

Covenant Loyalty and the Goodness of God: A Study in the Theology of James

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Author's Declaration

I affirm that this thesis is entirely my own work and that all significant quotations have been acknowledged in the footnotes. No part of this thesis has been previously submitted for consideration for any degree.

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Abstract

The problem of what, if anything, brings continuity of thought to the exhortations found in the New Testament Letter of James has perplexed, and continues to perplex interpreters of this letter. Indeed, for Martin Dibelius the literary character of this letter provided no opportunity for the development, or elaboration of religious ideas. In view of this fact, Dibelius concluded that the Letter of James has no theology. In this present consideration of James, it is demonstrated that Dibelius' view of James as lacking a developed theology is quite mistaken. In contrast to Dibelius' opinion, James' employment and development of covenant thought provides the letter with continuity of thought, as the author uses it to challenge the 'defective' theology of the implied audience, whilst establishing his own alternative theology.

The thesis proceeds by examining three aspects of covenant thought (God's character, the nature of the covenant relationship, and the threat of assimilation) in the context of the Old Testament and other Jewish sources. Then the indictment of the implied audience, found in Jas 4:1-6, is considered in order to establish whether or not covenant thought is a significant factor in James' theology. This consideration establishes that James employs and develops covenant thought, and on this basis the following chapters proceed to investigate the role this ideology performs in the exhortations of Jas 1-2. Finally, a summary analysis of the remainder of the letter (3:1-18; 4:7-5:20) confirms that covenant thought is influential throughout the whole letter. Consequently, it is evident that covenant thought performs a significant role in the theology and ethics of the Letter of James as he seeks to combat the 'defective' theology of the implied audience whose unfaithfulness is related to their misunderstanding of both God's character and their relationship to him.

Abbreviations

The abbreviations used in this thesis are in accordance with those found in P. H. Alexander *et al* (eds.), *SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Early Christian Studies*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999. In addition it should be noted that following their first reference commentaries on James are referred to by their author's surname alone.

Contents

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 DIBELIUS' LEGACY	3
1.2 THE QUESTION OF GENRE	5
1.3 AUTHORS, AUDIENCES, AND SITUATIONS	13
1.4 THEOLOGY AND CONTINUITY OF THOUGHT IN JAMES	33
CHAPTER 2 EXPLORING COVENANT THOUGHT	54
2.1 IDENTIFYING COVENANT	54
2.2 THE CONTINUING SIGNIFICANCE OF COVENANT	62
2.3 A DISTINCT PEOPLE	67
2.4 THE COVENANT GOD	70
2.5 SUMMARY	78
2.6 THE THREAT OF ASSIMILATION	79
2.7 SUMMARY	86
2.8 DOUBLENESS AND SINGLENESS	87
2.9 CONCLUSION	92
CHAPTER 3 FRIENDS AND ADULTERESSES IN JAS 4:1-6	93
3.1 INTRODUCTION	93
3.2 JAS 4:1: A QUESTION OF ORIGIN	99
3.3 JAS 4:2: DANGEROUS DEFICIENCIES	102
3.4 JAS 4:3: NOT HAVING AND PRAYER	107
3.5 SUMMARY: JAS 4:1-3 AND THE THREAT OF ASSIMILATION	112
3.6 JAS 4:4: INDICTING COVENANT UNFAITHFULNESS	112
3.7 JAS 4:5-6: THE FINAL INDICTMENT!	132
3.8 CONCLUSION	146

CHAPTER 4 UNDER TRIAL (JAS 1:1-18)	149
4.1 INTRODUCTION	149
4.2 JAS 1:2-4: JOY AND ENDURING FAITHFULNESS	150
4.3 JAS 1:5-8: REQUESTING FAITHFULNESS – GOD AND HIS PEOPLE	161
4.4 JAS 1:9-11: EXALTATION AND HUMILIATION	171
4.5 JAS 1:12, 13-15: FAITHFULNESS UNDER TRIAL	176
4.6 JAS 1:16-18: GOOD GIFTS, BIRTH, AND PURPOSE	186
4.7 CONCLUSION	195
CHAPTER 5 IDENTITY, PRACTICE, AND SALVATION	199
5.1 INTRODUCTION	199
5.2 JAS 1:19-20: ‘QUICK TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO ANGER’	203
5.3 JAS 1:21: IMPLICATING THE AUDIENCE AND THE IMPLANTED WORD	208
5.4 SUMMARY: IDENTITY, VOCATION, DISTINCTION AND SALVATION	221
5.5 JAS 1:22-25: HEARING AND DOING THE WORD	222
5.6 JAS 1:26-27: DECEPTION AND THE RELIGION OF GOD	246
5.7 CONCLUSION	250
CHAPTER 6 PARTIALITY BREEDS JUDGEMENT (JAS 2:1-13)	254
6.1 INTRODUCTION	254
6.2 JAS 2:1: PARTIALITY, FAITH AND GLORY	257
6.3 JAS 2:2-4: THE COMMUNITY AND PARTIALITY	265
6.4 JAS 2:5-7: GOD’S CHOICE, HONOUR AND ABSURDITY	277
6.5 JAS 2:8-13: PARTIALITY, LAW AND JUDGEMENT	283
6.6 CONCLUSION	298

CHAPTER 7 THE BENEFIT OF SALVATION (JAS 2:14-26)	303
7.1 INTRODUCTION	303
7.2 JAS 2:14: FAITH, WORKS AND SALVATION	305
7.3 JAS 2:15-16: BENEFITS IN THE COMMUNITY	309
7.4 JAS 2:17: FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD!	314
7.5 SUMMARY: CONTRASTING VIEWS ON SALVATION	317
7.6 JAS 2:18-19: IS FAITH REALLY NOT EFFICACIOUS?	318
7.7 JAS 2:20-24: ANOTHER PROOF	333
7.8 JAS 2:25: A FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO FAITHFULNESS	340
7.9 CONCLUSION	343
7.10 EXCURSUS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JAMES AND PAUL	346
CHAPTER 8 COVENANT THOUGHT IN JAS 3-5	354
8.1 JAS 3:1-18: DISTINCTION AND ASSIMILATION	354
8.2 JAS 4:7-5:20: RESTORATION, WARNING & ENCOURAGEMENT	360
8.3 CONCLUSION	377
CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION	382
BIBLIOGRAPHY	387

Introduction

In modern critical scholarship the Letter of James has often been considered as something of a misfit amongst the main theological traditions and trajectories of early Christianity.¹ However, while this letter may still be described as 'enigmatic',² or indeed, as something of an 'oddity' within the Christian canon,³ its reputation as 'the black sheep within the fold of early Christian writings' is gradually diminishing as a result of the renaissance of interest in this letter that has developed in the last twenty five years.⁴

The studies produced during this period are directed to several different aspects of the letter. Some examine the relationship between James and Jewish wisdom literature or the sayings of Jesus;⁵ others concentrate on discerning the

¹ A. Chester & R. P. Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter and Jude*, Cambridge: CUP, 1994, p. 6

² P. J. Hartin, *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus*, (JSNTSup, 47), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991, p. 12

³ S. Laws, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, London: A & C Black, 1980, p. 1

⁴ D. H. Edgar, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor? The Social Setting of the Epistle of James*, (JSNTSup, 206), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, p. 11; cf. T. C. Penner, 'The Epistle of James in Current Research', *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 7 (1999) 257-308, p. 261

⁵ R. Hoppe, *Der theologische Hintergrund des Jakobusbriefes*, (FB, 28), Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1977; E. Baasland, 'Der Jakobusbrief als neutestamentliche Weisheitschrift', *ST* 36 (1982) 119-139; Hartin, *James and Q*; W. H. Wachob & L. T. Johnson, 'The Sayings of Jesus in the Letter of James', 431-450 in B. Chilton & C. A. Evans (eds.), *Authenticating the Words of Jesus*, (NTTS, 28/1), Leiden: Brill, 1999; R. Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, London; NY: Routledge, 1999; W. H. Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus in the Social Rhetoric of James*, (SNTSMS, 106), Cambridge: CUP, 2000

Sitz im Leben of the letter in the world of emergent Christianity.⁶ Additionally, there is a concern to rehabilitate the ethics of James and an interest in examining both the themes of the letter in general, and, more specifically, the theological conceptions underlying the author's appreciation of Christian existence.⁷ In spite of their divergent foci these studies manifest a quest for structure and coherence in the Letter of James that 'arises out of the unanimous conviction...that such coherence can be found'.⁸ Furthermore, in upholding this conviction all of these studies can be understood as reacting to the understanding of James as paraenesis propounded by Martin Dibelius. Indeed, it is over against, and in opposition to, the position of Dibelius that the majority of current research must be understood.

⁶ T. C. Penner, *The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Re-reading an Ancient Christian Letter*, (JSNTSup, 121), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996; Edgar, *Chosen*

⁷ G. Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe und Egalität: Jak 2:1-13 als Höhepunkt urchristlicher Ethik', *DBAT* 30 (1999) 179-192; M. Klein, „Ein vollkommenes Werk“ *Vollkommenheit, Gesetz und Gericht als theologische Themen des Jakobusbriefes*, (BWANT, 7/19), Stuttgart; Berlin; Köln: W. Kohlhammer, 1995; M. Tsuji, *Glaube zwischen Vollkommenheit und Verweltlichung*, (WUNT, 93), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1997; P. J. Hartin, *A Spirituality of Perfection: Faith in Action in the Letter of James*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999; M. Konradt, *Christliche Existenz nach dem Jakobusbrief: Eine Studie zu seiner soteriologischen und ethischen Konzeption*, (SUNT, 22), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998

⁸ Penner, 'Current Research', p. 272. For a detailed review of recent literature see further F. Hahn & P. Müller, 'Der Jakobusbrief', *Tru* 63 (1998) 1-73; M. Konradt, 'Theologie in der ,strohernen Epistel'. Ein Literaturbericht zu Ansätzen in der Exegese des Jakobusbriefes', *VF* 44 (1999) 54-78

1.1 *Dibelius' Legacy*

The commentary of Dibelius was originally published in German in 1921, but was only made available in English translation when it was published as part of the *Hermeneia* series in 1975.⁹ That it was translated so long after being first published indicates to some degree the persistence of Dibelius' conclusions. Moreover, it is clear that the reaction to Dibelius, particularly evident in the last twenty five years, is closely connected to the availability of his views in English. This reaction is particularly focused on Dibelius' attempt to understand the letter 'as evidence for early Christian paraenesis and to explicate the problems of the letter in terms of the particular presuppositions of this paraenesis',¹⁰ especially with regard to his definition of paraenesis.

Before outlining Dibelius' definition of paraenesis it is important to recognise that his understanding of the letter's literary character is based on his analysis of the text.¹¹ Dibelius discerns that different sorts of material are present in James, embracing sections in the style of the diatribe (Jas 2:1-3:12), smaller self-contained units (3:15-17; 4:1-6; 4:13-16), isolated sayings (3:18; 4:17), and sayings that are strung together quite loosely (1:1-27; 5:7-20). It is on the basis of this analysis that Dibelius claims that 'the entire document lacks continuity of

⁹ M. Dibelius (rev. H. Greeven; trans. M. A. Williams), *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, (*Hermeneia*), Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975

¹⁰ Dibelius, p. xi

¹¹ Dibelius, p. 1

thought', between individual sayings, smaller units and larger treatises.¹² In addition to this structural analysis Dibelius examines the epistolary situation evident in the letter as a whole, concluding that there are no indications of epistolary situation and no epistolary remarks.¹³ It is on the basis of these conclusions regarding the literary character of the letter that Dibelius designates James as paraenesis, defining paraenesis as 'a text which strings together admonitions of general ethical content'.¹⁴

According to Dibelius the most characteristic features of paraenesis are pervasive eclecticism, lack of continuity, the repetition of identical motifs in different places within a writing, and the impossibility of constructing a single frame into which all the admonitions fit; and each of these characteristics is discernable in James.¹⁵ In addition to such features there are a number of consequences that flow from this understanding of James as paraenesis. Firstly, 'in view of the timeless character of paraenesis one must avoid overly precise datings'. Secondly, 'paraenesis is not interested in locale', and so 'the attempt to fix the place of the composition of Jas must be abandoned'.¹⁶ These two conclusions relate in particular to the avowedly traditional character of paraenesis which seeks to transmit 'an ethical tradition that does not require a

¹² Dibelius, p. 2

¹³ Dibelius, pp. 2-3

¹⁴ Dibelius, p. 3

¹⁵ Dibelius, pp. 5-11

¹⁶ Dibelius, p. 47

radical revision...'.¹⁷ Thirdly, and most importantly for the present investigation, Dibelius' classification of James as paraenesis leads to his declaration that 'James has no "theology"', since 'paraenesis provides no opportunity for the development and elaboration of religious ideas'.¹⁸

1.2 *The question of genre*

The responses that Dibelius' understanding of James as paraenesis has drawn are manifold, being directed towards both his definition of paraenesis and the conclusions he reaches regarding issues such as the letter's provenance. Although the idea that James contains features found in paraenesis is generally accepted within scholarship,¹⁹ the question of whether the whole letter may be designated as paraenesis is debatable. In the first instance Davids suggests that James only partially fulfils the requirements of Dibelius' definition, arguing that themes in James are repeated in a definite pattern which fits a clear enough *Sitz im Leben*. Furthermore, according to Davids the eclecticism of this letter is only apparent if the interpreter fails to move beyond form criticism.²⁰ Therefore, even if paraenesis is understood on Dibelius' terms, the Letter of James is not an example of paraenesis. This is a particularly effective approach

¹⁷ Dibelius, p. 5

¹⁸ Dibelius, p. 21

¹⁹ P. H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (NIGTC), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982, p. 24; L. T. Johnson, *The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (AB, 37A), London; NY: Doubleday, 1995, p. 18

²⁰ Davids, p. 24

since it is primarily focused on undermining Dibelius' analysis of the text itself, rather than his definition of paraenesis.²¹

A different approach is exemplified by those who define paraenesis in terms of its social function. According to L. G. Perdue there are three possible functions of paraenesis: it may confirm the validity of a prescribed way of life; seek to convert the audience to a new manner of existence; or seek to subvert an existing social structure and promote the formation of a different one.²²

However, Perdue's definition of paraenesis in terms of social function does not dispense with the idea that paraenesis has certain literary characteristics, continuing to suggest that it is a form-critical category. In contrast to this approach W. Popkes argues convincingly that *παράνεσις* did not become a literary genre.²³ On the contrary, paraenetic concerns may be communicated in various forms, the common factor of paraenesis being that it functions to 'secure a steady and desired development, providing guidance in situations of transition and decisions where clear and reliable advice is needed'.²⁴ In addition, in view of the non-literary and functional definition of paraenesis,

²¹ Cf. Penner, *Eschatology*, pp. 126-127

²² L. G. Perdue, 'The Social Character of Paraenesis and Paraenetic Literature', *Semeia* 50 (1990) 5-39, p. 6; cf. L. G. Perdue, 'Paraenesis and the Epistle of James', *ZNW* 72 (1981) 241-256; Johnson, p. 19

²³ W. Popkes, 'James and Paraenesis, Reconsidered', 535-561 in T. Fornberg & D. Hellholm (eds.), *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual Situational Contexts*, Oslo; Copenhagen; Stockholm; Boston: Scandinavian University Press, 1995, p. 537; so also Wachob, *Voice*, pp. 51-52

²⁴ Popkes, 'James and Paraenesis', p. 543

Popkes concludes that paraenetic texts can no longer be considered to be incoherent and non-situational *per se*.²⁵ Therefore, according to Popkes' assessment of paraenesis as a functional term, Dibelius' definition of James in terms of the supposed literary characteristics of paraenesis can be rejected, while continuing to describe James as paraenesis in terms of its function.

The preceding paragraphs illustrate different reactions to Dibelius' understanding of James as paraenesis, each of which allows for different definitions of paraenesis. The variety of understandings illustrates the difficulty of continuing to use paraenesis as a descriptive term, whether this relates to a literary genre, or the function, of James. This difficulty is no less felt if one chooses instead to speak of James as a protreptic discourse,²⁶ since 'as a rule, paraenesis and protrepsis are not genre distinctions; they are interchangeable terms for exhortation or hortatory speech'.²⁷ Inasmuch as this investigation of James will demonstrate that the author seeks to persuade the implied audience to adopt the lifestyle consonant with their relationship to God, whilst dissuading them from assimilating to the 'world', then its function may be considered to be commensurate with paraenesis or protrepsis. Therefore, in terms of genre this

²⁵ Popkes, 'James and Paraenesis', p. 543; cf. Johnson, p. 18

²⁶ So Johnson, pp. 20-21; Hartin, *Spirituality*, pp. 48-49

²⁷ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 51

text can be considered as an example of symbouleutic rhetoric presented as a letter.²⁸

1.2.1 *Is James a Letter?*

That James presents itself as a letter is clear from the 'A-to-B-*χαίρειν*' salutation found in its prescript (cf. Acts 15:23; 23:26). This simple greeting is enough to identify the text as a letter, since the *only* requirement for a document to be considered a letter was its possession of a prescript comprising a superscription, adscription and salutation.²⁹ In view of this fact 'virtually any type of written text could be sent to individuals or groups in an epistolary format'.³⁰ However, S. R. Llewelyn has questioned the authenticity of the prescript of James, suggesting that it was added at a later date to give the text the 'ostensible form of a letter'.³¹

²⁸ On the classification of James as symbouleutic rhetoric see Wachob, *Voice*, p. 52. On the question of whether James is a letter see sections 1.2.1-3; cf. Dibelius, pp. 1-2; Davids, pp. 24-27; Johnson, pp. 22-24; Bauckham, *James*, p. 12; Edgar, *Chosen*, pp. 17-18

²⁹ J. L. White, 'New Testament Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography', *ANRW* 2.25.2 1730-1756, p. 1732; D. E. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 1987, p. 163; J. T. Reed, 'The Epistle', 171-193 in S. E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 BC – AD 400*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, p. 179

³⁰ Aune, *New Testament*, p. 158

³¹ S. R. Llewelyn, 'The Prescript of James', *NovT* 39 (1997) 385-393, p. 385

1.2.2 *Is the Prescript original?*

The basis upon which Llewelyn makes his argument includes this writing's lack of explicit features that would normally accompany the letter genre (e.g. formal greetings, final farewell, identity of the audience). Furthermore, according to Llewelyn, the work is pseudepigraphal, and the supposed catchword connection between *χαίρειν* and *χαράν* (Jas 1:1-2) fails to harmonise with the author's other catchword connections (e.g. *ἔργων-ἀρογή* 2:20) and is not improbable given that the 'writing of the prescript in the Greek form entailed the use of *χαίρειν*'.³²

The problem of James' lack of explicit features that normally accompany the letter genre has been addressed by a variety of interpreters, and some of them argue that there is a letter closing in James even if there is no farewell greeting.³³ As discussed above, the prescript of James is enough in itself to designate the text as a letter.³⁴ Furthermore, the identity of those addressed is no more 'obscure' than that of the addressees in Jewish diaspora letters (e.g. 2 Macc 1:1; 2 Apoc. Bar. 78:1; b. Sanh. 11a).³⁵

³² Llewelyn, 'Prescript', pp. 388, 385-387

³³ F. O. Francis, 'The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and 1 John', *ZNW* 61 (1970) 110-126; Davids, pp. 24-28; Penner, *Eschatology*, pp. 121-213

³⁴ See also Bauckham, *James*, p. 12

³⁵ On Jewish diaspora letters see Tsuji, *Glaube*, pp. 18-37; K-W. Niebuhr, 'Der Jakobusbrief im Licht Frühjüdischer Diasporabriefe', *NTS* 44 (1998) 420-443; Bauckham, *James*, pp. 19-21

As Llewelyn admits, his categorisation of James as pseudepigraphic is based on the prescript.³⁶ However, it is difficult to see why such a conclusion mitigates against the prescript being an original part of the work as a whole. On the contrary the conclusion that James (i.e. the brother of Jesus) is not the author of the text is based on the divergence between the material found in the text as a whole and what is apparently known about this historical figure.³⁷ This divergence would only indicate that the author of the text is claiming the authority of James for his own work, not that the prescript is a later addition.³⁸ Finally, while Llewelyn is correct to assert that the catchword connection is not at all improbable given the Greek form of the letter prescript, he is mistaken with regard to his conclusion that this connection fails to harmonise with the author's practice elsewhere in the letter. Indeed, the connection between Jas 1:1-2 harmonises with that between verses 4 and 5 where the author uses *λειπόμενοι-λείπεται*. Along with the other considerations this suggests that the prescript should not be considered a later addition to the text as a whole, but rather as introducing a text that the author wishes to be considered as a letter, whether or not it actually functioned as such.

³⁶ Llewelyn, 'Prescript', p. 390

³⁷ Llewelyn, 'Prescript', pp. 386, 390

³⁸ Although Llewelyn's ('Prescript', p. 390) suggestion, that the prescript may have been added to make explicit the supposed author of the text, need not indicate that those who added it were correct, it implicitly undermines the grounds upon which he classifies the reference in the prescript as pseudepigraphic.

1.2.3 A Diaspora Letter?

The prescript indicates that the addressees are the 'twelve tribes in the diaspora' and in recent years the plausibility of this address has been considered in light of the tradition of Jewish diaspora letters.³⁹ The tradition of sending letters from Jerusalem to the diaspora is first witnessed in Jer 29 (LXX 36) where the prophet Jeremiah is depicted as having sent a letter to the exiles in Babylon (v. 1).⁴⁰ To what extent the material contained in this chapter represents the content of the letter is unclear. However, it is evident that the narration of this event is supposed to depict Jeremiah as a figure of authority setting out the strategy for the survival of the exiles in Babylon.⁴¹ Furthermore, this account provides inspiration for the later Epistle of Jeremiah which is also addressed to the captives in Babylon, and which serves to remind those addressed of the dangers and folly of idolatry (vv. 4-73).⁴²

This tradition of writing letters to the exiles is also evident in *2 Apoc. Bar. 77-87*. Here we are informed that Baruch sent two letters, one to the nine and a half tribes and the other to the 'brothers' in Babylon (77:12, 17-19).⁴³ As M. F.

³⁹ Tsuji, *Glaube*, pp. 18-37; Niebuhr, 'Der Jakobusbrief im Licht Frühjüdischer Diasporabriefe', pp. 420-443; Bauckham, *James*, pp. 19-21

⁴⁰ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 19

⁴¹ R. P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, London: SCM, 1986, p. 555

⁴² Bauckham, *James*, p. 20

⁴³ M. F. Whitters, 'Some New Observations about Jewish Festal Letters', *JSJ* 32 (2001) 272-288, p. 285; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 20; Niebuhr, 'Der Jakobusbrief im Licht frühjüdischer Diasporabriefe', p. 427

Whitters has recognised, the audiences to whom these letters are addressed are spread out and have been residents of foreign nations for a long time.⁴⁴ The content of the letter to the nine and a half tribes is then presented in chapters 78-87. This content is exhortative, seeking to prepare those in the diaspora for the end time by calling them to follow the covenant.⁴⁵ This concern with doing God's will is also found in the two letters found in 2 Macc 1:1-2:18. These letters claim to have been sent from Jerusalem to the Jews living in Egypt (1:1, 10).⁴⁶ However, in addition to their concern with promoting the keeping of the covenant among those addressed (1:2-5; 2:2), they are primarily concerned with promoting the observance of the feast of Tabernacles and narrating the events of divine deliverance upon which it is based (1:7-9; 1:10-2:18).⁴⁷

The use of a letter to encourage the observance of feasts is also found in Esth 9:20-32, where the promotion of a covenant mentality occurs through the depiction of Mordecai in the role of Moses.⁴⁸ In addition to these examples Gamaliel the elder is described as sending letters, dealing with matters such as the calendar and tithing, addressed to exiled brethren in diverse geographical areas outside Palestine (b. Sanh 11a; y. Sanh. 1:2 [18d]; t. Sanh. 2:6).⁴⁹ The possibility that the early Christians were aware of this letter tradition is

⁴⁴ Whitters, 'Jewish Festal Letters', p. 285

⁴⁵ Whitters, 'Jewish Festal Letters', p. 287

⁴⁶ Note that the both groups are described as *ἀδελφοί*.

⁴⁷ Niebuhr, 'Der Jakobusbrief im Licht frühjüdischer Diasporabriefe', pp. 426-427

⁴⁸ Whitters, 'Jewish Festal Letters', pp. 276-279

suggested by the embedded letter in Acts 15:23-29, the prescript of 1 Peter and the reference in Acts 28:21 to the possibility that letters might have been sent from Jerusalem to Rome with regard to Paul.⁵⁰ This possibility is increased when James is brought into the equation, since it is addressed to the 'twelve tribes in the diaspora', refers to the addressees as 'brothers' (1:2, 9, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14, 15; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19), and, as will be argued in this investigation, calls those addressed to keep the covenant. These considerations suggest a plausible background against which James may be considered to function as a letter, although they do not establish that it actually did.

1.3 Authors, Audiences, and Situations

The traditional questions of introduction, concerning authorship, provenance and dating, were to a significant extent sidelined in Dibelius' interpretation of James on the basis of his understanding of paraenesis.⁵¹ Therefore, it is not surprising that the rejection of Dibelius' views and the redefinition of paraenesis in terms of its social function have seen a renewal of interest in establishing the

⁴⁹ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 20; Bauckham, *James*, p. 20; D. C. Allison, 'The Fiction of James and its *Sitz im Leben*', *RB* 108 (2001) 529-570, pp. 539-540

⁵⁰ R. Bauckham, 'James and Jerusalem', 415-480 in R. Bauckham (ed.), *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting: Volume 4 The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting*, Grand rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995, p. 423; D. Noy, 'Letters out of Judaea: Echoes of Israel in Jewish Inscriptions from Europe', 106-117 in S. Jones & S. Pearce (eds.), *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period*, (JSPSup, 31), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, p. 106; Tsuji, *Glaube*, pp. 21-22

⁵¹ Dibelius, pp. 5, 47

place of James within early Christianity. However, while there is general agreement that the questions of authorship, provenance and dating are valid, and are, to some extent answerable, there remains a significant level of disagreement concerning their resolution.

In respect of the question of authorship, there is general agreement that of the five men named *Ἰάκωβος* in the New Testament, only James, son of Zebedee and James the brother of Jesus are feasible candidates.⁵² Furthermore, although an early date for this letter is becoming more fashionable,⁵³ the fact that James, son of Zebedee, died in 44 CE still makes it improbable that he is designated as the author of this letter. In any case the authoritative position occupied by James the brother of Jesus within early Christianity (Acts 15:13-29; 21:18; Gal 1:19; 2:9, 12) suggests that he is the referent of the simple designation in Jas 1:1.⁵⁴ However, this deduction simply poses another question, that is, does this letter stem from James the Just or is it pseudonymous?

⁵² U. Schnelle, *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings*, London: SCM, 1998, p. 384; Davids, p. 6; Johnson, p. 167

⁵³ Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 244; Johnson, pp. 118-121; Penner, *Eschatology*, pp. 276-277

⁵⁴ Perhaps it is no coincidence that the renaissance of interest in the Letter of James has coincided with a renewed and revitalised interest in the historical person of James the Just. See J. Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition*, Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997; B. A. Chilton & C. A. Evans (eds.), *James the Just and Christian Origins*, (NovTSup, 98) Leiden: Brill, 1999; B. Chilton & J. Neusner (eds.), *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission*, Louisville; London; Leiden: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001; J. S. McLaren, 'Ananus, James, and Earliest Christianity. Josephus' Account of the Death of James', *JTS* 52 (2001) 1-25

Naturally, the issue of dating is crucial in resolving this question, since James the Just is known to have died in 62 CE. The problem is that the letter does not refer to any public events, movements or catastrophes,⁵⁵ and so the question of dating must be approached on other grounds. Indeed, the silences of James have been understood as indicating both an early and a late date for the letter. Those arguing for authenticity point out that there is no reference to Gentiles or the controversy surrounding their entrance into the Christian fold.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the evidence of Jas 5:14 is understood as indicating that the letter dates from before the rise of the bishopric.⁵⁷ This evidence from silence is interpreted as supporting an early date for the letter. However, silence is a precarious basis upon which to build historical judgements, and especially where the source provides so little indication of the reasons behind this silence.⁵⁸

This is evident regarding the letter's silence with regard to the controversy surrounding the entrance of the Gentiles. This silence has been interpreted as indicating both that the letter is early and that it is late. On the one hand it is considered improbable that this controversy could be ignored while the letter appears to use terms found in connection with it in the letters of Paul.⁵⁹ On the other hand, this same silence is considered to indicate that the letter stems from

⁵⁵ J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, London: SCM, 1976, p. 119

⁵⁶ Robinson, *Redating*, pp. 120, 122

⁵⁷ Robinson, *Redating*, p. 124; Davids, p. 17; Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 234

⁵⁸ Cf. Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 263

⁵⁹ Mayor, p. cxli

a time when this controversy has died down.⁶⁰ In both cases the additional question of the relationship between Jas 2:14-26 and Paul's teaching on justification by faith looms large.⁶¹ However, even with this additional material it remains difficult to evaluate the silence of James with regard to the Gentiles.

In a similar fashion to the way in which connections with the Pauline letters have been used to suggest possible dates for James, the letter's relationship with other oral and written communication has also proved to be a fruitful source of evidence regarding date and provenance. Although the literary dependence of the *Shepherd of Hermas* upon James is questionable,⁶² it is generally recognised that this document displays some knowledge of James,⁶³ indicating that the letter was in circulation by the time that *Hermas* was composed. This provides a *terminus ad quem* of ca. 148 CE for the writing of the epistle, but does not indicate that the letter arose in Rome.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Laws, pp. 15-17; Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 236; M. A. Jackson-McCabe, *Logos & Law in the Letter of James: The Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, & the Law of Freedom*, Leiden: Brill, 2001, p. 253; W. Popkes, 'The Mission of James in His Time', 88-99 in Chilton & Neusner, *Brother of Jesus*, pp. 88-92

⁶¹ On the role of this supposed connection in the dating of James see Penner, *Eschatology*, pp. 47-74

⁶² So Dibelius, p. 47

⁶³ Laws, p. 23; Davids, p. 9

⁶⁴ With Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 105; contra Laws, pp. 24-26

In addition to this relationship, several studies have argued that James makes use of Jesus-sayings that pre-date the writing of the Synoptic Gospels.⁶⁵ This connection has generally been understood as indicative of an early date for the epistle, although Penner has raised questions about the validity of making chronological claims based on this evidence.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it is questionable whether the use of such traditions can be interpreted as indicative of the letter's provenance, since it is difficult to establish the dissemination of these traditions within the early Christian movement. The additional grounds upon which provenance has been decided, that is, the climactic conditions referred to in Jas 5:7 and the author's use of certain word pictures (1:6, 11; 3:11-12),⁶⁷ are extremely tenuous, since they are applicable to a large geographic area and may be the result of literary dependence upon the Old Testament.⁶⁸

As is clear from the preceding paragraphs, the letter offers scant material for the resolution of the traditional questions of introduction,⁶⁹ leading to a variety of conclusions regarding its date (55-60 CE,⁷⁰ 40-80 CE,⁷¹ 62-100 CE,⁷² 70-130

⁶⁵ Adamson, p. 21; Robinson, *Redating*, p. 125; Davids, p. 16; Hartin, *James and Q*, pp. 215-216; Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 264

⁶⁶ Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 261

⁶⁷ Adamson, p. 19; Robinson, *Redating*, p. 120; Davids, p. 14; Johnson, p. 121

⁶⁸ Dibelius, p. 47; Laws, pp. 9-10; Penner, *Eschatology*, pp. 261-262

⁶⁹ Laws, p. 2; Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 263

⁷⁰ Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 240; cf. F. Mussner, *Der Jakobusbrief*, (HTKNT) Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1964, p. 21

⁷¹ Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 276

⁷² Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 203, n. 62; cf. Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 207

CE⁷³), provenance (Jerusalem,⁷⁴ Rome,⁷⁵ Antioch,⁷⁶ Syria-Palestine⁷⁷), and authorship (James the Just,⁷⁸ pseudonymous⁷⁹). Although the present investigation recognises that these questions are valid, it is not directed toward their resolution. Instead, recognising that there may be a gap between the actual flesh-and-blood addressees external to the text and the audience implied in the text itself,⁸⁰ it will concentrate on the communication between the author and the implied audience.

The implied audience consists in the 'attitudes, interests, reactions, and conditions of knowledge' suggested or evoked in the text.⁸¹ It is the audience produced by the author's need to make assumptions about the beliefs, practices and knowledge of the flesh-and-blood audience (i.e. the auditors) in order to prepare and develop his text;⁸² that is, an author's 'text is always conditioned,

⁷³ Laws, pp. 6-26; cf. Davids, p. 4

⁷⁴ Mussner, p. 23; Adamson, pp. 18-21; Bauckham, *James*, p. 19

⁷⁵ Laws, p. 26

⁷⁶ R. P. Martin, *James*, (WBC, 48), Waco, Texas: Word, 1988, pp. lxxvi-lxxvii; Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 235; C. Burchard, *Der Jakobusbrief*, (HNT, 15/1), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000, p. 7

⁷⁷ Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 277; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 204; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 225

⁷⁸ Mussner, p. 8; Adamson, pp. 19-21; Robinson, *Redating*, p. 138; Davids, pp. 21-22; Martin, p. lxxvi; Johnson, p. 121; Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 240

⁷⁹ Laws, p. 41; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 206; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 43; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 253; Burchard, p. 5; W. Popkes, 'Mission of James', pp. 88-92

⁸⁰ Cf. J. E. Porter, 'Audience', 42-50 in T. Enos (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age*, London; NY: Garland, 1996, p. 43; D. Park, 'The Meanings of Audience', *College English* 44 (1982) 247-257, p. 249

⁸¹ Park, 'Meanings of Audience', p. 43

⁸² P. J. Rabinowitz, 'Truth in Fiction: A Re-examination of Audiences', *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977) 121-141, p. 126; Porter, 'Audience', p. 44

whether consciously or unconsciously, by the persons he wishes to address'.⁸³ However, since the text is produced according to the author's expectations and perceptions of his auditors, there may be a gap between the implied audience and the auditors.⁸⁴ If the communication between the author and the auditors is to be successful, that is, in terms of the author's purpose, the gap between the implied audience and the auditors must be kept to a minimum.⁸⁵ In view of this gap, as mentioned above, and the impossibility of knowing how successful the letter was in achieving the author's purpose, this study will concentrate on the author's depiction of the theology and behaviour of the implied audience.

This concentration on the implied audience means that this study is not concerned with the reconstruction of the historical *Sitz im Leben* of the flesh-and-blood addressees; rather it is concerned with the rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation consists in the author's perception, as presented in the letter, of both the actual or potential exigence and the auditors.⁸⁶ Since the situation that is clear in the text is the situation of the implied audience and not the

⁸³ Ch. Perelman & L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, Notre Dame; London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969, p.7

⁸⁴ Rabinowitz, 'Truth in Fiction', pp. 126-127; Park, 'Meanings and Audience', p. 43

⁸⁵ Rabinowitz, 'Truth in Fiction', p. 127; Perelman, *New Rhetoric*, p. 20; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians', *NTS* 33 (1987) 386-403, p. 391

⁸⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Rhetorical Situation', p. 387; D. L. Stamps, 'Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation: The Entextualisation of the Situation in New Testament Epistles', 193-210 in S. E. Porter & T. H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, (JSNTSup, 90), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, p. 199; G.

auditors, it should not be assumed that the two situations are identical. However, the rhetorical situation is not thereby designated as a figment of the author's imagination. Rather, the rhetorical situation is the author's perception of the historical and social situation of his implied audience, providing a window upon the potential or actual exigence as understood by the author. Therefore in concentrating on the rhetorical situation, this study does not deny that the *Sitz im Leben* can be tentatively reconstructed; rather it suggests that the investigation of the rhetorical situation can be carried out with a greater degree of plausibility.

