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“This outstanding volume opens up the Letter of James for students and pastors who have some knowledge of Greek. It features clear organization, concise wording, copious bibliographies, and comprehensive coverage of many exegetical questions. Both *what* Vlachos writes and *how* he goes about his labor will inform readers and make them better exegetes. If you want to know what scholars make of James, buy their commentaries. If you want to be equipped to learn what *you* should make of James based on the Greek text, buy this book.”

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JAMES

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Chris A. Vlachos

FOREWORD BY DOUGLAS J. MOO



EXEGETICAL
GUIDE TO THE
GREEK
NEW
TESTAMENT

JAMES

Murray J. Harris

Andreas J. Köstenberger

GENERAL EDITORS



Nashville, Tennessee

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*To my students at
Wheaton College, Illinois*





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Foreword

I consider it a great honor to write this foreword to Chris Vlachos's commentary on James. Murray Harris, the initiator and editor of the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series, is a mentor, former colleague, and friend. His passion for careful analysis of the Greek text as the necessary foundation for any faithful reading or teaching of the NT has been a guiding principle in my own writing and teaching. I hope this developing series will find its place on the shelves of every serious teacher and preacher of the Word.

Chris Vlachos is another upon whom Murray Harris has stamped his imprint. As this commentary reveals, Chris is also committed to that fine tradition of biblical interpretation that finds its heart and soul in detailed interaction with the original text. He begins with description, providing for those of us who might no longer recognize all the Greek word forms at sight the basic information without which serious exegesis cannot proceed. Chris's summary of syntactical and lexical issues in the Greek text of James provides us with an invaluable map of exegetical options. By adding references to key grammars and commentaries as well as to English translations, he also gives us perspective, pointing out which roads on this exegetical map have borne the heaviest traffic. This EGGNT volume therefore compactly collects information students of the letter of James would otherwise have to search for in dozens of other volumes.

But this commentary on James does more than simply collect information. A commentary must make judgments; and what distinguishes excellent commentaries is sound judgment. Of course, I do not agree with all the exegetical judgments Chris makes in this commentary. But I agree with the vast majority of them; and, even when I disagree, I can understand why Chris goes a different direction. This commentary provides the student of James with reliable guidance about the meaning and significance of this neglected yet important NT letter.

As I write this foreword, I am strongly conscious of occupying a middle position in a chain of tradition. Even as I look back with appreciation at one of my own key mentors, I look forward with pleasure and gratification to one I have had the honor of mentoring. Chris Vlachos wrote both his master's thesis and doctoral dissertation under my guidance. I have had the privilege of watching him blossom as a scholar and,

now also, a teacher here at Wheaton College. This commentary beautifully blends his academic expertise with his didactic abilities and heart. I commend it to the church.

Douglas J. Moo
Kenneth T. Wessner Chair of Biblical Studies
Wheaton College

Publisher's Preface

It is with great excitement that we publish this volume of the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series. When the founding editor, Dr. Murray J. Harris, came to us seeking a new publishing partner, we gratefully accepted the offer. With the help of the co-editor, Andreas J. Köstenberger, we spent several years working together to acquire all of the authors we needed to complete the series. By God's grace we succeeded and contracted the last author in 2011. Originally working with another publishing house, Murray's efforts spanned more than twenty years. As God would have it, shortly after the final author was contracted, Murray decided God wanted him to withdraw as co-editor of the series. God made it clear to him that he must devote his full attention to taking care of his wife, Jennifer, who faces the daily challenges caused by Multiple Sclerosis.

Over the course of many years God has used Murray to teach his students how to properly exegete the Scriptures. He is an exceptional scholar and professor. But even more important, Murray is a man dedicated to serving Christ. His greatest joy is to respond in faithful obedience when his master calls. "There can be no higher and more ennobling privilege than to have the Lord of the universe as one's Owner and Master and to be his accredited representative on earth."¹ Murray has once again heeded the call of his master.

It is our privilege to dedicate the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series to Dr. Murray J. Harris. We pray that our readers will continue the work that he started.

B&H Academic

1. Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999), 155.

Acknowledgments

When Jeffrey Greenman, Associate Dean of Biblical and Theological Studies at Wheaton College, asked me some years ago if there were any New Testament books that I would be interested in teaching, I replied that there were and that the book of James topped my list. Speech ethics, discrimination, authenticity, and justice are among the topics in James to which college students are particularly drawn, and while today's youthful visionaries often become tomorrow's status quo, I knew that introducing students to James would provide them with a source that would keep them on the cutting edge of discipleship beyond their college years. We offered a class on James and were not surprised by the turnout. Each year the class continues to be full, and graduates, many now married and in various vocations, write to say that James continues to challenge them.

This EGGNT volume contains insights of my own and others into the Greek text of James, much of which informed and provided the substructure of my lectures. It is the text of Scripture that changes lives, and by careful exegesis and exposition of the text, its life-changing message can be heard. I hope the present work will be helpful to those who, like myself, seek to explore and unfold the message of James to listeners eager to make a mark in their world.

I am indebted to Douglas Moo, who initiated my involvement in the EGGNT series. Thanks are due to Chee-Chiew Lee and Dane Ortlund for their research assistance while they were doctoral students at Wheaton College; my students Steven Dunkel and Gavin Lymberopoulos for their bibliographical help and homiletical suggestions; and Rachel Rossiter, Alex de Sosa Kinzer, and Blanche Montesi, my TAs, who held down the fort while I gave myself to this project. But my greatest expression of appreciation is reserved for Jeffrey Greenman, who provided me with the opportunity to teach James. I thank him, and so do the students and graduates who continue to be challenged by its message.

Chris A. Vlachos
Wheaton College, Fall 2012

General Introduction to the EGGNT Series

Studying the New Testament in the original Greek has become easier in recent years. Beginning students will work their way through an introductory grammar or other text, but then what? Grappling with difficult verb forms, rare vocabulary, and grammatical irregularities remains a formidable task for those who would advance beyond the initial stages of learning Greek to master the interpretive process. Intermediate grammars and grammatical analyses can help, but such tools, for all their value, still often operate at a distance from the Greek text itself, and analyses are often too brief to be genuinely helpful.

The Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (EGGNT) aims to close the gap between the Greek text and the available tools. Each EGGNT volume aims to provide all the necessary information for understanding of the Greek text and, in addition, includes homiletical helps and suggestions for further study. The EGGNT is not a full-scale commentary. But these guides will make interpreting a given New Testament book easier, in particular for those who are hard-pressed for time and yet want to preach or teach with accuracy and authority.

In terms of layout, each volume begins with a brief introduction to the particular book (including such matters as authorship, date, etc.), a basic outline, and a list of recommended commentaries. At the end of each volume, you will find a comprehensive exegetical outline of the book. The body of each volume is devoted to paragraph-by-paragraph exegesis of the text. The treatment of each paragraph includes:

1. The Greek text of the passage, phrase-by-phrase, from the fourth edition of the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* (UBS⁴). In the present volume on James, five textual changes (1:20; 2:3, 4, 15; 4:10) from the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, twenty-eighth revised edition, © 2012 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart (NA²⁸) are noted that will also be adopted in the fifth revised edition of the UBS text (forthcoming, 2013).
2. A structural analysis of the passage.
3. A discussion of each phrase of the passage with discussion of relevant vocabulary, significant textual variants, and detailed grammatical analysis, including

parsing. When more than one solution is given for a particular exegetical issue, the author's own preference, reflected in the translation and expanded paraphrase, is indicated by an asterisk (*). When no preference is expressed, the options are judged to be evenly balanced, or it is assumed that the text is intentionally ambiguous. When a particular verb form may be parsed in more than one way, only the parsing appropriate in the specific context is supplied; but where there is difference of opinion among grammarians or commentators, both possibilities are given and the matter is discussed.

