers economic difficulties and is oppressed by the rich.

#### 4.3.3.2 Knowledge

When James encourages the recipient in 5:7-12, he provides a basis for his exhortations: “the coming of the Lord” (τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου) (5:7); “the coming of the Lord” (ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου) (5:8); “the Judge is standing at the door” (ὁ κριτὴς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἔστηκεν) (5:9); “the end of the Lord” (τὸ τέλος κυρίου) (5:11); “you may not fall under judgement” (ἵνα μὴ ὑπὸ κρίσιν πέσητε) (5:12). In section (5:7-12) James frequently repeats the eschatological hope, thereby encouraging the reader to endure on “the ground of eschatological hope”: “the coming of the Lord” and “the judgement of the Lord.” The “παρουσία” occurs twice in 5:7 and in 5:8.

The Greek noun παρουσία means “presence” (2 Macc. 15:21; 3 Macc. 3:17; 1 Cor. 16:17; Phil. 2:12; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.80), “arrival” (2 Macc. 8:12; Jdt. 10:18), or “coming”, especially “the coming of a royal figure (Polybius 18.48.4), a person of rank (1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6, 7; 10:10; Phil. 1:26), or a deity (Diodorus Siculus 3.65.1)” (Wachob 2002:166). In the New Testament it occurs twenty-four times, and in eleven occurrences it clearly refers to the eschatological coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8; 2 Pet. 1:16). Moreover, the coming of the Lord Jesus is frequently associated with eschatological judgment (e.g. 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 5:2, 23; 1 Jn. 2:28; 2 Pet. 3:4; cf. Acts 10:42; Heb. 10:25). The term παρουσία became a technical reference in the early church for the messianic coming of Jesus “in glory to judge the wicked (Mt. 24:37, 39; 2 Thess. 2:8) and deliver the saints (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23)” (Moo 2015:212; cf. Blomberg & Kamell 2008:226; Wachob 2002:166). This tradition strongly suggests that James refers to the coming of the Lord in this sense. The Lord here refers to Jesus rather than God the Father (Moo 2015:212; Vlachos 2013:169-170; Painter 2012:161-162; Stulac 2010 [1993]:170-171; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:270; Bauckham 2003:1490; Culpepper 2000:43; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:226; Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:178;

<sup>104</sup> See Chapter 2 for more details on historical situations in the period of AD 33-66.

Wachob 2002:170; Martin 1988:190; Davids 1982:182; Adamson 1976:190).<sup>105</sup> The expression of the judgment follows directly: “the judge is standing at the doors” (5:9). Since the coming of the Lord in vv. 7, 8 refers the coming of Jesus, it is likely that the judge in v 9 is Jesus Christ. The similar parallel between “the judge is standing at the door” in Jas. 5:9 and “Behold, I stand at the door” in Rev. 3:20 also supports for this view.

The term “τέλος” in 5:11 means “end”, “goal”, “outcome” (see BDAG; Louw & Nida), “conclusion” (NIDNTT), and “purpose” (ESV, NET, NRSV, NAB). The “τέλος” here may not reflect the eschatological judgement, but refer to “the ‘end’ of the book of Job” (McKnight 2011:422) or “the end or outcome of Job’s situation, which the Lord eventually brought about” (Moo 2015:217; cf. Blomberg & Kamell 2008:229-230; Bauckham 2003:1491). However, when we consider the contexts of “παρουσία” or “the judgement of the Lord” before and after 5:11, James provides a precedent for the readers to expect the Lord’s mercy at the eschatological judgement like Job’s eventual blessing (Bauckham 2003:1491). Then James delivers the basis of judgment for his exhortation in 5:12 as well: “you may not fall under judgement.”

James provides examples of “the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord” in 5:10 and the endurance of Job” in 5:11. The prophets and Job are used as examples of patience and endurance under affliction. The reference indicates that the recipients have known about the prophets and the story of Job. Martin (1988:193-194) notes that the idea of blessedness as a reward for endurance in persecution is found in the common tradition. He also observes that “[i]n 4 Maccabees the ‘blessed ones’ are those who exhibit ὑπομονήν (‘endurance’) in the face of death (1:10; 7:22; cf. Becker, NIDNTT 1:215–18).”

We conclude that the knowledge of the messianic coming of Jesus to judge, and the knowledge of the Old Testament, especially concerning the prophets and Job, are used as a basis of James’ exhortations in 5:7-12.

#### **4.3.3.3 Exhortation: Works of faith**

The close connection between 5:1-6 and 5:7-12 indicates that James’ primary concern is not with the rich landowners but rather with faithful believers who are the victims of the rich’s actions. In 5:7-11 James exhorts how the faithful community should respond to the economic difficulties and the oppressing rich.

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<sup>105</sup> McKnight (2011: 405-408) favoured the imminent judgment of God by the application of “Lord” to God in vv. 4, 10, and 11 and by the references to the impending destruction of Jerusalem in the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:3-31).

In 5:7-8 James urges his readers to “be patient” (vv. 7, 8) and “strengthen your hearts” (v. 8). The frequency of this advice – three times of the term “μακροθυμέω” (be patient), and once of “μακροθυμία” (patience), “ὑπομένω” (endure), and “ὑπομονή” (endurance) in 5:7-12 – indicate that the faithful community may be “tempted to strike back with violence” (McKnight 2011:405). James also mentioned “war” and “fights” among them in 4:1. When James encourages patience and steadfastness, he provides a reason: “the coming of the Lord” (5:7) and “the coming of the Lord is near” (5:8), with an illustrative example of the farmer’s waiting for “the precious fruit of the earth” (5:7). The meanings of patience and the coming of the Lord are related also in the example of farmer’s waiting. The preposition ἕως (until) has a pregnant sense, denoting the idea of a goal as well as a time period: “you must be patient as you wait for the Lord’s return” (NLT) or “Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord” (ESV; NRSV; NASV; cf. NET; NIV) (Moo 2015:212; Vlachos 2013:169; McKnight 2011:405). Even though the “παρουσία” (coming) is a technical term indicating “the return of Jesus” in the early church, in Mt. 24:3-31 Jesus uses παρουσία to indicate two meanings: the destruction of Jerusalem as an act of God/Jesus and the messianic second coming of Jesus. James also seems to be thinking in a similar way: “Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord” (5:7) and “Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near” (5:8). Though the ultimate goal of the believer’s patience is the messianic coming of Jesus to judge the wicked and reward the faithful believers, the believers can also expect the deliverance by God/Jesus from their current hardship because God hears the cries of His people (5:4; cf. 1:5, 6; 4:2, 3; 5:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18).

As an example of patience, James uses the metaphor of the farmer waiting patiently for the precious fruit and the early and late rains. James offers two aspects of the depiction. First, the farmer waits patiently for “τὸν τίμιον καρπὸν” (the precious fruit). The goal is “the precious fruit” on which the farmer’s living depends. Though McKnight (2011:409) disagrees with the significance of “precious,” Johnson (2005 [1995]:314) underlines this adjective, “precious” (τίμιον) because this designation is usually associated with jewels and crowns (cf. Stulac 2010 [1993]:170; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:271; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:227). James clearly intends to teach from the image of “the farmer’s waiting for the precious fruit” that while the waiting calls for endurance, so the reward for the faithful believer is a precious one to await patiently, in other words, the goal of the patient waiting is of the greatest value. Second, the farmer waits patiently until the early rain and the late rain. The attitude of the farmer is further described by the second observation, “how patient he is for the fall and spring rains” (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:271). As the farmer must be patient until the Lord provides both the early and the late rains, so the faithful believers are to be patient until the coming of the

Lord (McKnight 2011:410). After planting their fields, the farmers can work hard at cultivating them, but they can do nothing to make their crops grow and produce their fruit, especially in the first century. The farmer waits patiently for the precious fruit for which God provides the rain at the proper time. Likewise, the believers wait patiently for the coming of the Lord because they believe the rewards from the Lord are the greatest; the pious believers wait until God acts for them during the life of the earth or the eschatological judgement of the Lord, at its appointed time.

James preaches repeatedly about the importance of “personal speech ethics” in v. 9 and v. 12 (Felder 1998:1799). He adds it in the middle of sharing the emphasis on the coming of the Lord and the patience, and the end of this section (v. 12). In doing so, James intends to instruct the hearer that impatience is equal to grumbling and faulty speaking and also that there is a tendency to grumble against one another when people are in difficult situations. “Do not grumble against one another” may mean that believers should not grumble to others about their affliction and not blame others for their difficulties (Moo 2015:214). For James being patient means not only not striking back with violence, but also not grumbling against one another and not speaking rashly (e.g. swearing, making oaths) either.