The present investigation will demonstrate that the author of this letter addresses a situation in which the implied audience adheres to a 'defective' theology and pattern of behaviour at odds with the theology and behaviour that he considers to be commensurate with belonging to God's covenant people. In order to resolve this situation the author employs and modifies covenant thought, establishing that he is familiar with Jewish/biblical traditions concerning covenant and depicting the implied audience as those who, to some extent, share this knowledge with him. This suggests that if this text actually functioned as a letter, a conclusion that is probable given the author's concern to ensure the reception of his message and the urgency with which he addresses the failings of the implied audience, it would have worked best if the auditors

shared, to a large extent, the characteristics of the implied audience. However, whether any real audience met these conditions is not ascertainable.

In view of its rhetorical situation, there are a number of settings in which the letter may have arisen. In the first instance it is possible that the letter stems from James the Just and is directed towards Jewish Christians. Accordingly the author's use of covenant thought would resonate with the auditors to a great extent, hopefully having the desired effect of encouraging them to fulfil the covenant. On the other hand, if the letter is pseudonymous and from a later date, it is probable, but not necessary, that the author is Jewish Christian in view of the fact of his knowledge of covenant thought. In this case the auditors need only be biblically literate, being either Jewish or Gentile Christians, for the letter to be successful. However, the text does not give direct access to these auditors and it is impossible to know how successful it was in fulfilling its purpose. Therefore, the present investigation will proceed to consider the letter with regard to its implied audience and rhetorical situation within the general context of the first hundred years of Christianity.

1.3.1 *The Author's Identity*

The prescript begins with the identification of the author as *Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δούλος*. It has already been established that the *Ἰάκωβος* in question is most probably James, the brother of Jesus, whether or not this ascription is authentic or pseudonymous. However, it

remains to be shown what further information concerning the author is disclosed in Jas 1:1.

The prescript presents the author as a *δοῦλος*, and so it is important to establish the meaning of this term in its present context. The LXX uses the *δοῦλος* word-group to refer to service in general, and not only that of slaves. However *δοῦλος*, along with other terms such as *παῖς*,⁸⁷ is almost always used to translate the Hebrew root עבד and its denominatives.⁸⁸ This term is primarily used to indicate a specific personal relationship, that of belonging to somebody.⁸⁹ 'It is a status which involves subjection and allegiance' (2 Sam 19:36-39; Josh 9:24-25).⁹⁰ Whether thinking of עבד or *δοῦλος*, 'the exclusive nature of the relationship' is always implied.⁹¹ The people of Israel are represented as being slaves of God in numerous passages,⁹² and this identification means that enslavement to anyone else violates their relationship with God.⁹³ In addition to this corporate usage, the terminology of slavery is also

⁸⁷ B. G. Wright III, 'Ebed/Doulos: Terms and Social Status in the Meeting of Hebrew Biblical and Hellenistic Culture', *Semeia* 83/84 (1998) 83-111, p. 90

⁸⁸ K. H. Rengstorf, 'δοῦλος', 261-280 in *TDNT Vol. 1*, pp.265-266

⁸⁹ D. E. Callender, 'Servants of God(s) and Servants of Kings in Israel and the Ancient Near East', *Semeia* 83/84 (1998) 67-82, p. 73

⁹⁰ P. Kalluveetil, *Declaration and Covenant*, (AnBib, 88), Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982, p. 120

⁹¹ Rengstorf, 'δοῦλος', p. 267; Callender, 'Servants of God(s)', p. 79

⁹² e.g. Deut 32:36; 2 Chr 12: 5-9; Isa 49:3; Lev 25:55; LXX Pss 134:1; 135:22

⁹³ I. A. H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church: From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, p.

used to express dedication of the individual towards God (LXX Pss 118:38, 76; 142:12; cf. 122:2).⁹⁴ However, the use of this terminology in relation to individuals is more frequently applied to those who mediate between God and humanity, or satisfy the divine claim in an outstanding manner, as slaves (Moses (Josh 14:7); Joshua (Josh 24:29); Abraham (LXX Ps 104:42); David (LXX Ps 88:3); and the prophets (4 Kgdms 17:23 etc)).⁹⁵ The association of the titular description 'slave of God' with these great figures of Israel's past, suggests that being described in this way indicates a certain degree of honour. However, it should be remembered that it is precisely the faithful submission and service of these great figures that results in the title's honorary usage.

In the New Testament this terminology is variously applied to Jesus (Phil 2:7) and Christians in general (1 Pet 2:16; Acts 2:18; 4:29; Rev 19:5; 22:3,6). Furthermore, it is also used with regard to Christian leaders (Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1; Jude 1:1). Therefore, it is evident that James is not alone in employing the terminology of slavery to describe the credentials of its author. However, in James this slavery is connected to both God and Jesus Christ, whereas in the other texts it is associated with Jesus Christ alone.⁹⁶

The primacy of *θεοῦ* in the description *θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δούλος* indicates that James is claiming to be 'a slave of God and the Lord

⁹⁴ Johnson, p. 168

⁹⁵ Rengstorff, 'δούλος', p. 267

⁹⁶ Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 47

Jesus Christ', and not 'a slave of Jesus Christ, God and Lord'.⁹⁷ In view of the exclusive relationship indicated through the use of *δοῦλος*, its association with two referents is surprising. Indeed, it indicates a fundamental change in the perception of the divine-human relationship. That is, the exclusive relationship between God and Israel (or individual Israelites) is transformed into an exclusive relationship between James and not only God, but also Jesus Christ. Through this development, the distinction between God and Jesus Christ is blurred. Furthermore, it will be shown through the consideration of Jas 2:1-13 that this blurring is consistent with the author's practice elsewhere in the letter, indicating once again that the prescript should be considered an integral part of the letter.⁹⁸

In view of the preceding discussion, it is clear that the author acknowledges the lordship of Jesus Christ, and that in describing himself as the 'slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ' presents himself as their faithful representative.⁹⁹ The simplicity with which he describes himself indicates that the implied audience is expected to understand and accept both his use of *δοῦλος* and the combined lordship of God and Jesus Christ without 'further explanation or justification'.¹⁰⁰ Since the author's presentation is intended to establish his credentials, this simplicity indicates that, at the very least, the audience is expected to respect

⁹⁷ R. P. Martin, p. 6

⁹⁸ See sections 6.2.1 and 6.4.1

⁹⁹ Mussner, p. 61; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 46

¹⁰⁰ S. Laws, *The Epistle of James*, London: A & C Black, 1980, p. 46

the author's self-designation, whether or not they share his belief in the lordship of Jesus.

1.3.2 *Identifying the Implied Audience*

In the adscript the implied audience is identified as *ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ*. This identification is not far removed from the corporate and geographically spread-out audiences countenanced in the diaspora letter tradition (2 *Apoc. Bar.* 77:12, 17-19; 2 *Macc* 1:1,10; b. *Sanh.* 11a). It identifies the audience in terms of Israel's tribal constituency, and by locating them 'in the diaspora' places them outside Palestine. Furthermore, this description suggests that they encompass a number of 'tribal' entities who possess a unifying bond that allows them to be addressed together as a distinct sociological group, in spite of the diverse geographical locations they inhabit (cf. 1 *Pet* 1:1). In order to establish the nature of this unifying bond it is necessary to consider the adscript's description of the audience in more detail.

As already noted, the implied audience's identification as the 'twelve tribes' is related to the tribal constituency of Israel. The perception that the twelve tribes of Israel continued to exist is apparent in a number of writings (1 *Esdr* 7:8, 9; *T. Benj.* 9:2; *T. Moses* 3:1-9; 4:5-9; *Sib. Or.* 2.171; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 77:12, 17-19; 4 *Ezra* 13:39-50);¹⁰¹ this suggests that it is possible that James' audience is

¹⁰¹ R. Bauckham, 'Anna of the Tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36-38)', *RB* 104 (1997) 161-191, p. 163; D. E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, (WBC, 52B), Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, p. 461;

formed by the dispersed elements of the nation of Israel. This possibility receives further support from the early Christian application of the phrases 'twelve tribes' and 'twelve tribes of Israel' to the nation of Israel (Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30; Acts 26:7; Rev 7:4-8; *Ep. Apos.* 30; *Prot. Jas.* 1:1, 3; 6:2). Indeed, in view of this evidence, one may concur with Allison and Bauckham that the description of the implied audience in Jas 1:1, 'most naturally suggests one thing, namely, Jews living in the dispersion'.¹⁰²

However, a further identification of the audience occurs in Jas 2:1,¹⁰³ suggesting that even if 'twelve tribes' is an alternative expression for Israel,¹⁰⁴ it is an Israel in which membership is redefined in terms of those who possess faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁵ The narrowing of what it means to belong to Israel has a long history in Jewish sources, having its first significant appearance in the writings of Ezra and Nehemiah and remaining the subject of (re)definition

Allison, 'Fiction', p. 537; H. Frankemölle, *Der Brief des Jakobus*, (ÖTK, 17), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 1994, p. 126

¹⁰² Allison, 'Fiction', p. 530; Bauckham, *James*, p. 14

¹⁰³ See Section 6.2

¹⁰⁴ Burchard, p. 48

¹⁰⁵ Contra Allison ('Fiction', pp. 541-545), who seems all too aware that his deletion of the reference to Jesus is without serious foundation. This is clear from the fact that he presents two possible alternative arguments. His suggestion that 2:1 addresses a distinct section of the implied audience is possible, but hardly plausible given the use of *ἀδελφός* and the fact that the whole of 2:1-26 is concerned with living in accordance with the faith described in this verse. Moreover, the idea that James is assuming that many, or most of the Jews in the diaspora were Christians is not found in the text, and should also be rejected.

throughout the literature of early Judaism.¹⁰⁶ According to Jubilees, belonging is by birth and 'proper' behaviour, while in the Dead Sea Scrolls membership in the covenant people is on a voluntary basis (1Q14 Fr. 8-10 Lines 6-8; 1QS 1:7-8; 5:1, 6).¹⁰⁷ In both of these cases ethnicity remains important as other nations remain outside of God's covenant (*Jub.* 1:9; 2:19; 22:16-22; CD 12:5-10; 4Q394 Fr. 3-7 1:6-12). However, in spite of the reference to Abraham as 'our father' (Jas 2:20),¹⁰⁸ the emphasis on ethnicity found in these texts is absent from James. Indeed, it will be argued that the opposition to the nations found in these texts is developed here into an opposition to the 'world'. In view of these factors the ethnicity of the implied audience cannot be determined. Consequently it should be recognised that James is more concerned with appropriating the identity of Israel for a 'new' group consisting of those possessing faith in Jesus Christ, whether these people are Jews or Gentiles.¹⁰⁹

In addition to being described as the 'twelve tribes', the audience is also depicted as being located 'in the diaspora'. The use of the term *διασπορά* has a variety of implications for the audience's identity. The major difficulty in

¹⁰⁶ B. W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11*, (JSNTSup, 57), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991, p. 31; J. Blenkinsopp, 'Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism: An Aspect of Second Temple History', 1-26, 299-309 in E. P. Sanders (ed.), *Jewish-Christian Self-Definition Volume 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period*, London: SCM, 1981, p. 5

¹⁰⁷ E. J. Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul: A Study of Ritual Boundaries as Identity Markers*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 89, 94, 109; Blenkinsopp, 'Interpretation', p. 22

¹⁰⁸ See section 7.7.1

¹⁰⁹ Cf. R. W. Wall, *Community of the Wise: The Letter of James*, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1997, 12

deciphering these implications is presented by the negative connotations associated with the term *διασπορά* and the assumption that these are representative of Jewish self-understanding outside Palestine. That is, the term *διασπορά* is often perceived as indicating that Jews outside of Palestine 'experienced their migrant status as undesirable'.¹¹⁰ Therefore, before considering the term *διασπορά* itself, it is first necessary to give brief consideration to the self-understanding of the Jewish people outside of Palestine.

In the first instance it must be recognised that while deportation by force was undoubtedly a negative experience,¹¹¹ many, if not the majority, of the Jews living in the diaspora during the first century CE had not been forcefully repatriated in the biblical exiles.¹¹² Indeed, even though the letters embedded in 2 Macc 1:1-2:18 include a prayer for the gathering of the people, the overall message presupposes the continued existence of the diaspora community in Egypt.¹¹³ Furthermore, life in the diaspora could also be celebrated as the colonisation of the world (Jos *Ant.* 4.115-16; *J.W.* 2.398; Philo, *Legat.* 281-282;

¹¹⁰ J. Tromp, 'The Ancient Jewish Diaspora: Some Linguistic and Sociological Observations', 13-35 in G. ter Haar, *Strangers and Sojourners: Religious Communities in the Diaspora*, Leuven: Peeters, 1998, p. 14

¹¹¹ J. M. Scott, 'Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman period', 173-218 in J. M. Scott (ed.), *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, p. 203

¹¹² Tromp, 'Jewish Diaspora', p. 14

¹¹³ E. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 238-39

Flacc. 45-46; *Mos.* 2.232). Indeed, Philo can even regard pilgrimage to the Jerusalem Temple as involving a separation from the diaspora Jews' *patris* (*Spec.* 1.68).¹¹⁴ Therefore while Palestine mattered to diaspora Jews, to varying degrees, it is evident that the supposedly negative connotations of the term *διασπορά* should not be understood as indicating that life outside of Palestine was almost universally understood as an undesirable existence.¹¹⁵

The term *διασπορά* is used rarely and, in contrast to the verb *διασπείρειν*, almost exclusively in texts displaying the Deuteronomistic pattern of sin-exile-return.¹¹⁶ In this context, *διασπορά* is a technical term for 'the people who have been dispersed', that is, it refers to the state of being dispersed.¹¹⁷ The dispersal in question is depicted as resulting from the people's violation of their covenant with God (*Deut* 28:25; 30:1-4; *Jer* 15:5-7; 41(34):17-18; cf. *T. Naph.* 4:4-5; *T. Iss.* 6:2; *Pss. Sol.* 9:2). The negative connotation that accrues to the term from its depiction as punishment for transgression is reinforced by the additional intimation that the people dispersed in the nations will be despised (*2 Macc* 1:27; *Tob* 13:1-5; *Bar* 2:4; 3:8; *T. Levi* 10:3-4; *T. Asher* 7:2-3). In view of these examples and the connection with judgement and punishment, Van

¹¹⁴ S. Pearce, 'Belonging and Not Belonging: Local Perspectives in Philo of Alexandria', 79-105 in Jones & Pearce, *Jewish Local Patriotism*, pp. 98, 101

¹¹⁵ Gruen, *Diaspora*, p. 252; J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996, pp. 421-423

¹¹⁶ Tromp, 'Jewish Diaspora', pp. 15-20

¹¹⁷ Tromp, 'Jewish Diaspora', p. 21; K. L. Schmidt, '*διασπορά*', 98-104 in *TDNT Vol 3*, p. 99

Unnik's conclusion that this term is almost always used with a negative sense is understandable.¹¹⁸

However, as the connotations of the verb *διασπείρειν* vary according to context (e.g. Gen 11:8-9; 2 Sam 20:22), so to overemphasise the idea of dispersion as judgement and punishment is to ignore the soteriological connotations of the term.¹¹⁹ That is, the term is not only used with the negative emphasis of punishment, but also as the object of God's 'salvific' action of gathering his people (Deut 30:4; Neh 1:9; Ps 146 (147):2; Isa 49:6; 2 Macc 1:27; *Pss. Sol.* 8:26-28).¹²⁰ Therefore, while Jews acquainted with scripture 'could not help but be aware of the fact that...dispersion was understood as punishment for the sins of the people of Israel',¹²¹ it is also evident that this same acquaintance would make the Jewish people aware of the hope of God's future ingathering.

In view of the important role the prescript occupies in establishing the relationship between the author and the implied audience, it is highly unlikely that the negative connotations of the term *διασπορά* are being emphasised in the adscript. On the contrary, in combination with the description of the audience as the 'twelve tribes', it is the note of restoration that resounds the

¹¹⁸ W. C. Van Unnik (ed. P. W. van der Horst), *Das Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit*, (AGJU, 17), Leiden: Brill, 1993, pp. 88, 106

¹¹⁹ M. Baumann, 'Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison', *Numen* 47 (2000) 313-337, p. 317

¹²⁰ Tromp, 'Jewish Diaspora', p. 22; cf. Baumann, 'Diaspora', p. 319

loudest. This description depicts the audience, not in terms of the separate bodies constituted by the exiles of Israel and Judah (i.e. the nine and a half tribes and the two and a half tribes (2 Apoc. Bar. 77:12, 17-19 T. Moses 3:1-9; 4:5-9; 4 Ezra 13:39-50)), but in terms of the tribal confederacy that received the covenant at Sinai and conquered the promised land.¹²² This corresponds to the hope for a restored Israel found within Jewish literature (Isa 11:11-16; 27:12-13; 49:5-6; Jer 38 (31):7-14; Ezek 37:15-23; Hos 11:10-11; Sir 36 (33):11; 48:10; Bar 5:5-9; 1QM 2:1-3).¹²³ Therefore the implied audience is depicted in terms of the hoped-for restoration of Israel.¹²⁴ However, in spite of their designation as the 'twelve tribes', the restoration is as yet unfulfilled since they remain 'in the diaspora'.¹²⁵

In the texts that deal with the gathering of the diaspora the restorative action of God is a response to the repentance of the dispersed people who turn from sin in order to keep the covenant (Deut 4:29-31; 30:1-5; Neh 1:8-9; Jer 29:10-14;

¹²¹ I. M. Gafni, *Land, Center and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity*, (JSPSup, 21), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, p. 21

¹²² As J. E. Huther (*The Epistles of James and John*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1882, p. 40) recognises, this designation identifies the implied audience with those to whom God's covenant promises were made.

¹²³ See further E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice & Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE*, London: SCM, 1992, pp. 289-298

¹²⁴ Contra Frankemölle, p. 127; with A. Geysler, 'The Twelve Tribes in Revelation: Judean and Judeo-Christian Apocalypticism', *NTS* 28 (1982) 388-399, p. 390; Bauckham, *James*, p. 15; M. A. Jackson-McCabe, 'A Letter to the Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora: Wisdom and "Apocalyptic" Eschatology in the Letter of James', *SBLSP* 35 (1996) 504-517, pp. 511, 515; W. Popkes, 'Mission of James', p. 89; Mussner, p. 62; Johnson, p. 172; Edgar, *Chosen*, 98

¹²⁵ Jackson-McCabe, 'Twelve Tribes', p. 515

Jdt 5:19). In this way the restoration to the land involves a restoration of covenant faithfulness on the part of Israel. The restoration of fellow brothers to the way of truth is addressed in Jas 5:19-20. T. B. Cargal has suggested that there is a parallel between the prescript's reference to the diaspora and the exhortation in 5:19-20, indicating that the author desires to restore those who have wandered from the truth.¹²⁶ Although such a parallel is possible, it is far from clear.¹²⁷ Nevertheless it will be shown in this thesis that James is concerned with encouraging and restoring the covenant faithfulness of the implied audience. However, whether this restoration of faithfulness involves a physical restoration to the land is unclear from the letter as a whole, although it is clear that it is informed by the imminent expectation of the eschatological judgement.

From this consideration it is evident that the implied audience is depicted as a sociological group bound together by faith in Jesus Christ. In possessing this faith, they are connected to the author whose authority for addressing them is derived from his claim to be a 'slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ'. In addition to this connection James and the audience also share knowledge of the cultural heritage of Israel. The author employs this heritage to shape the audience's identity in terms of the hoped-for restored Israel. By situating them in the diaspora he indicates that this restoration has yet been completely fulfilled

¹²⁶ T. B. Cargal, *Restoring the Diaspora: Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993, pp. 46, 49

¹²⁷ Bauckham, *James*, p. 14, n. 2; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 97

and that, as a group, they are distinguishable from their environment. Although their presence in the diaspora does not necessarily result from sin or indicate a continued unfaithfulness, it does indicate the need for faithful fulfilment of the covenant. That the audience is lacking in this regard will be demonstrated later through the consideration of other parts of the letter.¹²⁸

1.4 *Theology and Continuity of Thought in James*

In addition to the redefinition of paraenesis and the renewed interest in the issues of authorship, provenance and date, the reaction to Dibelius' understanding of James as paraenesis has also challenged his conclusion that 'James has no "theology"'.¹²⁹ However, before considering this reaction, it is first of all necessary to establish what Dibelius actually meant.

In his commentary Dibelius presents his conclusion that James has no theology as a consequence of his classification of the letter as paraenesis, since 'paraenesis provides no opportunity for the development and elaboration of religious ideas'.¹³⁰ However, this conclusion is not simply the result of Dibelius' understanding of James as paraenesis; rather, it results from his analysis of the letter, an analysis that establishes that it lacks continuity of thought. It is as a result of this lack that the letter provides no opportunity to develop and

¹²⁸ See Chapters 3-8

¹²⁹ Dibelius, p. 21

elaborate religious ideas, and so there is no 'coherent structure of theological thought'.¹³¹ Therefore, for Dibelius, the question of James' having a theology is integrally related to whether or not it has continuity of thought, since the former cannot exist without the latter.

In contrast to Dibelius, present scholarship shares the unanimous conviction that there is continuity of thought in James as a whole.¹³² This conviction involves the rejection of Dibelius' views regarding the literary character of the letter, a rejection that has come about as the result of the redefinition of paraenesis and the examination of the employment of rhetorical techniques and arrangements within the letter.¹³³ In addition, other investigations have emphasised that the structure of James relates to the form of letters or other forms of discourse.¹³⁴ Although these investigations differ with regard to the specific details of the structures they propose, they indicate that both individual

¹³⁰ Dibelius, p. 21

¹³¹ Dibelius, p. 22

¹³² Penner, 'Current Research', p. 272

¹³³ W. Wuellner, 'Der Jakobusbrief im Licht der Rhetorik und Textpragmatik', *LB* 43 (1978) 5-65; E. Baasland, 'Literarische Form, Thematik und geschichtliche Einordnung des Jakobusbriefes', *ANRW* 2.25.5 3646-3684; J. H. Elliott, 'The Epistle of James in Rhetorical and Social Scientific Perspective: Holiness-Wholeness and Patterns of Replication', *BTB* 23 (1993) 71-81; D. F. Watson, 'James 2 in Light of Greco-Roman Schemes of Argumentation', *NTS* 39 (1993) 94-121; *idem*, 'The Rhetoric Of James 3:1-12 and a Classical Pattern of Argumentation', *NovT* 35 (1993) 48-64; *idem*, 'Rhetorical Criticism of Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles since 1978', *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 5 (1997) 175-207, pp. 187-190; Cargal, *Restoring*, pp. 34-36; L. Thurén, 'Risky Rhetoric in James?' *NovT* 37 (1995) 262-284; Wachob, *Voice*, pp. 11-17, 59-71

passages and the letter as a whole can be understood to be structurally and argumentatively coherent. As Davids argues, 'as soon as one admits that there is unity to the Epistle of James, one must also begin to look for a theology'.¹³⁵ However, it is not immediately clear where one should look for this theology.

It is impossible to read James without recognising that it contains theological references. In view of this fact, some interpreters point to the letter's teaching about God, as proof that Dibelius was wrong to conclude that it has no theology. This teaching is deduced from the individual statements about God contained in the letter, and the role these statements perform with regard to ethical motivation.¹³⁶ However, Dibelius does not deny that the letter contains statements about God.¹³⁷ On the contrary, he recognises that James makes use of 'theological formulations', but insists that the conceptions involved in these individual statements are not developed or elaborated upon either within the passages in which they occur or in the letter as a whole.¹³⁸ Therefore, if these statements are to be used to challenge Dibelius it must be demonstrated

¹³⁴ Francis, 'Form and Function', pp. 118-120; Davids, 25-28; Penner, *Eschatology*, pp. 121-213; K. D. Tollefson, 'The Epistle of James as Dialectical Discourse', *BTB* 27 (1997) 62-69

¹³⁵ Davids, p. 34

¹³⁶ F. Mussner, 'Die ethische Motivation in Jakobusbrief', 416-423 in H. Merklein (ed.), *Neues Testament und Ethik: Für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, Freiburg: Herder, 1989, p. 423; J. B. Adamson, *James: The Man and His Message*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989, p. 362; Johnson, p. 87

¹³⁷ Dibelius, p. 25

¹³⁸ Dibelius, p. 25

that they form part of a larger theological structure that brings continuity of thought to the letter as a whole.

In this regard it has been suggested that all of James' ethical and theological teaching flows from his Christology.¹³⁹ However, it is difficult to reconcile this suggestion with the evidence of the letter, not only because much of the letter's Christology is indirect,¹⁴⁰ but also because its theological statements primarily refer to God without any reference to Christology (e.g. 1:5; 2:5; 4:5-6). In contrast to this suggestion, Obermüller has argued that all of the material in Jas 1:5-5:20 stems from two aspects of God's character, that he is merciful and compassionate, and that he resists the exalted and gives grace to the lowly.¹⁴¹ Additionally, Laws has argued that the *imitatio Dei* motif provides the doctrinal basis of James' ethics.¹⁴² These studies indicate that the letter's concentration on the character of God may be an appropriate place to start looking for the theology of James.

An alternative starting point in the search for theology in James is provided by the recognition that the letter's teaching can be understood according to certain topics or themes. Accordingly, Davids proceeds to examine the letter's teaching

¹³⁹ Adamson, *James: The Man*, p. 262

¹⁴⁰ F. Mussner, "Direkte" und "Indirekte" Christologie im Jakobusbrief', *Catholica* 24 (1970) 111-117; R. Obermüller, 'Hermeneutische Themen im Jakobusbrief', *Bib* 53 (1972) 234-244, p. 237; Adamson, *James: The Man*, p. 262

¹⁴¹ Obermüller, 'Hermeneutische Themen', p. 236

in terms of seven areas of its thought, which collectively represent its theology. These are suffering/testing, eschatology, Christology, poverty-piety, law, grace and faith, wisdom and prayer.¹⁴³ However, Dibelius does not deny that the letter contains themes,¹⁴⁴ and if these themes are to be understood collectively as indicating that James has a theology then it must be demonstrated that they are held together by some unifying factor. For Davids, it is the theme of testing that 'forms the thread which ties' these disparate elements together.¹⁴⁵ However, although this theme is prominent in Jas 1, it is not as ever-present in the rest of the letter as Davids suggests. Furthermore, this theme involves other concerns that are present throughout the letter. In particular it can be seen as subservient to the author's general concern with faithfulness, whether this is described in terms of perfection, singleness, wholeness or integrity.¹⁴⁶

The subservience of the theme of testing to the letter's general concern for faithfulness may be thought to provide some evidence for the unifying role performed by the theme of perfection. However, as will be shown below, the depiction of this concern in terms of perfection is relatively restricted.¹⁴⁷ In

¹⁴² Laws, pp. 30-32; *idem*, 'The Doctrinal Basis for the ethics of James', *SE* 7 (1982) 299-305; cf. section 1.4.1

¹⁴³ Davids, pp. 34-57

¹⁴⁴ Dibelius, pp. 6, 48

¹⁴⁵ Davids, p. 35

¹⁴⁶ J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of James*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1913 (3rd ed.), pp. cxxxi-cxxxii; J. B. Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976, p. 20; Laws, p. 29; Martin, p. lxxix; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, pp. 43-117; Tsuji, *Glaube*, pp. 53-54, 100-103; Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 10; Elliott, 'Holiness-Wholeness', p. 72; Bauckham, *James*, pp. 177-185

¹⁴⁷ Section 1.4.2

addition to the possibility that the theme of perfection unifies the teaching of the letter it has also been suggested that baptism,¹⁴⁸ soteriology,¹⁴⁹ and wisdom perform this role.¹⁵⁰

According to G. Braumann the use of salvation as a motive in relation to the exhortations to accept the word and put off wickedness in Jas 1:21 indicates that the author is drawing on the background of baptism where similar connections are made (1 Pet 3:21).¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, even if such a connection was accepted with regard to Jas 1:21, it is unlikely that baptismal theology provides the theological structure of the letter as a whole, since the links between this background and the letter's use of *σώζω* (2:14; 4:12; 5:15, 20) that Braumann suggests are extremely tenuous. However, the frequent references to the approaching eschaton, with its prospect of reward and judgement (e.g. 1:12, 21; 2:12-14; 4:11-12; 5:7-11, 19-20), do indicate that soteriology is important for James. Nevertheless, even though the purpose of the letter may be considered soteriological,¹⁵² in that James attempts to turn the implied audience from their sins through the consideration of their salvation at the future judgement, this purpose is not simply identical with the letter's theological

¹⁴⁸ G. Braumann, 'Der theologische Hintergrund des Jakobusbriefes', *TZ* 18 (1962) 401-410, pp. 409-410

¹⁴⁹ E. A. C. Pretorius, 'Coherency in James: A Soteriological Intent?' *Neot* 28 (1994) 541-555; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, pp. 303-315

¹⁵⁰ Hoppe, *Der theologische Hintergrund*, p. 147; U. Luck, 'Die Theologie des Jakobusbriefes', *ZTK* 81 (1984) 1-30, p. 15

¹⁵¹ Braumann, 'Der theologische Hintergrund des Jakobusbriefes', p. 405

¹⁵² Pretorius, 'Coherency in James', pp. 542, 554

structure. Rather, it represents a fundamental element within this theological structure, that is, the importance that attaches to whether the actions of the implied audience are compatible with their relationship to God.

The consideration of the importance of wisdom in relation to James is variously presented as a claim that from a history of religions standpoint James stands in the tradition of Jewish wisdom theology,¹⁵³ and that wisdom theology performs a fundamental structuring role in the letter.¹⁵⁴ These claims are based on a number of factors, including the parallels that exist between James and the wisdom literature,¹⁵⁵ the supposed connection between the letter's genre and the wisdom literature,¹⁵⁶ and the role of the theme of wisdom within the letter as a whole.¹⁵⁷ The parallels between James and Jewish wisdom literature cannot be denied. However, it is clear that the legal and prophetic traditions are equally important to James.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, it is clear that Jewish wisdom literature encompasses a number of different genres so that a connection between this body of texts and James on the basis of genre is not feasible. A similar conclusion may be reached regarding the similarity of forms found in James and the wisdom literature, since these forms are not restricted to this body of

¹⁵³ Hoppe, *Der theologische Hintergrund*, p. 147

¹⁵⁴ Luck, 'Die Theologie des Jakobusbriefes', p. 16

¹⁵⁵ E. Baasland, 'Der Jakobusbrief als Neutestamentliche Weisheitschaft', p. 123; Martin, p. xcii; Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 42; Frankemölle, pp. 190-194

¹⁵⁶ Dibelius, p. 27; Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 42; Bauckham, *James*, p. 29

¹⁵⁷ Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 43; R. F. Chaffin, 'The Theme of Wisdom in the Epistle of James', *Ashland Theological Journal* 29 (1997) 23-49, p. 23

¹⁵⁸ Johnson, p. 33

texts.¹⁵⁹ In addition to these difficulties it is far from clear that the theme of wisdom performs the role claimed for it by Luck.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, this theme is only given significant attention in Jas 3:13-18, since it is merely mentioned in passing in 1:5. This is not to claim that this theme is unimportant for James, but only that its role in terms of the letter as a whole has been overestimated in a similar fashion to Davids' assessment of the theme of testing.¹⁶¹ Therefore, it is unhelpful to discuss James' theology in terms of wisdom.

The preceding paragraphs illustrate the difficulty of establishing the theological structure of James, by extending one of its themes to embrace all of the others, or by adding together its statements about God and its teaching on various topics. Nevertheless, the foregoing consideration has also suggested that the character of God and the nature of the implied audience's relationship to him are important factors within the letter's theological structure. However, there is one important aspect of the letter that remains to be considered, that is, its emphasis on the problem of doubleness or inconsistency. The ubiquitous nature of James' indictment of inconsistency and doubleness has been recognised by both Laws and Bauckham,¹⁶² although this recognition has led their investigations in different directions. While Laws has been led to examine the possibility that the doctrinal basis of ethics in James is the *imitatio Dei*,

¹⁵⁹ See Penner, *Eschatology*, pp. 126-127, 217-219

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Adamson, *James: The Man*, p. 365

¹⁶¹ Cf. D. J. Verseput, 'Wisdom, 4Q185, and the Epistle of James', *JBL* 117 (1998) 691-707, p. 706; Edgar, *Chosen*, pp. 23-24

¹⁶² Laws, p. 29; *idem*, 'Doctrinal', *SE* 7 (1982) 299-305, p. 300; Bauckham, *James*, pp. 178-179

Bauckham has followed a path of investigation through the theme of perfection towards the importance of Deuteronomy 6:4-6.¹⁶³ These divergent paths will be considered further now.

1.4.1 *Laws and the Imitatio Dei*

After noting the prevalence of James' attack on disunity and inconsistency, Laws notes that since doubleness is the essence of sin (1:8; 4:8), the ideal state of humanity is that of singleness or integrity (1:4; 3:2; cf. 3:17).¹⁶⁴ In addition to the need for humanity to attain a state of singleness or integrity, Laws discerns an emphasis upon the 'singleness of God'.¹⁶⁵ According to Laws this emphasis on the 'singleness' of God is found in 2:11, 19, 4:12 and 1:5. However, while I agree with Laws' assessment that 2:11 and 4:12 suggest that 'the character of the one who gave the Law...is relevant to the exhortation' to obey it, these verses do not so much emphasise God's singleness as God's metaphysical unity.¹⁶⁶ That is, James' emphasis is on the fact that there is only one God and that he is not broken into disparate parts, rather than the singleness of his actions. It is the fact that there is only one lawgiver and therefore only one law that he is highlighting. Through this emphasis James does not invite the implied audience to imitate God's singleness, but rather, he exhorts them to fulfil the

¹⁶³ Laws, p. 32; *idem*, 'Doctrinal', p. 304; Bauckham, *James*, p. 182

¹⁶⁴ Laws, pp. 29-30; *idem*, 'Doctrinal', p. 301

¹⁶⁵ Laws, p. 30

¹⁶⁶ Laws, 'Doctrinal', p. 299; See section 6.5.1

whole law (2:11) and ensures that no one usurps God's place as lawgiver and judge (4:12). This indicates that while God's character is important for the behaviour of the audience, this importance cannot simply be correlated with the *imitatio Dei*.

In Jas 1:5 Laws finds that God is depicted as consistently and wholeheartedly the one who gives.¹⁶⁷ For Laws this is another indication of the importance of God's 'singleness', although unlike the instances discussed above, this example of 'singleness' withstands investigation. However, being distracted by her understanding of the terminology of 'singleness' in relation to God's metaphysical unity, Laws fails to grasp the full significance of the description of God in 1:5.¹⁶⁸ The 'singleness' of God described in 1:5 relates to God's faithfulness and absolute goodness in giving. According to 1:5-8 the aspects of God's character that the believer should imitate are his consistency and generosity, while also accepting that God is unequivocally good. Therefore it is not only imitation, but also acceptance of God's character that prevents doubleness and enables faithfulness in the life of the believer.¹⁶⁹ In view of this brief discussion of Laws' investigation, it is evident that the relationship between God's character and faithful behaviour is an important element of the teaching of James. Furthermore, it appears from 1:5-8 that James' concern with the character of God is significant for understanding his indictment of doubleness.