4. Various translations of significant words or phrases.
5. A list of suggested topics for further study with bibliography for each topic. An asterisk (*) in one of the "For Further Study" bibliographies draws attention to a discussion of the particular topic that is recommended as a useful introduction to the issues involved.
6. Homiletical suggestions designed to help the preacher or teacher move from the Greek text to a sermon outline that reflects careful exegesis. The first suggestion for a particular paragraph of the text is always more exegetical than homiletical and consists of an outline of the entire paragraph. These detailed outlines of each paragraph build on the general outline proposed for the whole book and, if placed side by side, form a comprehensive exegetical outline of the book. All outlines are intended to serve as a basis for sermon preparation and should be adapted to the needs of a particular audience.¹

The EGGNT volumes will serve a variety of readers. Those reading the Greek text for the first time may be content with the assistance with vocabulary, parsing, and translation. Readers with some experience in Greek may want to skip or skim these sections and focus attention on the discussions of grammar. More advanced students may choose to pursue the topics and references to technical works under "For Further Study," while pastors may be more interested in the movement from grammatical analysis to sermon outline. Teachers may appreciate having a resource that frees them to focus on exegetical details and theological matters.

The editors are pleased to present you with the individual installments of the EGGNT. We are grateful for each of the contributors who has labored long and hard over each phrase in the Greek New Testament. Together we share the conviction that "all Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness" (2 Tim 3:16, HCSB) and echo Paul's words to Timothy: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15, HCSB).

1. As a Bible publisher, B&H Publishing follows the "Colorado Springs Guidelines for Translation of Gender-Related Language in Scripture." As an academic book publisher, B&H Academic asks that authors conform their manuscripts (including EGGNT exegetical outlines in English) to the B&H Academic style guide, which affirms the use of singular "he/his/him" as generic examples encompassing both genders. However, in their discussion of the Greek text, EGGNT authors have the freedom to analyze the text and reach their own conclusions regarding whether specific Greek words are gender-specific or gender-inclusive.

Abbreviations

For abbreviations used in discussion of text critical matters, the reader should refer to the abbreviations listed in the Introduction to the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*.

- * indicates the reading of the original hand of a manuscript as opposed to subsequent correctors of the manuscript, *or* indicates the writer's own preference when more than one solution is given for a particular exegetical problem, *or* in the "For Further Study" bibliographies, indicates a discussion of the particular topic that is recommended as a useful introduction to the issues involved
- §, §§ paragraph, paragraphs

Books of the Old Testament

Gen	Genesis	Song	Song of Songs	(Canticles)
Exod	Exodus	Isa	Isaiah	
Lev	Leviticus	Jer	Jeremiah	
Num	Numbers	Lam	Lamentations	
Deut	Deuteronomy	Ezek	Ezekiel	
Josh	Joshua	Dan	Daniel	
Judg	Judges	Hos	Hosea	
Ruth	Ruth	Joel	Joel	
1-2 Sam	1-2 Samuel	Amos	Amos	
1-2 Kgs	1-2 Kings	Obad	Obadiah	
1-2 Chr	1-2 Chronicles	Jonah	Jonah	
Ezra	Ezra	Mic	Micah	
Neh	Nehemiah	Nah	Nahum	
Esth	Esther	Hab	Habakkuk	
Job	Job	Zeph	Zephaniah	
Ps(s)	Psalm(s)	Hag	Haggai	
Prov	Proverbs	Zech	Zechariah	
Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mal	Malachi	

Books of the New Testament

Matt	Matthew	1–2 Thess	1–2 Thessalonians
Mark	Mark	1–2 Tim	1–2 Timothy
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Phlm	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb	Hebrews
Rom	Romans	Jas	James
1–2 Cor	1–2 Corinthians	1–2 Pet	1–2 Peter
Gal	Galatians	1–3 John	1–3 John
Eph	Ephesians	Jude	Jude
Phil	Philippians	Rev	Revelation
Col	Colossians		

General Abbreviations

<i>ABD</i>	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , 6 vols., ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
abs.	absolute(ly)
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
acc.	accusative
act.	active (voice)
Adamson	James B. Adamson, <i>The Epistle of James</i> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976)
adj.	adjective, adjectival(ly)
adv.	adverb, adverbial(ly)
anar.	anarthrous
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> , ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1972–)
aor.	aorist
apod.	apodosis
appos.	apposition, appositive, appositional
Aram.	Aramaic, Aramaism
art.	(definite) article, articular
attrib.	attributive
<i>AUSS</i>	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
Barclay	William Barclay, <i>New Testament Words</i> (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974).
<i>Barn.</i>	<i>Barnabas</i>
Bauckham	Richard A. Bauckham, <i>James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage</i> (London: Routledge, 1999)

BDAG	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , rev. and ed. F. W. Danker (Chicago/London: University of Chicago, 2000), based on W. Bauer's <i>Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch</i> (6th ed.) and on previous English ed. W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker References to BDAG are by page number and quadrant on the page, <i>a</i> indicating the upper half and <i>b</i> the lower half of the left-hand column, and <i>c</i> and <i>d</i> the upper and lower halves of the right-hand column. With the use of dark type, biblical references are now clearly visible within each subsection.
BDF	F. Blass and A. Debrunner, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , tr. and rev. by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961)
BGk.	Biblical Greek (i.e., LXX and NT Greek)
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
Blomberg and Kamell	Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell, <i>James</i> , Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008)
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
Burton	E. de W. Burton, <i>Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek</i> , 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Clark, 1898)
c.	<i>circa</i> (Lat.), about
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CEV	Contemporary English Version (1995)
cf.	<i>confer</i> (Lat.), compare
CGk.	Classical Greek
<i>Colloq</i>	<i>Colloquium</i>
comp.	comparative, comparison
cond.	condition(al)
conj.	conjunctive, conjunction
consec.	consecutive
cstr.	construction, construe(d)
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
dat.	dative
Dauids	Peter H. Dauids, <i>The Epistle of James</i> , New International Greek Text Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982)
<i>DBI</i>	<i>Dictionary of Biblical Imagery</i> , ed. Leland Ryken, James Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998)
decl.	declension, decline

Deissmann	G. A. Deissmann, <i>Bible Studies</i> , tr. A. Grieve (Edinburgh: Clark, 1901; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988)
def.	definite
dep.	deponent
Dibelius-Greeven	Martin Dibelius, <i>James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James</i> , rev. Heinrich Greeven; tr. Michael A. Williams, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976)
dir.	direct
<i>DJG</i>	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> , ed. J. B. Green, S. McKnight, and I. H. Marshall (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992)
<i>DLNT</i>	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments</i> , ed. R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997)
<i>DNTB</i>	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> , ed. C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (Leicester/Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000)
<i>DOTWPW</i>	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings</i> , ed. T. Longman III and P. Enns (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008)
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> , ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993)
<i>DTIB</i>	<i>Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible</i> , ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005)
ed(s).	edited, edition(s), editor(s)
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , 3 vols., ed. H. Balz and G. Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–93)
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (Lat.), for example
Eng.	English
epex.	epexegetic
esp.	especially
ESV	English Standard Version (2001)
ET	English translation
et al.	<i>et alii</i> (Lat.), and others
etym.	etymology, etymologically
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
EVV	English versions of the Bible
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
f(f).	and the following (verse[s]) or page[s])
Fanning	Buist Fanning, <i>Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)
fem.	feminine
fig.	figurative(ly)

fut.	future
gen.	genitive
Gk.	Greek
GNB	Good News Bible (1976)
<i>GTJ</i>	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
Greenlee	J. Harold Greenlee, <i>An Exegetical Summary of James</i> , 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL, 2008)
Harris	M. J. Harris, "Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament," <i>NIDNTT</i> 3.1171–1215
Hart	George and Helen Hart, <i>A Semantic Analysis and Structural Analysis of James</i> (Dallas: SIL, 2001)
Hartin	Patrick J. Hartin, <i>James</i> , Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003)
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible (1999)
<i>HE</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica (History of the Church)</i>
Heb.	Hebrew, Hebraism, Hebraic
HGk.	Hellenistic Greek
Hort	F. J. A. Hort, <i>The Epistle of James: The Greek Text with Introduction, Commentary as far as Chapter IV, Verse 7, and Additional Notes</i> (London: Macmillan, 1909)
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Studies</i>
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (Lat.), in the same place
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (Lat.), that is
impers.	impersonal
impf.	imperfect (tense)
impv.	imperative (mood), imperatival(ly)
incl.	including, inclusive
indecl.	indeclinable
indef.	indefinite
indic.	indicative (mood)
indir.	indirect
inf.	infinitive
instr.	instrument, instrumental(ly)
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
interr.	interrogative
intrans.	intransitive
iter.	iterative
JB	Jerusalem Bible (1976)
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>