In preaching patience in this section (5:7-12), James provides the prophets and Job as examples of patience and endurance in difficulty and oppression. The prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, were examples of suffering (κακοπαθίας) and patience (μακροθυμίας).<sup>106</sup> It is not the suffering which forms the example but the fact that the prophets suffered. Many commentators (Moo 2015:215; Davids 2013 [1982]:186; McKnight 2011:417; Varner 2010:183; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:275; Hartin 2009 [2003]:244; Martin 1988:193; Ropes 1916 [2009]:298) assert that the Greek phrase “κακοπαθίας” (suffering) and “μακροθυμίας” (patience) creates a type of hendiadys<sup>107</sup> and it is properly understood as “patience in suffering” (NLT). McKnight (2011:417) suggests why James keeps the two nouns close: “because he is speaking here of a patience in suffering or a suffering with patience inasmuch as the two words are virtually combined to form ‘endurance’ (*hypomonē*) in 5:11.” In adding “the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord”, James is implying that the suffering endured by them was not because of any wrongdoing, but because of their faithful service to God. This example of the prophets reminds of the saying of Jesus in Mt. 5:12: “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted

<sup>106</sup> McKnight (2011:416-417) summarizes examples from the lives of prophets:

E.g. as a negative example, Jeremiah saw himself as a laughing stock (Jer 20:7-9), and Ezekiel spoke of knowing the abominations of the ancestors (20:4). Enoch was an example of repentance (Sir 44:16). Eleazar was a ninety-year-old example of fidelity and a “noble example of how to die” (2 Mace 6:21-31). Jesus left an example in washing his disciples’ feet (Jn. 13:15), and 2 Peter says that Sodom and Gomorrah were an example of what happens to the ungodly (2:6). We have lengthy lists of important figures in Israel’s history, such as Sirach 44-50; of the deeds of the ancestors, e.g. 1 Maccabees 2:49-64, and examples of faithful lives, e.g. Hebrews 11. A list of examples of *zeal and envy* as well as *nobility* can be found in *1 Clement* (Chs. 4-6) urging Christians to “cling” to such examples (46:1; 63:1).

<sup>107</sup> Expressing a single idea with two words connected with “and.”

the prophets who were before you” (NRSV).

In 5:11 James provides the example of Job to show how blessed those are who endure faithfully to the end: “Behold, we regard as blessed those who have endured.” The “τέλος” may refer to the end of Job’s story or the outcome of his situations, which the Lord eventually brought about. James may expect that reminding readers of the result which God worked out at the end of Job’s life will provide them with the expectation of the Lord’s mercy at the eschatological judgement. Although Job complained about God’s treatment of him, he never abandoned his faith in spite of his incomprehension (cf. Job 1:21; 2:10; 16:19–21; 19:25–27). As Culpepper (2000:42) emphasises, “the main point is that Job remained faithful in spite of his suffering.”

Although many commentators regard 5:12 as independent from previous passages or as belonging to the section of 5:12-18, it is obvious that 5:12 is connected thematically to previous sections of 5:7-11 by speech ethics: “Do not grumble” (v. 9) and “do not swear” (v. 12) (cf. Ropes 1916:300); and eschatological motivations: “the coming of the Lord” (v. 7, 8); “so that you may not be judged” (v. 9); “the end of the Lord” (v. 11); and “so that you may not fall under judgement” (v. 12). The introductory “πρό πάντων” (above all) with δέ (and/but) also certainly suggests some connection to the previous context. It is a typical Jacobean summary to take a particular problem and work it into a general principle (McCartney 2000:229; cf. Allison 2013:664; Brosend 2004:125, Perkins 1995:130; Sleeper 1998:118). Jas. 5:12 is also tied with 5:7-11 by the exhortations of passive tones in 5:7-12: “Be patient” (vv. 7, 8); “Do not grumble” (v. 9); “an example of suffering and patience” (v.10); “endured ... endurance” (v. 11); “do not swear” (v.12). The section of 5:13-18 is clearly connected by the exhortations of active tones: “pray... praise” (v. 13); “summon the elders ... they should pray” (v. 14); “the prayer of faith will save” (v. 15); “confess ... and pray” (v. 16); “prayed” (vv.17, 18). The contents of 5:13-18 are obviously linked by the theme of payer. Baker argues that for James swearing is probably considered the most serious sin of speech because “a broken oath directly involves God in falsehood” (1990:105). In terms of literary structure, Baker (1994:70) suggests that 5:12 forms the culmination of 5:7-12 as the proper response to economic difficulties because the poor might be “tempted to use oaths to fend off creditors or to obtain credit for food and other necessities” (Baker 1990:106; cf. Blomberg & Kamell 2008:231; Felder 1998:1799; Davids 1989:121).

Jas. 5:12 is closely paralleled by Mt. 5:33-37. The similarity between Jas. 5:12 and Mt. 5:33-37 suggests that James is quoting Jesus.

**Table 9 A comparison between Matthew 5:33-37 (NRSV) and James 5:12**

Matthew 5:33-37	James 5:12
But I say to you, <b>Do not swear at all,</b>	Above all, my brothers, <b>do not swear,</b>
<b>either by heaven,</b> for it is the throne of God,	<b>either by heaven</b>
or <b>by the earth,</b> for it is his footstool,	or <b>by earth</b>
or <b>by Jerusalem,</b> for it is the city of the great King.	or <b>by any other oath,</b>
And <b>do not swear by your head,</b> for you cannot make one hair white or black.	
<b>Let your word be “Yes, Yes” or “No, No”</b>	but <b>let your “Yes” be yes and your “No” be no,</b>
<b>anything more than this comes from the evil one.</b>	<b>so that you may not fall under judgement.</b>

The words in Jas. 5:12 are not drawn directly from the Old Testament regarding prohibition of oaths (cf. Exod. 22:10-11). It was wrong to swear falsely (Lev. 19:12), but it was not wrong to use oaths properly (Deut. 6:13; Exod. 20:7; 22:10-11; Num. 30:3-15; Ps. 50:14). The Old Testament demanded that if one used an oath one was obliged to fulfill the promise (e.g. Deut. 30:2). As Johnson (2000:1167) claims, here is “one of the clearest instances of a commandment deriving from the sayings of Jesus” (cf. Moo 2015:220; Davids 2013 [1982]:189-190; Painter 2012:164; McKnight 2011:427; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:236; Meier 2008:19; Bauckham 2003:1491; Culpepper 2000:42; Davids 1989:121; Felder 1998:1799; Perkins 1995:134; Martin 1988:203-205).

Most agree that Jesus probably had no intention of forbidding taking an oath in a court. In context, according to Blomberg & Kamell (2008:236), “the problem was the Pharisaic casuistry, in which one could swear by something lesser than God himself and then claim that the oath was less binding” (cf. also Mt. 23:19-22). Moo (2015:221) suggests that “Jesus and James do intend to prohibit any *voluntary* oath” that “would have the intention of avoiding absolute truthfulness.” It is obvious that Paul continued to use oaths (Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; 11:11; Gal. 1:20; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:5, 10). In quite different contexts, “Paul called God to be his witness that what he said was true, and he did so as part of inspired Scripture” (Blomberg & Kamell 2008:236). In the context of the literary structure, v. 12 forms a culmination of the speech ethics: “boasting” (4:16), “grumbling” (5:9), and “swearing” (5:12). In the section on patience (5:7-12), James exhorts the believer not to grumble (in 5:9), or swear (in 5:12) because both are connected with judgement. James indicates that the grumbling and swearing are linked to uncertainty about judgment and doubt about the goodness of God (Perkins 1995:133).

In Jas. 5:7-12, James provides the faithful believer with the proper response to economic

exploitation. First he encourages his hearers to be patient and steadfast in suffering. It implies not to strike back with violence. Secondly he forbids grumbling and swearing. James emphasizes the equal importance of both endurance and incorrect speech. To be patient means not to take violent revenge, not to grumble against one another, and not to take oaths.

When James provides exhortations of patience and speech ethics in 5:7-12, he teaches the audience the several important aspects of knowledge and reasons. First, he repeats the message about the eschatological judgement and rewards: “until the coming of the Lord” (5:7), “for the coming of the Lord is near” (5:8), “so that you may not be judged, behold, the Judge is standing at the door” (5:9), “the end of the Lord” (5:11), “so that you may not fall under judgement” (5:12). The continuous reminder of eschatological judgement penetrates to the heart of the audience with the fact that the Lord will certainly come again and will judge the oppressor and hasty speaker. Second, to ensure clear understanding James illustrates the farmer who waits patiently for the precious fruit resulting from the early and late rain, and he provides the prophets and Job as examples of patience and endurance in trials. From these examples James clearly shows that in the end the rewards from the Lord are the most valuable, and those who are enduring are blessed. The believers must thus be patient and control their tongues until the coming of the Judge.

The knowledge underlying the motivation and exhortations (e.g. the eschatological judgement and rewards, enduring patiently, not grumbling nor swearing) is not a secular but a Christian virtue (Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:179). The encouragement to “be patient” is rare in secular Greek (Ropes 1916:293; cf. Hiebert 2009 [1979]:270). The bases of the exhortation in 5:7-12 are normally from the Old Testament and more from sayings of Jesus (e.g. the prohibition of oaths of Mt. 5:33-37, the great rewards for the persecuted of Mt. 5:10-12). For James the grumbling against one another and taking oaths are connected to judgement (5:9, 12). If one is blaming other members of the church and swearing, it indicates the person’s uncertainty about judgement and doubt about the goodness of the Lord. The true believers ought to follow Jesus and live according to the teachings of Jesus. The patience and steadfastness of the faith until the coming of the Lord is “a presentation of the character of faith” (McCartney 2009:57).

#### **4.3.4 James 5:13-18**

The fact that prayer is mentioned in every verse in this section indicates that the topic of this paragraph is prayer. James begins with two brief questions used as conditional clauses and he provides the exhortations in each situation. If one is suffering, one should pray (v.13a). If one is

happy, one should sing praise (v. 13b). From 5:14 James keeps teaching when to pray and how to pray, focusing on a more specific situation of suffering and how the faith community responds to that situation. In v. 14 James introduces a similar concrete situation with a question: “Is anyone among you sick?” James advises to call on the elders of the church to pray over the afflicted person and to anoint him with oil (5:14). In 5:15-16 James explains the detail further: first, the healing is coming from the Lord (v. 15); second, James instructs some more effective prayer as it is working: the prayer of faith (v. 15), the mutual prayer for one another (v. 16), and the prayer of a righteous person (v.16). Third, in some instances, sin is possibly involved in sickness, in which case forgiveness is pertinent (v. 15b) but confessing sins to one another is encouraged for more effective healing (v.16). James closes this passage with the motivational example of Elijah’s prayers for rain (vv. 17-18).