¹⁶⁷ Laws, 'Doctrinal', p. 300

¹⁶⁸ Laws, 'Doctrinal', pp. 302-303

¹⁶⁹ See section 4.3

1.4.2 Bauckham and the Theme of Wholeness

In contrast to the approach taken by Laws, Bauckham attempts to understand James' attack on doubleness and inconsistency in relation to the letter's teaching on 'perfection' or 'wholeness'. This approach stems from Bauckham's conclusion that 'perfection' is

not just one important theme, but the overarching theme of the whole letter, encompassing all the other major concerns.¹⁷⁰

The argument that Bauckham puts forward for the dominance of this theme begins with the understanding that Jas 1:2-4 introduces this theme with a particularly strong emphasis in verse 4. While the terms *τέλειος* and *όλόκληρος* appear in verse 4, I would suggest that the major concern in 1:2-4 is the need for *ύπομονή* when faced with trials.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, it is *ύπομονή* that characterises the faithful when faced with trials, while perfection and wholeness are the end products of this faithful response to trials. On this basis it appears that James is concerned with faithfulness, but there is no suggestion that the understanding of this faithfulness should be restricted to the category of 'perfection' or 'wholeness'.

¹⁷⁰ Bauckham, *James*, p. 177

¹⁷¹ See section 4.2

Another aspect of the letter that, for Bauckham, points to the importance of this theme of 'perfection', is the frequency with which *τέλειος* and its cognate verb *τελειοῦν* appear (1:4, 17, 25; 2:8, 22; 3:2).¹⁷² On this basis these terms for 'perfection' are proclaimed as 'a favourite of James'.¹⁷³ However, even a cursory glance through a concordance reveals that terms such as *ἔργον* (1:4, 25; 2:14-26; 3:13) and *πίστις* (1:3, 6; 2:1, 5, 14-26; 5:15) and their cognates appear as or more frequently than *τέλειος* and its cognates. Therefore if frequency of terminology is understood as an indicator of thematic importance, the themes of faith and works appear to be as or more important than that of 'perfection'. However, Bauckham admits that the use and frequency of the terminology of 'perfection' and 'wholeness' is only a preliminary indication that this theme pervades the letter as a whole.¹⁷⁴

In order to establish the pervasive force of this theme Bauckham offers a schematic account of five aspects of the notion of 'wholeness': these aspects are integration, exclusion, completion, consistency, and divine perfection. In considering the aspect of integration, Bauckham focuses on the need for the individual to be wholly devoted to God rather than being half-hearted and therefore unstable and restless (1:6-8; 3:8). That James requires that the believer be wholly devoted to God does not necessitate that 'wholeness' should be understood as the dominant theme of the letter. Rather it demonstrates that

¹⁷² Bauckham, *James*, p. 177; Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 57

¹⁷³ Bauckham, *James*, p. 177

¹⁷⁴ Bauckham, *James*, p. 178

the letter is concerned with faithfulness in the relationship between the believer and God, and that 'wholeness' is an important aspect of such faithfulness. The same conclusion can be drawn from Bauckham's consideration of the integration required in the community as a whole (3:13-17; 4:1-2, 11-12), where Bauckham notes it is 'loyalty to God and each other that should unite' the individual believers in 'a community characterised by peaceable...relationships'.¹⁷⁵

The second aspect of 'wholeness' that Bauckham deals with is that of 'exclusion', i.e. that aspect 'that creates and maintains the whole by excluding what is incompatible'.¹⁷⁶ While the exclusion of imperfection is inherent in the concept of perfection, James deals explicitly with exclusion in relation to perfection only in 3:2. This suggests that the concern the letter exhibits with excluding what is incompatible with devotion to God is not necessarily an aspect of the theme of perfection. As Bauckham observes, the single-minded who exclude anything that detracts from their relationship to God are contrasted with the double-minded who are divided in their loyalties between God and the 'world'. However, while Bauckham is right to relate this dualism to the aspect of exclusion, in my opinion the theme of wholeness fits into the thought pattern that underpins this relationship between exclusion and dualism in James and not vice versa.¹⁷⁷ The dualism Bauckham is discussing is not simply a dualism

¹⁷⁵ Bauckham, *James*, pp. 178-179

¹⁷⁶ Bauckham, *James*, p. 179

¹⁷⁷ Bauckham, *James*, pp. 179-180

of value-systems,¹⁷⁸ since the exclusive loyalty demanded of the believer is not only loyalty to that lifestyle commanded by God (2:8-12), but also loyalty to God himself, as is clear in the author's use of accusation of adultery through 'friendship with the world' (4:4; 2:23).¹⁷⁹ This suggests that James' indictment of doubleness relates to the need for exclusive loyalty in the believer's relationship to God, and that the force of that indictment is due to the threat to such loyalty posed by the 'world'.

The aspect of 'consistency' is, as Bauckham admits, essentially another way of considering 'integration', 'exclusion' and 'completion',¹⁸⁰ and therefore I will not discuss it here. However, before discussing the aspect of 'divine perfection', that of 'completion' requires a brief consideration. While the adding of one thing to another can be understood as 'completion', it appears quite arbitrary to consider that the need to not only hear, but also do (1:22-25), should be considered an act of completion necessary for the attainment of wholeness. The passage itself offers no evidence that it should be subordinated to a concern for wholeness. Rather, it is concerned with the necessity of acting in obedience to the law, as opposed to hearing and forgetting it. This aspect of 'wholeness' simply indicates that James is concerned to motivate faithful responses to the possession of the law (1:22-25; 2:12) and faith (2:14-26), rather than the overarching importance of 'perfection'.

¹⁷⁸ Contra Bauckham, *James*, p. 179

¹⁷⁹ See section 3.6

¹⁸⁰ Bauckham, *James*, p. 181

The final aspect of 'wholeness' that Bauckham examines brings his views into correspondence with those expressed by Laws, as it is here that Bauckham considers the significance of 'divine perfection'. Bauckham recognises that in order for the believer to aspire to 'wholeness' as expounded in his discussion of 'integration', 'exclusion', 'completion' and 'consistency', he or she requires a 'focus of integration' and a 'standard of consistency'. For Bauckham, this focus and standard is found in God and God's law; a conclusion based on the fact that God is characterised by wholeness and consistency (1:5, 13, 17).¹⁸¹ Furthermore, he notes that Lev 19:2 and Deut 6:4-6 connect God with the wholeness required from his people, and that these texts are probably implicit in the paraenesis of James.¹⁸² As the

one God provides the single object of wholehearted love...[d]evotion to any other object is idolatry. This is why James refers to 'the world' as though it were an idol or another god....¹⁸³

Bauckham concludes that the dualism he has associated with the theme of 'wholeness' is the 'necessary implication of the exclusiveness of the total devotion to the one and only God which the *Shema* requires'.¹⁸⁴ This corresponds to the conclusions drawn above from Bauckham's discussion of

¹⁸¹ Bauckham, *James*, p. 181

¹⁸² Bauckham, *James*, pp. 181-182

¹⁸³ Bauckham, *James*, p. 182

¹⁸⁴ Bauckham, *James*, p. 182

'exclusion', where it was found that the indictment of doubleness is connected to the need for exclusive loyalty in the believer's relationship to God.

It is clear then that while the theme of 'perfection' is not the overarching and all-encompassing theme Bauckham believes it to be, it remains an important theme in the letter as a whole. Furthermore, in criticising and interacting with Bauckham's views, it has become apparent that the indictment of doubleness is related to the author's concern with the character of God and the nature of the relationship between the believer and God. Moreover, this concern with the relationship between the believer and God involves the need for exclusive loyalty in the face of the danger posed by the 'world'.

1.4.3 *Covenant Thought and the Letter of James*

The consideration of the views of Laws and Bauckham has confirmed the suggestions¹ made on the basis of previous attempts to establish James' theology, that the character of God and the nature of the relationship between God and the believer are important elements within this letter. In addition, Bauckham's investigation has revealed that the threat of assimilation can be added to these previous suggestions. The preliminary conclusion that these elements perform an important role in the letter as a whole will be confirmed through the exegetical investigation of James found in chapters 3-8 of the present investigation. However, in order for these to be understood as elements

of James' theology and not simply individual themes it must be shown that they belong to a 'coherent structure of theological thought'.¹⁸⁵

The present investigation will examine the possibility that this 'coherent structure of theological thought'¹⁸⁶ is related to the concept of covenant. This concept may be defined as the special relationship between God and Israel, a relationship between superior and inferior parties, that involves the acceptance by Israel of certain obligations in light of the promises offered to them by God. The possibility that the theological structure of James is to be found in the ideology connected with covenant, that is, covenant thought, is suggested by a number of factors. In the first instance the implied audience are depicted in Jas 1:1 as the 'twelve tribes', that is, they are identified with those to whom God's covenant promises have been made.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, the *imitatio Dei* motif that Laws considers to be the doctrinal basis of James' ethics is particularly prominent in covenant thought.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, Bauckham recognises that the author's concern with the character of God and the nature of the relationship between the believer and God are connected with the *Shema* and the problem of idolatry, both of which stem from the background of covenant. Additionally, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the three elements of God's character, the nature of the relationship, and the threat of assimilation are significant aspects of covenant thought.

¹⁸⁵ Dibelius, p. 22

¹⁸⁶ Dibelius, p. 22

¹⁸⁷ Huther, p. 40

The present study sets out to demonstrate that theology brings coherence to, and is fundamental for, the ethical instruction contained and developed within this letter. Although the subject of theology in James is not exactly 'virgin territory',¹⁸⁸ it is considered that previous attempts to establish James' theology have proven inadequate and so Dibelius' claim that James has no theology still remains to be challenged. Therefore, it will be shown that the theological structure within which the three elements of the character of God, the nature of the relationship and the threat of assimilation are united is found in covenant thought. The exegetical investigation of the letter will establish not only that this ideology is present and influential, but also that the author employs and modifies it in order to evaluate, correct, and shape the theology and behaviour of the implied audience. More specifically it will be shown that the author's use of covenant thought is intended to challenge and persuade the implied audience to abandon their 'defective' theology which involves a fundamental misunderstanding both of God's character and of the covenant relationship. Furthermore, this challenge involves the author's attempt to persuade the audience to adopt an alternative theology according to which God is unequivocally good together with its pattern of behaviour.

The investigation will proceed in the next chapter by considering the continuing scholarly discussion of the covenant concept and how the influence of this concept and its accompanying ideology can be identified. In addition to this

¹⁸⁸ See section 2.4.1

¹⁸⁹ Contra W. R. Baker, 'Christology in the Epistle of James', *EvQ* 74 (2002) 47-57, p. 47

consideration, the significance of covenant ideas within Second Temple Judaism will be discussed with a view to establishing that it is entirely plausible that James made use of covenant thought. Following this discussion, the remainder of the chapter will focus on exploring the significance of the three aspects of God's character, the nature of the relationship, and the threat of assimilation within covenant thought, before also giving brief consideration to the ideas of singleness and doubleness.

Following this exploration of covenant thought this study will concentrate on the exegetical investigation of James. The consideration of the letter will begin with Jas 4:1-6. The reasons for beginning with this passage are threefold. Firstly its use of the 'adulteresses' metaphor (4:4) is clearly informed by covenant thought. Secondly, it applies this metaphor clearly and directly to the implied audience without the hypothetical constructions that are found in Jas 1-2. Thirdly, Johnson has argued that the 'absolute incompatibility of [the] two construals of reality' and their accompanying modes of behaviour evident in the opposition depicted in Jas 4:4, represent an important organising (and selecting) principle in James.¹⁹⁰ This suggests that the theological structure of James may be particularly evident at this point. Through the exegetical investigation of this passage it will be demonstrated that James employs and develops covenant thought to evaluate, correct and shape the theology and behaviour of the implied audience.

¹⁹⁰ Johnson, p. 14

Having established that covenant thought is not only present, but also fundamentally important to James, the possibility that such thought provides the basis for the theology and ethics of the whole letter will be explored in the following chapters. In the interest of providing exegetical depth and in view of the limited space available, the investigation will concentrate on Jas 1-2. This choice is based on the fact that Jas 1 is often understood as introducing topics that the author addresses again later in the letter.¹⁹¹ In addition, it is important to assess the continuation of the use of covenant thought as the letter unfolds, and so the consideration of Jas 1 will be followed by an examination of Jas 2. The latter chapter is also recognised as offering a particularly clear insight into the author's thought and purpose in view of the fact that it contains two well-structured arguments.¹⁹² The exegesis of these chapters will confirm that the author employs and modifies covenant thought to challenge the implied audience's 'defective' theology, whilst also establishing his own alternative theology and the pattern of behaviour that ought to accompany it.

Finally, a summary analysis of those passages that have not been considered in detail (i.e. Jas 3:1-18; 4:7-5:20) will be provided in chapter 8. This analysis will confirm the conclusion that the influence of covenant thought, while not always explicit or indeed present in every verse, is nonetheless found throughout the letter as a whole. Furthermore, it will also be established that the author continues to be concerned to challenge and persuade the implied

¹⁹¹ Davids, p. 25; Johnson, pp. 14-15

¹⁹² Dibelius, p. 5

audience to adopt the pattern of behaviour concomitant with a theology in which God is unequivocally good.

Exploring Covenant Thought

The present chapter is concerned with the exploration of covenant thought primarily as it is found in the Old Testament, although some consideration will be given with regard to its continuing influence in the literature of Second Temple Judaism. In particular, this exploration will focus on three aspects of covenant thought: the character of God, the nature of the covenant relationship, and the threat of assimilation. Following the treatment of these three aspects, the problem of doubleness and its polar opposite singleness will be discussed in relation to covenant thought. However, before embarking on this exploration it is necessary to give some attention to the continuing discussion of the covenant concept within scholarship and how the influence of this concept and its accompanying ideology can be identified. In addition, the significance of covenant ideas within the Second Temple period will also be discussed in order to establish the plausibility of the present investigation's claim that James employs covenant thought.

2.1 Identifying Covenant

The importance that is placed on the concept of covenant in current scholarship concerned with post-biblical Judaism and early Christianity is to a significant extent the result of the highly influential monograph *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. In this monograph E. P. Sanders set out to compare texts from

Palestinian Judaism with the writings of the apostle Paul.¹ This aim was coupled with a greater concern to undermine the view that characterised post-biblical Judaism as a religion of works-righteousness.² In addressing these interrelated issues Sanders chose to focus upon a comparison between patterns of religion rather than individual motifs. According to Sanders a pattern of religion is 'the description of how a religion is perceived by its adherents to function', and this function is 'the way in which a religion is understood to admit and retain members'.³ The pattern of religion that Sanders' study found to be generally prevalent within Palestinian Judaism is described as covenantal nomism, where this is defined as

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.⁴

Although covenantal nomism is not a description of the covenant concept, Sanders' study revealed that the absence of the term 'covenant' in a text does not necessarily mean that that text or group of texts should be considered as

¹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, London: SCM, 1977, pp. 12-28

² Sanders, *PPJ*, pp. 1-12, 33-59; F. Avemarie, 'Bund als Gabe und Recht: Semantische Überlegungen zu *bərīth* in der rabbinischen Literatur', 163-216 in F. Avemarie & H. Lichtenberger (eds.), *Bund und Tora: Zur theologischen Begriffsgeschichte in alttestamentlicher, frühjüdischer und urchristlicher Tradition*, (WUNT, 92), Tübingen: Mohr, 1996, p. 163

³ Sanders, *PPJ*, p. 17

⁴ Sanders, *PPJ*, p. 75

evidence against the primacy of this concept in post-biblical Judaism. On the contrary, the absence of the term may be the consequence of the fundamental nature of this concept for the texts in question.⁵

Although there is continuing debate regarding the suitability of Sanders' description of post-biblical Judaism in terms of covenantal nomism,⁶ scholarship's appreciation for the primacy of the covenant concept in Jewish thought has increased considerably.⁷ This appreciation has led to a burgeoning of interest in this concept, whether in a concern to evaluate Sanders' concept of covenantal nomism,⁸ in the comparison of Judaism and Paul,⁹ or in the reassessment of the theology of Judaism.¹⁰

This burgeoning of interest has also involved the general acceptance of the presupposition, brought to prominence in the work of Sanders, that the covenant concept may be present and influential even when the terms ברית

⁵ Sanders, *PPJ*, pp. 420-421

⁶ M. D., 'Paul and "Covenantal Nomism"', 47-56 in M. D. Hooker & S. G. Wilson (eds.), *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, London: SPCK, 1982, p. 52; Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism*, p. 26; T. Eskola, 'Paul, Predestination and "Covenantal Nomism" – Reassessing Paul and Palestinian Judaism', *JSJ* 28 (1997) 390-412; D. A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien & M. A. Seifrid (eds.), *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1 The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, (WUNT, 140), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2001, p. 544

⁷ J. D. G. Dunn, 'New Perspectives on Paul', *BJRL* 65 (1983) 95-122, p. 99; Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*, pp. 15, 31; Avemarie, 'Bund als Gabe und Recht', p. 165; M. A. Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, p. 245

⁸ Carson *et al* (eds.), *Variegated Nomism*,

⁹ Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism*; Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant*,

¹⁰ Elliott, *Survivors*,

and *διαθήκη* are absent.¹¹ This possibility is not surprising given the distinction that exists between concepts and words.¹² In this respect the conclusion that 'covenant ideas play a comparatively restricted role in the NT' because of its limited usage of *διαθήκη* can be rejected.¹³ However, this still leaves the problem of how the presence and influence of the covenant concept can be identified.

Before considering how the employment of the concept can be detected it is first necessary to define the concept itself. This task is problematic since its most obvious starting point is the consideration of the use of the Hebrew lexeme *ברית*, even though the concept is not simply identical with this term. This lexeme is used to designate a variety of relationships, a variety that includes not only the type of relationship envisaged, but also the parties involved. This is evident from the description of covenants on the one hand as

¹¹ J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1885, p. 418; H. A. A. Kennedy, 'The Significance and Range of the Covenant Conception in the New Testament', *The Expositor 8th Series 10* (1915) 385-410, p. 391; Sanders, *PPJ*, pp. 420-421; Kalluveetil, *Declaration and Covenant*, p. 3; D. J. McCarthy, 'Covenant Narratives from Late OT Times', 77-94 in H. B. Hoffman, F. A. Spina, & A. R. W. Green (eds.), *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1983, pp. 80-81; N. P. Lemche, 'Kings and Clients: On Loyalty Between the Ruler and the Ruled in Ancient Israel', *Semeia 66* (1994) 119-132, p. 127; U. Rütterswörden, 'Bundestheologie ohne *ברית*', *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte 4* (1998) 85-99, pp. 94-96; Elliott, *Survivors*, p. 246

¹² S. van den Eynde, 'Covenant Formula and *ברית*: The Links Between a Hebrew Lexeme and a Biblical Concept', *Old Testament Essays 12* (1999) 122-148, p. 123; J. Joosten, 'Covenant Theology in the Holiness Code', *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte 4* (1998) 145-164, p. 148

¹³ E. Ball, 'Covenant', 142-147 in R. J. Coggins & J. L. Houlden (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, London: SCM, 1990, p. 145; cf. Christiansen, *Covenant in Judaism*, p. 10

being made by equal parties and involving mutual obligations (Gen 21:27; 31:44), and on the other hand as the imposition of a superior on an inferior (1 Sam 11:1-2).¹⁴ This is further complicated when it is recognised that even where the parties involved remain constant, the type of covenant, for example, whether it is promissory or obligatory, may vary.¹⁵ However, despite these difficulties and the continuing debate concerning the specific lexical meaning of ברית,¹⁶ there is widespread agreement that covenant can be defined as an agreement between two or more parties that involves the imposition by a superior, or acceptance by equals, of obligations attendant with the relationship that is therein established or renewed.¹⁷ Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, covenant is defined as *the special relationship between God and Israel, a relationship between superior and inferior parties, that involves the*

¹⁴ Kalluveetil, *Declaration and Covenant*, pp. 5, 15

¹⁵ M. Weinfeld, 'ברית', 253-279 in G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren, (trans. J. T. Willis), *TDOT 2*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977, p. 270; Elliott, *Survivors*, p. 246

¹⁶ L. Peritt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*, (WMANT, 36), Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969, p. 232; E. Kutsch, *Verheissung und Gesetz. Untersuchungen zum sogenannten „Bund“ im Alten Testament*, (BZAW, 131), Berlin; NY: Walter de Gruyter, 1973, pp. 149-150; N. Lohfink, 'Der Begriff „Bund“ in der biblischen Theologie', *TP 66* (1991) 161-176, p. 166; Joosten, 'Covenant Theology', p. 148

¹⁷ R. F. Collins, 'The Berith-notion of the Cairo-Damascus Covenant and its Comparison with the New Testament', *ETL 39* (1963) 555-94, p. 556; Kalluveetil, *Declaration and Covenant*, p. 91; A. S. Kapelrud, 'The Prophets and the Covenant', 175-183 in W. Boyd Barrick & J. R. Spencer (eds.), *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahstrom*, (JSOTSup, 31), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984, 175-183, p. 177; R. Davidson, 'Covenant Ideology in Ancient Israel', 323-347 in R. E. Clement (ed.), *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*, Cambridge: CUP, 1989, p. 324; G. E. Mendenhall & G. A. Hesion, 'Covenant', 1179-1202 in D. N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 1*, London; NY: Doubleday, 1992, p. 1179; Christiansen, *Covenant in Judaism*, p. 7

acceptance by Israel of certain obligations in light of the promises offered to them by God.

In view of the general agreement that covenant is of primary concern within Jewish thought and the understanding that this is not dependent on the use of ברית and διαθήκη, it is perhaps surprising that the methodology for discerning the presence and influence of this concept is generally not clearly defined. Nevertheless, a brief consideration of the ways in which this task has been carried out will reveal that there is general agreement among scholars with regard to the resolution of this problem.

The covenant concept may be detected where texts employ terms in the same way that they are used within the context of covenant, where this use is particularly connected with the nature of the covenant relationship. This connection has been demonstrated in relation to the use of 'love' in Deuteronomy, where those who belong to the covenant are frequently described in terms of their love for God, a love that is defined by and pledged in the covenant.¹⁸ Similar connections have been made where texts make use of expressions, either as these allude, as in the case of 1 Pet 1:2, to specific passages within the OT (Exod 24:6-8),¹⁹ or more generally, as they witness to

¹⁸ W. L. Moran, 'The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy', *CBQ* 25 (1963) 77-87, p. 78; D. J. McCarthy, 'Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel', *CBQ* 27 (1965) 144-147, p. 144; see further Section 2.3.2 and 2.5

¹⁹ Kennedy, 'Significance', p. 406

the conviction that there is a special relationship between God and Israel (e.g. Sir 33:1-4; 36:12).²⁰

The influence of the covenant concept has also been detected through the consideration of metaphors. In particular it is generally accepted that the marriage metaphor found in the prophets is a significantly apt representation of the exclusivity and expectations of the covenant relationship.²¹ Furthermore, various motifs have also been interpreted as evidence of the continuing influence of the concept of covenant. These motifs include, amongst others, those of heaven and earth as witnesses (Deut 30:19; Jdth 7:28; 1 En 7:1-6),²² the heavenly list of names (Exod 32:32-33; *Jub.* 5:13; *Jos. Asen.* 15:4),²³ God's impartiality (Deut 10:17; *Jub.* 5:15-16),²⁴ and God's presence among his people (Exod 19; 2 Cor 6:16,18).²⁵ In addition to such considerations the significance of covenant is also detected in a text's interest in ideas connected with the covenant, whether this concerns the character of God,²⁶ the consequences of

²⁰ D. Falk, 'Psalms and Prayers', 7-56 in Carson *et al* (eds.), *Variiegated Nomism*, pp. 19, 50; L. Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1-5*, Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1979, p. 89

²¹ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 418; D. J. McCarthy, 'Covenant in the Old Testament: The Present State of Inquiry', *CBQ* 27 (1965) 217-240, p. 234; see further Section 2.5.1

²² McCarthy, 'Covenant Narratives', pp. 81-82; Elliott, *Survivors*, pp. 156-160

²³ Elliott, *Survivors*, p. 265; C. A. Evans, 'Scripture-Based Stories in the Pseudepigrapha', 57-72 in Carson *et al* (eds.), *Variiegated Nomism*, p. 65

²⁴ Elliott, *Survivors*, p. 265

²⁵ Kennedy, 'Significance', p. 405; Christiansen, *Covenant in Judaism*, p. 30

²⁶ Kennedy, 'Significance', p. 401; B. W. Longenecker, 'Contours of Covenant Theology in the Post-Conversion Paul', 125-146 in R. N. Longenecker (ed.), *The Road to Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion in His Life, Thought and Ministry*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 126-127

failing to keep the covenant,²⁷ or the existence of a special relationship between God and Israel.²⁸

The various approaches outlined above may be understood as representing three levels at which the significance of the covenant concept may be assessed where the term itself is absent. These may be described in terms of the use of: a) key terms and expressions; b) key metaphors and motifs; c) basic structures of thought. The elements that make up these levels can be understood individually and collectively as examples of covenant language,²⁹ covenant theology,³⁰ or covenant thought/thinking.³¹ In turn this entity, that the present investigation will describe as covenant thought, can be defined as a relatively homogenous pattern of thought focused upon the delineation of the covenant concept. Consequently, the present study's investigation into the role of

²⁷ Falk, 'Psalms and Prayers', p. 50

²⁸ Sanders, *PPJ*, p. 82; P. Spilsbury, 'God and Israel in Josephus: A Patron-Client Relationship', 172-191 in S. Mason (ed.), *Understanding Josephus: Seven Perspectives*, (JSPSup, 32), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, p. 173; Evans, 'Scripture Based Stories', p. 63; R. Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', 135-187 in Carson *et al* (eds.), *Variiegated Nomism*, p. 187; B. Nitzan, 'The Concept of the Covenant in Qumran Literature', 85-104 in D. Goodblatt, A Pinnick & D. R. Schwartz (eds.), *Historical Perspectives: From the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (STDJ, 37), Leiden: Brill, 2001, p. 99

²⁹ Kennedy, 'Significance', p. 405; McCarthy, 'Covenant Narratives', p. 81; Spilsbury, 'God and Israel', p. 173; Dunn, 'New Perspectives', p. 105; cf. M. Bockmuehl, '1QS and Salvation at Qumran', 381-414 in Carson *et al* (eds.), *Variiegated Nomism*, p. 388

³⁰ Longenecker, 'Contours', p. 125; Rütterswörden, 'Bundestheologie ohne ברית', p. 96; Nitzan, 'Concept of the Covenant', p. 99

³¹ McCarthy, 'Covenant Narratives', p. 81; M. Vogel, *Das Heil des Bundes: Bundestheologie im Frühjudentum und im frühen Christentum*, (TANZ, 18), Tübingen; Basel: Francke, 1996, p. 13; Elliott, *Survivors*, p. 246. For a slightly different delineation of covenant thinking see T. Holmén, 'Covenant Thinking. Accounting for Diversity in Early Judaism', 95-113 in J. Neusner (ed.),

covenant thought in James will consider whether it makes use of terminology, expressions, metaphors and motifs connected with the covenant concept. In particular significant consideration will be given to whether the author's concern with the three aspects of God's character, the nature of the relationship between God and his people, and the threat of assimilation is significantly influenced by covenant thought. The possibility that they are important within covenant thought is suggested by the definition of covenant as a special relationship between God and Israel, since this involves the acceptance of God's promise, a distinctive identity and its accompanying obligations. This possibility will be confirmed in the following exploration. However, before proceeding to this exploration of covenant thought some consideration will be given to the significance of the covenant within the Second Temple period.

2.2 The Continuing Significance of Covenant

The significance of the covenant concept at the various stages of the historical development of Israelite thought continues to be a contested issue. On the one hand, the position of J. Wellhausen remains influential as many scholars continue to argue that covenant is a late, and primarily Deuteronomical, conception,³² while, on the other hand, a similarly strong case continues to be

Approaches to Ancient Judaism (New Series): Volume Twelve, (South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, 158), Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997, pp. 96, 100-104

³² Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp. 417-418; Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*, p. 232; Kutsch, *Verheissung und Gesetz*, pp. 149-150; H-J. Hermisson, 'Bund und Erwählung', 222-243 in H. J. Boecker, H-J. Hermisson, J. M. Schmidt & L. Schmidt (eds.), *Altes Testament*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983, p. 222; Lohfink, 'Der Begriff „Bund“', p. 165; F-L. Hossfeld, 'Bund und Tora in den Psalmen', 66-77 in H. Merklein, K. Müller & G. Stemberger

made for the concept's antiquity.³³ However, the present investigation is concerned, not with the historical development of the OT literature, but rather with the significance of the covenant within the OT as this was available to James. Consequently, it is not important, as far as the present study is concerned, whether Hosea originally referred to the covenant. Rather, the important question is whether this prophet's presentation of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel would have been understood in terms of the covenant by someone standing at the end of the historical process of development. That this is indeed probable is confirmed by the prominent role scholars attach to the covenant in Deuteronomistic thought,³⁴ since this stream is particularly prominent in the biblical tradition as a whole. Therefore, although the covenant concept may or may not have arisen late in the history of biblical Israel, it was certainly a significant element within the biblical tradition as it was available to James.

(eds.), *Bibel in jüdischer und christlichen Tradition: Festschrift für Johann Maier*, Main: Anton Hain, 1997

³³ W. Eidchrodt, (trans. J. A. Baker), *Theology of the Old Testament: Volume 1*, London: SCM, 1961, p. 36; D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament*, (AnBib, 21a), Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978, p. 14; Kapelrud, 'The Prophets', p. 180; A. Laato, 'The Royal Covenant Ideology in Judah', 93-100 in K-D. Schunck & M. Augustin (eds.), '*Lasset uns Brücken bauen...*' *Collected Communications to the XVth Congress of the International Organisation for the Study of the Old Testament*, Cambridge, 1995, (BEATAJ, 42), Berlin; NY: Peter Lang, 1998, p. 94

³⁴ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 419; Kennedy, 'Significance', p. 385; Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*, p. 232; H-J. Hemisson 'Bund und Erwählung', p. 222; Davidson, 'Covenant Ideology', p. 343; Lohfink, 'Der Begriff „Bund“', pp. 168-176

In the Dead Sea Scrolls the covenant between God and Israel becomes more particularly the covenant between God and the community.³⁵ This is evident in the identification of the entrant to the covenant and the community member (1QS 1:16) and the idea that God has made a new covenant with the community (CD 6:19; 8:21; 20:12).³⁶ In order to enter the covenant one must choose (1QpMic Fr. 8-10, 7; 1QS 1:7-8) to join the community, a choice that entails the acceptance and fulfilment of the community's interpretation of the law (1QS 5:8-11).³⁷ Nevertheless, the understanding of the relationship between previous manifestations of the covenant (e.g. the patriarchal covenant CD 1:4; 6:2; 8:18:19:31) and that belonging to the community is one of continuity, distinction and transcendence rather than discontinuity.³⁸ Furthermore, Israel's distinction from the nations continues to be an important element within the covenantal identity of the community (1QS 11:7-9; 4Q504 Fr. 1-2 3:9-10).³⁹ From this brief consideration it is evident that even though the concept of covenant is to some extent developed and transformed, it is highly significant for the Dead Sea Scrolls community.

³⁵ Sanders, *PPJ*, p. 240; Bockmuehl, '1QS and Salvation', p. 389

³⁶ H. Lichtenberger & S. Schreiner, 'Der Neue Bund in jüdischer Überlieferung', *TQ* 176 (1996) 272-290, p. 275

³⁷ J. A. Huntjens, 'Contrasting Notions of Covenant and Law in the Texts from Qumran', *RevQ* 8 (1974) 361-380, p. 367; Christiansen, *Covenant in Judaism*, p. 90

³⁸ Collins, 'Berith-Notion', p. 565; E. J. Christiansen, 'The Consciousness of Belonging to God's Covenant and What it Entails According to the Damascus Document and the Community Rule', 69-97 in F. H. Cryer & T. L. Thompson (eds.), *Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments*, (JSOTSup, 290), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, p. 73; Vogel, *Das Heil des Bundes*, p. 60

³⁹ Christiansen, 'The Consciousness of Belonging', p. 89; Falk, 'Psalms and Prayers', p. 11

The importance of the covenant for the identity of this community is also shared by the Judaism of this period in general. This is clear from the continued importance attached to fulfilling the covenant that appears in the diaspora letter tradition (2 Apoc. Bar. 77-87; 2 Macc 1:2-5) and Paul's references to the covenant as belonging to the Jews (Rom 9:4-5; cf. Eph 2:12).⁴⁰ This is further confirmed in *Jubilees* where Israel's special status as God's elect is referred to frequently (2:21; 16:17-18; 19:18),⁴¹ and in the *Psalms of Solomon* where God's covenant with Israel is an important element of the community's self-perception even though it is rarely mentioned explicitly (9:8-11; 10:4; 17:15).⁴² Moreover, Pseudo-Philo employs the concept to depict the history of Israel,⁴³ while the author of 4 Ezra strives to understand the discrepancy between Israel's chosen status and its present condition (3:28-36).⁴⁴ As Bauckham has argued, Ezra's arguments (3:20-23, 28-36; 5:23-30; 6:55-57) imply that the lack of mercy shown to Israel indicates that God has broken the covenant.⁴⁵ Reflecting on this possibility 4 Ezra emphasises that the righteous who faithfully fulfil the law will receive God's mercy (12:34; 13:48-49), while those who act otherwise have no share in the covenant (7:21-24).⁴⁶ This reflection presupposes the importance of covenant, even if in the course of the reflection the concept itself is subject to redefinition.

⁴⁰ Vogel, *Das Heil des Bundes*, p. 225; I. H. Marshall, 'Some Observations on the Covenant in the New Testament', 121-136 in P. W. Bochman, R. E. Kristiansen (eds.), *Context: Festschrift til Peder Johan Borgen*, Trondheim: Tapir, 1987, p. 125

⁴¹ Sanders, *PPJ*, p. 363

⁴² Falk, 'Psalms and Prayers', p. 50

⁴³ J. R. Levison, 'Torah and Covenant in Pseudo Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*', 111-127 in Avemarie & Lichtenberger (eds.), *Bund und Tora*, pp. 114, 116

⁴⁴ Longenecker, *Eschatology and Covenant*, p. 68

⁴⁵ Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', p. 163

As already discussed, the consideration of a text's employment of the structures of thought connected with the covenant can reveal the presence and influence of this concept. Significantly, P. Spilsbury has demonstrated that the basic idea of covenant, that is, that Israel enjoys a special relationship with God, continues to occupy an important place within Josephus' thought. However, Josephus replaces the traditional language of covenant with terminology drawn from the patron-client model.⁴⁷ This development is evident in the description of God as the ally (*συμμαχός*) and helper (*βοηθός*) of Israel, who, as in the covenant (Exod 20:2; Deut 7:13; 8:7-10), guarantees freedom from slavery and the possession of a favoured land for Israel (Jos *Ant.* 2.268-69; 3.300).⁴⁸ Accordingly, the law of Moses is depicted as a benefaction of God (*Ant.* 4.315-19; 3.223), and the proper response to God's benefactions is piety (*Ant.* 1.233, 234; 5.115-116).⁴⁹ In particular, observing the law ensures God's alliance, while imitating the behaviour of other nations results in God's turning away from Israel (*Ant.* 5.98; Deut 7:12-16; 8:19-20).⁵⁰ Spilsbury concludes that this description of the relationship between God and Israel can be described as 'patronal nomism'.⁵¹ Nevertheless, it is clear that this pattern of religion is inspired and profoundly influenced by the covenant, reflecting the enduring significance of this concept within Jewish thought.