Johnson	Luke Timothy Johnson, <i>The Letter of James</i> , Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1995).
<i>JOTT</i>	<i>Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>JTSA</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
KJV	King James Version (= "Authorized Version") (1611)
Laws	Sophie Laws, <i>Commentary on the Epistle of James</i> , Black's New Testament Commentary (London: Black, 1980).
<i>LB</i>	<i>Linguistica Biblica</i>
lit.	literal(ly)
LN	J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, Vol. I: Introduction and Domains</i> (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988)
locat.	locative, locatival(ly)
<i>LS</i>	<i>Louvain Studies</i>
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , rev. and augmented H. S. Jones et al., 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940); <i>Supplement</i> , ed. E. A. Barber et al. (1968)
<i>LTJ</i>	<i>Lutheran Theological Journal</i>
LXX	Septuagint (= Greek Old Testament)
Macc	Maccabees
Martin	Ralph P. Martin, <i>James</i> , Word Biblical Commentary 48 (Waco, TX: Word, 1988)
masc.	masculine
Mayor	J. B. Mayor, <i>The Epistle of St. James</i> (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954; [1913])
McCartney	Dan G. McCartney, <i>James</i> , Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009)
McKnight	Scot McKnight, <i>The Letter of James</i> , New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011)
Metzger	B. M. Metzger, <i>A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament</i> (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/New York: United Bible Societies, 1994)
mg.	margin
MH	J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard, <i>Accidence and Word-Formation</i> , vol. 2 of <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> , ed. J. H. Moulton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1939)
mid.	middle

MM	J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources</i> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972, reprint of 1930 ed.)
mng.	meaning
Moo	Douglas J. Moo, <i>James</i> , Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000)
Motyer	J. Alec Motyer, <i>The Message of James</i> (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1985)
Moule	C. F. D. Moule, <i>An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek</i> , 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1960)
Moulton	J. H. Moulton, <i>Prolegomena</i> . vol. 1 of <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> , ed. J. H. Moulton (Edinburgh: Clark, 1908 ³)
mng.	meaning
ms(s).	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
n.	note
NAB ¹	New American Bible (1970)
NABRE	New American Bible Revised Edition (2011)
NASB ¹	New American Standard Bible (1971)
NASB ²	New American Standard Bible (1995)
NCV	New Century Version
<i>NDBT</i>	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i> , ed. T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000)
NEB	New English Bible (1970)
neg.	negative, negation
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NET	New English Translation Bible (2005)
neut.	neuter
<i>NewDocs</i>	<i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity</i> , ed. G. H. R. Horsley and S. Llewelyn (North Ryde, N.S.W., Australia: Macquarie University, 1981—); cited by volume
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> , 3 vols., ed. C. Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–78)
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> , 5 vols, ed. W. A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997)
NIV ¹	New International Version (1984)
NIV ²	New International Version (2011)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
NLT	New Living Translation of the Bible (1996)
nom.	nominative
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1990)

NT	New Testament
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
obj.	object(ive)
Omanson	<i>A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament</i> (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006)
orig.	origin, original(ly)
OT	Old Testament
p(p).	page(s)
<i>pace</i>	(from Lat. <i>pax</i> , peace) (in stating a contrary opinion) with all due respect to (the person named)
pass.	passive
periph.	periphrastic
pers.	person(al)
pf.	perfect
pl.	plural
Porter	S. E. Porter, <i>Idioms of the Greek New Testament</i> (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992)
poss.	possessive, possession
pred.	predicate, predicative
pref.	prefix
prep.	preposition(al)
<i>Presb</i>	<i>Presbyterion</i>
pres.	present
<i>PTR</i>	<i>Princeton Theological Review</i>
pron.	pronoun, pronominal
prot.	protasis
ptc.	participle, participial(ly)
R	A. T. Robertson, <i>A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research</i> , 4th ed. (Nashville: Broadman, 1934)
rdg(s).	(textual) reading(s)
REB	Revised English Bible (1990)
ref.	reference
refl.	reflexive
Reicke	Bo I. Reicke, <i>James</i> , Anchor Bible 37 (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1964)
rel.	relative
rev.	revised, reviser, revision
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
Robertson, <i>Pictures</i>	A. T. Robertson, <i>Word Pictures in the New Testament</i> , 6 vols. (Nashville: Broadman, 1930–33)

Ropes	J. H. Ropes, <i>A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James</i> , International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1916)
RSV	Revised Standard Version (1952)
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
<i>Scr</i>	<i>Scripture</i> [journal]
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
Sem.	Semitic, Semitism
sg.	singular
sim.	similar(ly)
Sir	Sirac/Ecclesiasticus
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
Spicq	C. Spicq, <i>Theological Lexicon of the New Testament</i> , 3 vols., tr. and ed. J. D. Ernest (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994)
<i>STJ</i>	<i>Stulos Theological Journal</i>
subj.	subject(ive)
subjunc.	subjunctive
subord.	subordinate, subordination
subst.	substantive, substantial
suf.	suffix
superl.	superlative
<i>SwJT</i>	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
T	N. Turner, <i>Syntax</i> , vol. 3 of J. H. Moulton, <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963)
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Bible Today</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , 10 vols., ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, tr. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–74)
<i>TE</i>	<i>Theological Education</i>
temp.	temporal(ly)
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TNIV	Today's New International Version (2001)
tr.	translate(d), translator, translation(s)
trans.	transitive
Trench	Richard C. Trench, <i>Synonyms of the Greek New Testament</i> (London: Macmillan, 1876; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975)
<i>TTE</i>	<i>The Theological Educator</i>
Turner, <i>Insights</i>	N. Turner, <i>Grammatical Insights into the New Testament</i> (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1965)

Turner, <i>Style</i>	N. Turner, <i>Style</i> , vol. 4 of <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i> , ed. J. H. Moulton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976)
Turner, <i>Words TynBul</i>	N. Turner, <i>Christian Words</i> (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980) <i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UBS/UBS ⁴	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> , ed. B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, and B. M. Metzger, 4th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; New York: United Bible Societies, 1993); 1st ed. 1966 (= UBS ¹); 2nd ed. 1968 (= UBS ²); 3rd ed. 1975 (= UBS ³)
v(v).	verse(s)
var.	variant (form or reading)
vb.	verb
VE	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> (Lat.), namely
voc.	vocative
vol(s).	volume(s)
Wallace	Daniel B. Wallace, <i>Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament</i> (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996)
Winer	George Benedict Winer, <i>A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament: Prepared as a Solid Basis for the Interpretation of the New Testament</i> , ed. Gottlieb Lünemann, 7th ed. (Andover: Draper, 1872)
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WW	<i>Word and World</i>
Z	M. Zerwick, <i>Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples</i> , tr. J. Smith (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963)
ZG	M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, <i>A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament</i> , 5th rev. ed. (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1996)
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