#### 4.3.4.1 Situation

James raises three conditional situations: “suffering” (v. 13), “cheerfulness” (v. 13), and “sickness” (v. 14-16), and provides three exhortations concerning how to respond to these situations: “let him pray” (v. 13), “let him sing praise” (v. 13), and “let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him” (v. 14).

The first situation that concerns James is suffering: “Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν.” Κακοπαθεῖ is the third person singular present active indicative of κακοπαθέω (“suffer”). It can be translated in three primary ways: (1) “Is anyone ...? Let him ...” (most English Bible); (2) “If anyone ... he should ...” (NAB); or “Anyone who ... should ...” (NJB). The three different ways of translation do not differ much in meaning. James frequently uses questions throughout the Letter (see 2:14; 3:13; 4:1). It seems the first option may be the best one. James does not specify the kind of suffering clearly. The verb κακοπαθέω (suffer) occurs elsewhere only twice in the New Testament, in 2 Tim. 2:9; 4:5. The meaning of the word has a broad application that “often describes hardship in war as well as ordinary hardships in life” (McKnight 2011:432). The indefinite pronoun τις which is used with ἐν ὑμῖν (among you) clearly indicates that the hardship is related to the reader’s suffering. There is a possible link to κακοπαθία (suffering) in v. 10 or the various trials of 1:2-4, but the suffering could equally be the sickness in 5:14 (McKnight 2011:432). It is helpful to observe the parallel between v.13 and v. 14:

Is anyone among you *suffering*? Let him *pray* (v. 13)

Is anyone among you *sick*? Let him call for the elders... let them *pray*... (v. 14)

The term “sick” is used as synonymous with suffering and the exhortations that James provides are the individual prayer (v. 13) and the elders’ prayer with anointment with oil (v. 14). The comparison seems to specify the sickness as suffering and the proper response is the individual prayer (v. 13) and the prayer of the elders (v. 14). Blomberg & Kamell (2008:239) also believe that “[i]f anyone is sick, that person should likewise pray, but in severe instances also call on the church’s eldership for ritual anointing with oil (v. 14).”

The word ἀσθενέω literally means “without strength” (Vlachos 2013:183): It is “a general term denoting physical, spiritual, or mental weakness and can even describe someone on the verge of death (e.g. Jn. 4:46; 11:1-3; Acts 9:37; Phil. 2:26-27)” (McKnight 2011:434). Almost all commentators view it as meaning here physically “sick,” for the word “τὸν κάμνοντα” (the sick person) in v. 15 denotes certainly physical illness and “ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος” (the Lord will raise him up) in v. 15 also implies that the Lord will raise him from his bed of sickness. The descriptions of the sickness suggest “this person is seriously and physically ill” (McKnight 2011:435; cf. Blomberg & Kamell 2008:242; Motyer 1985 [1995]:193).

In ancient times people lived with poor care systems. Karris (2000:208) provides some information about the health care conditions in the first century that “[i]n an age when both drugs and doctors were of uncertain quality, few illnesses were easily cured, and their prevention was therefore paramount. Leaving aside the rich, however, the preservation of health was hardly within the control of the individual.” Ill health was “a real and ever-present hazard of ordinary people,” and “the poor, above all, were least able to resist” (Karris 2000:208).

In the Jewish health care situation, as Avalos (1999:45) observes, “chronically ill patients were excluded altogether from the temple and from the community itself. Thus families were separated from their chronically ill members.” Albl (2002:142-143) notes that the health care system reflected in James was situated “within the community’s dualistic symbolic world.” In that world, the patient’s sickness was considered not as an “isolated” occasion, a “natural” happening, or a merely “physical” concern. Instead, sickness was considered as “a demonic disturbance of the godly integrity of the person’s body.” The experience of healing was thus not a matter of an isolated individual, but involved the elders and community members who were to gather and demonstrate their integrated verification to declare the person’s integrity “through prayer, confession, and public ritual.” Then the individual body would be restored to integrity and the community body was strengthened.

There is a strong anti-physician passage stated in Philo, who criticizes people's first fleeing to "physicians, herbs, drug-mixtures, strict rules of diet, and all the other aids that mortals use" as behaviour revealing a lack of faith in God their Saviour (Karris 2000:209). But Sirach 38:1-15 honours physicians, e.g. 38:1: "Honor physicians for their services, for the Lord created them"(NRSV). But it also contains more traditional instructions, e.g. 38:9-12: "My child, when you are ill, do not delay, but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you. Give up your faults and direct your hands rightly, and cleanse your heart from all sin. Offer a sweet-smelling sacrifice, and a memorial portion of choice flour, and pour oil on your offering, as much as you can afford. Then give the physician his place, for the Lord created him; do not let him leave you, for you need him" (NRSV). While acknowledging that God is the divine healer, the wisdom of Sirach praises physicians. But there is still doubt about physicians in some instances, for Sirach 38:15 reads: "[m]ay the one who sins against his Maker fall into the hands of the physician!" (Karris 2000:209).

#### 4.3.4.2 Knowledge

As we observed above, James frequently encourages the audience to ask God or pray to the Lord on the ground of two facts: (1) God is a generous giver (1:5); (2) every good is from above, from the Father of lights (1:17). When James mentions the prayer for wisdom in 1:5, he emphasises faith without a divided or doubting mind (1:6-8). In 5:15 he repeats this emphasis: "the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up." Most commentators view the verb σώζω (save) in 5:15a as meaning physical healing because though σώζω could refer to spiritual salvation, σώζω commonly means "restore to health" in the New Testament (cf. Mt. 9:22). In addition, the use of oil (cf. Mk. 6:13) and James's utterance in the next clause that the Lord will "raise up" (ἐγείρω) the sick person lead us to assume that there is no need to think beyond physical healing. "The Lord" here refers to the Lord Jesus Christ because James' instruction to anoint the sick person "in the name of the Lord" in the previous verse 14 reminds of Jesus' instruction (cf. Jn. 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24, 26) and the following delineation of "raising up" is reminiscent of Jesus' healing described in the Gospels (cf. Mt. 8:15; 9:5-6, 25; Mk. 1:31; 2:11-12; 5:41; 9:27; Lk. 5:23-24; 7:14; 8:54; Jn. 5:8; cf. Acts 3:7; 9:41).

The faith here in 5:16 may be connected to the faith in 1:6-8, where James also mentioned the effectiveness of prayer, referring to a wholehearted commitment to God on the basis of the knowledge of God/Jesus, who gives generously to all without reproach and Jesus will effect a healing. But here we must not misunderstand and assume that God always heals the believer when the prayer is offered in faith; instead we must note carefully that it is the *Lord* who will raise him up and the phrase of "the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" in v. 16 implies

that the Lord does not always will to heal the sick person, even when he prays in faith. The healing depends on the will of God.

In 5:15b James also reveals the commonly accepted connection between illness and sin. Sickness in the ancient world was a mystery which could be resolved by connecting sickness to sin (McKnight 2011:442). The same connection is found in the New Testament when Jesus heals a paralyzed man (Mk. 2:5; cf. Jn. 5:14); Paul's exposure that some are sick at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:30) is answered by Jn. 9:2-3 about the connection: "[n]either this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him." All the instances in the New Testament provide a principle, according to McKnight (2011:444), that "sickness correlates with sin, health with faithfulness. *But not always.*" James points out the very common recognition. The  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  formed by crasis from  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  and  $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$  here means "and if"<sup>108</sup> and introduces "a third-class condition," which here introduces a possibility (Vlachos 2013:187). James does not believe that sickness is always the result of sin, but he believes that sickness can be produced by sin.

#### 4.3.4.3 Exhortation: Works of faith

In 5:13 James encourages the suffering person to pray and the cheerful person to praise. As we have seen above, the verb  $\kappa\alpha\kappa\omicron\pi\alpha\theta\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  (suffer) probably had a broad application referring to suffering hardship (Louw & Nida 1996:24.89). The indefinite pronoun  $\tau\iota\varsigma$  (anyone) which is used with  $\epsilon\nu$   $\acute{\upsilon}\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$  (among you) may refer to the audience's suffering economic difficulties and in the rich's oppression. The verb  $\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\theta\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  denotes "to be or to become encouraged and hence cheerful — 'to be encouraged, to take courage, to become encouraged'" (Louw & Nida 1996:25.146). Because the term  $\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\theta\upsilon\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}$  (cheerful) describes that of the heart rather than outward circumstances, many commentators<sup>109</sup> view that the verb  $\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\theta\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  refers only to the inner attitude of cheerfulness, independently of prevailing conditions. So the contrast between "suffering" and "cheerful" is about the emotional situation and not outward circumstances. It is right that one can have cheerfulness of heart regardless of outward conditions, whether good or bad. But since the suffering clearly refers to the hardship in difficulties, the contrast is a little strange. Further, it does fit well that when one suffers in difficult times, James exhorts to pray; nor does not fit well that when one is joyful even when the external situation looks bad, that James instructs singing praise, because the inner attitude of the cheerful is already an attitude of faith (1:2) and a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) (cf. Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:193). Therefore it is more natural to view the contrast as being between the suffering in difficult conditions and the cheerfulness in favorable circumstances that do not have to

<sup>108</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 13:3; most English Bible and commentators translate it by "and if."