⁴⁶ Bauckham, 'Apocalypses', pp. 164-173

⁴⁷ Spilsbury, 'God and Israel', pp. 173-174

⁴⁸ Spilsbury, 'God and Israel', p. 182; *idem*, 'Josephus', 241-260 in Carson *et al* (eds.), *Variiegated Nomism*, p. 250

⁴⁹ Spilsbury, 'God and Israel', pp. 183, 186; *idem*, 'Josephus', p. 250

⁵⁰ Spilsbury, 'Josephus', p. 251

⁵¹ Spilsbury, 'Josephus', p. 259. On the relationship between covenant and patronage see Lemche, 'Kings and Clients', pp. 119-152

From this brief survey it is evident that the covenant concept continued to exercise significant influence on Jewish thought as this is manifested in a wide variety of literature. In addition, the concept is most explicitly evident in the New Testament with regard to the issue of salvation history, particularly with regard to the depiction of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism (e.g. 2 Cor 3:4-18; Heb 8:13).⁵² Moreover, the reference to the covenant in the Last Supper tradition (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; 1 Cor 11:25) suggests that the idea was current within Christianity from an early stage.⁵³ Therefore, in view of its continuing significance in both Jewish and early Christian literature, it is entirely plausible that the covenant concept is important for James. However, before proceeding to examine the letter itself in chapter three, the remainder of the present chapter will explore covenant thought with regard to the three aspects of God's character, the nature of the relationship between God and his people, and the threat of assimilation.

2.3 A Distinct People

In the exodus narrative God is described as 'remembering' his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exod 2:24),⁵⁴ and, knowing the condition of the 'people of Israel' (v. 25), he calls Moses to instruct Pharaoh to 'let [his] people

⁵² Marshall, 'Observations', p. 130; K. Backhaus, 'Gottes nicht bereuter Bund: Alter und neuer Bund in der sicht des Frühchristentums', 33-55 in R. Kampling & T. Söding (eds.), *Ekklesiologie des Neuen Testaments: Für Karl Kertelge*, Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1996, pp. 36-39

⁵³ Marshall, 'Observations', p. 129; Backhaus, 'Gottes nicht bereuter Bund', pp. 31-41

⁵⁴ The importance of God's remembering of the covenant is also evident in the DSS (CD 1:4; 6:2; 4Q504 Fr. 1-2 5:9-10)

go' (4:22-23; 5:1). The divinity is described as 'the Lord, the God of Israel' (5:1), and the Israelites are identified as his people (8:1), throughout this narrative. However, it is not until after the events of the exodus that a covenant is made between God and these descendants of Abraham (Exod 19:4-6), and it is through this act of covenant making that Israel's identity as God's people is secured.

In Exod 19:4-6 it is not God's faithfulness to the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that provides the expressed motivation for accepting the covenant God offers Israel. Rather, it is God's action of deliverance that provides such motivation (v.4) and therefore underpins the covenant offer and the identity Israel receives by accepting it.⁵⁵ The identity offered to Israel through this offer of covenant is that they alone among the nations shall be God's people and they will be a 'holy nation' (vv. 5-6).⁵⁶ However, in order to attain this identity as a people distinct from all others, the Israelites must obey God's voice and keep God's covenant. The status of being a nation apart from all others is linked with the vocation of keeping the covenant (cf. *Bib. Ant.* 24:1).⁵⁷ Therefore the covenant relationship brings both the distinct status of being God's people and the distinct vocation of keeping the covenant.

⁵⁵ Callender, 'Servants of God(s)', p. 77; R. Rendtorff, (trans. M. Kohl), *The Covenant Formula: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998, p. 22

⁵⁶ Christiansen, *Covenant in Judaism*, p. 49

⁵⁷ E. W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, p. 148; Rendtorff, *Covenant Formula*, p. 22; Christiansen, *Covenant in Judaism*, pp. 50-52, 62

In Exodus, the first commandments given to the people of Israel are those known as the 'Ten Commandments' (Exod 20:1-17). These commandments are preceded by the description of God as the one who brought Israel out of Egypt (Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6), and this description affirms the history that exists between the two covenant partners. The importance of remembering this history is made more explicit in Deuteronomy, where the homilies recount the deeds of Yahweh in order to appeal for exclusive loyalty to the 'only God the people had ever 'known' (Deut 13:2, 6, 13).⁵⁸ The events of Israel's history testify to the relationship between God and Israel, to the exclusion of all other gods. Therefore the covenant relationship is exclusive and this exclusivity is not only based on explicit commands (e.g. Exod 20:3), but is also founded upon the 'knowledge' of God Israel has gained through the course of its history.

Therefore, the fundamental aspect of Israel's covenant identity is its distinctive status as God's special possession and the exclusivity required to maintain this relationship (Exod 19:5-6; Deut 7:6; Sir 17:17; 33:1-5; 36:12; 2 Macc 1:25-26; *Jub.* 2:19; 16:17-19; 33:20; *Jos. Asen.* 8:9; 4Q504 Fr. 4 Line 10). Since 'being distinct' is fundamentally important, the greatest threat to the identity of the covenant people is that they become like 'other nations'. This fact is manifested in the curses that attend Israel's failure to keep the covenant (Deut 28:36, 64). In these verses Israel is warned that failure to keep the covenant will result in a loss of their national identity as they are scattered among the nations where they will act like those nations in serving 'other gods'. Accordingly the nature of

⁵⁸ D. Patrick, 'Election', 434-441 in D. N. Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 4*, London; NY: Doubleday, 1992, p. 436; E. P. Blair, 'An Appeal to Remembrance: The Memory Motif in Deuteronomy', *Int* 15 (1961) 41-47, pp. 41, 43; Cf. Josh 24:1-18

Israel's covenant identity involves being separate from the 'other nations' and maintaining an exclusive relationship with the God who delivered it from Egypt; consequently the biggest threat to the covenant relationship is assimilation through idolatry or the making of agreements with 'other nations' (Exod 23:32-33; 34:12-17; Lev 19:4; Deut 6:14-15; 7:16; 12:30).

2.4 *The Covenant God*

As has already been discussed, God's action of deliverance occupies an important role in the establishment of the covenant, both underpinning Israel's distinctive identity and providing the grounds for the exclusivity of the covenant relationship. Although these functions are of fundamental importance, the character and actions of God are also significant for the covenant relationship. This significance may be seen in the use of the *imitatio Dei* motif, or where God's character and actions provide motivation for maintaining the exclusivity of the covenant relationship.

2.4.1 *Imitatio Dei*

The idea of 'being like God' is the subject of ambivalent treatment in the Old Testament. On the one hand humanity is described as being created in the 'image' and 'likeness' of God (Gen 1:26-27), while on the other desiring to be 'like God' is reprehensible (Gen 3). However, as John Barton has recognised, the special task of the Israelites is to

do as God does: to take God's character as the pattern of their character and God's deeds as models for theirs.⁵⁹

Within the context of covenant thought the need to imitate God encompasses both cultic and social obligations, whether these obligations refer to actions or qualities. In terms of cultic practices the rationale for Israel to sacrifice the first-born of male beasts is provided by God's activity in the exodus narrative (Exod 13:11-16),⁶⁰ while the Sabbath rest imitates God's rest on the seventh day of creation (Exod 20:8-11). Furthermore, the holiness of God provides the motivation for the holiness of Israel (Lev 11:44; 19:2; 20:26; 21:8),⁶¹ and this quality of holiness is connected with being separate from the nations (Lev 20:26).

However, as Barton notes, it is in Deuteronomy that Israel's task of imitating God is particularly visible.⁶² Here it is the experience of slavery in Egypt and God's action of deliverance that is brought into connection with the behaviour required from Israel. In the presentation of the 'Ten Commandments' found in Deut 5 there is a significant change to the command to keep the Sabbath (vv. 12-15). Rather than being predicated on the divine rest in creation, this command is now motivated by Israel's experience of slavery and God's action

⁵⁹ J. Barton, 'The Basis of Ethics in the Hebrew Bible', *Semeia* 66 (1994) 11-22, p. 17

⁶⁰ E. W. Davies, 'Walking in God's Ways: The Concept of *Imitatio Dei* in the Old Testament', 99-115 in J. Jarich, P. R. Davies, & D. J. A. Clines (eds.), *In Search of True Wisdom: essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements*, (JSOTS, 300), Sheffield: JSOT press, 1999, p. 102

⁶¹ D. S. Shapiro, 'The Doctrine of the Image of God and *Imitatio Dei*', *Judaism* 12 (1963) 57-77

⁶² Barton, 'Basis of Ethics', p. 17

of deliverance. In Deut 24:17-18 the practice of perverting the justice due to sojourners and orphans, or taking a pledge from a widow is forbidden. The motivation for avoiding such injustice is the memory of slavery in Egypt and God's action of deliverance. The implication is that the Israelites should imitate God's justice as it was made evident to them in the exodus. The implication of imitation found in these passages becomes more explicit in Deut 10:17-19 and 15:13-15. As God is just and shows love to the sojourner, so Israel should love the sojourner, and as God delivered them from Egypt so they must release Hebrew slaves after six years. In addition to these examples, it should be noted that God's love for Israel (Deut 7:7, 13; 10:15) is to be reciprocated in Israel's love for God (6:5; 11:1, 22), and this love entails 'renouncing everything that is in any degree inconsistent with loyalty to him'.⁶³ In this way Israel imitates God's faithfulness and loyalty to her in her faithful and loyal maintenance of the covenant.

Beyond Deuteronomy, the importance of the character and actions of God as revealing behaviour that is consistent with God's will is found among the prophets. Since, for the prophets, God's will is revealed as much through his character as through his law, they express grave concern at the apparent lack of 'knowledge of God' in the land (Hos 4:1; 5:4; 6:6; Jer 4:22; 5:4-5; 9:3, 6). The lack of 'intuitive awareness of God's character and nature' is connected with the people failing 'in their social obligations'.⁶⁴ Furthermore, explicit calls to imitate God are found in Philo (*Virt.* 168) and the Letter of Aristeas (187-188, 190, 192;

⁶³ S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, (ICC), Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902, p. xxi

⁶⁴ Davies, 'Walking in God's Ways', p. 106

205; 207; 210).⁶⁵ According to Aristeas, God is the ultimate exemplar of benefaction. This is particularly interesting as God's role as benefactor is particularly important for James.⁶⁶ However, for Aristeas, such imitation is not connected to the maintenance of Israel's identity as God's people. This indicates that although the *imitatio Dei* is used in the context of covenant thought, it also has implications for behaviour on a more universal scale.⁶⁷ However, the evidence from the prophets indicates that it is not only in passages where the *imitatio Dei* motif is more or less explicit that God's character and actions are brought into relationship with the behaviour necessary for Israel to be identified as God's people, a suggestion that will be borne out by the examination of the memory motif within covenant thought. However, before considering this motif another aspect of God's character must be examined.

2.4.2 A Jealous God

In Exodus the description of God as a 'jealous God' first appears in 20:5-6 as a negative reason supporting the prohibition against idolatry. In these verses the exclusive nature of the covenant relationship is presented in terms that may be

⁶⁵ On *imitatio Dei* in the Tannaitic literature of Judaism see P. S. Alexander, 'Torah and Salvation in Tannaitic Literature', 261-301 in D. A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, M. A. Seifrid, *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1 The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, (WUNT, 140), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2001, p. 295

⁶⁶ See Sections 3.6, 3.7, 4.3 and 4.6

⁶⁷ In *Jub.* 6:8 and *Bib. Ant.* 3:11 the idea that humanity is created in the image of God is connected with the prohibition of murder. It is possible that the more universal element in the *imitatio Dei* motif is related to God's creative activities.

understood in a personal or political sense. Those who commit idolatry are described as 'hating' God, while those who keep the covenant are said to 'love' God. The incompatibility of the two options, committing idolatry and keeping the covenant, is apparent in the opposition of the terms 'love' and 'hate'. The gravity of this incompatibility is captured in the description of God as a 'jealous' God. This characteristic of God indicates that the covenant relationship excludes anything that detracts from Israel's service of God, and warns the Israelites that breaching the covenant in this way will have catastrophic results. Throughout covenantal thought this characteristic of God underpins prohibitions against both idolatry and making agreements with 'other nations' (Exod 34:12-16; Deut 4:24; 5:7-10; 6:14-15; Josh 24:19-20; cf. *Jos. Asen.* 11:7; 4Q504 Fr. 1-2 3:11). Furthermore the result of ignoring this characteristic of God is sometimes described as the destruction of the people (Deut 6:15; Josh 24:19-20). Thus Israel faces considerable danger if it causes God to be jealous by breaking the covenant, although texts such as Hos 11:8-9 stress God's ability to overcome this aspect of his character.⁶⁸ Therefore, this characteristic of the covenant God establishes the exclusive nature of the covenant relationship and warns against adopting practices that are incompatible with that relationship.

2.4.3 *The Memory Motif*

In the discussion of Israel's identification as a 'distinct people' it was noted that God 'remembered' his covenant with Abraham (Exod 2:24). This in itself is no

⁶⁸ M. Halbertal, & A. Margalit, (trans. N. Goldblum), *Idolatry*, London: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 29

surprise since God is frequently characterised by such action (Gen 8:1; 9:15, 16; 19:29; Exod 6:5; Lev 26:42, 44-45; cf. Sir 33:8; *Pss. Sol.* 10:4; CD 1:4; 6:2; 4Q504 Fr. 1-2 5:9-10). However, reference to this aspect of God's character gains importance when it is recognised that the covenant relationship is also characterised by Israel's need to remember and not forget (Deut 4:9; 5:12-15; 24:17-18). Therefore the behaviour required from Israel is characteristic of God. However, I do not intend to examine this motif as a general case of *imitatio Dei*, but rather with regard to what this motif reveals about the character of God and the covenant relationship in its own right.

The most concentrated appearance of the memory motif is found in Deuteronomy, a book that retraces the events of Israel's history in order to underscore the debt of gratitude and obedience Israel owes to its sovereign Lord.⁶⁹ Among those things the Israelites are commanded to remember are the giving of the covenant at Horeb (4:9-13) and especially their former slavery in Egypt and God's act of deliverance (5:15; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:18, 22; cf. 8:2). In each of these instances it is clear from the verses themselves, or their context, that such remembrance is intended to ensure Israel's faithfulness to the covenant. The idea that what is remembered conditions present action is also applicable to attitudes. This is clear from the command that Israel should remember how God acted against Pharaoh in order to prevent fear of the nations (7:18). Therefore God's actions not only serve as the foundation for faithful action, but also provide the basis for the adoption of proper attitudes to the difficulties that Israel faces as a nation.

⁶⁹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p. xix; Blair, 'Appeal to Remembrance', pp. 41-43

However, the importance of remembering is not only supported by the emphasis on the need to remember, but also by the necessity to avoid forgetting. The Israelites must not forget their covenant with God (4:9-13, 23). In this instance forgetting the covenant takes the form of making a graven image (v. 23). Such behaviour indicates a failure to obey God's commands and this forgetfulness is dangerous as Israel's God is 'a jealous God' (v. 24). The connection between forgetfulness and idolatry is further developed in 8:19 (cf. 6:12-15) where forgetting God takes the form of going after 'other gods'. Therefore it is clear that whether Israel's idolatry involves making images (4:23) or going after 'other gods' (8:19), such behaviour is understood in terms of forgetfulness. Furthermore, failing to keep the covenant (i.e. forgetting the covenant), is a direct manifestation of failing to remember who God is and what he has done for Israel.

Another significant element of forgetfulness relates to God's gift of the land and Israel's enjoyment of that land. In Deut 8:11 (cf. 6:10-12) the Israelites are warned against forgetting God by not keeping his commandments as a result of their enjoyment of the land. The danger the Israelites face is that they become proud (vv. 14, 17) and 'forget the Lord' who brought them out of Egypt (v. 14) and led them through the wilderness (vv. 15-16). In order to guard against such an eventuality the Israelites must remember it is God who has given them their power and wealth (v. 18). Therefore it is important for the Israelites to remember the gracious acts of God, whether the deliverance from Egypt or the provision of food in the desert, so that they will not become proud and attribute the results of God's grace to their own efforts (cf. 9: 6-7). Once more it is evident that who

God is and what he has done for Israel is of great significance for the maintenance of the covenant, impacting upon both behaviour and attitudes. Neither Israel's past, nor the character and actions of God, should be allowed to 'fall out of dynamic conditioning relation to the present',⁷⁰ since such forgetfulness leads to and is characteristic of covenant unfaithfulness.

The importance of remembering and not forgetting is not restricted to the book of Deuteronomy. The correlation between forgetting God and failing to keep the covenant is also found in Judg 3:7 and 1 Sam 12:9-10 where the forgetfulness in question is that of idolatry. This aspect of the memory motif may also be evident in 2 Kgs 17:38 which stresses the need to remember God's covenant and not to 'fear other gods'. The relationship between idolatry and forgetting God is particularly clear in the prophets (Isa 65:11; Jer 13:25). Here 'false' prophets devise ways to make the people forget God (Jer 23:27), while the people in their forgetfulness are described as burning incense to false gods (Jer 18:15). The people's forgetfulness is of particular concern to Hosea who writes that Israel has gone after her 'lovers' and forgotten God (2:13; cf. 4QpHos^a 1:3) her maker (8:14) and his law (4:6). In addition to the relationship between forgetfulness and idolatry, Hosea also indicates that Israel's pride leads her to forget God (13:6). Elsewhere in the Old Testament forgetting God is the activity of the sinner and sinful nations (Job 8:13; Ps 9:17), while the importance of remembering God's character and activities is stressed in both positive and negative ways (Pss 50:22; 78:7, 11; 106:13, 21).

⁷⁰ Blair, 'Appeal to Remembrance', p. 44

The memory motif continues to be used in Jewish literature beyond the OT with regard to God (*Jub.* 21:2; *Jos, Ant.* 5.107; Philo, *Virt.* 163-165; cf. *Sib. Or.* 1:40) and his commandments (*Tob* 1:10-13; *Sir* 28:7; *Jub.* 1:14; 23:19; *1 Enoch* 94:6-11; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 44:7). In these texts the problem of forgetting God, his law or the covenant is associated with unfaithfulness (*1 Enoch* 94:6-11; *Bib. Ant.* 13:10), while remembering is characteristic of, and required from, the faithful (*Tob* 1:10-13; *Jub.* 21:2; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 84:2, 7-8). In particular the problem of forgetting continues to be related to transgression of the covenant through idolatry and mixing with Gentiles (*Jub.* 1:9; *Bib. Ant.* 30:1; 41:3). Furthermore, remembrance of God's act of deliverance continues to remain a concern (*Bar* 4:8; *4 Ezra* 1:4-23).

2.5 Summary

It has been found that within covenantal thought the fundamental aspect of Israel's identity as God's people consists in its distinction from 'other nations'. It is God's act of delivering Israel from Egypt that provides the foundation for both this status and the 'distinct' vocation of keeping the covenant that accompanies it. Moreover, this act of deliverance also testifies to the exclusive history of relations that exists between God and Israel. In response to this gracious act the Israelites are expected to faithfully maintain the covenant relationship in all of its exclusivity.

The consideration of *imitatio Dei* and the memory motif has demonstrated that the deeds and character of God are fundamentally important in covenant

thought. They establish the exclusivity of the covenant relationship, providing motivation for Israel's faithfulness whilst also supplying a model for this faithfulness. In view of their fundamental importance for Israel's 'distinct' vocation, it is not surprising that failing to remember the deeds and character of God is characteristic of unfaithfulness. Therefore, in forgetting God and his deeds Israel endangers its distinct status and is in danger of becoming like the 'other nations'.

2.6 *The Threat of Assimilation*

Since the most significant aspect of Israel's covenant identity is being a 'distinct people', it is clear that this identity is endangered through assimilation. The two major ways in which Israel is threatened with assimilation consist in the threat posed by serving 'other gods' and interacting with 'other nations' (Exod 23:32-33; 34:12-17; Lev 19:4; Deut 6:14-15; 7:16; 12:30; cf. *Jub.* 3:31; 22:16; 30:7). Through an examination of this dual threat further light will be shed on the nature of the covenant relationship and the importance of holding a correct perception of God for the maintenance of that relationship.

The danger posed to Israel's covenant relationship with God on entering the promised land is depicted as arising from interaction with the 'other nations' (Exod 23:23-33; 34:11-16; cf. Deut 31:16-22). The danger posed by interaction with the 'other nations' is that Israel will make covenants with either the inhabitants of the land or their gods (23:32; 34:12). The making of such covenants is forbidden and is directly opposed to the actions the Israelites are

commanded to take against the altars of the 'other gods' they encounter (23:24-25; 34:13). Furthermore, it contravenes the covenant relationship in that Israel are to serve God alone (23:24-25; 34:14), since he is a jealous God (34:14). Although the connection between making covenants with the inhabitants of the land and serving 'other gods' is not made explicit in 23:23-33, in 34:11-16 the former is depicted as leading to the latter. Consequently, making covenants with 'other nations' is understood as a 'slippery slope' leading to idolatry (Num 25; Deut 7:1-4; cf. 12:30). In this way idolatry is presented as the greater threat to Israel's distinctive identity and the more fundamental sin against the covenant, a conclusion supported by the frequency with which Israel is exhorted against idolatrous behaviour (Exod 20:3-6; Lev 19:4; Deut 6:14-15; 7:16; 8:19; 11:16, 28; 28:14).⁷¹

The problem of idolatry is also addressed using the interpersonal language of 'love' and 'hate'. In Deut 13:1-18 Israel is instructed to purge itself of anyone, even family members, who seek to lead the nation astray after 'other gods'. The history between God and Israel, as opposed to the 'other gods' that Israel has not 'known' (vv. 2, 6), is emphasised in verses 5 and 10. Furthermore, the actions of the 'false' prophet are described as a test of Israel's love for God (v. 3) and as teaching rebellion against God (v. 5). The 'love' required from Israel is characterised by keeping God's commands and serving him (v. 4), the opposite of the behaviour involved in rebellion (v. 5). Therefore 'love'

⁷¹ For the idea that idolatry is the fundamental sin against the covenant see M. D. Guinan, 'Mosaic Covenant', 905-909 in D. N. Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 4*, London; NY: Doubleday, 1992, pp. 907, 908; Alexander, 'Tannaitic Literature', p. 291

in a covenant setting is concerned with the unquestioning commitment of parties to the covenant and to the demands of the covenant.⁷²

It is evident from the use of 'love' and its opposites 'hate' and 'rebellion' in the context of the discussion of idolatry, that covenant faithfulness is characterised by absolute loyalty to God.

2.6.1 *Covenant, Marriage and Idolatry*

The use of language such as 'love', 'hate' and 'rebellion' suggests that the covenant relationship may be understood through analogy with human relationships. This suggestion gains support from the personal character the covenant obligation receives from the history of relations that exists between God and Israel (e.g. Deut 13:2, 6).⁷³ Furthermore, the description of idolatry in terms of sexual deviance is present in the Pentateuch (Exod 34:15-16; Deut 31:16; cf. *Jub.* 35:13-14), where the description of God as a 'jealous God' also suggests the possibility of understanding the covenant through analogy with human relationships. Therefore it is no surprise that the prophets use the human relationship of husband and wife to attack Israel's relationships with 'other gods' and 'other nations'.

The identification of idolatry in terms of sexual sin relies on moral assumptions about marriage that are shared by the prophet and those he addresses;

⁷² J. A. Thompson, 'Israel's "Lovers"', *VT* 27 (1977) 475-481, p. 479

⁷³ Halbertal, & Margalit, *Idolatry*, p.31

relations that are forbidden in this interpersonal relationship are used to illustrate what is permitted and what is proscribed by the covenant relationship between God and Israel.⁷⁴ The use of the marriage metaphor is probably most concentrated in Hosea, although it is also employed in Isaiah (1:21), Jeremiah (3:6) and Ezekiel (16, 23). Within Hosea the main function of the husband, and by extension God, is the satisfaction of the wife's material needs.⁷⁵ Here Israel is depicted as seeking the fulfilment of its material needs from 'lovers', rather than God (Hos 2:7-8, 12). This behaviour is forbidden within marriage and is therefore contrary to the covenant, since God is the sole supplier of Israel's needs. Therefore the idolatrous behaviour of Israel is seen to derive from their failure to accept the all-sufficiency of their God and the exclusive nature of the covenant relationship. Throughout Hosea Israel's 'lovers' are usually 'other gods' or idols (2:5, 7, 10, 12, 13; cf. 4QpHos^a 1:3), although in Hos 8:9-10 this description is applied to 'other nations'. This indicates that both turning to 'other gods' and turning to 'other nations' can be depicted as adulterous behaviour that contravenes the marriage relationship. In both cases Israel denies the all-sufficiency of God by seeking the fulfilment of her needs from a source other than God.

Israel's political allies are described as her 'lovers' in Jeremiah (4:30; 22:20-23), Lamentations (1:2, 19) and Ezekiel (16:33, 36; 23:5, 9, 11, 22).⁷⁶ The description of the relationship between Israel and 'other nations' in terms of the sexually illicit union of 'lovers' blurs the line between covenant making and

⁷⁴ Halbertal, & Margalit, *Idolatry*, p. 10

⁷⁵ Halbertal, & Margalit, *Idolatry*, pp. 13-14; Ortlund, *Whoredom*, p. 48

⁷⁶ Thompson, 'Israel's "lovers"', p. 477

serving 'other gods'. The making of covenants with 'other nations' is depicted in terms of the marriage metaphor in Jeremiah (2:4-3:5) and Ezekiel (16:23-34; 23:1-49), where adultery involves seeking from the nations what is only available to Israel from God. The making of covenants involves trusting such nations as Egypt and Assyria rather than God (Jer 2:37). It involves a rejection of God as Israel's provider and protector, and therefore a denial of his all-sufficiency and sovereignty. This can be seen clearly in Isaiah 31:1-3 where reliance on Egypt is perceived as a deification of that nation since God alone is Israel's protector.⁷⁷ Therefore it is evident that the threat posed by interaction with 'other nations' is not only related to that presented by serving 'other gods', but can also be understood as an aspect of idolatry.

2.6.2 *Idolatrous Error*

It is clear from the discussion of idolatry above, that this sin is frequently understood within a system of interpersonal relationships. Understood in this way, idolatry is perceived as disloyalty and betrayal, rather than error.⁷⁸ However, while Halbertal and Margalit are right to conclude that in the OT the 'focus of the sin' was 'the sexual aspect rather than the aspect of error',⁷⁹ the latter aspect should not be dismissed as unimportant. While the 'problem of error' may not become the 'crux of the problem of idolatry' until the flourishing of

⁷⁷ Halbertal, & Margalit, *Idolatry*, p. 223

⁷⁸ Halbertal, & Margalit, *Idolatry*, p. 108

⁷⁹ Halbertal, & Margalit, *Idolatry*, pp. 108-109

philosophical religion with Maimonides,⁸⁰ it is nonetheless an important aspect of the understanding of that sin within the OT.

Apart from explicit cases like Jeremiah 2:11 where the gods worshipped are described as non-existent (cf. Ep Jer 4-73), the role of error in the act of betrayal is often more subtle. From the above discussion of the prophets it is clear that Israel's idolatry, whether consisting in turning to 'other gods' or 'other nations', involves failing to grasp the exclusive nature of the covenant and attributing God's position and actions to rival objects of loyalty. This error may consist in Israel attributing the provision of its material needs to her 'lovers', or it may involve placing trust for survival as a nation in nations like Egypt and Assyria (Isa 31:1-3; Jer 2:37). This more subtle side of idolatry is found in Ps 50 where '[t]he saints have turned the truth upside down' by making God dependent on the people.⁸¹ Here those who forget God are depicted as having 'created God in their image' (Ps 50:21-22).⁸² The people's deception about God's nature leads them to make God into an idol who must be fed; in this way their error goes to the heart of their sin. In view of the evidence gathered from this Psalm, the prophets and the Pentateuch, the threat of idolatry should be understood as involving an error in Israel's understanding of God and the covenant relationship.

⁸⁰ Halbertal, & Margalit, *Idolatry*, p. 2

⁸¹ J. W. H. Bos, 'Oh, When the Saints: A Consideration of the Meaning of Psalm 50', *JSOT* 24 (1982) 65-77, p. 71

⁸² Bos, 'Oh, When the Saints', p. 73; Shapiro, 'Doctrine', p. 59

2.6.3 *Beyond the Canon?*

That the opposition to idolatry found in the texts of the OT canon is also prevalent in other Jewish literature is already clear from the continued use of the memory motif in this connection (*Jub.* 1:9; *Bib. Ant.* 41:3). In this literature the distinction between those who worship God and those who worship idols or 'other gods' continues to be made (*2 Enoch* 2:2; 34:1-2; *Jos. Asen.* 11:7; 1QpHab 12:10-17; 13:1-4). Indeed, loving God continues to involve an opposition to idolatry and the life associated with it (*Jub.* 20:7). However, perhaps the clearest example of Israel's identity as God's covenant people involving the need to avoid the threat of assimilation posed by idolatry is found in Pseudo-Philo.

In *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 'resistance to idolatry is seen as the essence of Israel's identity'.⁸³ In contrast to the rest of humanity who are characterised as idolatrous (*Bib. Ant.* 2:9), Abraham comes from a family that distinguishes itself from all the inhabitants of the earth by its rejection of idolatry (4:16; cf. *Jub.* 11:16-17; 12:2-5). As Murphy recognises, Pseudo-Philo sees Israel as beginning with Abraham's rejection of idolatry (chs. 6-7), a rejection that separates Israel from the 'other nations' (12:2).⁸⁴ The opposition between Israel and the nations is presented as corresponding to the opposition between God and idols in the battle of David and Goliath (61:6). For Pseudo-Philo, as for the biblical writers, an idolatrous Israel is just like all the other nations, and therefore

⁸³ F. J. Murphy, 'Retelling the Bible: Idolatry in Pseudo-Philo', *JBL* 107 (1988) 275-287, p. 275

⁸⁴ Murphy, 'Retelling', pp. 276-277

he employs the theme of idolatry to remind Israel 'that its identity as a nation is founded upon its exclusive and uncompromising loyalty to God'.⁸⁵ Therefore from this brief consideration of Ps-Philo it is clear that idolatry continues to be a clear-cut example of covenant unfaithfulness, the rejection of which remains an important factor of Israel's identity.

2.7 Summary

The threat of assimilation faced by Israel primarily consists in covenant unfaithfulness characterised by idolatry or interaction with 'other nations'. In making agreements with 'other nations' Israel not only breaches the exclusivity of its covenant with God, but also denies God's position as its provider. This denial of God's role of provision and protection is therefore a rejection of God's all-sufficiency and sovereignty.

The relationship between interacting with 'other nations' and committing idolatry in Exod 34:11-16 demonstrates that the former leads to the latter. The distinction between the two sins that exists in this passage becomes blurred in the prophets through the use of the term 'lovers' and the metaphor of marriage for the covenant relationship. The former term is used for both 'other gods' and 'other nations', and the language of sexual deviance is applied to covenant making in such a way that it is understood as idolatry.

⁸⁵ Murphy, 'Retelling', p. 284

Although the use of the marriage metaphor highlights the betrayal and disloyalty involved in breaching the exclusive covenant relationship through idolatry, the importance of error in the perpetration of this sin should not be overlooked. From the prophets and the Psalms it is clear that a distortion of God's character is involved in the action of idolatry, whether it consists in a denial of his provision for and protection of Israel, or the projection of human needs onto God. Therefore a proper conception of God's character and the nature of the covenant relationship is significant for covenant faithfulness in the face of the threat of assimilation posed by idolatry.

2.8 Doubleness and Singleness

The preceding investigation of covenant thought has been carried out without much regard for the terminology of doubleness and singleness in the various texts considered. However, the need for absolute loyalty that this examination has revealed demonstrates the importance of singleness. The need for such singleness is clear in Deut 13:3 where it is described in terms of wholehearted love (cf. Deut 6:4). Within the OT there is a variety of terminology for such single-minded loyalty, including לֵבִי (1 Kgs 8:61; 11:4; 15:3, 14; 2 Chr 16:9), תְּמִיךְ (Exod 12:5; Deut 18:13) and קִרְבָּן (Gen 38:26; Ps 7:9).⁸⁶ Furthermore, the frequent connection of obedience or disobedience with faith or unbelief (Gen 15:6; 22:18; Deut 9:23; Ps 106:24-25; cf. 2 Apoc. Bar. 42:2; *Bib. Ant.* 23:12;

⁸⁶ Bultmann, 'πιστεύω κτλ.', *TDNT Vol. 6*, p. 188; Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 24; G. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology Vol. 1: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962, pp. 373, 393

25:6; 1QpHab 2:3), means that this terminology can also be understood as representing the need for singleness.⁸⁷

This latter point is of some significance given the correspondence between the conception of God held by Israel and its covenant faithfulness that has become apparent through the above examination of covenant thought. Within the OT, 'faith' is used in the sense of trusting God and inclines in the direction of 'taking God as God with unremitting seriousness'.⁸⁸ This aspect of 'faith' is apparent in Abraham's belief in God's promise (Gen 15:6; cf. Gen 42:20; 45:26; Exod 4:1) and in Israel's failure to trust God (Num 14:11). The latter passage is particularly interesting as the Israelites are described as not only failing to trust in God's promise that they will inherit the land (v. 11; cf. Deut 9:23), but also questioning God's goodness (v. 3) in a similar way to that recounted in Exod 16:3. In both cases the people understand their present situation as being worse than life in Egypt. Furthermore, God's provision for them is compared unfavourably to the 'good' things they could enjoy in Egypt,⁸⁹ to the extent that their present situation leads them to contemplate that God's purpose in delivering them from Egypt has malicious intent (cf. Deut 1:27). Their failure to believe in God's goodness, in relation to both his provision of food and his ultimate purpose, is depicted as rebellion (Num 14:9, 11-12).

⁸⁷ D. B. Garlington, *The Obedience of Faith: A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991, p. 13

⁸⁸ Bultmann, 'πιστεύω κτλ.', p. 188

⁸⁹ J. Milgrom, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers*, Philadelphia; NY: Jewish Publication Society, 1990, p. 108; C. Houtman, *Exodus Vol. 2 Chapters 7:14-19:25*, Kampen: Kok Publishing House, 1996, p. 300

Therefore the singleness required from Israel not only consists in loyal obedience, but also in believing that God is who he says he is and trusting that he will do what he has promised. In this way 'faith' is integral to covenant faithfulness, since unbelief leads to and is manifested in unfaithfulness. While apostasy is predominantly depicted as practising behaviour that contravenes the covenant (e.g. idolatry), 'faith' or rather the lack of it occupies a significant role in the act of disobedience and so it is no surprise that in later literature 'faith' becomes a more explicit mark of covenant membership (*1 Enoch* 63:7, 8; *2 Enoch* 51:2; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 54:16, 21-22; *1QpHab* 2:2; 7:17; *4 Ezra* 5:21-30).

Apart from the counterparts of the terminology of singleness already discussed, the OT can also refer to doubleness in the sense of having a double-heart (*1 Chr* 12:33; *Ps* 12:2) or a divided heart (*Hos* 10:2). The examples from *Chronicles* and the *Psalms* are concerned with human relationships, while that in *Hosea* relates to Israel's abrogation of the covenant. In the latter instance the doubleness described is a division of loyalty, while the point in *Chronicles* is that there is no such division. The doubleness described in *Ps* 12:2 is that of lying and deceiving, and therefore it involves not a division of loyalties but a disregard for the truth. The chasm between truth and falsehood created by deception comes to particular prominence in the *Apocrypha* where doubleness is often discussed in terms of hypocrisy (*Sir* 1:29; 35:15; 36:2; *2 Macc* 5:25; 6:21; *4 Macc* 6:15, 17). However, even in this literature doubleness continues to be understood in terms of divided loyalties (*Sir* 2:12), particularly in relation to faith and unbelief.