JAMES



Introduction

AUTHORSHIP

The author identifies himself simply as “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1), the lack of elaboration suggesting that he was well-known to the community to which he writes. If we examine the NT for his identity, we find five people named James:

1. James the son of Zebedee brother of John, one of the twelve apostles (Mark 1:19; 5:37)
2. James the son of Alphaeus, also one of the twelve (Mark 3:18; Acts 1:13)
3. James “the Younger” (Mark 15:40; Luke 24:10 = son of Alphaeus?)
4. James the father of Judas, not Iscariot (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13)
5. James the Lord’s brother and leader of the early church (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3; 1 Cor 15:7; Gal 1:19; 2:9, 12; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Jude 1:1)

There is no evidence in Acts that the first James mentioned above had the authoritative influence to issue an encyclical of this tone, and he was, in any case, martyred in AD 44 (cf. Acts 12:2), likely too early to have authored the letter, especially if it is responding to Paul’s doctrine of justification or a garbled form of it, since Paul before this date had not yet begun his missionary journeys. Of the remaining, the most likely candidate is the last, since only this James would have been well enough known to have required no identification beyond his mere name in the letter’s greeting (or in Acts and Jude for that matter). He was a leader, if not *the* leader, of the Jerusalem church. Thus when Peter was released from prison, he asks that word be sent “to James and the brethren” (Acts 12:17). Later at the Jerusalem Council, James is the one who brings the discussion to a close and renders the final decision (Acts 15:12–21). When Paul arrives in Jerusalem after his third missionary journey, he reports to James (Acts 21:18). His lead position also appears in the order in which Paul lists the “pillars” of the church in Jerusalem: “James, Cephas, and John” (Gal 2:9, 12), an order that would later appear in the canonical arrangement of the general epistles. Additional evidence that points to this James includes:

1. The relationship that evidently existed between the author and the community to which he writes and the authority that he assumes in addressing them
2. The Jewish “dialect” in the letter (see, e.g., 1:1, 8, 11, 22, 23, 2:1, 7, 9, 13, 16; 3:13; 4:7, 11; 5:3, 17)
3. The similarities between the language in the letter and the speech of James and the councilial letter in Acts 15:13–29 (see below on 1:1, 16, 27; 2:5, 7; 5:10, 19)
4. Social, economic, agricultural, and climatic references that are consistent with a Palestinian provenance (cf., e.g., 2:5–7; 3:12; 4:13–17; 5:1–7)
5. Early church tradition that generally, though not unanimously, supports this identification (see Eusebius *HE* 3.25.3; 2.23.25)
6. Indications of an early composition of the letter (see below on Date)

Some scholars, however, contend that the author *poses* as James the Lord’s brother but cannot, in fact, *be* that James (see, e.g., Dibelius-Greeven 11–21; Ropes 43–52). They argue that

1. The Greek is too refined and the rhetorical style too Hellenistic for an Aramaic-speaking Jew from Galilee (see below, e.g., on 1:17)
2. A dialogue with Paul’s doctrine of justification suggests a date later than AD 62, the year in which James was executed
3. The dietary and cultic concerns that appear in Acts 15 are absent from the letter
4. The “Judaistic” James of Gal 2:12 and tradition could not be the James of the letter who reveals no concern for ritualistic purity
5. There are only two direct references to Jesus
6. The author never, in fact, identifies himself as Jesus’ brother

These concerns are not definitive, however, for they begin with the assumption that a pseudonymous letter would have been accepted as authoritative in the ancient world. Studies are challenging this premise (see, e.g., Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, *Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie* 22 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986]; Terry L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004]).

In regard to the language and rhetorical style of the letter, Greek was widely spoken in Galilee, and Hellenistic influences were ever present there. There is no compelling reason to assume the Greek of the letter is “too schooled” (Turner, *Style*, 114) to have been composed by James the Lord’s brother, especially if he was assisted by an amanuensis (see J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* [Leiden: Brill, 1968], esp. 3–21, 119–23, in S. E. Porter, ed., *The Language of the New Testament: Classical Essays*, JSNTSup 60 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], 126–52, 174–90, 191–226).

As for the relation between James and Paul, it is possible that James is not responding directly to Paul but to an early and perverted form of his doctrine (cf. Rom 3:5–8; 6:1–2; see D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005], 625–26). Or James could be responding to issues entirely independent of Paul (see Richard Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James*,

Disciple of Jesus the Sage [London: Routledge, 1999], 127–31). Indeed, James may not even be using *δικαίω* (“justify”) in the Pauline sense (see section on 2:21).

Concerning Acts 15, it is certainly reasonable to expect that James would have addressed the Gentile controversy, especially when some of his readers likely resided in or near Antioch (see below on Occasion and Purpose). However, it is possible, if not likely, that the letter predates the controversy (see section on Date).

Regarding the “Judaistic” James, ritual law may not have been an issue in the community to which James writes, not to mention that Gal 2:12 does not state that James aligned himself with the legalists (in fact, he did not; cf. Acts 15:24), nor can we be certain that the accounts of James’s cultic piety are history rather than legend (see R. B. Ward below in For Further Study § 2).

As for there being only two direct references to Jesus (1:1; 2:1), the letter abounds in allusions to the Sermon on the Mount (see, e.g., 1:2, 4, 5, 8; 2:5, 10; 3:1, 12, 18; 4:2–3; 5:10, 12), and the letter contains numerous similarities to Q, a hypothetical source of Jesus’ sayings likely used by Matthew and Luke (see McKnight 26). James may not cite or quote Jesus, but he makes Jesus’ teaching his own throughout (see Martin lxxv–lxxvi; Mayor iii–iv).

Finally, while the letter does not mention James’s relation to Jesus, neither does Acts, the spirit being thicker than blood (cf. Mark 3:33–35; see Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990], 125–30). And the fact that the letter does not mention a relationship virtually undermines the assumption of pseudonymity, since a later author who was posing as James the Lord’s brother would likely have identified himself as such.

DATE

Those who deem the letter pseudonymous usually date it toward the end of the first or beginning of the second century (see, e.g., Werner G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, tr. Howard Clark Kee, rev. ed. [London: SCM, 1975], 414). If James the brother of Jesus composed the letter, the *terminus ad quem* date would be AD 62, the year of his martyrdom (see Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.9.1 [197–203]). Some date it near this date (see, e.g., Hort xxv), primarily, they argue, because

1. The discussion of justification in the letter suggests a knowledge of Paul’s developed doctrine
2. The worldly behavior described in the letter suggests a second generation of Christians (cf. 1:19–27; 4:1–10)

Neither reason is convincing, however, since the former need not be assumed (see section on Authorship) and the latter naïvely assumes that first-generation believers could not be as readily prone to sin as later generations (see Moo 25). Other scholars who consider James to be the author date it in the mid-to-late 40s, which would make it, perhaps, the earliest New Testament book (see, e.g., Mayor cxxi–cliii; Johnson 111–21). The following points argue for an early date:

1. The absence of any reference to the Gentile situation, which precipitated the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 (c. AD 48)
2. The distinctively Jewish nature of the letter (cf., e.g. 1:1; 2:2, 8–13, 19, 21, 25; 4:4; 5:4, 17)
3. The simplicity of church organization—“teachers” (3:1) and “elders” (5:14)
4. The relative simplicity of doctrine, including the lack of explicit Christology
5. An affinity to the teachings of Jesus closer than that of any other letter
6. The apparent use of pre-synoptic Jesus traditions (see below For Further Study § 65)