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Moo 2015:222; McKnight 2011:432; Davids 2013 [1982]:192; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:293; Martin 1988:206.

refer to well-being but to a heart comforted from some a favourable situation. The verb εὐθυμέω occurs only in Acts 27:22, 25: in a storm at sea, Paul urges the sailors to “keep up your courage (εὐθυμεῖν), for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.” Paul urged the sailors to be cheerful because he heard from God that their lives would be saved from peril. What James intends to instruct the audience is that the faithful believers must not forget God’s sovereignty, whether in suffering or in cheerfulness. Also the sufferer must believe that God is the generous giver (1:5) and hearer of the cries of the faithful believer (4:2; 5:4) and so should pray on the basis of that knowledge. When one is cheerful in favourable circumstances, the person must not forget God from whom we receive all good and perfect gifts (1:17) and sing and praise God (cf. Vlachos 2013:183; Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:194). The faith that acknowledges God’s providence in our lives spurs praise in difficult situations and singing praise in joyful situations.

After giving general exhortations in broader situations, James provides detailed instruction as to how believers should respond to the specific situation when someone is sick. First, James urges the readers to call the elders of the church to pray over him, anointing him with oil. The “elders” can refer to an official designation (cf. 1 Tim. 5:17, 19; Tit. 1:5; cf. 1 Pet. 5:5), but “it is a general term for senior wise, honored, respected males in the community who were household leaders” (McKnight 2011:436). The latter case may apply, although it is not certain, because James uses the term “διδάσκαλοι” (teachers) for the leaders in 3:1 and there are no alternatives (like bishop, pastor or deacon) in this letter. In poor health care conditions, ordinary people hardly had recourse to the benefit of drugs and doctors for such services were not cheap (Karris 2000:210). This is why the healing of the sick was an important task of Jesus in his public life: “[t]hen Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and *curing* every disease and every sickness” (Mt. 9:35). There were many sick people among the great crowds who followed Jesus everywhere; and he had compassion for them and cured them (cf. Mt. 14:14; 20:34; Mk. 1:41). The disciples of Jesus also did similar things: “[s]o they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them” (Mk. 6:12–13 NRSV). In such a situation we can assume that James’ instruction is relying on that of Jesus. The sick person is instructed not to call the physicians, nor paterfamilias, but to call the elders of their Christian community. “They don’t have to go to a temple or shrine. No fee is charged. There is no discrimination against the chronically ill. And healing, and perhaps even a cure, come from faith and the Lord Jesus” (Karris 2000:211).

It was also customary in the ancient world to anoint someone with oil, for either medicinal, sacramental, or consecrative purposes (Vlachos 2013:185); in other words, practical, religious, or

symbolic (Moo 2015:224-226). Oil was widely used in the ancient world as a medicine. In Jesus' parable, he tells us that the Samaritan who stopped to help the man who had been robbed and beaten "went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine" (Lk. 10:34; also see Isa. 1:6). The medicinal view, however, is problematic since there may be examples of its use for wounds but never sickness and if oil was used for medical purpose, there was no need to call the elders. Proponents of the sacramental purpose consider the anointing to be "a sacramental vehicle of divine power" (Davids 1982:193), "... an outward and physically perceptible sign of the spiritual power of prayer, as well as a sign of the authority of the healer (Mk. 6:13)" (Davids 1989:123). Moo (2015:226) points out that the view of the "sacrament" depends on only one verse of Mk. 6:13 in the New Testament, which renders this debatable. But the third option (consecration) is preferred by many (Moo 2015:226; Vlachos 2013:185; McKnight 2011:439; Martin 1988:209). Anointing (ἀλείφω) was sometimes done as a symbolic action of consecrating (cf. Exod. 28:41; Lk. 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; 2 Cor. 1:21; Heb. 1:9). "The anointing with oil would symbolize the sick person being set apart for God's special attention" (Vlachos 2013:185; cf. Moo 2015:226; McKnight 2011:439). This would seem a more acceptable deduction when we consider the Jewish health care system and dualistic symbolic world of the age. The healing of an illness is important to both of the individual and community, and might also have been understood as a demonic disturbance of the godly integrity of the person's body. The restored patient needed not only the level of individual healing but also the experience of restoration at the level of community. The symbolical ritual anointing by elders and prayers by community members had significance as a symbol of restoration of the patient to God, family, and community.

The second step for healing was for the sick person to confess his or her sins to others and pray for one another (5:16). We found above that people in the ancient world and the New Testament commonly assumed some connection between illness and sin. Even though James does not agree that all illness is connected to sin, he instructs his readers to confess their sins in the case of the possible connection. McKnight (2011:445-446) observes that there are marks of mutual public confession of sins in the early churches. It is not obvious however that the church practiced regular confession to a priest or whether there were publicly confessed sins weekly through the liturgical recitation of a prayer of confession. He concludes that the biblical pattern is for believers to confess their sins both to God and to one another, but it does not entail becoming "institutionalized"<sup>110</sup>. Though James can mean that members should pray for one another's needs, the context indicates praying for healing. Together with the practice of anointing with oil confession toward one another

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<sup>110</sup> E.g. the Sacrament of Penance where Catholics confess their sins to a Priest in absolute secrecy to receive God's forgiveness and be reconciled with God. Or a public confession in front of the congregation.

was thought to have a significant role in restoring the sick person in integrity.

James frequently mentions the term “pray” or “prayer” and emphasizes the prayer for healing a sick person. It is the prayer with which the Lord will save the sick, not the elder, oil, nor confession of sin (5:15). In instructing the members to pray James reminds them of the prayer of faith (1:6): “the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick (5:15). The “faith” here is not the confidence of healing because, as we observed above, James and any other New Testament do not promise always to heal all the sick by prayer. The healing of the sick person depends on the will of God; the faith exercised in prayer may be referring to a wholehearted commitment to God who sovereignly achieves his will, which is related with faith in 1:6-8. When we ask God, we necessarily acknowledge the providence of God who is the generous giver and will answer as we ask. But the faith must include recognition that the healing is decided by the will of God, which outweighs our desire. What Moo (2015:235) is suggesting, is that “the faith with which we pray is always faith in the God whose will is supreme and best; only sometimes does this faith include assurance that a particular request is within that will.” To ask “in Jesus’ name” in 5:14, for Moo (2015:235), means “to take into account his will.”

James strengthens his encouragement to pray with a reminder of the power of prayer in v. 16. The expression “πολὸν ἰσχύει” means literally “it has much power or ability” (see BDAG 2000:484), hence the translation “the righteous person’s prayer is powerful” (Hartin 2009 [2003]:270). Δέησις (prayer) is used as a synonym of προσεύχομαι (vv. 13-14) and εὐχή (v. 15). The anarthrous form of δίκαιου (righteous) functions as an indefinite substantive adjective, “denoting any person in this class, not just the elders” (Vlachos 2013:189). The power affected by prayer is not limited to “supersaints” (Moo 2015:230), or “a special class of elite ‘charismatics’” (Martin 1988:211); McKnight (2011:449) suggests that “we must think of ‘righteous’ in the more general sense of the person who does God’s will.” “Righteous” may signify “a person who is in right standing with God through Christ and who displays that, through a life of faith” (Morgan & Ellenburg 2008:203). “Righteous” may denote “a man who has confessed his sins and by faith stands acquitted before God. But since James in this epistle is stressing that a living faith must manifest itself in daily life, the term more probably calls attention to his ethical character” (Hiebert 2009 [1979]:300). Moo (2015:230-231) encapsulates it succinctly: “the *righteous person* simply designates one who is wholeheartedly committed to God and sincerely seeking to do his will.”

The participle ἐνεργουμένη (“work,” “accomplish,” “be effective,” cf. Vlachos 2013:189; McKnight 2011:448; BDAG 2000:335) is somewhat ambiguous in terms of the voice (middle or passive?) and the grammatical classification (adjective or adverb?). Vlachos (2013:189-190)

provides the most common interpretations, as follows:

1. attributive middle adj.: “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (NASB; Laws 1980:234);
2. predicative middle adj.: “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (NIV; NABRE; McCartney 2009:258);
3. middle adv.: “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (ESV; Robertson, *Pictures* 66); or
4. passive adv.: “How great is the power of a good man’s prayer prompted by the Spirit of God!” (Mayor 1954:231).

There is little effect on the main point, that “the prayer of a righteous person is powerful,” whether it is adjective or adverb; but a decision on the classification of the participle is difficult. It could probably be passive, “indicating God as the ultimate agent in activating his people’s prayers” (Blomberg & Kamell 2008:245; cf. Hartin 2009 [2003]:270-271; Davids 1989:125). But Adamson (1976:210) argues that “ἐνεργουμένη in Jas. 5:16 is more likely intended to mean ‘in operation’ than taken as a passive: this prayer is mighty in what it is *able* to do, not in what it is *enabled* to do.” In context, James is more likely trying to encourage his hearers to practice their opportunity of prayer more earnestly (Blomberg & Kamell 2008:245). The participle is more likely to be middle (Moo 2015:231; Allison 2013:772; Stulac 2010 [1993]:185; Kent 2005:187). As Martin (1988:212) suggests, “the use of the middle [voice] does not diminish God’s role in healing; instead it emphasises the fact that those who are ill because of sin (and have confessed this sin) have immediate access to the channel through which they can receive healing from the divine source” (cf. also Hiebert 2009 [1979]:301). Thus it is better to take the participle as a middle voice. Considering the placement of the term ἐνεργουμένη at the end of the sentence, we can translate the thought as: “[t]he prayer of a righteous person has great power in its working.”