The connection of doubleness and faith in terms of divided loyalties is evident in Sirach (2:12; 1:27-28) and the Wisdom of Solomon (1:1-2). The context of Sir 2:12 is concerned with encouraging belief in God in times of testing (2:1-11). Those who follow the advice of the sage and believe in God are assured that they will be rewarded because God is both trustworthy and faithful (vv. 10-11). However, in v. 12 belief is motivated with reference to the consequences of failing to believe:

Woe to fearful hearts, and faint hands, and the sinner that goes two ways!

The condemnation of fear in this verse indicates that those upon whom the woe is pronounced are not those who fear the Lord (1:26-28). Rather, as their description as sinners indicates, such people are disobedient, and such disobedience witnesses to their doubleness (1:27-28; 2:12). However, although in Sirach obedience results from faith,⁹⁰ the position condemned is not devoid of faith altogether since the people described as going two ways at once attempt to combine the life of faith with behaviour wholly incompatible with it. These peoples' convictions and loyalty vacillates between serving God and alleviating their trials through assimilation to the behaviour of the nations.⁹¹ This vacillation,

⁹⁰ E. J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom, and Ethics*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1985, p. 45

⁹¹ P. W. Skehan, & A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (AB, 39), NY: Doubleday, 1987, p. 151

being grounded in a lack of trust (2:13-14), demonstrates a lack of loyalty to God, through both doubting his faithfulness and rejecting his ways.⁹²

The opening of the Wisdom of Solomon encourages those addressed, to love righteousness, think of the Lord with a good heart, and seek him in simplicity (1:1).⁹³ The reason for following such advice is given as follows:

For he will be found by those who do not test him; and will show himself to those that do not distrust him (1:2).

Furthermore, in v. 3 those who test God are described as being unwise. Therefore these verses establish an antithesis between God and those who test him, the latter being characterised as lacking in belief and wisdom. The distrust evident in testing God is clearly at odds with the requirement that God should be sought in simplicity of heart. Those who test God evidently have some faith in God although they are reluctant to take God at his word. In view of the consideration of these passages from Sir and Wis, it is evident that the character of God performs an important role in encouraging singleness and averting doubleness among the people of God.

⁹² Garlington, *The Obedience of Faith*, p. 66

⁹³ D. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (AB, 43), NY: Doubleday, 1979, p. 100

2.9 Conclusion

This exploration of covenant thought has revealed that the most significant element in Israel's identity as God's people is being a 'distinct' nation, and that the greatest threat to this identity is that of assimilation in the form of idolatry. Since the character and actions of God form an important foundational and motivational aspect of the covenant relationship, informing the behaviour attendant with covenant faithfulness, the maintenance of a correct perception of God and the covenant is highly significant for combating the threat of assimilation and keeping the covenant. Furthermore, it was found that, as in the case of idolatry, so in the case of doubleness there is a failure to accept that God is who he has revealed himself to be and that he will keep his promises.

It has also been demonstrated that the covenant concept continues to be significant throughout the Second Temple period, even where the terms *ברית* and *διαθήκη* are absent, thus establishing the plausibility of the suggestion that James employs covenant thought. That James does in fact make use of and adapt covenant thought for his own purposes will be demonstrated in the following chapter through the consideration of Jas 4:1-6. This passage will be examined in the light of the preceding consideration of God's character, the nature of the covenant relationship and the threat of assimilation.

Friends and Adulteresses in Jas 4:1-6

3.1 *Introduction*

The possibility that James has been influenced by and makes use of covenant thought has already been suggested through the examination of the work of Laws and Bauckham in the introduction.¹ Furthermore, certain aspects of covenant thought have been considered as a result of the implications of this examination, and so it has been demonstrated that the most significant element of Israel's covenant identity is being a 'distinct' nation and that the maintenance of this distinction requires loyalty. In turn it has been shown that the greatest threat to this identity is that posed by assimilation in the form of idolatry, and that lack of resistance to this threat is frequently connected with failure to maintain a correct perception of God and the covenant. However, it remains to be established whether or not this thought pattern is actually present and influential in the Letter of James.

In order to establish this fact the present chapter will consider James' indictment of the implied audience in Jas 4:1-6, and in particular his condemnation of them as 'adulteresses' and 'friends of the world'. Furthermore, from the examination of this passage it will be demonstrated that James uses the covenant ideology connected with the threat of assimilation posed by idolatry to depict the implied

audience, thus identifying their thoughts and actions as those of apostates. As is clear from 4:7-10 this identification is intended to lead the implied audience into repentance and the adoption of the ethos of faithfulness.

The limitation of the primary focus of this chapter to 4:1-6 is not intended to be a structural statement, implying that this passage is disconnected from 3:1-18 or 4:7-10. On the contrary the verbal connections between 3:13-18 and 4:1-6 (e.g. *ζηλος* (3:14, 16), *ζηλοῦτε* (4:2); *ἐν ὑμῖν* (3:13; 4:1)) indicate that one should not insist upon establishing rigid boundaries between these passages. This conclusion is borne out by the divergent conclusions scholars have reached in relation to the structure of this portion of James. Although some argue that 3:13-4:10 represents a single section,² even those that understand 4:1-10/12 to be a self-contained passage recognise some connection with the thought of 3:13-18.³ In view of this recognition it is important to consider the material that precedes 4:1-6 in 3:1-18.

3.1.1 *Jas 3:1-18: The Foundation of the Indictment in 4:1-6*

As with the relationship between 3:1-18 and 4:1-6, so there is also a wealth of divergent opinion regarding the strength of the connections between 3:1-12 and 3:13-18. Despite the verbal (e.g. *πικρόν* (3:11, 14), *ἀκατάστατον* (3:8, 16)) and topical connections between these sections (e.g. demonic origin (3:6, 15);

¹ See sections 1.4.1-2

² Martin, p. 142; Johnson, p. 268

³ Mussner, p. 175; Laws, p. 167; Davids, p. 155

teachers and the wise (3:1, 13)) some interpreters continue to treat 3:13-18 as a new section,⁴ although most interpreters understand 3:13-18 as continuing at least some aspects of the thought of 3:1-12.⁵ The connection of thought that is most important in considering 3:1-18 in relation to 4:1-6 is that focused upon the office of teaching, as some interpreters understand the strife described in 4:1 as the consequence of the actions of the teachers mentioned in 3:1.⁶

In 3:1 James warns the addressees in general with an admonition that 'not many' of them should 'become teachers'. The reasons why they might seek to 'become teachers' are left unstated, although the suggestion that it is the status attached to the teaching office that forms the attraction is probably correct (cf. concern with boasting 3:5, 14).⁷ However, some interpreters suggest that James shifts from addressing the whole congregation to addressing the teachers in particular.⁸ The argument for this reading is based on his use of the first person plural in the latter half of 3:1 and throughout the rest of 3:2-12. However, the use of the first person plural in 3:9 appears to relate to humanity

⁴ Dibelius, p. 207; Laws, pp. 157-159; Watson, 'James 3:1-12', p. 52; Johnson, pp. 254, 268;

⁵ Adamson, pp. 138, 148; Davids, p. 149; Martin, p. 127; J. L. P. Wolmarans, 'The Tongue Guiding the Body: The Anthropological Presuppositions of James 3:1-12', *Neot* 26 (1992) 523-530, p. 524; Wall, *Community*, pp. 180, 186; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 181; D. J. Versepunt, 'Plutarch of Chaeronea and the Epistle of James on Communal Behaviour', *NTS* 47 (2001) 502-518, p. 517

⁶ Mussner, p. 176; Davids, p. 156; Martin, p. 144

⁷ Laws, p. 141; Davids, 136 This idea that there was a potential or actual desire to seek positions of status within the community suggests that the Christian community may have been understood to fulfil a similar role to the *collegium*, 'providing a social setting in which persons who normally never aspire to participation in the *cursus honorum* of the city and state could give and receive honours...'. J. S. Kloppenborg, 'Collegia and THIASOI: Issues in Function, Taxonomy, and Membership', 16-30, in J. S. Kloppenborg, S. G. Wilson (eds.), *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, London; NY: Routledge, 1996, p. 26

⁸ Adamson, p. 140; Watson, 'James 3:1-12', pp. 52-53; Wall, *Community*, p. 162

in general and is not restricted to teachers in particular. Furthermore, in view of the warning of 3:1, a restriction of 'we' to those who are teachers in 3:2-12 would suggest that these teachers, including the author, should relinquish their position in order to avoid judgement. However, James' intention is to support his warning in 3:1 with the difficulties in the realm of speech that face all of those addressed; in view of such general difficulties and the prospect of judgement the task of teaching is represented as particularly uninviting.⁹ Therefore, while he remains concerned with the issue raised in 3:1, the difficulties posed by the tongue are those of the addressees in general who remain the target of James' concern throughout 3:1-12.¹⁰

The general nature of the paraenesis in 3:1-12 offers no indication as to whether the problem of 'too many' seeking the position of teacher is an actual or potential problem. Indeed even the problems relating to the tongue need only be present among the addressees in the same way that they are present among humanity in general. However, in this regard there is one particular feature of the teaching in 3:1-12 that stands out as of interest in regard to the influence of covenant thought in James. This feature is found in 3:9 where the tongue is the source of both blessing and cursing.¹¹ Here James reminds the addressees that humans are made in the likeness of God, and the allusion to Gen 1:27 is immediately clear. Both Johnson and Edgar have noted that this verse makes a contrast between the actions of humanity and those of God, so

⁹ Contra Dibelius, p. 209; Laws, p. 140

¹⁰ Contra Adamson, p. 140; Watson, 'James 3:1-12', pp. 52-53; Wall, *Community*, p. 162

that from this verse one might understand that 'human speech and action should be normed by the speech and action' of God.¹² This implies that James uses the character of God in much the same way as it is used in covenant thought, although here this obviously occurs under the influence of creation theology.

As Bauckham has recognised, the teaching in 3:12, that a person who is evil cannot utter genuinely good statements, provides a close link between 3:1-12 and 3:13-18.¹³ It is the *prima facie* impossibility of fig trees yielding olives or salt water yielding fresh that the author develops in 3:13-18. Therefore, having established humanity's general tendency to encounter extreme difficulties controlling the tongue and thus demonstrated that 'not many' of the addressees should 'become teachers', James asks 'Who is wise and understanding among you?' This question initiates both an exploration of who should occupy leadership roles,¹⁴ and a description of the life lived according to wisdom that is expected from all the addressees (cf. 1:5).¹⁵

The discussion that follows James' question is structured according to various oppositions (e.g. meekness versus jealousy, ambition, and boasting (3:13-14)). The most important and overarching opposition is that between wisdom from

¹¹ Martin (p. 119) notes the possibility that Jas 3:9 may prepare for 4:1-3 in bringing the divine image into connection with cursing, recognising in this the possibility of an allusion to the tradition found in Gen 9:6 which links murder and the idea of humanity as image of God.

¹² Johnson, p. 264; Edgar, *Chosen*, pp. 180-181

¹³ Bauckham, *James*, p. 90

¹⁴ Davids, p. 149; Verseput, 'Plutarch', p. 517

¹⁵ Laws, p. 159; Watson, 'James 3:1-12', p. 52

above (3:17) and wisdom from below (3:15).¹⁶ This spatial opposition is informed by the earlier statements in the letter (e.g. 1:5, 17, 27; 2:5) so that 'above' means 'from God' and 'below' means 'from a source opposed to God', e.g. the 'world'. Therefore it is evident that the fundamental opposition James is concerned with is that opposition that underlies the behaviour that results in disorder or peace. As Edgar has noted in regard to 3:13, the 'wise and understanding' are those who are loyal to God (i.e. those who act according to the wisdom from above).¹⁷

The impossibility of acting according to the wisdom from above and being jealous and ambitious (3:14) is emphasised both by the verbal connection with 3:11 (*πικρόν*) and the indication that boasting in such behaviour is contrary to the 'truth'. This boasting also contrasts with the meekness called for in 3:13, and is indicative of an arrogant attitude (cf. 4:16). However, as in 3:1-12, so also here in 3:13-18 James gives no positive and explicit indication that he means to depict the audience as culpable of the behaviour condemned. On the contrary, the condition found in 3:14 is left unfulfilled in this section, suggesting that if the behaviour condemned is to be understood as representative of the implied audience, this condition must be fulfilled elsewhere.

This consideration of 3:1-18 has demonstrated that James is concerned with a potential or actual problem involving a widespread desire to attain the position

¹⁶ The latter can be identified as 'wisdom', despite James' reluctance to say so much explicitly, in accordance with its opposition to wisdom from above and the use of the feminine adjective *ψυχική* at 3:15 (so also, Jackson-McCabe, 'Twelve Tribes', p. 509, n. 37).

¹⁷ Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 183

of teacher. In order to combat this problem he has emphasised the prospect of judgement and the difficulty of controlling the tongue. Furthermore he has indicated that those who are suitable for the position must demonstrate such by their humble conduct. Although the reason for desiring the position of teacher is left unstated, the suggestion that it involves a desire for honourable status receives support from the prohibition against boasting if one is jealous and ambitious. The author characterises such behaviour as finding its source in all that is opposed to God through the use of a spatial opposition between 'above' and 'below'. This spatial dualism indicates that the relationship with God characterised by his gift of wisdom excludes certain inappropriate behaviour. The conjunction of this inappropriate behaviour (3:14) and the negative designation of space in 3:15 indicates that those who remain loyal to God are those who remain distinct from 'below'. Therefore, the honourable status that is sought in the position of teacher is only available to those who live life humbly in accordance with God's wisdom. That the implied audience does not fulfil this life of wisdom is demonstrated by their condemnation in 4:1-6.

3.2 *Jas 4:1: A Question of Origin*

The indictment of 4:1-6 opens with two rhetorical questions in 4:1. Both of these questions betray an unmistakable emphasis on origin with the use of *πόθεν* and *ἐντεθεν*.¹⁸ This emphasis on origin recalls James' spatial dualism in 3:13-18

¹⁸ W. E. Oesterley, *The General Epistle of James*, 385-476 in *The Expositor's Greek Testament Volume 4*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1897, p. 457; W. R. Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics in*

and the idea that behaviour can only come 'from above' or 'from below'. Therefore it is in terms of this opposition that he intends his audience to consider the source of their *πόλεμοι* and *μάχαι*: are they from God and therefore good or are they in opposition to God? Against this background the contrast between *πόλεμοι καὶ μάχαι* (4:1) and *εἰρήνην* (3:18) clearly establishes that the source of *πόλεμοι* and *μάχαι* cannot be God, and therefore the opening question implies that the audience fails to act in loyalty to God.¹⁹

The precise circumstances in which *πόλεμοι* and *μάχαι* have appeared among the addressees are not clear from the text, although it is possible that James has in mind the tensions arising from the behaviour addressed in 3:1.²⁰ Indeed, his association of strife and jealousy in 4:2 connects with both 3:14 and 3:16 to indicate that the general description of those who live by the wisdom from below is applicable to the implied audience.²¹ Therefore it is probable that James has circumstances, akin to those addressed in 3:1, in mind in his use of *πόλεμοι* and *μάχαι*. However, the lack of information about these circumstances should caution the interpreter against further speculation. Furthermore, since 3:13-18 is not exclusively concerned with qualifications for teaching, the connections with this passage cannot be used to limit the reference of 4:1 to the circumstances hinted at in 3:1.

the Epistle of James, (WUNT, 2/68), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995, p. 135; Burchard, p. 165; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 186

¹⁹ For the contrast between 3:18 and 4:1 see also Frankemölle, p. 580; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 126

²⁰ Mussner, p. 176; Davids, p. 156; Martin, p. 144; Wall, *Community*, p. 194

²¹ see Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 126; Wall, *Community*, p. 194

The answer to the first question implied through the contrast with 3:18 is confirmed by the author in the second question. These tensions do not come from God but *ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν*. In making this claim he indicates that the responsibility for failing to live by God's wisdom is personal, since the source of this failure comes from within. This localisation of the problem is evident in James' use of *ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν*. It is probable that this phrase localises the problem of *ἡδονή* in the human body since *μέλος* has already been used in this sense (3:5-6) and the following verses indicate that the argument is moving from the communal to the personal.²²

The majority of interpreters read *ἡδονή* as equivalent in meaning to *ἐπιθυμία*, since this latter term appears in 4:2 (in verbal form) and is presented as the source of sin in 1:13-15.²³ However, in spite of these considerations it is unnecessary to understand *ἡδονή* simply as equivalent in meaning to *ἐπιθυμία*.²⁴ According to the network of meaning established in 3:13-18 *ἡδονή*, as the origin of disputes, is in opposition to God and the wisdom that comes from above. Rather than living according to wisdom the implied audience is living by *ἡδονή*, and this suggests that *ἡδονή* should be understood as a principle around which they organise their lives. Therefore *ἡδονή* should be

²² Mayor, p. 134; Mussner, p. 177; Dibelius, p. 216; Adamson, p. 166; Laws, p. 168; Davids, p. 157; Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 135; Frankemölle, p. 582; Burchard, p. 166; Contra Martin, pp. 144-145

²³ Dibelius, p. 215, n. 40; Davids, p. 156; Martin, p. 145; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 108; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 82; Burchard, p. 166

²⁴ In 1:14-15 the author leaves the object desired unstated, whereas the use of *ἡδονή* in 4:1 provides the object of the unfulfilled desires dealt with in 4:2-3.

understood as that pleasure that is the object of desire, and this pleasure is clearly to be understood negatively as self-gratification (cf. 4:3).²⁵ Since pleasure involves the satisfaction of personal desires that are momentary and passing, the person may be subject to several pleasures at any one time, each of them campaigning (*στρατεύομαι*) for dominance and satisfaction.²⁶ It is this division on the personal level that James depicts as the origin of strife on the communal level, and it is the failure to satisfy the dictates of pleasure that he focuses on in 4:2.²⁷

3.3 Jas 4:2: *Dangerous Deficiencies*

In developing the thought of 4:1 James seeks to make the connection between the divisive demands of pleasure on the personal level and the occurrence of communal strife more explicit. This intention accounts for the didactic effect induced through the use of the present tense and indicative clauses.²⁸ Furthermore, while his analysis of *ἐπιθυμία* and *ξηλόω* may be widely applicable to all humanity,²⁹ it should be remembered that James is using this analysis in relation to his own audience against the background of oppositions established in 3:13-18 and that it is this audience he condemns in 4:4.

²⁵ so also Laws, p. 168; cf. Ropes, p. 253; Johnson, p. 276

²⁶ Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 135

²⁷ Note that James does not indicate whether or not the object of desire (i.e. pleasure) is fulfilled in 4:1, and so pleasure is depicted as a problem in itself whether it is simply sought or enjoyed. That James focuses on lack and deficiency in 4:2-3 suggests that it is unfulfilled pleasure that is of primary importance in this passage (Contra Dibelius, p. 215, n. 40).

²⁸ Laws, p. 172

²⁹ so Ropes, p. 255

Therefore it is evident that through this analysis, he seeks to make plain to those addressed the reason for their indictment, and in doing so presents the flaws of the implied audience if not his actual addressees.

There are two issues that have exercised the thoughts of interpreters in relation to 4:2: the meaning of *φονεύετε* and the punctuation of this verse. These two problems are to some extent interrelated, but it is James' suggestion that his addressees' unfulfilled desires result in murder that has drawn most scholarly attention. However, in view of the cautionary note sounded above (3.1.1) with regard to the possibility of uncovering the actual circumstances of the addressees from this text, some of the more speculative attempts to understand the meaning of *φονεύετε* can be set aside.³⁰ A further suggestion made by Dibelius (following Erasmus) that *φονεύετε* is a textual corruption and should be replaced with *φθονεῖτε* must also be rejected.³¹ The textual evidence clearly supports the reading *φονεύετε*, with only one late attestation to the possibility of reading *φθονεῖτε* (918). In view of this evidence it is preferable to attempt to interpret the text as it stands.³²

³⁰ E.g. those of Bo Reicke (*The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude*, (AB, 37), London; NY: Doubleday, p. 45) and Martin (p. 144) who speculate regarding the addressees' involvement in conflict involving similarities to the behaviour of Jewish Zealots. For an earlier argument against such a reading see Mayor, p. 135

³¹ Dibelius, pp. 217-218

³² Laws, p. 171; Burchard, p. 168

In retaining this reading it is important to avoid what Ropes calls the impossible anticlimax of *φονεύετε καὶ ζηλοῦτε* and preserve the parallelism within the verse.³³ This is achieved by punctuating the verse in the following manner,

ἐπιθυμεῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε· φονεύετε.

καὶ ζηλοῦτε καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν· μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε.

This punctuation heightens the point of the sentence and produces a more powerful effect,³⁴ as the argument reads ‘You desire and do not have; you murder. And you are jealous and cannot obtain; you fight and war’.³⁵ According to this parallelism James’ use of *φονεύετε* should be understood in relation to his use of *μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε*. Therefore, since his use of *πόλεμοι* and *μάχαι* in 4:1 is most likely figurative and the present verse develops the thought of that verse, a figurative meaning should be preferred for both *φονεύετε* and *μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε* in 4:2.

Since *φονεύετε* results from unfulfilled desire it is probable that the figurative meaning of this term involves trying to fulfil that same desire through hostile and oppressive means. This may involve abusive speech (Sir 28:17), or the seizing of someone’s property (Sir 34 (31):22; 2 Enoch 10:5; Deut 22:26; Prov 1:11; CD

³³ Ropes, p. 254

³⁴ F. Blass, A. Debrunner & R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960, p. 262

³⁵ Punctuation accepted by Mayor, p. 136; Ropes, p. 254; Johnson, pp. 267, 276-277. Both Dibelius (p. 218) and Adamson (pp. 167-168) argue for an alternative.

6:16; Philo, *Spec.* 3.204).³⁶ That the latter may be the case receives additional support from Jas 5:6 where the 'rich' who oppress the 'poor' are accused of murder. Although this passage addresses the 'rich' as opposed to the community,³⁷ the contrast between the influence of 'above' and 'below' that undergirds this section of James, implies that the audience is quite capable of acting like the 'rich'.

The possibility that the implied audience is being depicted through the use of *φονεύετε* in 4:2 as acting in a way that characterises those outwith the community receives further support from the parallel usage of *μάχεσθε και πολεμείτε*. The use of these terms indicates that the behaviour that results from unfulfilled jealousy is opposed to that resulting from God's wisdom. This is evident from the contrast between 4:1 and 3:18 and the emphasis on jealousy and disorder found in 3:14-16. However, the various ethical characteristics that distinguish wisdom from above and wisdom from below in 3:13-18 do not include murder. Therefore if murder is to be understood as functioning in a similar manner to *μάχεσθε και πολεμείτε* we must look elsewhere for its choice as a delineation of behaviour opposed to God.

This information is clearly supplied in Jas 5:6 as has already been noted, but this text comes after the reference in 4:2 and therefore does not provide the key by which murder is understood as behaviour opposed to God. The only other

³⁶ Davids (p. 159) and Konradt (*Christliche Existenz*, p. 129) both note the example given by the author in 2:15-16. Furthermore, as some of these texts make clear, such hostile actions may in fact lead to a decidedly non-figurative death, for further references see Davids, p. 158; Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, pp. 135-136; Burchard, p. 168

reference to murder in James is found in 2:11 where James discusses the unity of the law. The suggestion that 4:2 alludes to 2:11 has been made by J. J. Schmitt,³⁸ although in doing so he offers no indication as to the author's intention in making this connection.³⁹ However, in correspondence with the function of *μάχεσθε και πολεμείτε* already discussed, it is probable that this connection is intended to demonstrate the implied audience's failure to keep the law.⁴⁰ That is, in accordance with the unity of the law taught in 2:10-11, James' depiction of the audience as those who commit murder, functions to identify them as those who fail to live by God's law, preferring to live by their own pleasures. This characterisation of the implied audience leaves them facing the prospect of judgement without having lived by the standard that it will employ (2:12). In this way the audience is depicted in 4:2 as failing to keep God's standards, whether these are thought of in terms of wisdom or law.

A final implication of the behaviour resulting from unsatisfied longing after pleasure is that the audience are willing to treat people who stand in the way of their desires or who have something that they want in a manner that both ignores and contradicts God's standards. That is, they are depicted as putting the satisfaction of their own pleasures over and above the law and wisdom of God. Furthermore, their focus on pleasure obviously indicates a belief that the

³⁷ Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 109

³⁸ There is a general tendency to note the appearance of murder in 2:11 when discussing 4:2, e.g. Mussner, p. 178; Davids, p. 159; Frankemölle, p. 596; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 109

³⁹ J. J. Schmitt, 'You Adulteresses! The Image in James 4:4, *NovT* 28 (1986) 327-337, p. 334; so also Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 191, n. 19 The suggestion is rejected by Johnson (p. 278) without a stated reason.

object of their desire and jealousy is good, a belief in contradiction with James' depiction of pleasure. So the implied audience are depicted as being both arrogant and foolish in their opposition to God.⁴¹

3.4 Jas 4:3: Not Having and Prayer

The idea that the desire and jealousy of the implied audience is unsatisfied is recalled in James' analysis of their prayers in 4:3 by his use of *οὐκ ἔχετε*,⁴² where the final part of 4:2 is included in this verse so that it reads:

*οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ὑμᾶς,
αἰτεῖτε καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε,
ἵνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε.*

In this verse the thought that strife has its origins in the pursuit of pleasure is developed in relation to the topic of prayer, indicating that God is not responsible for the situation of unsatisfied desire in which the audience find themselves.⁴³ However, while in 4:2 James leaves the reasons for the

⁴⁰ As noted by Schmitt ('Adulteresses!' p. 334) and Edgar (*Chosen*, p. 191, n. 19) the occurrence of adultery in 4:4 further strengthens the argument for an allusion to 2:11 in 4:2.

⁴¹ The irony of this depiction of the audience, if it is seen to relate to the issue raised in 3:1, is that in struggling to achieve their goal they ignore and reject that by which it would be achieved, i.e. wisdom from above.

⁴² Mussner, p. 179

⁴³ In view of Jas 1:13, the idea that the audience may pass the responsibility for this situation and their behaviour on to God might be implied in the movement from the workings of desire to the relationship with God, a movement that reverses the order in 1:13-15. For a discussion of Jas 1:13-15 see section 4.5.

continued state of unsatisfied desire and jealousy unstated, in the present verse he seeks to make it explicit that this failure results from a breakdown in the relationship with God.

The combination of 'you do not ask' and 'you ask but do not receive' has often been seen as incongruous, leading to suggestions that the author is using diverse traditions.⁴⁴ According to Dibelius this combination of traditions is historically significant as it joins a tradition developed under the influence of the imminent expectation of the parousia with one that reflects disappointment at its delay.⁴⁵ Dibelius reaches this conclusion on the basis of his understanding that certainty regarding answer to prayer was a feature of earliest Christianity with its imminent expectation of the parousia. However, this certainty was eroded as disappointments occurred with regard to both prayer and the parousia. According to Dibelius, the erosion of the certainty that prayer will be answered, which characterised earliest Christianity, is clearly seen in the qualification of the promise that prayer will be answered, that is, as answers to prayer become dependent upon the disposition of the petitioner, or the type of petition.⁴⁶

This understanding has been challenged by Davids who argues that unqualified and qualified statements relating to prayer existed together in early Christianity, pointing out that qualified statements are already found in the OT (e.g. Pss 34:15-17; 145:18; Prov 10:24).⁴⁷ Therefore, although the qualified statement in

⁴⁴ Oesterley, p. 457

⁴⁵ Dibelius, p. 219

⁴⁶ Dibelius, p. 219

⁴⁷ Davids, p. 159; see also Bauckham, *James*, pp. 205-206

Jas 4:3 obviously relates to the problem of unanswered prayer, this does not necessarily reflect the use of a tradition developed under the impact of a delayed parousia. Furthermore, it is questionable whether 'you do not ask' reflects a 'highly intensified pneumatic consciousness'.⁴⁸ In the first instance James insists on the imminence of the parousia (e.g. 5:9), and the letter as a whole does not depict the implied audience as being particularly certain that God will provide for them. Furthermore, the teaching in 1:5-8 emphasises the need to pray and seeks to encourage such faithful action by refuting an inadequate conception of God's generosity.⁴⁹ This suggests that, at least in James' usage, the statement 'you do not ask' is not due to the certainty of receiving from God in view of the parousia.

As I have already suggested, the use of *οὐκ ἔχετε* at the end of 4:2 recalls the use of *οὐκ ἔχετε* at the beginning of 4:2. In addition to this connection the further suggestion that the implied audience 'asks and does not receive' can be understood in parallel to their inability to obtain in their jealousy. In this way the two statements on prayer parallel the failure of the audience's pursuit of pleasure as depicted in 4:2, so that each can be understood as representing the variety of actions employed or ignored in this search for satisfaction.

In the first statement James depicts the implied audience's continued state of 'not having' as a direct result of their failure to ask, a suggestion that receives adequate support from his depiction of them in 4:2. The idea that the audience should ask God to supply their lack recalls the earlier teaching on prayer in 1:5-

⁴⁸ Contra Dibelius, p. 219

8,⁵⁰ and God's characterisation as the consistent giver of good in 1:17.⁵¹ Against this background their failure to ask suggests that they do not consider God to be able or willing to supply that which they seek, even though they consider that this object is good. Therefore their failure to ask exhibits a deficient understanding of God's character and an acknowledgement that God is not the exclusive source of good things.

The second statement on prayer acts to make the implied audience's deficient understanding of God's character explicit, and to counter the possible implication of the first statement that prayer should be adopted in pursuit of pleasure.⁵² In this statement James indicates that failure to receive from God is the result of how the implied audience ask. Once more the teaching on prayer in 1:5-8 is recalled, where receiving involves asking in faith and not doubt. Furthermore, the doubts that James has in mind in that passage are connected with the implied audience's all too anthropomorphic appreciation of God's character.⁵³ Therefore it is not coincidental that here in 4:3 the audience's approach to prayer exhibits a misunderstanding of God's character akin to their treatment of other humans as depicted in 4:2.

⁴⁹ See further section 4.3

⁵⁰ Johnson, p. 277; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 192

⁵¹ A characterisation that has already been recalled in the language of wisdom from above employed in 3:13-18.

⁵² Contrary to Wall's (*Community*, p. 198) suggestion, the second statement does not function epexegetically to indicate that the first statement refers to only an apparent failure.

⁵³ See further section 4.3

The author uses *κακῶς* as an ethical disqualifier,⁵⁴ indicating that the motives rather than the method of prayer are evil.⁵⁵ The problem with these prayers is that the things asked for are desired for the petitioner's pleasure rather than the service of God.⁵⁶ In the same way that the implied audience are depicted as manipulating other members of the community in 4:2, here in 4:3 they are presented as attempting to manipulate 'the gift-giving God...as a kind of vending machine...for the purposes of self-gratification'.⁵⁷ In this way they are depicted as placing the pursuit of their own pleasures, now explicitly identified with evil, above the will of God. This behaviour and the denigration of God it involves confirm the implications throughout the previous verses that the audience acts in arrogant opposition to God. Indeed their pleasures have become idols before God,⁵⁸ since their devotion to these pleasures warps their view of God and their relationship to him.⁵⁹ Therefore the pursuit of pleasure and lack of satisfaction is seen as a result and indication of a breakdown in the relationship between the implied audience and God.

⁵⁴ Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 130

⁵⁵ Johnson, p. 278

⁵⁶ Ropes, p. 259

⁵⁷ Johnson, p. 278

⁵⁸ This is similar to the thought in 1QS 2:11-14 where there is a division between the idols of the heart and serving God.

⁵⁹ The idea that devotion to idols involves thinking wrongly about God is found in Wis 14:30 as noted by L. T. Johnson, 'Friendship with the World/Friendship with God: A Study of Discipleship in James', 166-183 in F. F. Segovia (ed.), *Discipleship in the New Testament*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985, p. 169, n. 25

3.5 Summary: *Jas 4:1-3 and the Threat of Assimilation*

In the foregoing discussion of Jas 4:1-3 it has been demonstrated that the disputes and quarrels James depicts among the implied audience have their source in the pursuit of pleasure, and that such an approach to life and its resultant behaviour is in opposition to God. Through various connections with the preceding teaching of the letter James indicates that this opposition involves ignoring the wisdom from above and God's law. In this way he suggests that the audience's evaluation of the way things are is unhealthily skewed by the influence of 'below', as they arrogantly and foolishly pursue pleasure instead of the will of God. Furthermore, through his analysis of their prayers James indicates that this tendency to assimilate with all that is from 'below' involves the acceptance of a deficient and idolatrous approach to God and their relationship to him. The condemnation that follows in 4:4-6 is made with respect to these failures.

3.6 *Jas 4:4: Indicting Covenant Unfaithfulness*

In spite of the preparations James has been laying in 4:1-3, his indictment of his audience as 'adulteresses' in 4:4 appears abrupt. However, it is in this depiction of the audience, and the language of friendship that follows, that his use of covenant thought is most clearly and explicitly seen. It is my contention that he employs this thought pattern to depict the actions of the implied audience as idolatry, and in so doing establishes beyond doubt that such

actions constitute apostasy. Through this depiction he hopes to shock the audience into repentance and the adoption of the ethos of faithfulness God requires.

In employing the vocative *μοιχαλίδες* as an indictment it is clear that the author presumes to share a world of meaning with his audience. However, as the textual tradition indicates, the intended meaning of this vocative was not always apparent since in some places *μοιχαλίδες* is replaced with *μοιχοὶ καὶ μοιχαλίδες* (Ⲛ, Ψ, 323, 436, 945). The addition of the masculine presumably resulted from understanding *μοιχαλίδες* in a literal sense,⁶⁰ and implies that James' accusation was understood as intended for all those addressed and not just the women. However, the shorter reading is strongly attested by both Alexandrian and Western witnesses (Ⲛ*, A, B, 33, 81, 629*, 1241), and should be accepted as the original reading.

Having accepted the shorter reading the vast majority of interpreters recognise that 'the feminine vocative clearly calls one back to the whole OT tradition of Israel as God's unfaithful wife'.⁶¹ The influence of this tradition among early Christians can be seen in the Gospels (Mark 8:38; Matt 12:39; 16:4) and Revelation 2:22, as well as in the idea of the church as the bride of Christ (2 Cor 11:1-2; Eph 5:22-32; Rev 19:7; 21:9).⁶² Dibelius suggests that the Gospel

⁶⁰ Mayor, p. 139; B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London; NY: United Bible Societies, 1971, p. 683

⁶¹ Davids, p. 160; Mayor, p. 139; Dibelius, p. 220; Mussner, p. 180; Adamson, p. 170; Laws, p. 174; Martin, p. 148; Frankemölle, p. 596; Johnson, p. 278; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 112; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 84; Edgar, p. 192

⁶² Mayor, p. 139; Mussner, p. 180; Laws, p. 170; Davids, p. 161

phrase 'this adulterous generation' provides a possible step from the corporate image of the OT to its application to the individual in Jas 4:4.⁶³ However, since this phrase is a corporate designation, it is difficult to see how it could provide a step towards the individualisation in James. Furthermore it is possible that such a step may already be present in the use of *μοιχαλίδες* in Ezek 23:45.

However, not all interpreters are convinced that *μοιχαλίδες* should be understood in terms of this OT tradition. Schmitt has suggested that there are two significant problems for this understanding: 1) this metaphor is absent from the rest of James and differs from the remainder of the verse which uses the imagery of friendship not marriage; 2) There is no coherent view in the OT.⁶⁴

Schmitt's first objection effectively breaks into two components, the first relates to the absence of the marriage metaphor from the rest of the letter, while the second questions the suitability of combining the marriage metaphor with the language of friendship. The first component does not in and of itself represent a valid objection to finding the marriage metaphor in Jas 4:4, although it may raise questions concerning the probability of its employment. However, the letter witnesses to a special relationship between the addressees and God. This relationship is evident in James' teaching on prayer in 1:5 and his use of the metaphor of birthing in 1:18. This relationship entails being a 'friend of God' (2:23; 4:4) and that the addressees behave in a certain way (1:22-27; 2:1-13; 3:13-18). Furthermore, James addresses the audience as 'the twelve tribes'.