OCCASION AND PURPOSE

If the letter is pseudonymous, any number of occasions for its writing could be postulated. If we assume James the Lord’s brother composed the letter, it was probably written from Jerusalem during his tenure there as the leader of the church. Based on the explicit reference to faith in Christ in 2:1, James was addressing Christians, and the manner of address, “to the twelve tribes in the dispersion” (1:1), as well as the Jewishness of the letter almost certainly indicate that these Christians were Jews. Furthermore, if the letter is an early composition and the term “dispersion” (διασπορά) is taken literally, the recipients were probably among the rank-and-file believers in Acts 8:1 that were driven out of Jerusalem by their persecutors and eventually scattered (διασπείρω) as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (Acts 11:19–21). The oppressed and poverty stricken condition of James’s readers fits such a diaspora existence well (cf., e.g., 1:2–4, 12; 2:6–7; 5:4–11; see E. Tamez, *The Scandalous Message of James: Faith Without Works Is Dead* [New York: Crossroad, 1990], 23–24). This in turn would likely explain the circumstances that precipitated the letter and the purpose for which it was written: James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem writes, as it were, an “encyclical” or “diaspora letter” (Jer 29:1–23) to his oppressed and displaced flock in order to encourage, instruct, and admonish them (see Donald J. Verseput, “Genre and Story: The Community Setting of the Epistle of James,” *CBQ* 62 [2000]: 96–110).

OUTLINE

- I. Address and Greeting (1:1)
- II. The Testing of Faith (1:2–18)
 - A. Trials in Perspective (1:2–4)
 - B. Praying for Perspective (1:5–8)
 - C. Ups and Downs in Perspective (1:9–11)
 - D. Perseverance and the Crown (1:12)
 - E. Hooked by One’s Own Bait (1:13–18)
- III. The Evidence of Genuine Faith: Deeds of Love (1:19–2:26)
 - A. Open Ears and Measured Speech (1:19–20)
 - B. Hearers and Doers of the Word (1:21–27)
 - C. Discrimination Against the Poor (2:1–7)

- D. Partiality and the Golden Rule (2:8–13)
- E. The Inadequacy of a Faith Without Works (2:14–17)
- F. Justified by Works (2:18–26)
- IV. Warnings Against Pride and Arrogance (3:1–4:12)
 - A. The Taming of the Tongue (3:1–12)
 - B. Wisdom’s Peaceful Disposition (3:13–18)
 - C. Ungratified Desires and Church Conflict (4:1–3)
 - D. Spiritual Adultery (4:4–6)
 - E. Submission to God (4:7–10)
 - F. Defamation and Judgmentalism (4:11–12)
- V. Living in Light of Eternity (4:13–5:11)
 - A. Making Plans and the Will of God (4:13–17)
 - B. The Woes of Wealth (5:1–6)
 - C. Persecution and the Parousia (5:7–11)
- VI. Concluding Exhortations (5:12–20)
 - A. Oaths and Truth-Telling (5:12)
 - B. Prayer for All Seasons (5:13–18)
 - C. An Alarm to Action (5:19–20)

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

Throughout this volume of the EGGNT, references for the most part are made to five specialized commentaries on James, written in or translated into English and based directly on the Greek text. They are:

- Davids, Peter H. *The Epistle of James*. New International Greek New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Dibelius, Martin. *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*. Hermenia. Revised by Heinrich Greeven. Translated by Michael A. Williams. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.
- Martin, Ralph P. *James*. Word Biblical Commentary. Nashville: Nelson, 1988.
- Mayor, Joseph B. *The Epistle of St. James: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, Comments, and Further Studies in the Epistle of James*. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1913; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990.
- Ropes, J. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1916.

Davids provides, perhaps, the best balance of scholarship and accessibility. Proposing that the letter is a collection of homilies and axioms written in a Jewish milieu in the AD 50–60s, the book is a mixture of insights, quotables, and applications that can be brought directly into the sermon. Martin provides a broader and more sustained analysis of the text and a much wider survey of current scholarship on James. The reader might repeatedly stumble, however, on his interpretations and theory that James was addressing zealots and attempting to quell an uprising from among the Christian ranks. Dibelius-Greeven is something of a masterpiece with its exhaustive analyses and excurses. The reader who is unconvinced of the commentary’s ongoing

emphasis that the letter is a later editor's patchwork of ill-fitting units might be tempted to set it aside. It nevertheless provides a valuable comparison of James to other ancient hortatory literature and leaves almost no grammatical questions unaddressed. Mayor is the oldest but is magisterial in its breadth and remains unsurpassed in its analysis of the Greek, survey of the grammar, and listings of classical and Hellenistic parallels. The commentary is a virtual treasure chest to students of the Greek text of James. Ropes might at first be dismissed as nothing more than a concise clone of Mayor. It is not, and for its size it provides the expositor with a significant number of perceptive and quotable gems.

Sometimes when weighing differences of interpretation, references are also made to the following more current commentaries drawing from the Greek text, though written for readers of the English text:

- Blomberg, Craig L., and Mariam J. Kamell. *James*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *James*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1995.
- McCartney, Dan G. *James*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.
- McKnight, Scot. *James*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Moo, Douglas J. *The Letter of James*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

For a comprehensive list of commentaries and bibliography of general literature relating to the background and exegesis of James, see Dibelius-Greeven 263–71; McKnight xix–xxx.

I. Address and Greeting (1:1)

STRUCTURE

The opening verse forms a salutation in typical ancient style: the letter begins with an identification of the sender, a ref. to the recipients, and a greeting. Typical of other NT authors, James elaborates on the first two elements, providing a description of each. The particular term with which he greets his readers, *χαίρω*, root related to the word “joy,” serves as a link word that leads into the body of the letter.

Ἰάκωβος	Author
θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος	Description
ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς	Recipients
ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ	Description
χαίρειν	Greeting

VERSE 1

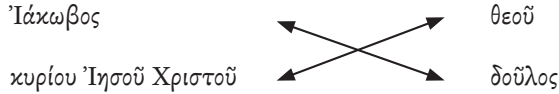
Ἰάκωβος

In first century epistolary salutations the author’s name appears at the letter’s head and in the nom. (nom. abs., R 459). Ἰάκωβος is the Gk. form of the Heb. “Jacob.” The name “James” came into English from the Old French “Gemmes,” a variation of the later Latin “Jacomus,” itself a variant of the early Latin “Jacobus” (see Johnson 93).

θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος

The gens. θεοῦ and κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ are dependent on δοῦλος and express poss. or ownership. The gens. are emphatic, being one of only three places in James where a gen. precedes its governing noun (also in 1:17; 3:3). The gen. Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ stands in appos. to κυρίου. The NT letters usually omit the art. with Χριστός when (as here, with Ἰησοῦς) it is a proper name (see BDF § 260[1]). The use of κύριος in ref. to Christ evidences a high Christology (see also the honorific expression τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης in 2:1; see Bauckham 138–39). It is unlikely, however, that θεός is being applied with κύριος to Ἰησοῦς Χριστός; i.e., “a servant of Jesus Christ who is God

and Lord” (Motyer 27). While divine titles are linked in Jas 1:27; 3:9, the formula θεός καὶ κύριος never occurs in the NT or LXX with ref. to one person, and the appellation κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός is a distinct and fixed formula in the NT (see Harris, *Jesus as God* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008], 266 n. 41). Nevertheless, though Jesus may not be called God, the chiasmic word order associates Jesus with God:



Δοῦλος is in appos. to Ἰάκωβος and is therefore in the same case (see T 206; on appos. in James, see Mayor ccxxiv–xv). The absence of the art. with δοῦλος may stress quality (e.g., James’s subservient status) or indefiniteness, i.e., James does not claim to be the only servant of God and Christ (on the absence of the art. to express these notions, see Moulton 82–83). More likely, the noun is anar. in accordance with the preceding anar. gen. nouns.

ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς

The dat. ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς indicates the recipients to whom the letter was addressed. The vb. γράφω may be implied since it takes the dat. as its indir. obj. Like various other cardinal numbers, δώδεκα, “twelve”—a combination of δύο (two) and δέκα (“ten”)—is indeclinable (on numerals, see R 281–84). Φυλαῖς (dat. pl. of φυλή, -ῆς, ἡ, “tribe”) occurs without such modifiers as πάσαις or τῆς γῆς (as, e.g., in Rev 7:9). This and the absence of any metaphorical clues suggest that the phrase is used ethnically here of Jewish believers (most commentators). A conscious word association by James in 1:1 between his name and Jacob, the patriarch of the 12 tribes of Israel, is possible but unlikely since he depicts himself throughout in a fraternal rather than paternal relationship with his readers.

ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ

The second art. functions as a rel. pron. “that [are]” (on this use of the art., see Winer 133) and combines with the prep. phrase to form a rel. clause modifying ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς. The clause is perhaps best understood as applying to the whole rather than a part; i.e., all the “twelve tribes” mentioned are in the dispersion (Ropes 124; but see Martin 9). For a partitive sense we might have expected ταῖς ἐκ δώδεκα φυλῶν ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ (cf. Rev 7:4).

Διασπορά, -ᾶς, ἡ, “dispersion.” The term had become an almost technical term used of Jews living outside of Israel (e.g., John 7:35; see P. R. Trebilco and C. A. Evans, *DLNT* 287). Some EVV render the phrase ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ in an abstract sense: “scattered among the nations” (NIV²); “who are dispersed abroad” (NASB²). The noun διασπορά, however, is art., which probably indicates that the dispersion mentioned by James is well known (with the exception of nouns followed by a gen. noun or pron. [e.g., 1:9, 27], this is the only instance in James of an art. noun following ἐν). The

phrase in 1:1 may thus be best understood concretely—“in the dispersion” (NRSV). If we accept an early date of composition, it is possible that James is addressing the early Jewish Christian community that had experienced the all but total “dispersion” noted by Luke in Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19 (these three occurrences of the cognate διασπείρω in Acts are the only occurrences of the vb. in the NT).

χαίρειν

The pres. act. inf. χαίρειν (from χαίρω, lit. “rejoice”), only here in NT epistolary salutations but common in the papyri (see *NewDocs* 7.36; 8.127–28), occurs in the Jerusalem Council letter, which may have been drafted by the same James (Acts 15:23; see also Acts 23:26). The inf. can be understood

1. as an impv. in the form of a complementary inf.: “[it is necessary] to rejoice!” (see BDF §§ 389, 480[5]) or
- *2. as an inf. abs.: “Greeting(s)!” (most EVV; see R 394, 1093).

In light of the close proximity of χαίρειν to χαράν (v. 2), the root relationship between the terms, and the evident paronomasia, it is likely that the notion of joy is inherent in χαίρειν and that the term serves as an intentional transition to the body of the letter (Dibelius-Greeven 68). James will make similar word transitions throughout the opening chapter.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. *Ancient Letters (1:1)*

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2. *James, the Brother of Jesus (1:1a)*

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- *Ward, R. B. "James of Jerusalem in the First Two Centuries." *ANRW* 2.26.1 (1992): 799–810.

3. *Slavery and Servitude as Metaphor (1:1a)*

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- Ben Zeev, Miriam Pucci. *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil, 116/117 CE: Ancient Sources and Modern Insights*. Leuven: Peeters, 2005.
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7. *New Testament Benedictions and Greetings (1:1c)*

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HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONS

Introductory Greeting (1:1)

1. The writer: James (v. 1a)
 - a. Identification: James, the brother of the Lord
 - b. Description: a slave of God and Jesus Christ
2. The addressees: The 12 tribes in the diaspora (v. 1b)
 - a. Identification: early Jewish Christians
 - b. Description: persecuted and scattered
3. The greeting: Rejoice! (v. 1c)

The Christian's Identity (1:1)

1. *Who* they are: slaves of God and Jesus Christ (v. 1a)
2. *Where* they are: outside their heavenly home (v. 1b)
3. *What* they are: joyful (v. 1c)

II. The Testing of Faith (1:2–18)

A. TRIALS IN PERSPECTIVE (1:2–4)

STRUCTURE

While most NT writers follow their salutations by expressing appreciation for their readers or by thanking God for his provisions, James, taking a cue from the notion of “joy” embedded in the term *χαίρειν* in v. 1, plunges immediately into exhortation regarding joy. The section contains two impvs., the first of fifty-five occurrences in the letter (assuming ἵστε is an impv. in 1:19)—the highest occurrence per verse of any NT book. The basis for the first exhortation is expressed in the form of a causal clause (v. 3). The second (v. 4), connected to the causal clause by the link words *ὑπομονή* and *τέλειος*, is motivated by a *ἵνα* purpose clause.

VERSE 2

Πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἠγήσασθε

Though the obj. usually follows the impv. in James, the phrase *πᾶσαν χαρὰν* is placed forward for emphasis with the adj., which occupies the first position in the phrase, receiving the most emphasis: “all joy” (see R 776). *Πᾶς* functions here adjectively (see BDAG 783d; *pace* Martin, who considers it adv., “altogether” [12 n. a]). The adj., modifying an anar. noun, may connote

- *1. intensity, i.e., sheer, utter joy (“great,” NLT; “all,” NASB²; “pure,” NIV²; “full, greatest, all,” BDAG 783d; see also BDF § 275[3]) or
2. exclusivity, i.e., no reaction but joy (“nothing but joy,” NRSV).

In favor of connotation (1) is a parallel cstr. in Phil 2:29, where Paul exhorts the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus *μετὰ πάσης χαρᾶς* (i.e., “with great joy”; cf. Rom 15:13). Trials would therefore not be viewed here as occasions for no other emotional response *except* joy, as though grief is never to be experienced or expressed (see 1 Pet 1:6). Trials, rather, would be viewed as occasions for *great* joy (Moo 53).

Ἠγήσαθε is a 2nd pl. aor. mid. impv. of dep. ἡγέομαι, “consider.” With the exception of the pres. ptc. that describes a person in a leading position (ὁ ἡγούμενος), the vb. in the NT always denotes a value judgment. In most of these cases, as here, the vb. means to regard someone or something (as) someone or something: “consider it” joy (BDAG 434b); “count it” joy (ESV). The aor. may view the action

1. specifically, the writer thinking in terms of how his readers are to respond to particular trials when (ὅταν) they occur (Ropes 131),
2. ingressively, the stress being placed on the beginning of the action (“begin to consider,” Wallace 720), or
- *3. constatively, of categorical or urgent action, as is μακροθυμήσατε, be patient, in 5:7, 8 (Mayor 33; on the constative aor. impv., see T 77).

While most major EVV translate the acc. χαράν as an obj. of ἡγέομαι, the noun can be taken in an adv. sense, expressing the joyful manner in which trials should be regarded (e.g., “with joy,” Dibelius-Greeven 69). However, since ἡγέομαι never takes an adv. acc. elsewhere in the NT and often takes a double obj. (cf., e.g., Phil 2:6), χαράν is best understood here as a pred. acc., the ὅταν clause containing what is essentially the primary obj. of the vb. (see BDAG 434b; Ropes 131; for a discussion of the pred. acc., see R 480–82). The double obj. and the perspectival sense of ἡγέομαι suggests that James is not merely calling his readers to rejoice during their tribulations but to *regard* their tribulations as occasions to rejoice: “occasion of joy” (Ropes 131); “a matter of joy” (Martin 14); “ground of rejoicing” (Mayor 33); “an opportunity for great joy” (NLT).