Lest the audience assume that the prayer of normal people does not have such effectiveness, James introduces the example of the remarkable example of Elijah as “a human being like us” (NET; NRSV; cf. Perkins 1995:138). James also cites Elijah as “an example of a righteous person whose prayers had great effect” (Moo 2015:231). In the Old Testament, Elijah is revealed as a very human character: despite being godly, he is not impervious to doubts and depression. He is depicted “as an ordinary man with an extraordinary God. Since he is **like us**, any Christian, as a person obedient to God, has the same power” (Davids 1989:125, the bold type is original). Elijah saw God respond,

after having “prayed fervently<sup>111</sup> that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit” (ESV). The hearers are also encouraged to expect the response of God to their prayer (Warrington 1994:220).

In a situation of suffering, especially if someone is sick, James exhorts the audience to pray. The ancient health care system did not allow access to the poor to drugs and doctors, which came at a high price and were of uncertain quality. In these circumstances, on the grounds of knowledge of God as a generous giver and the teaching of Jesus, James instructs the hearer first, to call upon the elders of the church for prayer and anointing with oil; second, the congregation also needs to pray for one other, confessing their sins because if the affliction was the punishment for sin, the sick person would be forgiven; third, they should pray with faith in the name of Jesus, upon whose will the healing depends. Faith is primarily related to healing (Mk. 2:5; 5:34, 36; 9:23; 10:52; Acts 14:9), and without faith one does not attain healing (Mt. 13:58; Mk. 6:6). Thus James emphasises the prayer of faith, of a righteous person who is sincerely seeking to do the will of God. The Lord will raise the sick up as a response to the prayer of the faith. The faith in Jesus who will respond to the prayer of the believer and will heal the ill, leads the believer to pray in faith. Faith inevitably produces prayer and the prayer of the faithful has great power in its working. So in suffering prayer is “an act of faith” (Adamson 1976:200).

#### 4.3.5 James 5:19-20

James begins with the same words, “anyone among you” (5:13, 14). Now in 5:19 This pericope opens with “if anyone among you.” In the preceding section of 5:13-18 James instructed the audience about the prayer of elders of the church and mutual prayer for one another when someone is sick. He continues his teaching about the importance of mutual responsibility within the community. For the last exhortation, James closes the Letter with an encouragement of mutual correction in a situation where another member is erring (5:19-20). Like the closing of 1 John, this kind of ending is “more typical of the more ‘formal’ New Testament letters that read like published sermons” (Moo 2015:236).

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<sup>111</sup> The phrase καὶ προσευχῆ προσήύξατο (lit. “he prayed with a prayer”) is “a cognitive dative, a virtual equivalent to the Hebrew infinitive absolute with a cognate” (McKnight 2011: 451 see notes 110). It is likely that this reflects the common Semitic construction to show intensity (cf. Vlachos 2013:190). The other opinion is that the meaning of the Greek “προσευχῆ προσήύξατο” refers not his fervency, nor even his frequency of prayer, but that “he just prayed” (Motyer 1985 [1995]:206-207; cf. Adamson 1976:201). But the addition of “προσευχῆ” (with a prayer) is intended to show some intensity.

### 4.3.5.1 Situation

In the previous section James provided an exhortation in a situation of illness. In 5:19 James imagines a situation in which someone has strayed from the truth.” Verse 20 presents some parallels, “a sinner” for “the wander” and “path” for “the truth.” To understand the situation properly we must consider the related words together.

Πλανηθῆ is third person singular aorist passive subjunctive of πλανάω/ πλανάομαι (“wander,” “go astray,” “deceive”) (cf. Vlachos 2013:196; Rogers & Rogers III 1998:565; Kistemaker 1996 [1986]:185). When this verb πλανάω is used in the passive voice, it refers to the idea of “being led astray or deceived.” But this verb could mean “either a true passive (‘be led astray’) or perhaps an implied middle (‘one goes astray’ of one’s own accord)” (Blomberg & Kamell 2008:248; cf. Vlachos 2013:198). James uses the term πλανάω in 1:16, where the meaning is “do not be deceived.” Though this has a passive form to mean that he is deceived by incorrect knowledge of God, in 1:14 James exposes the key source of being deceived: “each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.” In 5:19 the passive of πλανάω may similarly imply that the person who is wandering from the truth may be influenced by the external environment, but the final temptation stems from his own desire. There is a question whether “wander” means “backslide” or “apostatize.” Some (Martin 1988:218; Davids 1982:198) opt for the view that the “πλανάω” means to apostatize, and although this is a possibility, most commentators are of the opinion that James may not be discussing apostasy here, but any deviation from the way of truth, because James does not mention that the wanderer has disowned the faith and the exhortation suggests the wanderer’s turning back. McKnight (2011:454) claims that “[i]t is both useful and useless to dissect ‘wander’ into backsliders who return and apostates who do not return. There is a difference, so the distinction is useful for theology and pastoral care. But for our text it is well-nigh useless because one does not know if the people so described were actually restored” (cf. also Moo 2015:236-237; McCartney 2009:263; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:248). Another question regarding the person who wanders from the truth (v. 19) to live in “the error of his way” (v. 20, NIV) is whether the reference is to the backsliding of a believer who will unfailingly be brought back *versus* the unbeliever who does not truly belong to Christ at all so that turning means to convert to being a Christian from having been an unbeliever. But the answer of this question is in fact impossible for us who have limited wisdom. Motyer (1985 [1995]:212) declares that “[t]he fact is that the only evidence we have of each other is what we profess with our lips and live in our lives. We are not privy to the secrets of another’s heart, nor to the secret counsels of God.”

James relates the wandering to ὁ ἀλήθεια (the truth) (v. 19). In Judaism “truth” is “a way to go, a

way of life” (Davids 2013 [1982]:199), thus “both *what* one knows and *how* one lives” (McKnight 2011:454). In light of the parallel term “ὁδὸς” (way) in v. 20, ἀλήθεια (truth) here clearly relates to behaviour (Vlachos 2013:196); life-style (Davids 2013 [1982]:199); “the proper ‘way’ of behaving” (Johnson 2005 [1995]:337); and “an ethical sense” (Martin 1988:219). Considering this context and James’ stress on the practical aspects of faith, the “truth” here relates to “a public falling away, whether in speech or action, rather than merely a private change of theology or thought” (Blomberg & Kamell 2008:247-248). For James truth and life are inseparable, both belong together. “There is a way of life which matches and which grows out of the truth as it is in Jesus, and which cannot be had in any other way” (Motyer 1985 [1995]:210).

In conclusion, the situation in this section is one where someone in the community is behaving in speech or action in an incompatible way to the blessed lives of faithful believers.

#### 4.3.5.2 Knowledge

In the situation of the wandering brother within the community, James encourages mutual correction. The responsibility of the community to seek out the lost sheep and forgiveness of the sins of other believers were already concerns in the teaching of Jesus (Mt. 18:10-14, 21-35; Lk. 17:3-4). Paul also states the duty of all members to help the weak one another: “[a]nd we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak ...” (1 Thess. 5:14 ESV). Gal. 6:1 exhorts those who are spiritual in the community to restore anyone who is caught in a sin in a spirit of gentleness. In the early church it was clearly common to be concerned about turning back the fellow wandering members of the church. Jas. 5:20 is comparable with Prov. 10:12b, “love covers all sins” (NKJV) (cf. Perkins 1995:139). God warns Ezekiel that if he does not give the wicked a warning, both they and he will die; if he warns the wicked and they do not cease their wicked deeds, he will save himself (3:16-21; cf. 33:9). Daniel 12:3 also mentions that those who turn many to righteousness will be like the stars (cf. McKnight 2011:455).

James 5:20 also exhorts the audience to “let him know that ...” It implies that there is something more to know or he does not know what he should. James normally bases his exhortations on the common knowledge of the word of God in the Old Testament and the teaching of Jesus in the New Testament (e.g. the eschatological judgement and reward; the royal law, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself,” in 2:8). But he also gives instructions about possibly unknown knowledge or assumed misunderstanding (e.g. “Let no one say when he is tempted, ...” in 1:13; “Do not be deceived, ... all good gift and all perfect gift is from above, ... in 1:16-17; “pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this ...” in 1:27). Here again James wants to persuade the audience

of a truth: “whoever turns back a sinner from his wandering path will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

What the restorer who returned a sinner from error should know is that the successful outcome accomplishes two things: he or she has been “saved from death and a multitude of sins has been covered over” (cf. Moo 2015:237; McKnight 2011:457). James has used *σῶζω* (save) five times in this letter: in the sense of saving from eternal death three times before 5:20: in 1:21 (the implanted word, which is able to *save* your souls); 2:14 (Can that faith *save* him?); and 4:12 (There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to *save* and to destroy). In 5:15 James used the term for healing physical sickness: “the prayer of faith will *save* the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.” So it is not possible that “save from death” here could refer to saving from physical death. But since the saving is related with “wandering from the way of truth” and “soul (*ψυχή*) from death” here, it is more likely a reference to salvation as “spiritual, eternal salvation” (McKnight 2011:457). There are cases where God killed sinners immediately, like Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) or Herod who was killed by an angel of the Lord because he did not give God the glory (Acts 12:23). But these are isolated cases in the Old and New Testament. Even Adam and Eve did not die immediately after they ate fruit from the forbidden tree, though God states they will surely die when they eat (Gen. 2:17, 3:3). In the Old Testament and the New Testament, “death” often refers to life apart from God or Christ and therefore destined for eternal death (cf. McKnight 2011:457). It is unlikely that James is using, “saving from death” as healing or saving from physical death without any hint for physical death. Clearly the death here is eternal death and the salvation is spiritual and eternal salvation on the day of judgement (Moo 2015:237; Allison 2013:786; Vlachos 2013:198; Painter 2012:172; McKnight 2011:457; McCartney 2009:264; Blomberg & Kamell 2008:249; Martin 1988:219; Davids 2013 [1982]:199; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:309; Adamson 1976:203).