⁶³ Dibelius, p. 220

⁶⁴ Schmitt, 'Adulteresses', p. 332

Therefore it is probable that he would choose to employ an image that speaks of the special relationship between God and his people.

The problem of the difference between the imagery of marriage and friendship will be discussed further below in relation to the meaning of 'friendship with God/the world'.⁶⁵ However, it should be noted that marriage could be considered as a form of friendship,⁶⁶ and that both of these images are related to covenant within the Jewish tradition.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Israel's adultery often involves her 'lovers' (i.e. 'other nations'), and these allies can also be designated as *φίλοι* (LXX Jer 37 (30):14; Lam 1:2). Therefore there is no reason why the use of friendship imagery should rule out reading *μοιχαλίδες* in terms of the marriage metaphor.

The final objection Schmitt makes is that there is no coherent view of covenant as marriage in the OT. The fallacious nature of this suggestion should already be evident from the examination of the marriage between God and Israel in relation to idolatry carried out in chapter 2.⁶⁸ However, Schmitt suggests that the gender used in various OT examples (e.g. Ps 73:27; Hos 9:1) and the application of the image to cities rather than Israel as a whole (e.g. Ezek 16,

⁶⁵ see section 3.6.2

⁶⁶ R. F. Hock, 'An Extraordinary Friend in Chariton's *Callirhoe*: The Importance of Friendship in the Greek Romances', 145-162 in J. T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, (Resources for Biblical Study, 34), Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1997, pp. 160-162

⁶⁷ For marriage as covenant see Mendenhall & Hesion, 'Covenant', pp. 1194f; for friendship see 1 Sam 20:1-23; J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, London: Oxford University Press, 1926, p. 279

⁶⁸ See section 2.6.1

23), raises a problem for understanding such passages as providing the origin of James' usage of *μοιχαλίδες*. According to Schmitt the use of the masculine gender in Hos 9:1 indicates that Israel is not presented as God's unfaithful wife. However, while the verbs employed in this text are masculine and are applied to a masculine Israel, they are appropriate to the activities of an unfaithful wife.⁶⁹ So, in spite of the use of the masculine gender, Israel's behaviour is portrayed as that of an unfaithful wife, indicating that this metaphorical understanding of the relationship between God and Israel is not dependent on or restricted by the gender of Israel. This conclusion finds further support in Ezekiel's use of the metaphor with regard to Jerusalem (16:1-63) and two sisters (23:1-49). While the application of the imagery to Jerusalem may not indicate that Israel is understood as God's wife, it is clear that the two sisters represent Israel and Judah and so the relationship between God and his people could be presented as that between a husband and a wife.⁷⁰ Even if this was not the case, these passages would still indicate that the covenant between God and certain groups within Israel could be represented according to the marriage metaphor.⁷¹

⁶⁹ A. A. MacIntosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea*, (ICC), Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997, pp. 337-338

⁷⁰ W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, London: SCM, 1970, pp. 203, 321

⁷¹ P. L. Day, 'Adulterous Jerusalem's Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel XVI', *VT* 50 (2000) 285-309, p. 285 In view of this evidence Schmitt's grounds for rejecting this background and preferring an allusion to the shameless adulteress in Prov 30:20 are removed. This is an image whose own relation to the friendship language in Jas 4:4 is far from evident without the covenantal background of the marriage metaphor.

3.6.1 *Deciphering the Metaphor*

As has been shown in chapter 2 the marriage metaphor is most frequently used to portray the breakdown of the covenant relationship between God and Israel, a breakdown resulting from Israel's infidelity (Hos 9:1). The analogy with the human relationship between husband and wife is employed to underscore the exclusivity and inequality of Israel's relationship with God. This emphasis not only depicts Israel's disloyalty, but also teaches Israel concerning the nature of its covenant with God.⁷² Furthermore, it highlights that Israel's unfaithfulness involves its relationships with 'other gods' and 'other nations'.

The use of the metaphor is probably most concentrated in Hosea, although it is also employed in the Pentateuch and other prophetic texts. In the Pentateuch the metaphor stands behind accusations of 'whoring' after other gods, and God's jealousy for Israel. This idea of 'whoring' after other gods portrays Israel as cultivating a relationship with them, rendering to them her obedience and devotion, walking in their ways and pursuing their ideals (Lev 17:7; 20:5-6; Num 15:39; Deut 31:16; cf. Judg 2:17; 8:27, 33).⁷³ The lack of distinction between Israel and the 'other gods/nations' that results from breaking the exclusivity of the covenant in this way is taken up in Hosea where Israel is criticised for

⁷² G. A. Yee, "She is not my wife and I am not her husband": A Materialist Analysis of Hosea 1-2', *BibInt* 9 (2001) 345-383, p. 368

⁷³ R. C. Orlund Jr., *Whoredom: God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology*, Leicester: Apollos, 1996, pp. 30-32

pursuing her 'lovers', a pursuit that results from the idea that they can provide all she wants out of life (Hos 2:4-5).⁷⁴ As Nelly Stienstra has argued:

The sinfulness of the people of Israel, is according to Hosea, not only their adoration of Baal (or the Baals) but also the fact that they regard Baal rather than YHWH as the one who provides for them.

In this way Israel fails to recognise YHWH as the 'giver of good things' (Hos 2:7).⁷⁵

This portrayal of Israel's relationship with 'other gods/nations' as involving a breach of the exclusivity involved in her covenant with God, and particularly the denial of God's role as the provider of Israel, is also evident in other texts (Jer 2:4-3:5; Ezek 16:23-34; 23:1-49). The establishment of relationships that according to the marriage metaphor are adulterous involves a denial of God's all-sufficient provision for Israel, and in doing this transfers divine characteristics to 'other gods/nations', indicating that this assimilation involves idolatry. Therefore the accusation of adultery applied to Israel involves assimilative behaviour that removes her 'distinct' identity as God's special possession and the idolatrous denial of God's role as sole provider for the covenant people.

These features of covenant unfaithfulness bear a significant resemblance to the faults of the implied audience of James as detailed in 4:1-3. In the same way

⁷⁴ Ortlund, *Whoredom*, p. 58

⁷⁵ N. Stienstra, *YHWH is the Husband of His People: Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation*, Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993, p. 111

that Israel is depicted as turning from God to other sources of provision, so in Jas 4:1-3 the author has portrayed the audience as pursuing pleasure through their own means. Furthermore, throughout this portrayal the audience are depicted as being involved in an assimilative relationship with all that is from 'below', and this relationship contradicts God's will for their lives that they should live by the wisdom from above and the law. Moreover, in succumbing to the threat of assimilation posed by the wisdom from below, they are implicated in a deficient and idolatrous approach to God.⁷⁶ The correspondence between the depiction of Israel through the marriage metaphor and that of the implied audience in Jas 4:1-3, supports the conclusion that James intends his use of *μοιχαλίδες* in 4:4 to be heard according to the covenantal marriage metaphor. In using *μοιχαλίδες* he draws on the traditions connected to the marriage metaphor in order to (undeniably) categorise the behaviour of the audience as apostasy.⁷⁷ This, in turn, suggests that James expects his audience to agree with him that their relationship to God is covenantal.⁷⁸ That is, James intends the use of this pejorative address both to emphasise the critical nature of the implied audience's behaviour, and more positively to shape their theology and behaviour according to covenant thought.

⁷⁶ Adamson, p. 170; Davids, pp. 160-161; Johnson, p. 278

⁷⁷ Wall's (*Community*, p. 200) suggestion that it is materialism in contrast to apostasy that is here condemned is in clear contradiction with the implications of the marriage metaphor and Wall's own acknowledgement (p. 201) that in view of the connection with 2:11 the adulteress is a law-breaker. Davids, p. 161, understands the accusation to be that of apostasy.

⁷⁸ The idea that James is reminding the audience of something they should already know is seen in the use of *οὐκ οἴδατε* in the latter part of verse 4.

3.6.2 Friendship, Enmity and the Covenant

Following his indictment of the implied audience using *μοιχαλίδες* James proceeds to make the nature of their covenant unfaithfulness even more explicit. In order to achieve this, he drops the marriage metaphor and employs the terminology of friendship. However, through his use of *οὐκ οἶδατε* he suggests that those addressed should be aware of the incompatibility of 'friendship with God' and 'friendship with the world'.⁷⁹ Therefore, the interpreter is faced with two related questions: what does James mean by 'friendship with the world' and why should those addressed know that such a relationship is enmity towards God?

In regard to the latter question several suggestions have been made that relate the knowledge James presumes his addressees to share, with other passages in early Christian literature. Chief among the possibilities raised is that of the two masters saying found in Matt 6:24 and Luke 16:13, which presents God and mammon in opposition to one another.⁸⁰ However, while this saying is clearly influential in early Christianity (e.g. *2 Clem.* 6:1) and bears a resemblance to the contrast in Jas 4:4,⁸¹ it draws on the background of slavery and not friendship, to make its point. Furthermore, when through its combination with other traditions it is brought into relation with the terminology of friendship (*2 Clem.* 6:1-4), the explicit opposition involved becomes that between this world and the

⁷⁹ Johnson, 'Friendship', p. 170; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 112; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 132; Burchard, p. 170

⁸⁰ Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, pp. 131-134

world to come, an opposition that is absent from James. In addition to these passages, the opposition between God and the world found in 1 John 2:15-17 is also a possible source for the knowledge James presumes in Jas 4:4.⁸² However, the terminology of friendship is also absent from this passage.⁸³ Therefore, while these passages indicate that there was a prevailing tendency within Christianity to depict God and the world in opposition to one another, they do not appear to provide the knowledge that 'friendship with the world is enmity with God'. In view of this conclusion and the importance of uncovering what James means by 'friendship with the world', it is important to consider the relationship of friendship in more detail.⁸⁴

The relationship of friendship was the subject of much discussion in antiquity by philosophers and other writers. A particularly significant element of the *topos* on friendship was the idea that friends were of 'one mind' or 'one soul'. This idea is considered decisive for the existence of friendship,⁸⁵ and meant at least 'to share the same attitudes and values and perceptions, to see things the same way'.⁸⁶ Furthermore, this commonality meant that the friend could be viewed as

⁸¹ Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 131; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 193, n. 22

⁸² Burchard, p. 170

⁸³ see also Johnson, p. 279

⁸⁴ For a discussion of the threat posed by the 'world' in early Christianity see 8.3.3.

⁸⁵ J. T. Fitzgerald, 'Friendship in the Greek World Prior to Aristotle', 13-34 in Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman*, p. 22

⁸⁶ Johnson, 'Friendship', p. 173; see also E. N. O'Neil, 'Plutarch on Friendship', 105-122 in Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman*, p. 115; P. Gamsey & R. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*, London: Duckworth, 1987, p. 154; Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 109

an alter ego, whose advice should be listened to, since he/she was therefore able to present a mirror of the self.⁸⁷

This mutuality between friends is also present in Aristotle's description of the friend as 'one who loves and is loved in return' (*Rhet.* II.iv.2). However, this mutual 'love' is not shared affection, rather it is the desire for the good of the other. Moreover, this 'love' does not only involve desiring good on the other's behalf, but also procuring that good where it is within one's power (II.iv.1-2). Although Aristotle emphasises that this practice of 'love' is not self-regarding, since the one who loves is 'loved in return' by someone who shares the same idea of what is good (II.iv.5-7), it is clear that even this ideal of friendship is not entirely other-regarding.

The idea of exchange that lies at the heart of this description of friendship brings to the surface a

tension between an other-regarding imperative to desire the good for the sake of a friend rather than oneself, and what appears to be a calculating concern for benefits and what is due that leaves friendship looking more like an investment than a spontaneous expression of emotion.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ B. Fiore, 'The Theory and Practice of Friendship in Cicero', 59-76 in Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman*, p. 63

⁸⁸ D. Konstan, 'Reciprocity and Friendship', 279-301 in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite & R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 285

In light of this tension it can be seen that friendship is an exchange relationship in which behaviour, particularly mutual service, and not only shared ideas and values play an important role.⁸⁹

Therefore, friends and enemies are 'made manifest by their services and by their deeds', and the distinction between these actions is that between benefit and harm. Since, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus recognises,

we all love those who do us good and hate those who do us harm...we renounce our friends when they injure us and make friends of our enemies when some kindly service is done for us by them.⁹⁰

Thus the important place that the exchange of goods or services occupied in the relationship of friendship meant that it was important to choose one's friends wisely (Sir 6:7-8),⁹¹ discerning between genuine friends and those who are operating purely from self-interest (Prov 18:24; Sir 6:8, 10-12; 37:1, 4; *Ps-Phoc.* 91-94). Since the problem of the disloyal and unfaithful friend was common in antiquity, the conviction became established that above all else a friend must be loyal.⁹²

⁸⁹ Konstan, 'Reciprocity', p. 286; Gamsey & Saller, *Roman Empire*, p. 154; P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians*, (WUNT, 23), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987, pp. 1, 36-38

⁹⁰ E. Cary & E. Spelman, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus Volume 5*, (Loeb), London: Heinemann, 1962, VIII.34.1-2.

⁹¹ Marshall, *Enmity*, pp. 14-15

⁹² Fitzgerald, 'Friendship', p. 82 For a discussion of friendship in Sirach see J. Corley, 'Caution, Fidelity and the Fear of God: Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship in Sir 6:5-17', *Estudios Biblicos* 54 (1996) 313-326

In addition to friendships between humans some ancient writers speak of being a 'friend of God' (e.g. Epictetus, *Diatr.* iv.3.9; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.33). In Plato (*Leg.* IV 716c-d) we find the idea of likeness associated with friendships between humans applied to divine-human friendship. Here those who are temperate are considered to be like god and therefore they are 'friends of god'. In contrast, the one who is not temperate is unlike god and therefore at enmity with him. A similar application of the mutuality of friends is found in Philo, *Somn.* 2.219, where unchangeableness and steadfastness is understood to belong to God and those who are dear to him. Moreover, this mutuality is seen to extend beyond the sharing of character traits as 'friends of God' also share in his possessions (*Mos.* 1.156). Indeed, God is not a weak champion, nor regardless of the rights and claims of friendship (*Prob.* 42-44).

According to the Pythagorean tradition, 'friendship with God' is understood as being founded on knowledge or piety.⁹³ This connection with piety is also seen in the Christianised *Sentences of Sextus* where 'friendship with God' is viewed as the ultimate goal of the pious life (86b), while in Josephus (*Ant.* 5.115-116) it is only by piety that Israel retains the friendship of the deity.⁹⁴ However, in Josephus such friendship and piety is understood in accordance with

⁹³ J. C. Thom, "Harmonious Equality": The Topos on Friendship in Neopythagorean Writings', 77-103 in Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman*, pp. 83, 98-99

⁹⁴ Spilsbury, 'God and Israel', pp. 186-190 See also Philo, *Spec.* 1.317, where friendship is symbolised in full devotion to God and the promotion of piety in both speech and deeds; see further G. E. Sterling, 'The Bond of Humanity: Friendship in Philo of Alexandria' 203-223 in Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman*, pp. 218-219.

patronage, the relationship into which Josephus translates the covenant between God and Israel.⁹⁵

The possibility of 'friendship with God' is found within texts from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, with both general (Jos, *Ant.* 5.115-116; 4.199; Philo, *Somn.* 1.193; cf. 3 John 15) and specific applications (Luke 12:4; John 11:11; John 15:13-15; *1 Clem.* 10:1; 17:2).⁹⁶ Accordingly the wise are generally understood to be the 'friends of God' (LXX Job 36:33; Wis 7:14, 27-28; Philo, *Her.* 21), while the connection between this relationship and wisdom is also found in reference to individual figures (e.g. Moses; Philo, *Ebr.* 94). However, the identification of individual figures as 'friends of God' is not the exclusive domain of Philo, although such identifications are widespread in his writings.⁹⁷ In the OT both Moses (Exod 33:11) and Abraham (Isa 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7; LXX Pr Azar 11) are designated as 'friends of God'.⁹⁸ However, in the textual traditions that follow, it is primarily Abraham to whom the title 'friend of God' is most frequently applied (*Jub.* 19:9; *T. Abr.* [RA] 15:12-14; *Apoc. Abr.* 10:5; CD 3:2-3; 4Q252 2:8; *1 Clem.* 10:1; 17:2), and it is evident from Jas 2:23 that our author is aware of this

⁹⁵ Spilsbury, 'God and Israel', pp. 190-191; Spilsbury, 'Josephus', pp. 250-252

⁹⁶ D. Konstan, 'Friendship, Frankness and Flattery', 7-19 in J. T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*, (NovTSup, 82) Leiden: Brill, 1996, p. 15; A. C. Mitchell, "Greet the Friends by Name": New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman Topos on Friendship', 225-262 in Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman*, pp. 236, 257; H. Rönch, 'Abraham der Freund Gottes', *ZWT* 16 (1873) 583-590, p. 584; E. Peterson, 'Der Gottesfreund: Beiträge zur Geschichte eines religiösen Terminus', *ZKG* 42 ('5, 1923) 161-202, pp. 177-183

⁹⁷ Moses – *Sacr.* 130; *Ebr.* 94; *Her.* 21; *Mos.* 1.155-57; *Prob.* 44; *Migr.* 44-45; Abraham – *Sobr.* 55; *Abr.* 273

traditional designation of Abraham. This suggests that this tradition is particularly significant for our author.

According to Jubilees 19:9 (cf. 17:18), Abraham's loyalty to God forms the foundation for both his representation as God's friend and the recording of his name on the 'heavenly tablets'. In this way the author of Jubilees uses the title to emphasise Abraham's faithfulness, since in remaining faithful he is seen to act as a true friend (Sir 6:15; 22:23). Furthermore, God is also presented as a faithful friend since Abraham's faithfulness is reciprocated in the recording of his name on the 'heavenly tablets'. In using ideas connected with friendship to portray the relationship between God and Abraham the author implies that such a relationship is analogous to that of covenant. This implication is confirmed in Jubilees 30:20-21, where it is stated that those who do not 'commit sin or transgress the ordinances or break the covenant' will be 'written down as friends. But if they transgress and act in the ways of defilement, they will be recorded in the heavenly tablets as enemies'. Therefore it is evident that friendship or enmity with God is manifest in covenant faithfulness and unfaithfulness.

The path followed by the author of Jubilees in depicting Abraham and God as faithful friends is also found in the Testament of Abraham (Recension A). Here Abraham is characterised as one who 'did everything which is pleasing before [God]' (15:15). This idea that the 'friends of God' are pleasing to him is also

⁹⁸ Note also the title 'friends of God' appears in LXX Ps 138:17, although here it appears to designate the heavenly bodies. Furthermore, Jacob is called the 'friend of the Most High' in *Jos. Asen.* 23:10.

seen in Wis 7:27-28 where it is the result of a life lived in accordance with wisdom. Through this characterisation Abraham's faithfulness as God's friend is emphasised. The faithful friendship of Abraham is reciprocated by God who fulfils Abraham's requests and therefore demonstrates his own faithfulness (15:12). So, the relationship between God and Abraham is once more represented in terms of friendship and, although Abraham's designation as God's friend is not explicitly related to covenant, it is based on his faithfulness in doing God's will (1:1-7).

In the Dead Sea Scrolls Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are all described as 'friends of God'.⁹⁹ According to CD 3:2-3 Abraham

was accounted a friend of God because he kept the commandments of God and did not choose his own will. And he handed them down to Isaac and Jacob, who kept them, and were recorded as friends of God and party to the covenant forever.¹⁰⁰

Here, as in Jubilees, those who faithfully maintain the covenant are described as 'friends of God'. Furthermore, as those who kept the covenant were recorded as friends in Jubilees, so here in CD 3:2-3 Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are recorded in the same terms. Therefore it is evident that the covenant between God and Israel could be and was understood in terms of friendship.

⁹⁹ For Abraham see also 4Q252 2:8 which refers to God's gift of the land, and with regard to Jacob see 4Q372 Fr. 1 line 21.

¹⁰⁰ G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, London: Penguin, 1998, p. 129

However, this connection between the domains of covenant and friendship is not only evident from the use of the title 'friend of God' in texts such as Jubilees and the Damascus Document, but is also witnessed to in an aspect of the mutuality of friendship that has yet to be examined: that of common friends and enemies. Although this aspect of mutuality was to be observed in personal friendships (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.iv.5-7; Polybius, *Hist.* 1.14),¹⁰¹ the formula 'to be a friend to friends and a foe to foes' was also extremely widespread in covenants of the Ancient Near East and the Graeco-Roman world.¹⁰² The idea is found in Exodus 23:22 where God declares that if the Israelites faithfully fulfil his commands, then he will be an enemy to their enemies, thereby depicting Israel's covenant relationship with God in terms of friendship and enmity.¹⁰³ The use of this principle in the context of the covenant between God and Israel can also be seen in 2 Chr 19:2 where Jehu confronts King Jehoshaphat saying, 'Should you help the wicked and love those who hate God?' This principle is also active in the 'Jews' challenge to Pilate when he sought to release Jesus (John 19:12). Therefore, it is clear that friendship with one party was thought to exclude from friendship all those opposed to that party, and that this principle provides another piece of evidence for the depiction of covenant through the use of friendship terminology.

¹⁰¹ M. W. Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 37

¹⁰² M. Weinfeld, 'Berith', 253-279 in G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Volume Two*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977, p. 272; 'The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East', *JAOS* 90 (1970) 184-203, p. 194; 'Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and its Influence on the West', *JAOS* 93 (1973) 190-199, p. 198; 'The Loyalty Oath in the Ancient Near East', *UF* 8 (1976) 379-414, p. 390; Kalluveetil, *Declaration*, p. 91; Blundell, *Helping Friends*, p. 47

In light of this examination, it is clear that James' use of friendship terminology in Jas 4:4 can be, and following *μοιχαλίδες* probably should be, understood in terms of the covenant relationship between God and the implied audience. Accordingly, the assumed store of shared knowledge suggested by his use of *οὐκ οἶδατε* is found in the idea that friends should hold their enemies in common which was widely known within the ancient world and is also present in covenantal thought. Since God and the 'world' are enemies, an idea the implied audience should know from James' previous comments (1:27; 2:5) and the general tendency within early Christianity to depict the world in opposition to God, it is impossible to be a friend to both. Therefore 'friendship with the world is enmity with God'.

The preceding investigation also emphasises that the idea of 'friendship with the world' is particularly appropriate for continuing the indictment embodied in *μοιχαλίδες*. The idea of procuring goods and services that is prominent in the relationship of friendship continues the thought of Israel turning to 'other gods/nations', although in this case the 'other gods/nations' are transformed into the 'world'.¹⁰⁴ According to James' depiction, although God is generous (1:5) and all that is good comes from him (1:17), the implied audience have failed to receive his gifts of law and wisdom (4:1-3), choosing instead to devote themselves to the pursuit of their desires. This devotion to pleasure indicates an acceptance of an evaluation that is not shared by God, and so it is clear that the

¹⁰³ Note also Jer 37(30):14 where God acts as an enemy towards Israel because of its friendship with other nations, and Lam 1:2 where Israel's friends have become her enemies.

¹⁰⁴ Ortlund (*Whoredom*, p. 140, n. 4) recognises that for James friendship with the 'world' is analogous to Israel's national alliances.

audience are not of 'one mind' with God.¹⁰⁵ In this way they are depicted as assimilating to the 'world', just as Israel's adultery with 'other gods/nations' involved 'walking in their ways and pursuing their ideals'.¹⁰⁶ Rather than being like God the audience chooses to be like the 'world', adopting a lifestyle totally at odds with their 'friendship with God'. Unlike Abraham (2:23), James' 'supreme example of what it means to have "friendship with God"',¹⁰⁷ they place their own will above God's (cf. CD 3:2-3).

Therefore, it is clear that to be a 'friend of the world' means more for James than 'to be on good terms with persons and forces and things that are at least indifferent toward God, if not openly hostile to him'.¹⁰⁸ Rather it involves a serious breach of the implied audience's exclusive relationship with God through embracing a lifestyle of assimilation to the 'world'. This assimilation involves the adoption of values and behaviour contradictory to God's wisdom and law,¹⁰⁹ and allowing God's exclusive position as provider of all good things to be usurped by the 'world'. Furthermore, the audience violates the exclusivity of their relationship with God not only through their assimilation to the 'world', but also through their idolatrous ascription of divine attributes to the 'world'.

¹⁰⁵ According to Johnson, p. 288, it is this aspect of a shared outlook on life that is particularly significant in James' use of friendship language.

¹⁰⁶ Ortlund, *Whoredom*, p. 32

¹⁰⁷ Johnson, p. 248

¹⁰⁸ Ropes, p. 260

¹⁰⁹ Laws, p. 174; Johnson, pp. 279, 288; D. Rhoads, 'The Letter of James: Friend of God', *Currents in Theology and Mission* 25 (1998) 473-486

Following his reminder that 'friendship with the world is enmity with God', James indicates that it is through their own choice (*βούλομαι*) that the audience become enemies with God. They are responsible for their present situation, since the middle voice *καθίσταται* indicates that their status as God's enemies is self-determined.¹¹⁰ This self-determination prevents any implication that God is responsible for this situation of enmity and therefore depicts God as the faithful friend who has been wronged. In choosing to become enemies of God while continuing to approach him for gifts (4:3) the audience demonstrate that they are not of 'one mind' with themselves (cf. 1:8; 4:8) let alone God!

3.6.3 Summary: Jas 4:4 and Covenantal Thought

In Jas 4:4 the author employs two different images to describe the same underlying reality. From the preceding investigation it is clear that this reality is the covenant relationship between God and the implied audience. It has been shown that the imagery of adultery and friendship indicates that the audience have been disloyal to this relationship through their pursuit of pleasure. This behaviour involves breaching the exclusivity that pertains to their covenant with God and forfeiting their distinction from the 'world' as they seek to gain what they consider to be good. According to this depiction the 'world' is not simply a measure or system of meaning as might be deduced from Jas 1:27 or 2:5,¹¹¹ nor is it 'the whole system of humanity...organised without God'.¹¹² Rather, like

¹¹⁰ Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 224; Wall, *Community*, p. 202

¹¹¹ Johnson, 'Friendship', pp. 172-173

¹¹² Davids, p. 161

the 'nations' with whom Israel committed adultery, it is human society organised without the God James depicts i.e. with a misconception of God (4:3). Moreover, this conglomeration of values, beliefs and behavioural norms is also under demonic influence (3:15; cf. 3:6; 4:8), further emphasising its opposition to God. Furthermore, the audience, as Israel is before them, are depicted as attributing God's role and character as the provider and sustainer of his people to the 'world'. Therefore, through the interpersonal metaphors of Jas 4:4 the author depicts the audience as apostates, both in relation to behaviour and theology.

3.7 Jas 4:5-6: The Final Indictment!

The condemnation of the implied audience that began with the use of *μοιχαλίδες* in v. 4 is brought to a climactic conclusion in vv. 5-6. However, although the grammar and sense of v. 6 is relatively straightforward, the same cannot be said for v. 5. Before setting out the difficulties presented by this verse it is first necessary to set out the scheme according to which the following investigation will proceed:

5a *ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφή λέγει,*

5b *Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατώκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν,*

6a *μείζονα δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν;*

6b *διὸ λέγει, Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.*

The major difficulties regarding the interpretation of v. 5 are found in v. 5b. The first problems v. 5b presents are those of discerning whether or not *τὸ πνεῦμα* is the subject or object of the verb *ἐπιποθέω*, and whether *τὸ πνεῦμα* refers to the human spirit or the Holy Spirit. In addition to these problems the interpreter is also faced with the question of how to interpret the unusual combination of *πρὸς φθόνον*, particularly with regard to the negative connotations of *φθόνος*.¹¹³ Furthermore, these difficulties are compounded by v. 5a which, through its use of the phrase *ἡ γραφὴ λέγει*, suggests that a scripture citation may be found in v. 5b. The proceeding investigation of Jas 4:5-6 will begin by focusing on the various solutions that have been offered by interpreters of James in an attempt to overcome these difficulties. Having established the inadequacy of these proposed solutions I will then proceed to establish an alternative reading of these verses that is both possible and plausible. This reading understands v. 5 as two rhetorical questions which James assumes to be representative of the thoughts of the audience. According to the first of these questions the audience is understood to consider that the scripture cited in v. 6b speaks in vain. It will be shown that this mistrust of scripture results from their deception regarding their relationship with God and their continuing state of want. Furthermore, it will be established that this same misunderstanding undergirds the negative portrayal of God as one who gives with ulterior motive found in v. 5b.

¹¹³ C. L. Mitton, *The Epistle of James*, London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1977, p. 154; See further C. B. Carpenter, 'James 4:5 Reconsidered', *NTS* 47 (2001) 189-205

3.7.1 Exegetical Difficulties and Their Solution

The author's use of the disjunctive conjunction *ἢ* at the beginning of v. 5 and its combination with *δοκεῖτε*, indicates that this verse involves a rhetorical question providing an alternative for something in the preceding argument.¹¹⁴ Since this rhetorical question involves the thoughts of those addressed and continues their indictment, it is probable that it offers an alternative parallel to the rhetorical question in verse 4.¹¹⁵ This question functions to remind those addressed that 'friendship with the world is enmity with God', although it is also evident that James presumes that the implied audience already share this knowledge with him. In spite of this knowledge they have chosen to become 'friends with the world' and in so doing have become God's enemies. Therefore the alternative found in the question of verse 5 concerns the reason why the audience would choose to become 'friends of the world' in spite of their knowledge that this entails 'enmity with God'.

One possibility that could provide the alternative proposed here is found in that interpretation of this verse that understands it in terms of the covenant God's characteristic of jealousy (Exod 20:5).¹¹⁶ According to this interpretive trajectory the rhetorical question in Jas 4:5 asks, 'Do you think that the scripture says in vain, "God jealously yearns for the spirit he made to dwell in us?"' However, this interpretation is plagued by problems concerning its understanding of

¹¹⁴ Ropes, p. 261; Frankemölle, p. 601; Burchard, p. 172

¹¹⁵ Frankemölle, p. 601; Burchard, p. 172

πρὸς φθόνον. As is commonly recognised, God's jealousy is referred to in the LXX using *ζήλος* and its cognates, never *φθόνος*.¹¹⁷ The frequent response is that *ζήλος* and *φθόνος* are interchangeable, and that the choice of *φθόνος* results from a desire to avoid *ζήλος* in view of its negative usage elsewhere in the letter (e.g. 3:14, 16; 4:2).¹¹⁸ However, although the examples given indicate that *ζήλος* and *φθόνος* are frequently connected, they do not establish that they are generally interchangeable.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, in both these examples and in T. Sim (2:7; 4:5) where *ζήλος* and *φθόνος* do appear to be interchangeable, *φθόνος* is used in the thoroughly negative sense it has in LXX (Tob 4:7, 16; Sir 14:10; Wis 2:24; 6:23) and the New Testament (Matt 27:18; Mark 15:10; Rom 1:29; Phil 1:15). Therefore, despite its resonance with the covenantal background of verse 4, it is highly unlikely that *φθόνος* would have been understood in terms of the positive characteristic of God's jealousy.

The difficulty posed by *φθόνος* for the above interpretation has led some interpreters to reject the possibility that God is the subject of both clauses in v. 5b, and therefore argue that *τὸ πνεῦμα* is the subject of the main clause in v.

¹¹⁶ Mayor, p. 140; Ropes, p. 262; Mussner, p. 182; Davids, p. 164; Martin, p. 149; Frankemölle, p. 605; Carpenter, 'Jas 4:5', pp. 194-196

¹¹⁷ Adamson, p. 171; S. Laws, 'Does Scripture speak in vain? A Reconsideration of James iv.5', *NTS* 20 (1974) 210-215, p. 213; Laws, p. 178; Davids, p. 163; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 114; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 84; M. A. Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law in the Letter of James: The Law of Nature, the Law of Moses and the Law of Freedom*, (NovTSup, 100), Leiden: Brill, 2001, p. 204

¹¹⁸ Mayor, p. 141; Mussner, p. 182; Davids, pp. 163-164; L. T. Johnson, 'James 3:13-4:10 and the Topos ΠΕΡΙ ΦΘΟΝΟΥ', *NovT* 25 (1983) 327-347, p. 335; Frankemölle, p. 605; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 110; Carpenter, 'Jas 4:5', p. 195

¹¹⁹ So Plato, *Leg.* III.679C; *Menex.* 242A; *Symp.* 213D; Epictetus, *Diatr.* II.17.26, 19.26; III.2.3, 22.61; Plutarch, *Mor.* 86B, 91B; *Demetr.* 27.3; 1 Macc 8:16; 3 Macc 6:7; *T. Benj.* 4:4; 3 *Apoc. Bar.* 13:4; 1 *Clem.* 3:2; 4:7, 13; 5:2

5b.¹²⁰ However, both interpretations recognise that God is the subject of *ὁ κατώκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν* and that the *πνεῦμα* referred to is that of the human spirit. In relation to the former, the *haraχ legomenon κατώκισεν*, rather than the variant *κατώκησεν*, should be accepted as original on the basis of its strong textual support (Ⓜ⁷⁴, Ⓝ, B, Ψ). Furthermore, the identification of *τὸ πνεῦμα* as the human spirit given in creation should be accepted since *πνεῦμα* is used in this sense in Jas 2:26 and the idea of life as breath or vapour is found in 4:14 (cf. 3:9).¹²¹

In addition to the implausibility that *φθόνος* might be used in relation to God, suggesting that *τὸ πνεῦμα* is the subject of the main clause, interpreters who favour this position also draw support from the use of *ἐπιποθέω* in the LXX.¹²² However, while this term and its cognates are predominantly used in relation to human desiring (Pss 41(42):1; 61(62):10; 83(84):2; 118(119):20, 131, 174),¹²³ it is also used in relation to God's longing for Israel (Deut 32:11; cf. Jer 13:14) and creation (Job 14:15b Θ).¹²⁴ Therefore, the use of *ἐπιποθέω* offers definitive support neither to those who take *τὸ πνεῦμα* as the subject of the main clause, nor to those who supply *ὁ θεός*.

¹²⁰ Adamson, p. 171; Johnson, p. 281

¹²¹ Dibelius, p. 224; Mussner, p. 182; Adamson, p. 172; Laws, p. 178; Johnson, pp. 280-281; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 112; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 193; Carpenter, 'Jas 4:5', pp. 192-193

¹²² So Laws, 'Scripture', p. 213; Johnson, pp. 281-282

¹²³ Note that contrary to Carpenter's ('Jas 4:5', p. 195) findings it can be used both positively and negatively.

¹²⁴ J. Jeremias, 'Jas 4:5: ἐπιποθεῖ', *ZNW* 50 (1959) 137-138, p. 137; Davids, p. 164

According to the interpretation in which *τὸ πνεῦμα* is understood as the subject of the main clause, v. 5b involves the statement that 'the spirit God made to dwell in us desires enviously'. This statement emphasises the propensity of the human spirit towards envy, and this in turn is related to the Jewish concept of the evil inclination.¹²⁵ However, while such a characterisation of the audience would accord well with the depiction in 4:2,¹²⁶ it would also make God and not the audience responsible for the sin that results from desire.¹²⁷ That is, it would contradict James' own teaching in 1:13-18. Furthermore, in removing the responsibility from the audience, it goes against James' intentions in the previous verse where he sought to establish that their enmity with God was entirely of their own doing, and therefore fails to provide a plausible alternative to the implied audience's possible lack of knowledge.