ἀδελφοί μου

A voc. normally follows rather than precedes a 2nd pers. vb., as here (see BDF § 474[6]). Since the voc. is accompanied throughout the letter either by an impv. or a par-aenetic question (cf. 2:14; 3:12), James is likely employing ἀδελφοί μου to strengthen the hortatory appeal (Martin 14). The translation “brothers and sisters” (NIV²) is justified both by the general use of the term to include women as well as men (see BDAG 18c) and contextually here since the inclusion of ἀδελφή in 2:15 indicates that women were included among James’s readership (see Johnson 176).

ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις

This indef. temp. clause is punctuated with a triple alliteration where each word begins with π. This alliteration may be an echoing of πᾶς in the first clause. The clause is also crafted into an A B A´ B´ pattern in which the conj. at the beginning of the clause generalizes the vb. in the third position and the adj. at the end generalizes the noun in the second position. Though ὅταν, “when,” with the subjunc. introduces contingency (T 112), the immediate and wider contexts of oppression in James suggest that the prospect of trials will indeed be realized (cf. 1:1; 2:6–7; 5:4–6, 7–11; etc.). The notion of indef. repetition that is inherent in ὅταν (see BDAG 730b), coupled with

the adj. ποικίλος, -η, -ον (“diverse”) brings out the added implication that the trials will be recurrent.

Περιπέσητε is 2nd pl. aor. act. subjunc. of περιπίπτω, “fall into,” NKJV; “encounter,” NASB²; “come upon,” NJB; “meet,” ESV. The vb. lit. means to “fall among” or “fall into” (contrast ἐκπίπτω in v. 11). This explains the locat. πειρασμοῖς ποικίλοις, which answers the question “where?” In tune with the indef. viewpoint of the clause, the aor. tense summarizes this recurrent action without specifying anything about the nature of the action. James speaks in general terms of adversities that are inevitably encountered in life (see Spicq 3.99).

For πειρασμός, -οῦ, ὁ, see BDAG 293d. The term can denote either

1. “temptation,” i.e., an inner enticement to sin or
- *2. “trial,” i.e., an external affliction.

The inherent mng. of περιπίπτω and the move from πειρασμός to δοκίμιον (testing) in v. 3 favor the latter mng. here (so most commentators; “trials,” most EVV). As to what the specific afflictions were that James’s readers would inevitably suffer, the adj. ποικίλος, -η, -ον (“diverse,” “manifold,” “various”; lit. “multicolored”) casts the net widely; and by its unusual position, it does so emphatically (Mayor ccxxxviii; see sim. syntax where the noun and adj. are separated by the vb. in 4:6; 5:17). As ὅταν generalizes περιπίπτω by suggesting that trials will be encountered at various times, the adj. generalizes πειρασμός by suggesting that these trials come in a variety of forms (“various,” HCSB; “all sorts of,” NET; “of many kinds,” NIV²).

VERSE 3

γινώσκοντες ὅτι

Nom. pl. masc. (agreeing with the pl. subj. of περιπέσητε) of the pres. act. ptc. of γινώσκω (“know”). The cognitive γινώσκω, linked with the perspectival ἡγέομαι in v. 2, marks a key theme in the opening chapter, namely having a proper understanding of reality. Ὅτι typically means “that” when it follows vbs. of thinking (see R 1035). Here the conj. introduces an obj. clause, describing the end result of trials (on this use, see BDF § 397[1]). Γινώσκω occurs slightly less often in James than οἶδα (the former here and in 2:20; 5:20; the latter in 1:19; 3:1; 4:4, 17). There does not appear to be a distinction in mng. between the two; both γινώσκω ὅτι and οἶδα ὅτι are used by James to introduce a fact that forms the basis of an affirmation or, as here, an exhortation (cf. γινώσκοντες ὅτι in Rom 6:6). The ptc. is pres., describing action contemporaneous with the impv. ἡγήσασθε (Wallace 631 n. 45), and causal (rather than generic, *pace* McKnight 77 n. 41), indicating the reason trials are to be regarded as occasions for joy (“because you know,” NRSV; “for you know,” NLT; “in the knowledge that,” REB). The use of εἰδότες ὅτι in 3:1 to introduce a prior assumption upon which an imperative is based suggests that the participial phrase here is used similarly. James, it seems, reinforces a tradition regarding trials with which he assumes his readers are familiar (Matt 5:10–12?).

τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως

Δοκίμιον, -ου, τό, “testing,” “means of testing,” “genuineness” (as a neut. adj.) is a rare term appearing elsewhere in BGk. only in 1 Pet 1:7; LXX Ps 11:7a; Prov 27:21a. There are three possible renderings of τὸ δοκίμιον:

1. “the result of testing,” i.e., genuineness (Robertson, *Pictures* 12);
2. “the means of testing,” i.e., trials (Dibelius-Greeven 72–73); or
- *3. “the process of testing,” i.e., “the testing of your faith” (most EVV).

Rendering (1) comports both with Peter’s use of the substantivized neut. adj. in 1 Pet 1:7 (perhaps as a synonym of δόκιμον; see Turner, *Insights* 168–69) to denote the result of testing. However, a notion of a refined state of being does not suit the chain-linking logic where the term appears to be in some sense causative. In support of rendering (2), the noun in LXX Prov 27:21a is used to denote the means of purging (δοκίμιον ἀργύρω καὶ χρυσῷ πύρωσις, “a crucible is for silver and fire for gold”). Furthermore, the idea of cause is often found in nouns possessing the verbal suf. -ιον (MH 341). The rendering may also find support in Paul’s parallel statement in Rom 5:3 that ἡ θλίψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται. There, suffering is the means by which endurance is produced. Nevertheless, if James is emphasizing the means by which endurance is produced, we might have expected a rdg. sim. to Paul’s where he repeats the term: “Consider it an occasion for joy whenever you encounter various *trials* because *trials* produce endurance.” Such a rendering would seem to be particularly expected in light of James’s word-linkage of ὑπομονή in vv. 3–4. In rendering (3) James is not depicting the *means* of testing so much as the overall *process* of testing. This understanding fits nicely into the context since both the multiplicity of trials and the progressive notion inherent in κατεργάζομαι suggests that a process is in view.

While the gen. pers. pron. in the NT may stand before, between, or after the art. and the noun that it qualifies (see R 779), the gen. ὑμῶν regularly follows the head noun (see R 502–3). Here, however, it is placed forward for emphasis. The pl. stresses James’s concern for the faith of the community, not just for that of the individual. This is the first occurrence of πίστις in the letter, “faith” (all EVV). The term appears 16 times overall, clustering 11 times in 2:14–25. The noun can refer to what one believes (cf. 2:14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26). Here the term denotes belief (i.e., trust) in God (cf. 1:6; 2:1, 5, 19, 23; 5:15). The phrase τῆς πίστεως is an obj. gen., being the obj. of the trans. verbal idea in δοκίμιον (for this use, see T 210–12). The next clause indicates that this “testing of faith” is not intended to discover whether faith exists; the trial is intended to refine and strengthen the faith that already exists (Moo 54–55).

κατεργάζεται ὑπομονήν

3rd sg. pres. mid. indic. of dep. κατεργάζομαι, “produce” (most EVV), “bring about,” “achieve” (see BDAG 531b,c). While the pres. tense is progressive, implying that a process is in view (for the progressive pres., see Burton §§ 8–10), the κατά pref. is perfective, stressing the outcome of what is produced by the testing (“complete its work,” LN 68.23). The linear sense thus combines with the perfective notion to depict

the process leading up to the attained outcome. This idea along with the *εργ-* root in the vb. anticipates *ἔργον τέλειον* in v. 4.