There is also an ambiguity in the Greek, regarding the question of whether the person who is being saved is the rescuer or the wanderer, and similarly, whose sins have been covered. McKnight (2011:459) provides the two most probable readings of 5:19b-20:

[And if] a person restores the wanderer, let the restorer know that the one who restores a sinner saves himself from death, and covers a multitude of his own sins.

[And if] a person restores the wanderer, let the restorer know that the one who restores a sinner restores the wanderer from death and covers a multitude of the wanderer’s sins.

Allison (2013:787) argues that “it is quite possible that James wished to say, in effect, that to help

others is to help oneself” on the basis of 2 Clem. 16:4, 17:2, and Ezek. 3:19 and 21. Martin (1988: 220) also suggests that “James is hinting that the one who reaches out to the deviant neighbor will receive a blessing, possibly in bringing about a strengthened community reflecting the law of love (2:8) and peace (3:18).” However, the majority of exegetes support the second reading for the following reasons: (1) death refers to eschatological punishment and nowhere is there any mention or implication that the one who has helped the sinner is in danger. For James only the one who has “wandered from the way of truth” is in danger of this judgment (Moo 2015:237; Painter 2012:172); (2) James uses αὐτοῦ (his) twice in 5:20, and the nearest antecedent to αὐτοῦ is the previous αὐτοῦ, which refers to the same person who has gone astray because of the parallel uses of αὐτοῦ in both “the error of his/her ways” and “saves his/her soul” (Blomberg & Kamell 2008:249; cf. Vlachos 2013:199; McKnight 2011:459); (3) James would never have believed in this context that the rescue of a wanderer could be blessed for the soul of only the rescuer (Adamson 1976:203); (4) Since the main emphasis of this section (5:19-20) is certainly the mutual correction within the community by restoring a sinner from the error of his or her way, it makes no sense that James is concerned only with the rescuer’s blessing and he disregards the sinner’s. It is in discord with the teaching of Jesus (e.g. the parable of lost sheep in Mt. 18:10-14). Moo (2015:237) asserts firmly “the one who has been saved from death is almost certainly the one who has sinned,” adding (2015:238) that it would be unlikely to refer to one who has been saved, as now having his sins covered.

We conclude that James’ exhortation about mutual correction follows the teaching of Jesus that was common in the early church. James wants the one who has helped return a sinner to know, is that he or she has accomplished two things: (1) the sinner is saved from eternal death, and (2) this restoration covers a multitude of the wanderer’s sins.

#### **4.3.5.3 Exhortation: Works of faith**

In this section of Jas. 5:19-20, the situation is that someone in the community has strayed from the way of truth. James instructs that his reader should not only *do* the words of God, but also they should strive to see that others also follow the way of truth. The believer’s responsibility for other erring Jesus followers in the congregation does not stop with prayer, and James concludes by encouraging the audience to take responsibility for one another. The indefinite “someone” indicates that this responsibility belongs not only to leaders of the church but also to every church member in the community (Adamson 1976:203), a noble task assigned to every member in the faith (Johnson 2005 [1995]:346). “This last admonition, to be active in turning others from sin, captures the purpose of the letter. So, with no closing greetings, it ends abruptly, leaving us to consider its claim upon our lives” (Culpepper 2000:44).

James also teaches how serious the effect of sin is: sin is destructive and will surely result in an eternal death of the sinner's soul in separation from God. The threat of eschatological punishment should be motivation for concern about sin in our lives and in the lives of others (Moo 2015:238; Hiebert 2009 [1979]:309).

The communal responsibility to restore a wanderer like a lost sheep and the forgiveness of the sins of other believers are commanded in accordance with the teaching of Jesus (Mt. 18:10-14, 21-35; Lk. 17:3-4). In the early church it was clearly common to take responsibility for restoring sinners in the church. It indicates that the encouragement of mutual correction follow the teaching of Jesus.

Again James emphasises that faith and works are inseparable. The truth consists in both knowledge and living. In Tit. 1:1 Paul draws a parallel between “the faith (πίστις)” and “knowledge of the truth (ἐπίγνωσις ἀληθείας)” and speaks of “the faith and the knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness.” The “faith” and “the knowledge of truth” and “godliness” belong together. It means that faith is involved with knowledge of the truth and the living a life of godliness. It is impossible in Scripture to make faith a mere matter of holding some truth as confessional assertion. Faith is a living thing in accordance with the knowledge of truth. If we claim to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then the Bible would require us to know the word of God from the Lord Jesus Christ and also require us to prove our claim not only by reciting the knowledge and understanding it, but by the evidence of works of a life matching the knowledge of the truth. Paul mentions two false teachers named Hymenaeus and Philetus who “wandered away from the truth” (2 Tim. 2:17-18, NIV). Their error was primarily incorrect knowledge about the resurrection. Jude introduces the “ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord” (Jude 4, ESV). In this case the error was primarily immorality. “But in each case the true faith is denied, and in each case the error spreads” (Motyer 1985:210).

Though we do not know whether the sinner is a true believer, whether the wandering is a temporal deviation or an apostasy, James clearly instructs that keeping on living the life of sin means that the sinner is in danger of the eternal judgment. James thus emphasises the importance of the community of the church and he encourages the audience to watch for anyone who is straying from the truth. James also urges the recipients to help the wanderer to return to the faith (cf. Motyer 1985:210-211).

In the section of 5:19-20 James also implies that biblical perfection is the goal of the faith that

James encourages the faithful believers to seek from God. Though members of the Christian community should seek out perfection, whole-hearted commitment to God, and love for others, they do sometimes fail to accomplish that goal. This should not discouraged them, but spur them to run toward the goal. The perfection that James encourages is involved with growing in the knowledge of the truth and morality.

James relates the last exhortation to an eschatological motivation particularly by mentioning the eternal death. James finishes his letter by insisting that the readers should continue to live their lives in the way of faith according to the knowledge of the truth. The stress, as throughout the letter, is on working faith, on the works of the true faith.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The investigation on the lexical meaning of the πίστ-word group (πιστεύειν, πίστις, πιστός) reveals that in both Greek and Hebrew the term faith (trust) and faithfulness are used synonymously, so that the πίστ-word group could justifiably be translated with the terms “loyalty” or “faithfulness” rather than with “faith.”

We also examined the usages of πίστις (“faith”) and πιστεύω (“believe”) and how the other themes are connected to faith in James. True faith must produce works of the faith, without which faith is “*useless*” (2:14, 16), cannot “*save*” (2:14), is “*ineffective*” (2:20), and is “*dead*” (2:17, 26). Faith will be tested within various contexts and the true faith will be proved by endurance with a wholehearted commitment to God (1:3, 8). The endurance will make the believers complete, lacking in nothing (1:4), and such perfection is the goal of faith. Faith and works can be also understood in terms of perfection. For the perfections of the faith, we need wisdom from above, the word, and the perfect law of liberty. Only through wisdom and word/law can the believers be perfect in faith. There are two frequently-mentioned themes as important elements of the law, viz. restrained speech and love/mercy for the poor. To encourage the recipients to be doers of the word and law, James teaches them about the grounds for eschatological judgement and reversal to motivate them towards endurance and works of faith. For James, eschatological judgement and rewards are more valuable than wealth in earthly life. There is also an inevitable element for the life of faith, “the prayer of the faithful.” Prayer is an inevitable part of faith in the believer’s life, both individually and communally, because we lack wisdom and our lives and all good things are under the control of God, the generous giver to the humble and faithful.

We also find some other dimensions involved the conceptions of faith in James: (1) the right

knowledge is essential for faith; (2) true believers are those who were born through the word of truth (1:21) and they are steadfast doers of law/word/wisdom, becoming mature through doing the law/word/wisdom (1:3-4, 12, 22-25; 2:8, 17, 20, 26) and will receive the crown of life from God (1:12); (3) the works of faith can be categorized in three sets of concepts: (a) thinking (1:2, 26; 4:15); (b) speaking (1:13, 19-20, 26; 2:12; 3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:9, 12); and (c) acting (1:27; 2:1, 8, 9, 12, 14-17, 21-23, 25; 3:13, 17-18; 4:8, 17; 5:3-6, 7, 11, 20).

We finally examined the exhortations in 4:13-5:20 section by section, focusing on how the living faith produces works in various contexts with three steps: (1) context or situation of the reader; (2) knowledge of the word of God/Jesus; (3) exhortation to the work of faith.

In Jas. 4:13-17, James summons the arrogant rich merchants as an example of non-living faith. The merchants ignore God in their business plans and they are confident that they can control their lives without God. They boast and fail to do good deeds even though they know the good they should do. James exhorts the audience that the living faith must be manifested even in business enterprises, which should be conducted according to the knowledge of the truth. The proper way of planning for the future is to consider the providence of God and to live within sight of the sovereignty of God, with a humble attitude and saying, “if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that” (4:15). This is living faithfully, in humility and in submission to God’s will. For James *faith* must affect the *attitude and thinking (works)* of believers *in planning (a situation)* by the *knowledge* about the sovereignty of God.