The arguments against taking *τὸ πνεῦμα* as the subject of the main clause appear to be fatal. In contrast the arguments against supplying *ὁ θεός* as the subject of both clauses in v. 5b are only decisive if it is considered implausible that *φθόνος*, with all of its negative connotations, could be applied to the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition.¹²⁸ However, the use of *φθόνος* with regard to the gods is well established within Greek literature (Homer, *Od.* 5.118; Aeschylus, *Ag.* 921, 947; Euripides, *Alc.* 1135; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 42). Indeed, the attribution of envy to the gods was such a widespread idea that it provoked a response

¹²⁵ Adamson, pp. 171-172; J. Marcus, 'The Evil Inclination in the Epistle of James', *CBQ* 44 (1982) 606-621, pp. 620-621; Johnson, p. 281; Tsuji, *Glaube*, pp. 85-86, Wall, *Community*, pp. 202-203

¹²⁶ Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 204

¹²⁷ so Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 115; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 193

¹²⁸ so Adamson, p. 171; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 114, n. 436; Burchard, p. 173

from philosophers, who considered it to be incompatible with the true nature of the gods which they espoused (Plato, *Phaedr.* 247A; *Tim.* 29E; Cicero, *Nat. d.* I.xvi.42; Plutarch, *Superst.* 165B-170E).¹²⁹ According to this idea the envy of the gods was directed against those who enjoyed prosperity and honour, the result of this envy being harm and destruction (Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.32; 3.40; 7.10).¹³⁰ In addition, even death can be understood in terms of the envy of the gods and in this case the gods are depicted as envying their own gift of life (Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.46; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* II.25 (612)).¹³¹ Therefore it is possible that the implied audience, or James, might know of this tradition. However, it still remains to be shown that such a view could arise among those who belong to the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

The possibility that the connection of *φθόνος* with the gods in Graeco-Roman thought may perform a role in Jas 4:5-6 is dismissed on the basis that within the Judaeo-Christian tradition envy is connected with the 'devil' (Wis 2:24; cf. *1 Clem.* 3:4).¹³² However, the writings of this tradition can present God as the source of evil (Isa 45:6-7; Jer 44:2; Lam 3:38; Amos 3:6).¹³³ Besides, the wilderness generation entertains the idea that God delivered them from Egypt to

¹²⁹ see E. Bernert, 'Phthonos', *PW* 20 (1941) 961-964, p. 961 On superstition see D. B. Martin, 'Hellenistic Superstition: The Problems of Defining a Vice', 110-127 in P. Bilde, T. Engberg-Pedersen, L. Hannestad & J. Zahle (eds.), *Conventional Values of the Hellenistic Greeks*, Cambridge: Aarhus University Press, 1997, p. 114

¹³⁰ P. Walcot, *Envy and the Greeks: A Study of Human Behaviour*, Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1978, pp. 22-41; W. W. How & J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus with Introduction and Appendixes*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912, pp. 49, 69, 148

¹³¹ Walcot, *Envy*, p. 33

¹³² so Adamson, p. 171; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 114, n. 436; Burchard, p. 173

¹³³ see further R. P. Carroll, *Wolf in the Sheepfold: The Bible as Problematic for Theology*, London: SCM, 1997, pp.36-48

kill them in the desert, and this sentiment is connected with their hunger (Exod 16:3) and the prospect of defeat in their invasion of the promised land (Num 14:2-3). In both cases God's provision for Israel is in doubt and this results in doubts about the goodness of God.¹³⁴ A similar situation is found in Jer 44:1-19 where the prophet's word of judgement is rejected, since, in contrast to the deprived situation endured whilst serving God, the people, in their worship of 'other gods', have enjoyed prosperity. Furthermore, the transference of the more capricious attributes of God to a Satan figure (2 Sam 24; 1 Chr 21; *Jub.* 17:15-18:13) indicates that the character of God has undergone significant changes over time. Therefore texts such as Wis 2:24 cannot be used decisively to rule out the possibility of a connection between God and the wholly negative *φθόνος*. This last point is further confirmed by the use of *φθόνος* with God as subject in *Apoc. Mos.* 18:4 where the serpent deceives Eve saying, 'But since God knew this, that you would be like him, he begrudged you and said, 'Do not eat of it''.¹³⁵ Therefore it is possible that God is the subject of the main clause in Jas 4:5b.

Since it has already been established that God is the subject of the relative clause dealing with his gift of the human spirit, it is only the main clause and its relationship to both the rest of the verse and v. 4 that remains to be examined.

¹³⁴ See section 2.8

¹³⁵ Translation from M. D. Johnson, *Life of Adam and Eve: A New Translation and Introduction*, 249-295 in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Volume 2*, London; NY: Doubleday, 1985; Greek text (τοῦτο δὲ γινώσκων ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἔσεσθε ὅμοιοι αὐτοῦ ἐφθόνησεν ὑμῖν καὶ εἶπεν· Οὐ φάγεσθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ) from D. A. Bertrand, *La vie Grecque d'Adam et Ève: Introduction, Texte, Traduction et commentaire*, Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1987, pp. 82-83, 124; cf. Theophilus, *Autol.* 2.25

Apart from the decision regarding the subject of this clause, the other significant problem facing the interpreter is how to understand *πρός φθόνον*. The only other example of *πρός φθόνον* is found in Demosthenes (*Lept.* 165.7) and dates from the fourth century BC. Here the combination of *πρός* with the accusative means 'against envy'. However, this understanding is hardly prescriptive for James' usage. Although the usual force of the accusative with a preposition is that of extension, A. T. Robertson and most interpreters consider *πρός φθόνον* in Jas 4:5 to have adverbial force (i.e. enviously) while J. H. Moulton notes that *πρός* with the accusative frequently means 'with'.¹³⁶ Therefore it appears that it is possible to read *πρός φθόνον* either as 'enviously' or 'with envy', so that the whole of v. 5b reads 'With envy/Enviously God desires the spirit which he made to dwell in us'.

This statement depicts God, like the gods in Graeco-Roman thought, as being envious and suggests that this envy is directed towards the gift of life bestowed on humanity at creation. The evidence already cited regarding Israel's willingness to believe that God desires to kill them supports the idea that such an understanding of God could arise among the followers of God, and that it occurs when the people of God are in want. In addition, this idea of God's capriciousness could also find support in Gen 6:6-8 where God is described as 'repenting' or 'regretting' the creation of humanity and therefore decides to wipe

¹³⁶ A. T. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, Nashville: Broadman, 1923; Mayor, p. 141; Dibelius, p. 224; Frankemölle, p. 605; Carpenter, 'Jas 4:5', p. 194; J. H. Moulton & H. W. Francis, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Volume 2 Accidence and Word Formation*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979, p. 467

out all of creation apart from Noah.¹³⁷ However, the idea that God is envious contradicts James' earlier depiction of God as a generous gift-giver, whose gifts are entirely good (1:5, 17). So, while the evidence from *Apoc. Mos.* 18:4 indicates that the idea of a scripture quotation in Jas 4:5b is not impossible, it is improbable that James would castigate the audience for considering such a statement vain and so give it credence. In light of this consideration it is probable that there is no scripture citation in Jas 4:5b.¹³⁸

This conclusion raises the question of how v. 5a should be interpreted since it appears to introduce a citation of scripture with the words *ἡ γραφή λέγει*. However, it is clear that *διὸ λέγει* in v. 6b assumes *ἡ γραφή λέγει* in v. 5a.¹³⁹ Consequently it is possible that *ἡ γραφή λέγει* is used in relation to the citation of Prov 3:34 in the following verse rather than to introduce a quotation in v. 5b.¹⁴⁰ Contrary to Laws' opinion, this does not involve the citation of Prov 3:34 being the subject of a double introduction, since in v. 5a James is referring to the audience's thoughts (cf. *δοκέω*) about this scripture rather than introducing the scripture itself, a task that is accomplished by *διὸ λέγει* in v. 6b.¹⁴¹ In light of this argument v. 5a depicts the audience's thoughts concerning the foolishness of Prov 3:34, and this depiction takes the form of a rhetorical question.

¹³⁷ see further G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, (WBC, 1), Waco: Word, 1987, pp. 144-145; note also that God's 'regretting' is toned down in the LXX.

¹³⁸ so Johnson, p. 280; W. Popkes, 'The Composition of James and Intertextuality: An Exercise in Methodology', *ST 51* (1997) 91-112, pp. 99, 101

¹³⁹ Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 225

¹⁴⁰ Johnson, p. 280; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 206; Carpenter, 'Jas 4:5', pp. 199-200, 204

¹⁴¹ Laws, p. 178

This leaves the problem of whether v. 5b is a question or a statement. It is clear from the above investigation that v. 5b contradicts James' own depiction of God, and so as statement or question it should be understood as representing the thoughts of the implied audience. Since he has addressed the audience directly in v. 4 it is unlikely that James would want to distance them from this alternative ground for their choice of 'friendship with the world', and so it is unlikely that v. 5b should be understood as a statement from an interlocutor. Consequently it should be understood as a second rhetorical question that forms part of the alternative James is presenting to the question found in v. 4.¹⁴² Since he only depicts two alternatives and has already presumed that the first of these is not the reason for the audience's choice of 'friendship with the world', it is clear that he expects them to agree with his depiction of their thoughts in v. 5. Accordingly, the absence of *μή* from this rhetorical question is explained on the basis that James expects a positive and not a negative response.¹⁴³

3.7.2 *Faulty Conceptions and their Correction*

The alternative reason for the implied audience's choice of 'friendship with the world' is found in v. 5, which reads,

Or do you think that the scripture speaks in vain? Does God enviously desire the spirit he caused to dwell in us?

¹⁴² Others also interpret v. 5b as a second rhetorical question although they follow different interpretations to that proposed here. So Laws, p. 178; Johnson, pp. 280-82; Wall, *Community*, p. 202

As is evident from the consideration of this verse thus far, the thoughts that are here depicted represent those of the implied audience and not the author's. In addition, it is clear from both the preceding and following verses that the audience's primary problem concerns the reception of God's gifts. Therefore it is probable that this problem also underlies the faulty conceptions found in v. 5.

According to James, the audience are those who should be 'friends of God' and not 'friends of the world'; an understanding that he presumes to share with them. Furthermore, the actions of the implied audience in 4:3 indicate that they have approached God with respect to their deficiencies and this suggests that they also considered themselves to be 'friends of God'. Nevertheless, despite these approaches, they have failed to receive the 'good' things they desire from God. In view of their continued state of want, the audience is depicted as reaching two related conclusions, the first being that 'the scripture speaks in vain'. The scripture to which this thought is related is identified by James as Prov 3:34, which has two components. It is unlikely that the implied audience would have considered themselves proud since they consider themselves to be God's friends and this would suggest that they assess themselves as being humble. On the basis of this self-assessment and their failure to receive gifts from God, the audience reach the conclusion that what this scripture proclaims is false.

The second conclusion they are depicted as reaching from their failure to receive gifts from God, is that God is not a wholly generous giver, but rather he

¹⁴³ The missing *μή* is a problem for Johnson's (p. 282) interpretation.

gives with ulterior motives always desiring the return of his gift of life. Furthermore the idea that God is envious depicts him as an enemy, since friends do not envy one another (*Ps-Phoc.* 70; Plutarch, *Mor.* 91B, 536F),¹⁴⁴ and so it is God who became an enemy not the audience (cf. Jer 37 (30):14; Lam 2:4-5). In view of this fact and God's failure in giving (which is also a sign of enmity), the implied audience has chosen to become 'friends of the world'. Moreover, their idolatrous error is once more in view, as according to their depiction God becomes very much like them.

The adversative *δέ* at the beginning of v. 6 marks James' correction of the faulty conceptions that are found in v. 5. The use of *μείζονα* indicates that the contrast is between the preceding reference to the gift of life and some other gift that is greater.¹⁴⁵ The identity of this greater gift is not made explicit by James, although it probably involves God's willingness to receive those who humble themselves and their future exaltation (4:10).¹⁴⁶ However, *μείζονα* also emphasises the contrast between the quality of God's giving as understood by the audience and the author. This contrast in quality is underlined by James' use of the present *δίδωσιν* that demonstrates God's present willingness to give in comparison with his previous gift of life in creation.¹⁴⁷ Accordingly the preceding conception of God's envy is undermined and so in his willingness to give, God is once more depicted as a friend and not an enemy. Furthermore, this depiction also removes the grounds for the audience's presumption that

¹⁴⁴ Marshall, *Enmity*, p. 49

¹⁴⁵ Mussner, p. 184 The contrast between a 'lesser' and 'greater' gift is frequently recognised, so Johnson, p. 282; Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 225; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 204

¹⁴⁶ Mussner, p. 184; Burchard, p. 175

'scripture speaks in vain', since it demonstrates that the problem lies with them and not God. So, in contradiction with their own self-assessment, the audience is faced with the reality that they are not humble but proud, a categorisation James has prepared them for throughout his indictment. In this way they are confronted with the fact that they have become the enemies of God and therefore face his opposition.

The following translation with interpretative glosses sets out the overall argument in Jas 4:5-6:

Or do you (as I assume) think that scripture speaks in vain? Does God (as you suppose) enviously desire the spirit he caused to dwell in us (and is therefore your enemy)? But he gives a greater gift (than his gift of life in creation and does not give with ulterior motives as you suppose); therefore it says (that is, the scripture that you think speaks in vain), 'God opposes the proud (and so he opposes you who consider yourselves humble while presuming to know better than scripture), but gives a gift (as a friend) to the humble (that is, the loyal friends of God)'.

This indictment forms the basis of James' call to repentance that follows in vv. 7-10, as is indicated by the co-ordinating conjunction *οὐδὲ*.¹⁴⁸ In this call the implied audience is encouraged to submit themselves to God and resist the devil (v.7). The opposition between God and the devil in this verse confirms the

¹⁴⁷ Mussner, p. 184; Davids, p. 164

¹⁴⁸ For a discussion of the significance of Prov 3:34 and its context in relation to Jas 4:6-10 and the surrounding passage see Bauckham, *James*, pp. 154-155; Davids, p. 165; Johnson, p. 283

earlier connection between the 'world' and demonic influence, and once more emphasises the mutual exclusivity of 'friendship with God' and 'friendship with the world'. The further identification of the audience as sinners and the double-minded (v. 8) continues the depiction found in 4:1-6 and confirms the earlier conclusions that they consider themselves to be 'friends of God' even while they pursue pleasure. The polluting influence of the 'world' (1:27) must be washed away so that they can be truly humble, and therefore 'friends of God'.

3.8 Conclusion

Through the detailed consideration of Jas 4:1-6 it has been demonstrated that covenant thought is both present and significantly influential for James, and that he presumes that his implied audience shares his appreciation of the importance of their covenant with God. According to his argument the audience has succumbed to the threat of assimilation posed by the 'world', a threat akin to that which Israel faced from the surrounding nations. The assiduous creeping of this assimilative tendency is seen in both thought and behaviour, both of which are depicted as being seriously deficient and idolatrous, a fact that the audience cannot escape as James makes his indictment.

In this indictment James employs two images that have as their basis the covenant relationship between God and Israel. The first of these is the accusation 'adulteresses'. It has been demonstrated that this accusation draws on the prophetic denunciations of Israel's relationships with 'other gods/nations' to bring out the fundamental nature of the audience's disloyalty to

God in their pursuit of pleasure. In this regard their betrayal of God takes the form of appropriating values and behaviour that are opposed to God and seeking to procure that which is 'good' from sources other than God. Furthermore, this betrayal involves an idolatrous attribution of God's role and character as giver of good things to the 'world', an attribution compounded by the idolatrous misconception of God that informs the prayers of the implied audience (4:3). Moreover the audience fail to live by God's wisdom and law (4:1-2). Through this indictment they are clearly depicted as acting as apostates.

The second image that James employs is that of friendship, an image that he uses to emphasise the audience's failure to remain distinct from the 'world' and the implications this has for their covenant with God. Once more they are depicted as betraying their relationship with God and committing idolatry by giving the 'world' the role that belongs exclusively to God. This shift of allegiance is depicted as coming about as a result of their continuing state of want and their concomitant misconstruing of both God's character (v. 5b) and their relationship to him (v. 5a). These misconceptions involve assuming that their lack of satisfaction is due to God's failure to give, a conclusion that stems from their own presumptions to humility. Furthermore, the idea that God is an envious giver is indicative of their failure to accept God's unequivocal goodness. The author corrects each of these misconceptions as he confronts the audience with the profound nature of their disloyalty and encourages them to repent. In addition, through this encouragement he identifies the audience's disloyalty in thought and behaviour with double-mindedness, and the opposite to this is

single-hearted commitment to the humble and distinct lifestyle of a 'friend of God'.

Therefore it is clear from this indictment that the three aspects of covenant thought (God's character, the nature of the covenant relationship, and the threat of assimilation) examined in chapter 2 are important aspects of James' theology and the pattern of behaviour he encourages his addressees to adopt. Furthermore, the connection between unbelief and doubleness that was found in that chapter is confirmed in a context in which the double-mindedness of the implied audience is depicted as idolatry. In view of these conclusions the following chapters will focus on Jas 1-2 and will demonstrate James' concern with the implied audience's conception of God and the impact this should have on their behaviour. Throughout this investigation it will be evident that the author employs covenant thought as a formative influence with regard to both behaviour and theology.

Under Trial

God's Character and the Implied Audience in Jas 1:1-18

4.1 *Introduction*

The previous chapter found that the relationship between God and those addressed is conceived in terms of covenant thought. In accordance with this thought-pattern James emphasises the threat of assimilation stemming from the audience's fraternisation with the 'world', a fraternisation that involves disloyalty and unfaithfulness. It has been demonstrated that in Jas 4:1-6 the disloyalty of the audience involves a misunderstanding of their relationship with God and God's character. In particular, these misunderstandings are related to their reception of gifts. In the following examination of Jas 1:2-18 the importance of God's character for the faithful behaviour of the audience will be considered. It will be shown that the concern with God's gift-giving evident in 4:1-6 is also important here in 1:2-18. Furthermore, it will be established that James is combating a 'defective' theology according to which God's gift-giving character is understood in terms of the suspect giving of human benefactors. The author's concern to combat this anthropomorphic theology is also evident in his concern with trials. Indeed, it will be shown that his insistence that God is unequivocally good is intended to encourage faithfulness in the face of trials, indicating that, as in covenant thought, a 'correct' appreciation of the character of God is essential for the behaviour of believers.

There are a number of factors that indicate that Jas 1:2-18 may be considered as forming an integrated section of its own. Throughout these verses the language of testing (vv. 2-4, 12, 13-15) occupies an important place within the author's treatment of faithfulness and unfaithfulness.¹ This language connects vv. 2-4 and vv. 12-15, and its absence from the rest of the letter suggests that these passages form a discrete section of the letter. These passages are in turn connected to vv. 5-8 and vv. 16-18 by common vocabulary (vv. 4-5 *λειπόμενοι/λείπεται*; vv. 15, 18 *ἀποκύει/ἀπεκύησεν*). Furthermore, it will be shown that throughout this section James contrasts the character of God with humanity. However, although Jas 1:2-18 can be considered as a section in itself, it remains closely connected with the following material in 1:19-27 where the contrast between God and humanity continues (vv. 20, 27), and James focuses upon the need for the faithful to live according to God's word (vv. 18, 21-25).²

4.2 *Jas 1:2-4: Joy and Enduring Faithfulness*

The placement of the predicative object *πάσαν χαράν* before *ἠγήσασθε* makes a catchword connection with *χαίρειν* (v. 1) and stresses the joy emphasised by the attributive *πάσαν*.³ Although it is possible to read *ἠγήσασθε* in the indicative mood,⁴ it seems more likely that it should be read as an imperative.⁵ Thus

¹ Dibelius, p. 69; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 41; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 138

² See further sections 5.3.3 and 5.5

³ Mussner, p. 63

⁴ Cargal, *Restoring*, p. 58

⁵ so, Mussner, p. 63; Johnson, p. 176; Burchard, p. 53

James demands a certain course of action from his audience.⁶ From the use of *πάσαν* in the sense of 'full', 'supreme', 'nothing but' or 'unmixed',⁷ it is evident that the action called for is positive. That is, James is demanding that his audience should 'regard' or 'consider' something as 'nothing but joy'. In this way James exhorts the audience to hold an exclusively positive perception of *πειρασμός*.

It is clear that 'the apparently paradoxical thought of joy in suffering was developed in Judaism' (2 Macc 6:30; 4 Macc 10:20; 2 Apoc. Bar. 48:48-50; Wis 3:4-6; Sib. Or. 5: 269-70),⁸ and was also found among the early Christians (1 Pet 1:6-9; Rom 5:3-5; Heb 10:32-36; Matt 5:11; cf. *Did.* 3:10; *Barn.* 19:6).⁹ However, as Frankemölle recognises,¹⁰ James does not explicitly identify trials with 'persecution' or 'suffering', and therefore the interpreter must be careful not to take trials in James as simply synonymous with 'suffering' or 'persecution'.¹¹

The perception that James is concerned with is not that of the attainment of perfection,¹² but rather the occurrence of *πειρασμός*. The audience is exhorted to 'consider it nothing but joy' when they fall into diverse trials. The audience is not depicted as those necessarily undergoing trials but rather as those who will

⁶ M. Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 46

⁷ Ropes, p. 129

⁸ Friedrich, '*χαίρω κτλ.*', *TDNT Vol. 9* 359-372, p. 368; D. E. Garland, 'Severe Trials, Good Gifts, and Pure Religion: James 1', *RevExp* 83 (1986) 383-393, p. 385

⁹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary On First Peter*, (Hermeneia), Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996 p. 99; Frankemölle, p. 186; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 101

¹⁰ Frankemölle, p. 188

¹¹ Contra Davids, pp. 67-68; Wall, *Community*, p. 48; M. E. Isaacs, 'Suffering in the Lives of Christians: James 1:2-19A', *RevExp* 97 (2000) 183-193, p. 184

fall into trials.¹³ The use of *περιπίπτειν* indicates that these trials are not sought but rather they come upon the audience unexpectedly.¹⁴ Furthermore *ποικίλοις* signifies the diversity and variety of trials to which James' exhortation applies. In this way all trials are to be regarded as a cause for joy, the reason for this positive perception being made clear in 1:3. However before examining this reason it is necessary to examine the meaning of *πειρασμός*.

4.2.1 Background to the use of *πειρασμός*

The use of *πειρασμός* and its cognates in James 1:2, 12-14 leads to questions regarding the difference between testing and temptation. However as S. R. Garrett has argued, the use of this word group among Jews and early Christians 'suggests that they regarded 'tests' and 'temptations' as integrally related'.¹⁵ This is clear in the results of 'tests' and 'temptations' i.e. in both cases failure is sin and success is a demonstration of faithfulness. It is apparent from this that no great distinction should be drawn between the various uses of *πειρασμός* in James and so an examination of its background will enable a more thorough understanding of not only 1:2 but also 1:12-15.¹⁶

¹² so Cargal, *Restoring*, p. 63

¹³ Contra Burchard, p. 54, who interprets the diversity of trials as indicative of diaspora existence in general.

¹⁴ Plummer, p. 63

¹⁵ S. R. Garrett, *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, p. 5

¹⁶ Adamson, pp. 53-54

The use of *πειρασμός* is threefold. The terminology is used for God testing humanity (Gen. 22:1-19), humanity testing God (Exod 17:1-7), and humanity testing humanity (1 Kgs 10:1). The LXX uses *πειρασμός* and its cognates to translate the Hebrew *נסו* which describes the pursuit of knowing a person or an object. The aim of *נסו* is to reveal and know something hitherto hidden.¹⁷ In this connection the afflictions of the wilderness generation are understood as tests imposed by God (Deut 8:2; Jdt 8:25).

The role of the wilderness generation in regard to the conception of testing is so prevalent that Davids finds that

the test-failure theme of Israel's wilderness experience, the failure consisting of testing God (despite previous demonstrations of faithfulness), forms the most consistent use of the root *נסו* in the OT.¹⁸

That God's testing of humanity is found mostly within the context of the covenant is borne out by the basic purpose of such testing i.e. 'demonstration and acknowledgement of Israel's faithfulness and love toward God (Deut 13:[3]; Judg 2:22; 3:4; 2 Chr 32:31)'.¹⁹ It is the testing of a covenant partner in order to

¹⁷ Helfmeyer, *נסו*, 443-455 in *TDOT Vol. 9*, p. 443

¹⁸ P. H. Davids, *Themes in the Epistle of James that are Judaistic in Character*, Manchester: (PhD Diss.) 1974, p. 110

¹⁹ Helfmeyer, *נסו*, p. 452; Davids, *Themes*, p. 112; B. Gerhardsson, *The Testing of God's Son (Matt 4:1-11 and par.): An Analysis of an Early Christian Midrash*, Lund, Sweden: Gleerup, CWK, 1966, p. 26

see whether he is upholding his side of the agreement.²⁰ When God tests man it is 'his readiness to commit himself wholly to God which is on trial'.²¹

As indicated in Davids' statement, the concept of testing God plays an important role in the understanding of testing within the Old Testament.

To test or tempt God is not to acknowledge His power, not to take seriously His will to save...To test God is to challenge Him. It is an expression of unbelief, doubt and disobedience.²²

This can be seen in such texts as Exod 17:7 where the testing of God presupposes a lack of trust, and Ps 95:9 where putting God to the test is an expression of (groundless) mistrust. Judith 8:12-14 goes further than this, indicating that a deficient understanding of God's nature and purposes underlies the testing of God (cf. Wis 1:2).²³

While Davids is right in suggesting that in the intertestamental literature *πειρασμός* merges with the idea of purification and education (Wis 11:9; Sir 27:5),²⁴ it remains clear that adherence to God remains the essential

²⁰ Gerhardson, *Testing* p. 26

²¹ P. Hauck, 'πειρά', 23-40 in *TDNT Vol. 6*, p. 25

²² Hauck, 'πειρά', p. 27

²³ Helfmeyer, 'ἡσῆ', p. 448; W. Molinski, 'Temptation', 1661-1664 in K. Rahner (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1975, p. 1664

²⁴ Davids, *Themes*, p. 123

requirement in times of trial (Sir 2:1-11).²⁵ Another issue to be addressed is that of the source of testing. So far we have examined God testing people and people testing God; however, the source of testing is sometimes removed from God and placed with an intermediary such as Satan. This is clear in the prologue of Job, and is evident in Jubilees 17:15-16. Yet even in these cases the ultimate source of trial may be understood to be God (*T. Job* 37; 4:3-10).²⁶

Within the New Testament God is represented as being responsible for the testing of Jesus (Mark 1:12; Matt 4:1; Luke 4:1). Furthermore there has been a great deal of debate over the meaning of the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer. Does it represent God as the source of testing (so Betz) or is it speaking of the great tribulation (so Jeremias)?²⁷ Maybe it represents neither of these and should be seen as indicating that testing comes from the evil one (so Davies and Allison).²⁸ Whichever choice is taken, it is clear that Matt 6:13a and Lk 11:4 are far from decisive with regard to the origin of testing. However, it is evident that the idea of *πειρασμός* in the Synoptic Gospels is more than temptation to

²⁵ W. H. Irwin, 'Fear of God, the Analogy of Friendship and Ben Sira's Theodicy', *Bib* 76 (1995) 551-559, p. 556; N. Caldruch-Benages, 'Trial Motif in the Book of Ben Sira with Special Reference to Sir 2:1-6', 135-151 in C. Beentjes (ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Conference 28-31 July 1996 Soesterberg, Netherlands*, Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997, p. 138

²⁶ As Davids points out this dual focus of the testing tradition is also found within the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (*T. Benj.* 3:3; *T. Naph* 8:4). *Themes*, p. 151

²⁷ H. D. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3-7:27 and Luke 6:20-49)*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995, p. 380; J. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, London: SCM, 1967, pp. 104-105

²⁸ W. D. Davies, & D. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew: Volume 1 Introduction and Commentary on Matthew i-vii*, (ICC), Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988, p. 603

sin, rather it is 'temptation to abandon one's faith, to rebel, to side with the devil'.²⁹

In the light of the foregoing material it is likely that the trials referred to in Jas 1:2-4 are basically concerned with faithfulness, although they may also represent the chance for growth.³⁰ James presents the prospect of trials in close connection to the prescript. The identification of the implied audience in the prescript subtly recalls the fate of the 'twelve tribes' who failed to remain faithful during their trials, both before and after they entered the promised land. Therefore the trials faced by the audience are not simply educational, but involve a choice between faithfulness and apostasy. Although the trials are therefore those of the faithful,³¹ the source of these trials is left undisclosed and in view of the teaching in 1:13-15 should not be connected with God.³²

4.2.2 James 1:3-4: Endurance and its Perfect Work

Having given the cause for joy as the occurrence of trials, James moves on to reveal the reason why such circumstances should be considered joyfully.³³ The use of the present active participle of *γινώσκω* implies that the audience may

²⁹ Davids, *Themes*, p. 178; see also S. Brown, *Apostasy and Perseverance in the Theology of Luke*, Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969, p. 14

³⁰ Caldorch-Benages, 'Trial', p. 150

³¹ Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 82

³² Contra Isaacs, 'Suffering', p. 185

³³ Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 46

have some knowledge of the reason James provides.³⁴ This reason involves *τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως*. The reading that replaces *δοκίμιον* with *δοκίμον* is to be rejected since the former is both better attested (ϣ^{74vid}, κ, A, B, C, Ψ) and the harder reading. As Dibelius has shown *δοκίμιον* should not be taken to mean 'test' but rather 'genuineness' or 'means of testing'. Since a substitute term for *πειρασμός* in 1:2 is required, 'means of testing' should be preferred.³⁵ In view of the testing motif, it is evident that *πίστεως* describes the exclusive relationship to God to which James and the audience adhere.³⁶ Therefore 1:3 reads 'recognising that the means of testing your faith produces *ὑπομονή*'.

As J. E. Huther has pointed out, *δοκίμιον* is the cause rather than the effect of *ὑπομονή*.³⁷ Therefore *ὑπομονή* is the product of trials while it is also the quality that enables one to remain faithful in such circumstances (1:12). From this association with trials it is evident that *ὑπομονή* and faith are integrally related for James, so what does he mean by *ὑπομονή*?

It is clear from the use of *ὑπομονή* in the LXX that it is linked with hope (Ezra 10:2; Job 14:19; Ps 61:5; Jer 14:8). So this concept of 'courageous endurance which manfully defies evil' is linked with the person for whom one waits or to whom one holds fast with expectant hope.³⁸ It is holding fast to God in the knowledge that he is faithful. Thus *ὑπομονή* is an active resistance to hostility

³⁴ Plummer, p. 66; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 64; Thurén, 'Risky Rhetoric', *NovT* 37 (1995) 262-284, p. 271; Isaacs, 'Suffering', p. 185

³⁵ Dibelius, pp. 72-73

³⁶ Burchard, p. 56

³⁷ Huther, p. 43

³⁸ F. Hauck, '*ὑπομονή*', 581-588 in *TDNT Vol. 4*, pp. 581, 583

(*T. Job* 4:6). In 5:10-11 James cites the prophets and Job as examples of endurance. In this passage the example of patience occurs within 'the eschatological perspective of the coming Lord'.³⁹ This corresponds to the patience of Job in *T. Job* which is 'no passive resignation, but implies waiting intently for God's saving intervention founded on one's hope in God' (26:5; 24:1).⁴⁰ The point that James is making is that one must endure all trials until the hope of deliverance is fulfilled. The reason for viewing the production of *ύπομονή* as a cause for joy is that trials force one to depend upon and hope in God, i.e. to have faith that God will deliver his people from trials. Furthermore, since the one who endures trials will receive the 'crown of life' (1:12), it is evident that the production of *ύπομονή* is also the ground for joy because it points towards eschatological salvation.

However James has more to say with regard to *ύπομονή* in 1:4 as though he is warning the audience that the production of *ύπομονή* is not enough! The contrast with verses 2-3 is indicated by the use of *δέ*. James indicates that the audience needs to let endurance have its perfect work, so that they may become perfect and whole and lacking in nothing.⁴¹ Therefore it is important to understand what James means by *έργον τέλειον*. In contrast to Dibelius, Mayor

³⁹ P.J. Hartin, 'Call to be Perfect through Suffering (James 1:2-4). The Concept of Perfection in the Epistle of James and the Sermon on the Mount', *Bib* 77 (1996) 477-492, p. 482

⁴⁰ C. Haas, 'Job's Perseverance in the Testament of Job', 117-154 in M. A. Knibb, & P. W. Van der Horst (eds.), *Studies on the Testament of Job*, London: CUP, 1989, p. 128

⁴¹ Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 55

and Laws who take the 'perfect work' to be the Christian,⁴² Tsuji has argued that it is nothing other than perfect faith/loyalty to God.⁴³

Following Tsuji I would suggest that *ἔργον τέλειον* is not a reference to the Christian or to moral character. Rather, as Johnson has indicated, it is an action and the thought corresponds to that in 2:22.⁴⁴ In order to understand this idea it is necessary first to examine the meaning of *τέλειος*. In the LXX *τέλειος* is most often used in the sense of being perfect, that is, being without any fault before God.⁴⁵ This perfection often takes the form of perfectly fulfilling the commands of God. In addition to this it should be noted that just as *ד'לה* expresses the giving of one's heart to God unconditionally,⁴⁶ so the occurrence of *τέλειος* in the LXX is marked by a striking connection with *καρδία* (3 Kgdms 8:61; 11:4,10; 15:3,14; 1 Chr 28:9).⁴⁷

This suggests that the 'perfect work' of endurance refers to the faithful and continual, rather than transient, fulfilment of God's will.⁴⁸ Like Abraham the audience must see their faith completed in works (2:22). It is only through such enduring faithfulness that those addressed can become perfect, whole and without lack. In the latter half of v. 4 James employs two positive elements and one negative element to describe the character of the faithful believer.

⁴² Dibelius, p. 74; Mayor, p. 34; Laws, p. 54

⁴³ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 64; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 142

⁴⁴ Johnson, p. 178

⁴⁵ Gen. 6:10; Exod 12:5; Deut 18:13; Judg 20:26

⁴⁶ Hartin, 'Perfect', p. 483

⁴⁷ Tsuji, *Glaube* p. 101

⁴⁸ Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 205

According to this threefold description the faithful are depicted as those who are perfect (i.e. they follow God's will) and whole (i.e. they are wholly committed to God and are blameless), lacking in nothing (i.e. all their needs are supplied). This description of the faithful stands in marked opposition to the depiction of the unfaithful in vv. 6-8 (e.g. doubter tossed in the waves of indecision, receiving nothing, double-minded, displaying inconsistent behaviour).⁴⁹

4.2.3 Summary: Between Faithfulness and Apostasy

The importance of a 'correct' perception of reality for James is immediately clear from his exhortation that those addressed should consider the trials that they will inevitably face as occasions for rejoicing. The ground for this exclusively positive perspective on trials is the production of *ὑπομονή*. It is through the maintenance of this endurance that the audience prove themselves faithful. Accordingly the implied audience's appreciation of God's character is vitally important for their faithfulness in times of trial, since endurance involves depending and hoping upon God. Therefore it is significant that while he employs the idea of evaluating trials positively, James leaves the source of these trials unstated, attributing them neither to God nor to a Satan figure. This is particularly significant in view of the contrast between the faithfulness envisaged in these verses and the apostasy of Israel in circumstances understood as God's tests. Therefore, this presentation of trials suggests that James may not only be employing covenantal thought, but also modifying it for his own purposes, a suggestion that will be explicitly confirmed in 1:13-15 as

⁴⁹ Laws, p. 54, has noted the opposition between *τέλειος* and the double-minded in vv. 6-8.