The noun *ὑπομονή*, -ῆς, ἡ, “patience,” “endurance,” “fortitude,” “staying power,” is rare in the Gospels but is common in the letters and Revelation as a virtue particularly vital for an oppressed community (cf., e.g., Rom 8:25; Rev 3:10). In general, *ὑπομονή* differs from *μακροθυμία* (on which, see comments on 5:7) in that the former is used mostly in contexts of adverse circumstances, the latter of adverse people (see Trench, *Synonyms* 195–98). Etymologically, the term conveys the idea of “remaining under,” and this notion of “staying-power” (Ropes 135) or “nerving oneself . . . to hold fast” (F. Hauck, *TDNT* 4.583–84) is appropriate to the context. While the noun is usually art. in the NT, the anar. occurrence here perhaps places emphasis on fortitude as a quality or frame of mind as distinct from the act of enduring (Mayor 36; for the absence of the art. and a qualitative sense, see on 1:1).

VERSE 4

ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω

Rather than functioning adversatively, the *δέ* here likely has a conj. force (most EVV; see BDF § 171[2]), perhaps even a climactic force (ZG 691). The art. *ἡ* is anaphoric referring to the aforementioned *ὑπομονή* in v. 3 (for the anaphoric use of the art., see T 172–74). *ἔχω* may bear its normal sense of “have” (most EVV; see 2:14, 17, 20). More likely, however, since the phrase *ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω* appears to correspond to *κατεργάζεται*, the mng. here is “produce” or “bring about” (see BDAG 422a). The nom. *ἡ ὑπομονή* is the subj. of the impv. and is placed before the vb. for emphasis (except for here and 1:13, the subj. always follows the 3rd pers. impv. in the letter). The impv. may be rendered either

1. indirectly, i.e., let fortitude reach its goal (see NIV²) or
2. directly, i.e., fortitude must reach its goal (see HCSB).

In either case, the 3rd pers. impv. is as strongly directive as the 2nd pers. *ἡγήσασθε* (Wallace 486). James engages the volition and exhorts his readers not to abort the testing process but to allow fortitude to reach its intended goal. While the pres. may indicate a continuing duty, the full phrase *ἔργον τέλειον ἔχειν* appears to bear a perfective sense (cf. “must complete its work,” NJB).

Like the subj. of the impv. *ἐχέτω*, the obj. *ἔργον* occupies an emphatic position (cf. 1:2). Playing upon the *εργ-* root, James expresses in noun form what he had conveyed in the perfective vb. form: as testing “produces” (*κατεργάζεται*) fortitude, so fortitude, when allowed to run its course, results in a perfect “product” (“effect,” ESV; “result,” NASB²). As the sg. noun suggests, and the next clause will confirm, James does not describe the end of the testing process in terms of individual virtues but of totality of character (Davids 69).

The adj. *τέλειος*, -α, -ον, typical of attrib. adjs. in James, follows immediately after the noun it modifies (see R 656 on the position of attrib. adjs.). Elsewhere James uses

the adj. of every gift that comes from God (1:17), of the law of liberty (1:25), and of the person who is capable of “bridling his tongue” (3:2). While the term can denote “maturity” (NIV²; cf. Heb 5:14), this idea does not seem to fit James’s usage (*pace* Mayor 36–37). In each instance in the letter, “completeness” or “perfection” is connoted (sim. most EVV; cf. Matt 5:48).

ἵνα ἤτε τέλειοι καὶ ὁλόκληροι

2nd pl. pres. act. subjunc. of εἶμί with τέλειοι καὶ ὁλόκληροι functioning as pred. nom. adjs. (on the pred. nom., see R 457–58). ἵνα with the subjunc. usually introduces purpose (see R 981–85), and this appears to be the case here since the clause, being dependent on the previous clause, reveals the intended goal of the testing process (see Burton § 219). For an impv. followed by a ἵνα clause, see below 5:9, 12. The recurrence of τέλειος and the synonymous language, however, suggest that the clause is not only telic, but appos., providing added definition to the phrase ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω (for ἵνα in appos. clauses, see R 1078–79). The “perfect work” that endurance is meant to achieve is not the full extent of the fortitude itself (*pace* Mayor 36); the end result is the perfection and wholeness of godly character (“you are that perfect work,” Dibelius-Greeven 74).

The adj. ὁλόκληρος, -ον (a two-termination adj.), “whole,” “complete,” “intact”; ὅλος + κλήρος, lit., complete in all its parts (see Spicq 2.578–79), occurs elsewhere in the NT only in 1 Thess 5:23 (of spirit, soul, and body being kept complete), though the noun form is used in Acts 3:6 of the lame man who was restored to perfect health. The term bears a sense of completeness and is synonymous with τέλειος, “complete” (most EVV). The terms differ semantically, however, in that τέλειος is aspectual, connoting a perfection beyond which there is no degree, whereas ὁλόκληρος is quantitative, denoting a totality in all its facets (see W. Foerster, *TDNT* 3.766–67). This notion of totality comes full circle back to the adj. πᾶς at the beginning of the section.

ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι

The dat. μηδενὶ specifies that with which the action of the ptc. is concerned (for the dat. of ref./respect, see BDF § 197). The phrase ἐν μηδενὶ is positioned prior to the ptc. for emphasis: “lacking in not one thing” (cf. 1:6; see BDAG 591d). Μηδέν appears here rather than οὐδέν either because the clause as a whole is telic or, more likely, because of its relation to the ptc. (cf. 1:6, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος; on μή with ptc., see T 284–85).

Λειπόμενοι, nom. pl. masc. (agreeing with the pl. subj. of ἤτε) of the pres. pass. ptc. of λείπω, “be without,” “be in need,” “lack” (most EVV; see BDAG 590d). The vb. occurs again in 1:5 and 2:15, but elsewhere in the NT only in Luke 18:22; Titus 1:5; 3:13. While this may be a rare example of a periph. ptc. cstr. with the subjunc. (T 89), it is questionable because of the distance between the auxiliary vb. and the ptc. Alternatively, the ptc. may be functioning adverbially indicating result (Wallace 639) or more likely adjectivally (along with the pred. nom. adjs.) as the pred. complement of ἤτε (for this use of the ptc., see Burton § 429). In any case, the participial phrase

functions as a sweeping neg. amplification of τέλειος and ὀλόκληρος (for an example of λείπω serving as a counterpart to τέλειος, see Spicq 2.376 n. 5). The pass. conveys the sense of “being divested” (cf. the passives: χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι, “of *being filled* and going hungry, both of having abundance and *suffering need*” (Phil 4:12 NASB²). The pres. tense denotes action that is ongoing. In view of the ref. to the dispersion in v. 1, it is not impossible that there is an association at play here between λειπόμενοι (“divested”) and the root-related λείμμα (“remnant”).

FOR FURTHER STUDY

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HOMILETICAL SUGGESTIONS

Tacking Your Sails to Adversity (1:2–4)

1. Trials are to be viewed as occasions for joy (v. 2)
 - a. Adjusting the perspective (ἡγήσασθε)
 - b. Appreciating the opportunity (πᾶσαν χαράν)
 - (1) Whenever trials occur (ὅταν)
 - (2) Whatever the trials may be (ποικίλοις)
2. Trials produce endurance (v. 3)
 - a. The reason to rejoice—the knowledge of what trials produce (γινώσκοντες)
 - b. The by-product of trials—stick-to-it-iveness (ὑπομονήν)
3. Trials must be allowed to run their course (v. 4)
 - a. Not aborting the process (ἐχέτω)
 - b. Seeing the end result—completeness (τέλειοι καὶ ὀλόκληροι)

A Perseverance Primer (1:2–4)

1. The inevitability of trials (v. 2)
2. The value of trials (v. 3)
3. The end result of trials (v. 4)

Trials in Paradox (1:2–4)

1. Pain as an occasion for joy (v. 2)
2. Trials as the pathway to perseverance (v. 3)
3. Temporal suffering giving way to everlasting satisfaction (v. 4)