In Jas. 5:1-6, James shows that the life of true faith earns profits by the right means, as does the practice of sharing possessions with the needy on the basis of the knowledge of the word of the Lord/Jesus. The knowledge is that the omission of what is known as the correct action is a crucial sin and those who maintain a self-indulgent lifestyle will be punished seriously by God, but those who live in justice and generosity will be blessed by the Lord of hosts. James’ exhortation is that when the believers have a wealth of possessions (a *situation*), the *faith* in the *knowledge* about the blessing life at the eschatological judgement by the Lord results in helping the acts such as helping the needy (*work*).

In Jas. 5:7-12, James encourages the recipients who are oppressed and suffering in economic difficulties, by reminding them of the knowledge of the messianic coming of Jesus. He cites examples from the Old Testament about the prophets and Job. James provides the faithful believer with the proper responses to economic exploitation, which are: first to be patient and steadfast, not

to strike back in violence; the second is not to grumble and swear oaths. James emphasises the equal importance of both *endurance* and *appropriate speech* as conducting appropriate lives (*works*) of the *faith* in *economic difficulties* and *oppressions (situations)* because the Lord is coming to judge (*knowledge*). We note especially that the encouragement to “be patient” is rare in secular Greek, but occurs normally in the sayings of Jesus.

In Jas. 5:13-18, the *situation* depicted is suffering and especially “sickness” (v. 14-16). The ancient health care system did not help the poor much because of the scarcity, high price, and uncertainty of drugs and doctors. James *instructs* the hearer: first, to call for the elders of the church to *pray* over the sick person, anointing him/her with oil in the name of the Lord; second, the congregation also needs to *pray* for one other, confessing their sins; because if the afflicted person has sinned, he/she will be forgiven; third, they should pray with faith in the name of Jesus because the healing depends on the will of Jesus. These instructions conform to the *knowledge* of God as a generous giver and Jesus’ healing, described in the Gospels (cf. Mt. 8:15; 9:5-6, 25; Mk. 1:31; 2:11-12; 5:41; 9:27; Lk. 5:23-24; 7:14; 8:54; Jn. 5:8; cf. Acts 3:7; 9:41) and the teaching of the New Testament that sickness can correlated with sin, but need not always be. Healing is related primarily to faith (Mk. 2:5; 5:34, 36; 9:23; 10:52; Acts 14:9). James so emphasises the prayer of faith, specifically by the righteous person who is sincerely seeking to do the will of God. The Lord will raise the sick as a response to the prayer of the faith. For James *faith* inevitably produces prayer (*work*) and the prayer of the faithful has great power in its working. So in a *situation* of suffering *prayer* is a *work of faith*.

In Jas. 5:19-20, the imagined situation is where someone in the community is exhibiting speech or action incompatible with the way of truth. James encourages the audience to turn the wanderer back, following the teaching of Jesus that was common in the early church. James substantiates his lesson: the one who has helped to turn a sinner back has accomplished two things: (1) the sinner is saved from eternal death, and (2) this restoration covers a multitude of the wanderer’s sins. In this section James teaches the importance of mutual correction (*work*) in the community of the church, using an imagined situation as an example. James finishes his letter by emphasising the importance of the community for the individual believers to continue living their lives in the way of faith.

The emphasis, as throughout the letter, is the working faith on the basis of the knowledge of the truth in various situations.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

The research showed that most scholars now agree that one enters into salvation by grace through faith, but the saving faith inevitably produces works as well. While debate regarding the nature of the saving faith continues, there is scholarly consensus on its essential components: *notitia* (knowledge), *assensus* (assent) and *fiducia* (trust). They emphasise wholehearted trust at the core of faith. Some scholars reject *fiducia* (trust) as having to be included in the definition of faith, reducing the elements of faith to two components of *notitia* (knowledge) and *assensus* (assent). The argument is that if we insist that works are required as the inevitable fruit of faith, it seems to distort the gracious salvation and thus result in logical inconsistency.

Two problems arise: (1) there is debate on the nature of faith; (2) the majority of scholars agree that one enters into salvation by grace through faith, but argue that the saving faith inevitably produces works as well. But no scholars have explained *how* faith produces the works of faith in various specific situations. The aim of the proposed research has been to answer two questions: (1) “what is the nature of faith?” and (2) “how does it produce works?” To achieve this aim the researcher has investigated Jas. 4:13-5:20 by a theological approach integrated with exegetical analysis based on the historical and cultural background against which it was written: (1) researching the historical issues on the Letter of James (e.g. the author, recipient, date) and cultural backgrounds related to Jas. 4:13-5:20; (2) analysing a structure of Jas 4:13-5:20 and dividing sections by considering three dimensions: rhetorical devices, main themes (e.g. eschatology), and messages; (3) investigating the concept of faith in the whole Letter of James and analysing closely the exhortations in 4:13-5:20 section by section, focusing on how the living faith produces works in various contexts, by examining three related aspects: (1) the situations of the recipients; (2) knowledge of truth; (3) exhortations as the work of faith.

The Letter of James has suffered from a certain gentle disdain in the history of Christianity. Luther disliked the book, which he considered as contradicting Paul. Most scholars now agree that James is compatible with Paul on the issue of justification. The differences between Paul and James are only superficial, and are due to differences in readers, situations, and nuances of terms. The contrast in James is not in reality between faith and works, but between live faith and dead faith. Although the Letter of James was accepted slowly in the process of canonization, the church did accept it as Scripture. It is important to point out that though James was neglected sometimes, the book was never rejected in the church.

There are many challenges to the traditionally assumed authorship as being James, the brother of the Lord, on two main grounds: (1) the high level of the Greek language and Hellenistic literary devices in the letter; and (2) the inconvenient problem of the debate on the justification between James and Paul. But it has been revealed by many scholars that Hellenistic ideas and the Greek language were widespread in Palestine. The charge against Jesus written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek on the board of cross (Jn. 19:19-20) and the “Hellenists” in Acts 6:1 that refer to Jewish Jesus followers whose mother tongue was Greek, indicate that Greek was quite a *lingua franca* in Palestine. The investigation of the relationship between James and Paul concluded that James wrote his letter independently of Paul or misunderstood Paul’s teaching. The conclusion of their independently writing the letters shows that James did not have an opportunity for talking with Paul or obtaining Paul’s letters. Paul’s teaching on justification by faith was already being misunderstood during Paul’s ministry (Rom. 3:5-8, cf. 2 Pet. 3:15-16). We conclude, therefore, that James, the brother of the Lord, wrote the Letter around AD 45-47 to the mainly Jewish Jesus followers who were living outside of Palestine among Gentiles, including Gentile Jesus followers.

The research of the historical context in Palestine and Rome between AD 33-66 informs that the readers were suffering from severe economic difficulties because of famine, banditry, and exploitation by the rich, and religious confusion owing to false prophets from outside. The analysis of the Letter of James itself notifies that the recipients of James were also struggling with partiality, abusive speech, misconceptions about God and faith, seeking worldly desires at all cost, and quarrelling and fighting among one another. In these various situations, James exhorts them about the proper way to live as faithful believers of Jesus.

Moving to the world of the text, it is important to identify its main genre, that can include subgenres because such understanding crucially affects our interpretations. James was often understood as paraenesis or protreptic or wisdom literature. But recently it has been agreed that the Letter is best understood as a homily in the form of an encyclical letter. James seeks to persuade the recipients to live according to the wisdom of God, in the form of the Letter that conveys many biblical and pastoral exhortations with rhetorical expressions, prophetic warnings, and eschatological motivations.

To investigate Jas. 4:13-5:20 properly, we first set the sections that convey one main message in a section. To discern the proper structure, we searched scholars’ suggestions for the structure of the whole Letter. Many have tried to delineate the structure of the Letter by different ways. The rhetorical structures show that the Letter has the purpose of persuasion and James structured the

Letter carefully, employing various rhetorical devices, although there are some criticisms that the audience might not have been able to grasp its rhetorical functions. Thematic structures show that there are coherent theological themes spanning the letter. But it has a limitation that one theme covers whole sections of the letter, because there are several other important themes operating together. Some then propose mediating approaches to identify the structure of the Letter of James, a matter on which however there is no consensus. There is general agreement regarding the introduction and conclusion of the letter. It is suggested that 1:2-27 can be considered as the introduction functioning as an epitome or table of contents and 5:7-20 is identified as the conclusion of the Letter. This research suggests an integrated analysis that considers rhetorical devices, thematic elements, contents or messages of each section, supported by scholarly agreement regarding the introductions and conclusion. We have built a structure of Jas. 4:13-5:20 by considering three dimensions: rhetorical devices, main themes (e.g. eschatology), and messages of sections. We finally identified five sub-sections in Jas. 4:13-5:20 as: (1) 4:13-17; (2) 5:1-6; (3) 5:7-12; (4) 5:13-18; (5) 5:19-20.

Before examining the issue of faith and works in Jas. 4:13-5:20, we investigated the lexical meaning of the πιστ-word group (πιστεύειν, πίστις, πιστός) and the usages of the πίστις (“faith”) and πιστεύω (“believe”) in James. On the lexical meaning the πιστ-word group demonstrates that the term faith (trust) can also be translated with faithfulness or loyalty because these are used synonymously.

After we examined how the key terms and main themes in every section are related to the faith throughout the whole Letter,<sup>112</sup> we finally confirmed that faith is rooted in every exhortation in James as works of faith. We also can summarise the conceptions of faith in James following way:

- Faith will be tested in various contexts (1:2) and the true faith produces endurance and becomes mature (1:3-4, 12).
- Perfection is the goal of faith (1:2-4; 2:22).
- For the perfection of the faith, we need the wisdom from above, the word, and the perfect law of liberty. Two important elements of the law are speech and love/mercy.
- The right knowledge is essential for faith: (a) James sometimes exhorts the audience on the basis that they have known already (1:3, 5; 4:4); (b) at other times he corrects their misunderstanding (1:13-14, 16-17; 2:20); (c) James sometimes urges the reader to know more (1:19; 3:1; 4:14; 5:20); (d) the contents of the knowledge that James mentions are

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<sup>112</sup> See 4.2.6. All exhortations in James as works of faith.

grounds for doing in faith.

- To encourage the recipients to be doers of the word and law, James often reminds the audience of the eschatological judgement and reversal as motivation for endurance and works of faith. For James, eschatological judgement and rewards are more valuable than wealth in earthly life (1:12, 25; 2:5, 24; 5:20).
- Prayer is an inevitable part of faith in the believer's life, both individually and communally (1:5, 6; 4:2, 3; 5:13, 14, 17, 18).
- The works of faith can be categorized in three sets of concepts: (a) thinking (1:2, 26); (b) speaking (1:13, 19-20, 26; 2:12; 3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:9, 12); (c) acting (1:27; 2:1, 8, 9, 12, 14-17, 21-23, 25; 3:13, 17-18; 4:8, 17; 5:3-6, 7, 11, 20).

We finally examined closely the exhortations in 4:13-5:20 section by section, focusing on how the living faith produces works in various contexts, by studying three steps: (1) the context or situation of the recipient; (2) knowledge of truth; (3) manifestation of faith through the work of faith.

In Jas. 4:13-17, James exhorts the audience that the living faith must be manifested even in business enterprises in accordance with the knowledge of the truth. When the believers are planning for the future, it is proper in a life of faith to consider the providence of God and to plan in the light of the sovereignty of God, with a humble attitude and saying, "if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that" (4:15). For James the *faith* must affect the *attitude and thinking* of believers *in planning* according to the *knowledge* about the sovereignty of God.

In Jas. 5:1-6, James exhorts the self-indulgent rich landowners that failing to act correctly is a crucial sin and those who live self-indulgently will be punished seriously by God, but those who exercise justice and generosity are blessed by the Lord of hosts. James' exhortation is that when the believers have a wealth of possessions, the *faith* in the *knowledge* about the blessed life at the eschatological judgement by the Lord results in motivating them to works of the faith, such as helping the needy.

In Jas. 5:7-12, James encourages the readers who are suffering under economic difficulties and oppression, by reminding them of the knowledge of the messianic coming of Jesus to judge, and he offers examples of the Old Testament prophets and Job. He advises two proper responses of the faithful to the economic exploitation by the rich: firstly to be patient and steadfast, not to strike back in violence; and secondly not to grumble and swear oaths. It is impossible to practise endurance in a situation of oppression without the faith in the knowledge about the providence of God and the

Lord's imminent judgement. The endurance is the act of the faith.

In Jas. 5:13-18, for the *situation* of suffering, especially "sickness", James *instructs* the hearers that the afflicted should call for the elders of the church to *pray* over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, confessing sins and they should pray with faith in the name of Jesus because the healing depends on the will of Jesus. These instructions conform to the *knowledge* of God as a generous giver and Jesus' healing described in the Gospels. The New Testament teaches that sickness can correlate with sin, but this is not always the case. The Gospels (Mk. 2:5; 5:34, 36; 9:23; 10:52) and Acts 14:9 show that healing is primarily related to faith, so James emphasises the prayer of faith. The Lord will raise the sick as a response to the prayer of the faithful. For James faith inevitably produces prayer and the prayer of faith has great power in its working. So in a situation of suffering *prayer is a work of faith*.

In Jas. 5:19-20, when someone in the community is wandering from the way of truth, James encourages the audience to turn the wanderer back, following the teaching of Jesus. James also teaches that the one who has helped to turn a sinner back has accomplished two things: (1) the sinner is saved from eternal death, and (2) this restoration covers a multitude of the wanderer's sins. James concludes his letter by emphasising the mutual correction in the community for the individual believer to continue in the life of faith. James also explains biblical perfection as the goal of faith. Though members of the Christian community should strive for perfection, whole-hearted commitment to God, and loving others, James shows that they can sometimes fail to accomplish that goal. The perfection that James encourages is involved with growing in the knowledge of the truth and a moral life.

Throughout the letter, James teaches what the appropriate works of the faith is in specific situations, viz. behaving according to the knowledge of the truth in various situations.

The *situations* described in Jas. 4:13-5:20 are the following: (1) in business plans (4:13-17); (2) in having wealth of possession (5:1-6); (3) in economic difficulties and oppression (5:7-12); (4) in suffering, especially sickness (5:13-18); (5) in someone's wandering from the way of truth (5:19-20).

The knowledge on the basis of which James provides exhortations are the following: (1) there is the basic and common knowledge that James assumes they know already, e.g. the brevity of human life, the providence of God, the coming of Jesus, the eschatological judgment and reversal, God as

the generous giver, the loyal law of love, those who live in justice and generosity are blessed by the Lord of hosts, Jesus' healing; (2) there is the advanced knowledge that James assumes they do not know yet or misunderstood: the omission of doing what is known to be right is a crucial sin, and those who live in self-indulgence will be punished seriously by God, "let him know that ..." (5:20).

The works of faith are the following: (1) a humble attitude and remaining aware of the providence of God and saying, "if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that" (4:13-16); (2) making profit by the right means and practising sharing possessions with the needy (5:1-6); (3) endurance and appropriate speech (5:7-12); (4) prayer individually and mutually (5:13-18); (5) mutual correction (5:19-20).

We observed that the true faith is not just intellectual assent but must be a response to every context of life in accordance with the knowledge of the truth. There is common basic knowledge that every believer knows already (like the providence of God and eschatological judgement), but faith must grow in the knowledge of God. The works produced from the faith must touch the believer's thinking, speaking, and acting in every moment. The level of works must become mature in confidence of the judgement of God with praying to God.

In short, we can conclude that the faith in James means "the wholehearted commitment" to the word of truth from Jesus and the guidance of God. For James the saving faith directs us toward God, but the faith is absolutely connected to Jesus. James argues that the nature of faith is to trust in God and live in reliance on Him with prayer and acting according to his word, as revealed through the life and sayings of Jesus.<sup>113</sup> We can tell therefore that the believers are those who were born by believing the word of truth, and those who are living according to the life of Jesus (2:1), the word of Jesus, and the will of God. Faith depends first on the message of truth and the knowledge of God. Faith will be tested in various trials and circumstances but true believers endure and strive for perfection, with confidence in eschatological judgement and rewards, praying to God for help. Faith must become mature in doing the word/law/wisdom and in knowing God, while praying to God in faith.

What is the nature of faith? For James it is the confidence in the message of truth and the right attitude of wholehearted commitment to the word of Jesus and the will of God. The true faith then

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<sup>113</sup> See "4.1.2 The usages of πίστις ("faith") and πιστεύω ("believe") in James" (ps. 148-150) for the meaning of the faith of Jesus.

has a disposition or a direction toward becoming mature in knowledge of the truth and in thinking, speaking, and acting.

How does the faith produce works of the faith? James argues that as a manifestation of confidence and the attitude of wholehearted commitment to the word of Jesus and the will of God, faith is involved very closely with the knowledge of God revealed through Jesus, e.g. about who God is, what the word of truth is from Jesus, and what the will of God is. Since faith is the wholehearted commitment to the knowledge of truth through Jesus, faith naturally produces appropriate responses to various situations, in accordance with the knowledge of the truth. When believers are planning for the future, they should consider the providence of God and say, “if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that” (4:15) because the believers know that our future is not in our hands but determined by God and that every good and perfect gift that we receive comes from the hand of God (1:17). When the believers have a wealth of possessions, their confidence in the *knowledge* about the blessed life of those who exercise generosity and the punishment of those who live in self-indulgence at the eschatological judgement by God naturally encourages works of helping the needy. When the faithful believers are suffering from the economic exploitation by the rich, they do not strike back in violence, but remain patient without grumbling, because they believe that the Sovereign Lord will help them and punish the wicked rich. Their endurance is an act of faith because it is impossible to be patient in a situation of oppression without commitment to the knowledge about the providence of God and the Lord’s imminent judgement. When the believers are sick in a situation of a poor health care system, owing to scarcity of resources, high prices, and uncertainty about the quality of drugs and doctors, the faith in the *knowledge* that God responds to the prayer of the faithful and that Jesus healed the sick in response to faith (Mt. 9:28–29; Mk. 2:5, Lk. 17:19; Acts 3:16) leads the believers to ask God to help. For James faith inevitably produces prayer on the basis of the knowledge of God. When someone in the community is straying from the way of truth, James encourages the believers to turn the wanderer back as a proper response of the believers who are following the teaching of Jesus, because the sinner is saved from eternal death, and this restoration covers a multitude of the wanderer’s sins. James emphasises the mutual correction in the community, for the individual believer to continue in the life of faith and to achieve the perfection that is the goal of faith. Though members of the Christian community should strive for perfection, whole-hearted commitment to God, and loving others, James shows that they can sometimes fail to accomplish that goal. The perfection that James encourages is not perfectionism, but involves growing in the knowledge of the truth and a moral life. The nature of faith drives the believer to grow in knowledge of the truth and in proper thinking, speaking, and acting from love, with confidence of the eschatological judgement and with praying to God.

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