James emphasises God's unequivocal goodness, an emphasis that remains latent in 1:2-4.

4.3 *Jas 1:5-8: Requesting Faithfulness – God and His People*

The depiction of faithfulness in trials is connected to the following consideration of receiving God's gifts by the catchword connection of *λειπόμενοι* and *λείπεται*.⁵⁰ This connection immediately establishes a contrast between the description of the faithful in v. 4 as 'lacking in nothing' and the possibility that those addressed (*ὑμῶν*) may lack wisdom. However, there is no suggestion in the present context that the implied audience are actually lacking in wisdom, even though such a conclusion must be drawn from 3:13-4:6.⁵¹ Furthermore, although the later presentation of wisdom clearly establishes that those who lack wisdom fail to remain loyal to God (4:4), and accords with the contrast with faithfulness provided through the catchword connection of verse 4 and 5, James does not simply identify a lack of wisdom with unfaithfulness in 1:5-8. Rather he suggests that faithfulness and unfaithfulness are revealed in the believer's response to such situations of 'lack', whether these involve wisdom (v. 5) or any other gift from God (v. 7).⁵²

The treatment of wisdom in 3:13-18 indicates that James considers it essential for living faithfully in all circumstances, and not as simply supplying the

⁵⁰ Dibelius, p. 70; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 93; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 65; Wall, *Community*, p. 51

⁵¹ Contra Wall, *Community*, p. 51

⁵² Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 92

necessary perspective for viewing trials joyfully. Therefore I accept Ropes' argument that 'the limitation of *σοφία* to the wisdom requisite for the state of mind recommended in v. 2 is not justified'.⁵³ However, this does not mean that wisdom does not enable this understanding of trials. The focus of vv. 5-8 may be on prayer,⁵⁴ just as vv. 2-4 were concerned with trials, but underlying the teaching of both sections is a concern for faithfulness. In the same way as unswerving trust in the faithfulness of God is a necessary and integral part of enduring trials, so in the context of prayer the believer must have faith. In both cases the foundation for being and remaining faithful is the character of God.

According to James the faithful response the audience should make if they are faced with a deficiency in wisdom is simply to ask God. As has often been noted, the parallel between Jas 1:5 and Matt 7:7-11 (cf. Luke 11:11-13) is remarkable.⁵⁵ Both passages emphasise the assurance of receiving from God and the relation of this to God's nature. However, unlike the Matthean parallel, James does not emphasise how much God is like and even surpasses a human father, but rather, he stresses the dissimilarity between God and human benefactors.

In order to encourage the audience to turn to God to supply their needs, James employs a depiction of God as a wholly good gift-giver. He begins by using the attributive participle (*διδόντος*) and the future of *δίδωμι* to underline God's

⁵³ Ropes, p. 139

⁵⁴ Davids, p. 72

⁵⁵ e.g. Bauckham, *James*, p. 205; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 144; Burchard, p. 58 (although the latter notes several differences between the contexts of James and Matthew)

willingness to give. Then he employs the positive description of God as *ἀπλῶς*, and the negation of the negative characteristic *ὀνειδίξω* to assuage any lingering doubts the audience might have about making requests from God. The former term, *ἀπλῶς*, is found only here in the New Testament, although the noun *ἀπλότης* is found within the Pauline corpus with meanings relating to both generosity (Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11,13; 11:3) and singleness (Eph 6:5; Col 3:22). In addition to these occurrences of *ἀπλότης*, both Matthew (6:22) and Luke (11:34) make use of *ἀπλους* with the meaning 'sound' (reliable/healthy). Evidence from outwith the New Testament indicates that the noun *ἀπλότης* was often used with reference to singleness or integrity (e.g. *T. Reub.* 4:1; *T. Sim.* 4:5; *T. Levi* 13:1; *Barn.* 19:2; *1 Clem.* 23:1-2). That the use of the adverb *ἀπλῶς* also developed in this direction has been demonstrated by Harald Riesenfeld (Plato, *Gorg.* 468c; Demosthenes, *Aristocr.* 178),⁵⁶ and as both Mayor and Dibelius argue it is in this sense that the term should be understood in Jas 1:5.⁵⁷ Therefore, in using the adverb *ἀπλῶς* James is stressing that God does not give in two minds, but rather he gives 'without reservation'.⁵⁸

The last element in James' description serves to provide further clarification regarding the singleness and purity of God's giving. This clarification is provided by the negation of *ὀνειδίξω*. The use of the *ὀνειδος, ὀνειδισμός* group in the

⁵⁶ H. Riesenfeld, 'ΑΠΛΩΣ: Zu Jak. 1,5', *ConNT* 9 (1944) 33-41, p. 33-34

⁵⁷ Mayor, p. 37; Dibelius, pp. 78-79

⁵⁸ So also Wall, *Community*, p. 52; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 145; Burchard, p. 59; Frankemölle, p. 218, recognises the similarity between this thought and that found in Graeco-Roman philosophy (e.g. Plato, *Resp.* 2. 382e), although it should be noted that in contrast to the examples he gives from Philo (*Leg.* 2.1-3; *Her.* 183) James is not concerned in 1:5 with the metaphysical unity of God.

LXX 'embraces a number of experiences whose common factor is a relation to God disrupted by sinful man'.⁵⁹ One such example of this is its use with regard to the phenomenon of dispersion and failing to keep the covenant (Tob 3:4; Joel 2:19; Isa 43:28; Bar 2:4 (3:8); Ezek 22:4; Dan 9:16). However, James uses the *ὄνειδος, ὄνειδισμός* group with regard to its common meaning in the context of giving, and not with regard to the disruption of the relationship between God and humanity.

In the context of giving, *ὄνειδίξω* refers to a lack of generosity (cf. *Herm. Sim.* 9.24.2-3; *Man.* 9.3).⁶⁰ It is the 'manifestation of displeasure or regret which too often accompanies the giving of a gift'.⁶¹ It points to the way in which humans 'often accompany their gifts with discontented utterances which degrade and wound the recipient'.⁶² In using *ὄνειδίξω* James indicates that God does not operate like so many human benefactors (Seneca, *Ben.* 6.33.4; Juvenal, *Sat.* 5.9-19),⁶³ rather God gives unreservedly and without reproach like the ideal benefactor.⁶⁴ Furthermore God is not like the 'fool' who

⁵⁹J. Schneider, 'ὄνειδος κτλ.', 238-242 in *TDNT Vol. 5*, p. 239

⁶⁰ Johnson, p. 180

⁶¹ BAGD, p. 570

⁶² Schneider, 'ὄνειδος κτλ.', p. 240

⁶³ Dibelius, p. 79; Garland, 'Severe Trials', p. 392; Kloppenborg Verbin, 'Patronage Avoidance in James', *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 55 (1999) 755-794, pp. 768-769; Burchard, p. 59

⁶⁴ Garnsey & Saller, *Roman Empire*, p. 148

gives little and criticises often, and like the crier he shouts aloud. He lends today, he asks it back tomorrow; hateful is such a person (Sir 20:15).⁶⁵

It is therefore clear that James wishes to stress the dissimilarity between God and humanity in the context of gift giving. The combination of emphases in Jas 1:5 suggests that the implied audience require reassurance concerning not only God's willingness to give, but also the character of God himself. They need to be reassured that God is free from duplicity in his generosity and that he does not seek to cause them harm.

4.3.1 *Jas 1:6-8: Faithfulness and Double-mindedness*

As Mussner has pointed out, the use of *δέ* in v. 6 immediately draws attention to the need for the request to be joined with faith.⁶⁶ In order to receive, the believer must ask in faith and not doubt,⁶⁷ i.e. the believer must accept that God gives generously without reservation and without reproach. The believer who fails to do so is depicted as a wave of the sea blown here and there by the wind. This image is not presented as an unusual occurrence, but rather is simply a picture

⁶⁵ Mussner, p. 68; Frankemölle, p. 219

⁶⁶ Mussner, p. 69

⁶⁷ Contra F. C. Syngé, 'Not Doubt but Discriminate', *ExpTim* 89 (1978) 203-205, who argues that *διακρίνω* should be translated distinguish or differentiate as opposed to doubt. Moreover, as C. Gilmour ('Religious Vacillation and Indecision: Doublemindedness as the opposite of Faith: A Study of *δίψυχος* and its cognates in the Shepherd of Hermas and other Early Christian literature', *Prudentia* 16 (1984) 33-42, p. 39) recognises, Syngé's argument proceeds according

of the ordinary instability of the heaving sea.⁶⁸ Therefore, the doubter is portrayed as someone who ordinarily moves between trust and mistrust, and yet still expects to receive from God.⁶⁹ However, this type of believer should not think that he will receive anything from God.

The final characterisation of the doubting believer is offered in 1:8, which should be read in apposition to *ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκείνος*. James states that the doubter is *δίψυχος* and *ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ*. James' use of the term *δίψυχος* is thought to represent the first surviving appearance of a word group that 'enjoyed a vogue for a hundred years and then fell out of common Christian usage'.⁷⁰ Although the antecedents of this term are not entirely clear, it is possible that it evolved from the idea of the double or divided heart. This is possible despite the arguments of those who reject such a possibility on the basis that these concepts are concerned with insincerity and dishonesty in human relationships (e.g. Ps 12:2; 1 Chr 12:33 (בְּלֵב בְּלֵב)).⁷¹ As is clear from Hos 10:2 (בְּלֵב קִלְמַרִים καρδία) and Sir 1:27-28 (καρδία δισσή), this concept could also be used concerning divided loyalties and lack of trust in the divine-human relationship. Furthermore, the double-hearted man in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QH 12:13-14; 4Q542 Fr. 1 1:9 (בְּלֵב בְּלֵב)); cf. 1QS 2:11-14) is the type

to his own preconceived notion that there is no difference between the active and middle/passive, and is overly influenced by the Pauline opposition between faith and works.

⁶⁸ Ropes, p. 142

⁶⁹ Contra Dibelius, p. 80, since the very act of making a request suggests that the doubter has some expectation of receiving from God.

⁷⁰ A. Paretsky, 'The Two Ways and Dipsychia in Early Christian Literature: An Interesting Dead End in Moral Discourse', *Angelicum* 74 (1997) 305-334, p. 307

of person who has entered the covenant of God either without making the decision to follow God with complete devotion, or having made this decision fails to persist in it.⁷²

In the early Christian literature the term enjoys particular prominence in the Shepherd of Hermas and *1* and *2 Clement*. In Hermas being *δίψυχος* involves failing to be single-minded (*Vis.* 3.4.3) and is symptomatic of the struggle between trust and lack of trust (*Man.* 9).⁷³ The connection between double-mindedness and doubting the character of God is particularly strong in the Clementine literature. In *2 Clement* 11 the double-minded are 'those who have doubts about God's willingness to fulfil his promises'.⁷⁴ It should be noted that within this context the righteous are called to serve God with a pure heart in contrast to unbelief which is the sign of double-mindedness (*2 Clem.* 11:1-2).⁷⁵ In *1 Clement* 11:1-2 Lot's wife is characterised as being double-minded because of her vacillation and doubting God's power, and so it is once more clear that division of interest is basic to *διψυχία*.⁷⁶ A passage of singular importance in this regard is found in *1 Clement* 23 where the character of God as benefactor of believers is evident in 23:1,

⁷¹ O. J. F. Seitz, 'Antecedents and Signification of the term ΔΙΨΥΧΟΣ', *JBL* 66 (1947) 211-219, pp. 211-212; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 94

⁷² W. I. Wolverton, 'The Double-minded Man in the Light of Essene Psychology', *ATR* 38 (1956) 166-175, p. 173; O. J. F. Seitz, 'Afterthoughts on the term "Dipsuchos"', *NTS* 4 (1957-58) 327-334, p. 328

⁷³ C. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary*, (Hermeneia), Philadelphia: Fortress, 1999, pp. 31, 68

⁷⁴ Gilmour, 'Vacillation', p. 35

⁷⁵ so also Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p.94

⁷⁶ Gilmour, 'Vacillation', p. 35

The all-merciful and beneficent Father has compassion on those that fear him, and kindly and lovingly bestows his favours on those that draw near to him with simple (*ἀπλῆ*) mind.⁷⁷

The focus of the passage is on God's merciful dealings with the faithful, and it goes on to prohibit doubt concerning the mercy and goodness of God together with false ideas about his giving.⁷⁸ Clement goes on to quote from an, as yet, unknown scripture in 23:3-4 regarding the fault of the double-minded. This indicates that the double-minded doubt God as gift-giver, and that this doubt arises from their belief that they have not received 'good' from the Lord. They are those who doubt the deliverance of God (particularly the parousia).

It is clear, both from the context of James and from these parallels, that being double-minded involves doubting the nature of God, and in particular his generosity. From the description of the double-minded man as being 'unstable in all his ways' (Jas 1:8), it is evident that accepting the singleness and goodness of God's character is not only important within the context of prayer, but also for the fulfilment of God's will in all areas of life.⁷⁹ Therefore double-mindedness involves a division of interests opposed to the exclusive allegiance expected from God's people (Deut 6:5) and especially the restored Israel (Jer 32:38-40).

⁷⁷ K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers Volume 1*, (Loeb), London: Harvard University Press, 1912

⁷⁸ H. E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998, pp. 287-288

⁷⁹ Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 96; Note that vacillation is a characteristic of the wisdom from below in Jas 3:16.

The double-minded man is therefore the opposite of all that is called for in 1:2-4. His unfaithfulness is opposed not only to *τέλειον*,⁸⁰ but also to endurance and faith. In addition to this opposition there is an implied antithesis between the portrait of God in 1:5 and that of the unfaithful in 1:6-8.⁸¹ The singleness of God in his giving is an example of how the faithful should live, since they are to have no reservations in their commitment to God.

4.3.2 Summary: Jas 1:5-8 Living by 'Theology'

The author's concern with requests and their fulfilment is not restricted to this passage in Jas 1:5-8, but resurfaces throughout the rest of the letter (1:17; 2:1-7; 4:1-6; 5:16-18). Therefore the present treatment of this topic not only prefigures his later discussions, but also shapes the audience's perception of God's role as their provider and how they can receive his gifts. As in 1:2-4, the fundamental choice that faces the audience is that between faithfulness and apostasy, i.e. between faith and double-mindedness. However, the latent emphasis on the unequivocal goodness of God found in 1:2-4 is now made explicit in James' description of God the gift-giver. In this description he stresses the dissimilarity between God and humanity, emphasising God's willingness and singleness in giving and that he does not intend to cause them harm. Implicit in this emphasis is a theological perspective fundamentally at odds with anthropomorphic conceptions of God, conceptions that are idolatrous

⁸⁰ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 65

⁸¹ J. Calvin, (trans. A. W. Morrison), *The Epistles of James and Jude*, Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1972, p. 265; Frankemölle, p. 221; Isaacs, 'Suffering', p. 187; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 145

(cf. Ps 50) even though this remains unstated in Jas 1:5-8. In contrast to these conceptions God is depicted as wholly good, generous, and wise. Therefore, as James makes clear, the audience should respond to any situation of lack by asking God to supply their needs.

However, there is a proviso that the audience must meet if their requests are to be fulfilled by God, that is, they must ask in faith and not doubt (1:6-8). By this James indicates that they must accept the 'correct' theology of God's giving that has been set out in the preceding verse, and not succumb to 'defective' theology in which God's giving is like that of humanity and is consequently unreliable. Those who operate by such a 'defective' theology will not receive anything from God and demonstrate that they are not wholly committed to God either in belief or action. Therefore it is apparent that the covenantal connection between the character of God and the faithfulness of his people is important for James' understanding and depiction of the divine-human relationship.⁸² Furthermore, the dual contrast between God/the faithful and the double-minded indicates that the faithfulness expected from the audience is to some extent modelled on God's character. According to this implicit *imitatio Dei* ethic, as God is 'without reservation' in his giving, so the implied audience must be 'without reservation' in their commitment to God, remaining stable in all their ways. However, as the indictment in 4:1-6 demonstrates, they fail to live by the theology promoted by James and in their vacillation fail to receive fulfilment from God.

⁸² For the connection between God's character and faithfulness in covenant thought see sections 2.3 and 2.4

4.4 *Jas 1:9-11: The Exaltation of the Faithful and the Humiliation of the Unfaithful*

The relationship of vv. 9-11 to both the preceding and following verses is not immediately clear and has led to many questions concerning the meaning and purpose of the unit. The immediate question is that concerning the relationship of these verses to the preceding discussion of trials and requests (1:2-8), since at first glance there is no apparent connection.⁸³ Traditionally interpreters have given three possible answers to this question; either there is no connection, there is a connection with the *πειρασμοί* of v. 2, or vv. 9-11 are viewed as part of the total context of vv. 2-8.⁸⁴ Additional questions concern the identity of the 'lowly' and the 'rich' and the meaning of exaltation and humiliation.

The antithetical parallel structure of verses 9 and 10 introduces an opposition between *ταπεινός* and *πλούσιος*, and indicates a reversal of the status held by such people as the former is exalted while the latter is humbled. Such a reversal reflects God's classical action of raising the lowly and bringing down the lofty as a demonstration of his mercy and faithfulness toward Israel and a judgement upon the self-sufficient, the proud, the rulers and the rich (Luke 1:53-55).⁸⁵ Furthermore in Isa 40:6-8, which underlies vv. 10-11,

⁸³ Laws, p. 62

⁸⁴ P. D. U. Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth in James*, New York: Orbis, 1987, p. 38; examples of each respective position are, respectively, Dibelius, p. 83; Ropes, p. 144; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 66

⁸⁵ J. O. York, *The Last Shall Be First: The Rhetoric of Reversal in Luke*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991, p. 44, 53

the prophet anticipates the doubts of the despondent exiles-how can the might of Babylon be overthrown so that Israel may be set free?⁸⁶

So the prophet reassures them by contrasting the frailty of humanity with the eternity and omnipotence of God. God's will shall be done and the mighty Babylon will be overthrown. Therefore Isa 40:6-8 also demonstrates God's faithfulness and willingness to act on behalf of his people, a truth that James has sought to emphasise in the preceding material on trials and requests.

Although the antithesis with *πλούσιος* indicates that the social sense of *ταπεινός* is present in Jas 1:9, it cannot simply be equated with *πτωχός*.⁸⁷ The latter term is only used with explicit reference to the implied audience in 2:5, although it is also applied to them implicitly in 2:6-7 where they are depicted as those oppressed by the 'rich'. However, it is also clear from that passage that James can depict the audience as being distinct from the 'poor', as is clear in his allegation that they dishonour the 'poor'. Furthermore, even where the poverty of community members is in view he does not use *πτωχός* as an identity marker (2:15-16). Therefore, it is probable that in addition to the economic sense implied by the antithesis with *πλούσιος*, James uses *ταπεινός* as describing the faithfulness that this 'brother' shows towards God. That such an understanding of *ταπεινός* is found in this letter is evident from 4:6-10 where those who humble themselves receive gifts from God, and are exalted by God.

⁸⁶ E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah*, Dublin: Browne & Nolan Ltd, Richview Press, 1943 p. 8

⁸⁷ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 66; Burchard, p. 64

The humble brother is instructed to boast, and it is evident that this boasting is something positive and is therefore distinguished from the boasting condemned later in 4:16. Consequently it is not self-confident boasting that is called for but an expression of confidence in God's action of exalting. It is unclear what is meant by this exaltation, although, as an expression of God's faithfulness, it probably refers to the status of those accorded honour in God's perspective (2:5) and the gifts they receive both in the present and future. As is clear from the preceding verses, God's faithfulness to those who live by faith is assured.

In contrast to the ambivalent portrait of the implied audience connected with the use of *πτωχός*, James consistently depicts the *πλούσιοι* as those who oppress others and abuse their power (2:6; 5:1-6; cf. 4:13-17), and therefore as those opposed to God (2:7). However, although 5:3 indicates that the 'rich' hoard wealth, it is the failure to use this wealth and the abuse of those less fortunate that he rails against rather than simply its possession.⁸⁸ In addition, the use of Abraham (2:21-23) and Job (5:11) as examples suggests that it would be possible for James to consider someone to be both wealthy and faithful.⁸⁹ This possibility is further enhanced by the depiction of the audience as those who oppress the 'poor' in 2:6, an action that accords with the behaviour of the 'rich' (2:6-7).⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Although James does not make it clear, it is possible that the possession of wealth predisposes the 'rich' in the direction of unfaithfulness because of the significant involvement with the 'world' such possession involves.

⁸⁹ It should be noted that Job was impoverished during his endurance, although his possession of wealth both prior to and after these trials did not prevent him from living faithfully.

⁹⁰ Contra Garland, 'Severe Trials', p. 391

The antithetical parallel structure of verses 9 and 10 that indicates the opposition between *ταπεινός* and *πλούσιος*, also requires that *καυχάσθω* must be supplied from v. 9 and suggests that James intends the 'rich' man to be understood as an *ἀδελφός*.⁹¹ In view of the preceding consideration of the later presentation of the audience it is evident that there is no reason why *ἀδελφός* should not be supplied, so that v. 10 appears to be a reluctant admission that the wicked 'rich' belong to the faith community.⁹² This conclusion is not put in doubt by the description of the humiliation of the 'rich' found in vv. 10-11,⁹³ since from the use of *ὅτι* it is clear that the 'rich' brother's humiliation is his coming death.⁹⁴ So in contrast to those who boast in their arrogance about the control they have over their life (4:16), here in vv. 10-11 the 'rich' brother is to boast in the certainty of his death. For just as the grass of the field withers and the flowers fall so will the 'rich' man die in the midst of his everyday affairs. The judgement will come and it will come unexpectedly; for those unprepared it will be too late whether or not they are 'brothers' (cf. 5:1-6).

In this way James highlights the dangerous position of the unfaithful believer, whose unfaithfulness is signified in v. 10 through the use of *πλούσιος* and its antithesis with *ταπεινός*. The author will return to the danger of languishing in apostasy as God's enemies in 4:1-6, although there he accuses the implied

⁹¹ Note the author's reluctance in 3:15 to explicitly designate the opposite of wisdom from above as wisdom.

⁹² Contra Dibelius, pp. 87-88; Davids, p. 77; Garland, 'Severe Trials', p. 391; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 98; Wall, *Community*, p. 56; Isaacs, 'Suffering', p. 189; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 148

⁹³ Contra, Dibelius, p. 85; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 98

⁹⁴ Mussner, p. 74

audience of such unfaithfulness and exhorts them to turn from it. In contrast to this, the fate of the 'rich' brother is simply presented here in 1:10-11 as having a certain and unwelcome outcome. That this continues the depiction of faithfulness and unfaithfulness from 1:2-8 is apparent in the parallel between the 'rich' brother who *ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαρανθήσεται*, and the vacillating behaviour of the double-minded in v. 8.⁹⁵

Therefore, it is clear that this interpretation of vv. 9-11 should be preferred as it takes the grammatical inference that *ἀδελφός* should be supplied in v. 10 seriously, while also maintaining the certain and unavoidable nature of the fate of the 'rich' described in vv. 10-11. Furthermore, the opposition between the faithful and unfaithful found in the contrast between *ταπεινός* and *πλούσιος* continues James' approach in the preceding material on trials and requests (vv. 2-8). Moreover, it also confirms the depiction of God as wholly reliable that is present in vv. 5-8 and implicit in vv. 2-4. This latter emphasis also coincides with the purpose of Isa 40:6-8 and other texts that depict the exaltation of the lowly and the downfall of the 'rich' through the action of God. Therefore, Jas 1:9-11 functions to establish the certainty of a status reversal that accords with faithfulness and unfaithfulness, providing the perspective from which the implied audience should evaluate their own undertakings. Although not explicitly stated, James' comments offer encouragement to remain faithful to God.

⁹⁵ Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 207; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 97; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 66

4.5 Jas 1:12, 13-15: Faithfulness under Trial

In 1:12-15 James returns to the theme of *πειρασμός* which has remained in the background since 1:2-4. In returning to this theme James makes explicit the reward of remaining faithful in trial, while also dealing with a 'defective' theology that questions the faithfulness of God. He makes his points by employing a beatitude, followed by a debate form similar to that used in Sirach 15:15. The beatitude confirms the depiction of God as a good gift-giver found in Jas 1:5, offering a contrast to both the preceding description of the 'rich' man in v. 11 and the results ascribed to desire in vv. 14-15. Furthermore, vv. 13-15 deal explicitly with the 'defective' theology to which the earlier depiction of God's giving was implicitly opposed. Therefore, these verses are pivotal in the author's development of the 'correct' understanding of God's character and the nature of faithfulness and unfaithfulness.

The beatitude of 1:12 is conventional (Dan 12:12; Zech 6:14; 4 Macc 7:22; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:19; Rev 2:2-3, 10; *Herm. Vis.* 2.2.7).⁹⁶ The reading *ἐπηγγείλατο* should be accepted as original since it is supported by the earlier and better witnesses (Ϟ²³ Ⲙ A B Ψ), and it is probable that later witnesses add *κύριος* (C 1292 I⁶⁸⁰) and *θεός* (33^{vid} 322 I 596 vg) to fill out what seemed to be a lacuna.⁹⁷ The beatitude reinforces the depiction of God as a faithful and generous giver (1:5), since he is understood as the one who both promises and gives the reward to those who prove faithful in trial.

⁹⁶ Isaacs, 'Suffering', p. 189

⁹⁷ Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 679

The one who receives the reward is described using three related images. The author begins by describing him as the one who has endured trial, recalling the teaching of vv. 2-4 and conveying another reason for the positive perception of trials there encouraged, i.e. the future reward. Such a person holds firmly to the hope of deliverance, being certain that when deliverance comes he will receive the promised reward from God. Accordingly this person is described as *δόκιμος γενόμενος*, i.e. being genuine or having stood the test. Having been proved faithful this person will receive the *στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς*, a reward that suggests the image of an athlete completing his task and receiving his reward. The use of the athlete as an example of endurance was common in antiquity (Heb 12:2; *T. Job* 4:10), as was the description of the eschatological reward as a crown (2 Tim 4:8; Rev 2:10; *T. Job* 4:10; *Odes Sol.* 1:2; 17:1). The blessing and eternal life enjoyed by the person who having endured trial is proved genuine contrasts sharply with the fate of the 'rich' in v. 11 who are described as fading away (*μαρανθήσεται*).⁹⁸

The final image recognises that the reward of eternal existence is open to the one who endures trial because he belongs to a certain group of people. This group consists of those who love (*τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν*) God (cf. 2:5 where those who 'love God' are the heirs of the Kingdom). Contrary to Dibelius and Mussner it is not enough merely to describe this designation as 'fixed' or formulaic, and then dismiss its function delineating the terms regarding the receipt of the

⁹⁸ Mussner, p. 85; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 150

στέφανος τῆς ζωῆς.⁹⁹ Rather it seems more appropriate to take note of this group designation and its meaning within Judaism and early Christianity.

The application of language such as 'love' and 'hate' to the divine-human relationship has already been considered in chapter 2, where it was ascertained that within the context of the covenant this language is used to emphasise the exclusivity of Israel's relationship with God and the necessary behaviour this entails.¹⁰⁰ The Israelites were to demonstrate their love for God by remaining loyal to him, a task that entails keeping his commandments (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 6:4-9; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:1, 13; 30:16).¹⁰¹ As Ropes has recognised with regard to the use of *τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν* in Jas 1:12, 'the idea and phrase are strongly characteristic of Deuteronomy'.¹⁰² However, this understanding of Israel's love for God is not restricted to Deuteronomy, but is found throughout Jewish literature (Neh 1:5; *ψ* 144:20; Tob 14:7; Wis 6:18; Sir 2:15; 1QH 8.21; 4Q176 Fr. 16ff.5), although the influence of the Deuteronomic formulation remains evident (Dan 9:4; *Pss. Sol.* 10:3; CD 19.1). From these texts it is clear that those who love God are 'those in proper covenantal relationship with God'.¹⁰³ The use of this designation to describe the faithful members of God's people is also found within early Christianity both with reference to the keeping of commands (John 14:15, 21, 23; 1 John 5:2) and simply as a mark of

⁹⁹ Dibelius, p. 89; Mussner, p. 85

¹⁰⁰ See Sections 2.3.2 and 2.5; Weinfeld, 'Loyalty Oath', p. 383

¹⁰¹ see also Burchard, p. 70

¹⁰² Ropes, p. 153

¹⁰³ Johnson, p. 188

faithfulness (Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; Eph 6:24).¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, in *1 Clement* 59:3 Christians who are chosen out from the nations, a probable allusion to God's choice of Israel, are designated as those who love Jesus.

Therefore, in view of this evidence, it is clear that James employs *τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν* to designate the group to whom God's promises have been made, and that this designation indicates that the relationship between God and these people involves loyalty displayed through faithful adherence to God's will.¹⁰⁵ In this way the implied audience, who are expected, like Abraham (m. Aboth 5:2; *Jub.* 19:8), to endure trials (Jas 1:2-4) and demonstrate their love for God,¹⁰⁶ are characterised as being in a covenant relationship with God. As in Deut 30:19 the promise for those who are faithful is life, although this life is now an eschatological gift rather than the prolonging and blessing of life in this world. The alternative to this gift, as in Deut 30:19, is death as is evident from Jas 1:14-15. Therefore, the depiction of faithfulness and unfaithfulness in Jas 1:12-15 presents the audience with an implicit choice between life and death; the urgency of this choice being underscored by the preceding depiction of the fate of the 'rich' brother in vv. 10-11.

¹⁰⁴ It should be noted that Paul's inclusion of the phrase *τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν* in 1 Cor 2:9 is not dependent on the citation's source in which the faithful are described as those who wait for God's mercy.

¹⁰⁵ So also Burchard, p. 70

¹⁰⁶ L. Ginzberg, (trans. H. Szold), *The Legends of the Jews: Volume 1 From the Creation to Jacob*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1967-69, p. 217

4.5.1 *Jas 1:13: God's Faithfulness Under Trial*

The depiction of love, faith and endurance in Jas 1:12 contrasts sharply with the person who says, 'I am tested/tempted by God' (1:13). Such a speech seeks to pass the responsibility for one's own sin and suffering onto God, a tendency well documented in antiquity (Homer, *Od.* 1.32-34; Aeschines, *Tim.* 190; Philo, *Fug.* 78-81; *Conf.* 161; Prov 19:3; Sir 15:15; *1 Enoch* 98:4).¹⁰⁷ However, James' prohibition warns the audience against adopting such a position because it represents not only a misconception of God, but also a misunderstanding of the origin of trials and sin.¹⁰⁸

For James, the misconception of God's character involved in saying, 'I am tested by God', is twofold in nature, since God is *ἀπείραστος κακῶν* and does not test anyone. The latter claim that God does not test anyone explicitly denies that God is the source of trials, thus removing any ground for blaming God for the hardships and failures that occur when faced with trying situations.¹⁰⁹ In addition, this eliminates a potential source of doubt that might lead to unfaithfulness. However, the former claim that God is *ἀπείραστος κακῶν* presents more difficulty since the verbal adjective *ἀπείραστος* is unattested before the New Testament.

¹⁰⁷ Ropes, p. 153; Isaacs, 'Suffering', p. 190

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, p. 192; Wall, *Community*, p. 60; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 151

¹⁰⁹ Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 152; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 196

Of the various meanings put forward the most significant are 'inexperienced', 'unable to be tested', and 'ought not to be tested'. These meanings lead to three different interpretations: 1) 'God is inexperienced in evil', 2) 'God cannot be solicited to evil', and 3) 'God ought not to be tested by evil men'.¹¹⁰ However, all three of these interpretations make the basic point that 'God has nothing to do with evil'.¹¹¹ Although *ἀπείραστος* is frequently found in later literature with the meaning 'inexperienced',¹¹² it identifies testing as evil, an identification at odds with the perspective already exhorted in Jas 1:2, and is therefore to be rejected.

In support of the meaning 'ought not to be tested' P. H. Davids argues that the meaning 'unable to be tested' 'never appears in later literature'.¹¹³ However, such a claim is contradicted from his own reliance on Acts of John 57 and Ps-Ignatius (*Ad Phil.* 11). In both of these passages *ἀπείραστος* is used with the meaning 'unable to be tested'.¹¹⁴ Therefore, of the three possible meanings presented above, the second one, that is, 'unable to be tested' should be preferred.

In the same way that the Israelites' failure to trust in God's goodness is described as testing God (Exod 17:7; Pss 78:18; 95:9; 106:14; Jdt 8:12-14; Wis 1:2), so the fictional speaker in Jas 1:13 tests God by doubting God's goodness

¹¹⁰ Johnson, pp. 192-193

¹¹¹ P. H. Davids, 'The Meaning of ΑΠΕΙΡΑΣΤΟΣ in James 1:13', *NTS* 24 (1979) 386-392, p. 387; Johnson, p. 193

¹¹² Davids, 'ΑΠΕΙΡΑΣΤΟΣ', pp. 388-389

¹¹³ Davids, 'ΑΠΕΙΡΑΣΤΟΣ', p. 388

and faithfulness. So in this prohibition James follows the tradition that God should not be tested (Deut 6:16; Matt 4:7; Luke 4:12; 1 Cor 10:9; cf. Job 1:22; Acts 5:9). However, in stating that God cannot be tested and that God tests no one James contradicts the widespread teaching that God tests his people (Gen 22:1-19; Exod 16:4; 20:20; Deut 8:2; 13:1-3; Judg 2:22; 3:1; 1 Chr 29:17; Ps 66:10; Isa 48:10; Jdt 8:25),¹¹⁵ and the idea that both good and bad come from God (Job 1:21; 2:10; *T. Job* 19:4; 26:4). Although a tradition of distancing God from evil, and trials in particular, is found in Jewish literature (e.g. 1 Chr 21; *Jub.* 17:16; 48:12; Philo, *Conf.* 180; *Opif.* 75), James goes beyond this tradition by exculpating God from any involvement whatsoever, even that filtered through an intermediary. Since God is 'unable to be tested by evil' he is not susceptible to being divided between good and evil, and is therefore unequivocally good. This emphasis coheres with the previous emphasis on God's single-minded giving (Jas 1:5) and is similar to the following characterisation of God's giving in v. 17.

The author's critique of the fictional speaker's statement is made on the basis of God's character and actions, and primarily the idea that God is unequivocally good. This critique resembles that found among Graeco-Roman philosophers who reject the traditional conceptions of the gods found in Homer and Hesiod as misrepresentations (Plato, *Resp.* 2.377e, 379b).¹¹⁶ This conclusion is based

¹¹⁴ Davids, 'ΑΠΕΙΡΑΣΤΟΣ', p. 390; Dibelius, p. 92; Act. Jn. 57 (90), 'Now I know that God dwells in you, blessed John! How happy is the man who has not tempted God in you; for the man who tempts you tempts the untemptable'.

¹¹⁵ Frankemölle, p. 280; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 196, n. 14

¹¹⁶ Frankemölle, p. 283, recognises the similarities between Jas 1:13 and this philosophical debate, and suggests that this similarity may be the result of the influence such debate had in Judaism. See also Burchard, p. 72

on the idea that God is unequivocally good and is therefore unlike the anthropomorphic gods of the poets. In contrast to these false ideas 'god is the cause, not of all things, but only of good' (*Resp.* 2.380c; Philo, *Leg.* 2.1-3; *Her.* 183; *Conf.* 161; *Spec.* 2.11). Accordingly, as in Jas 4:5-6, the attribution of envy (*φθόνος*) to the gods is rejected (Plato, *Tim.* 29e; *Phaedr.* 247a). Therefore, it is clear that James' insistence on the unequivocal goodness of God is parallel to that found in Graeco-Roman philosophy, although James' employment of this idea is directed against the traditional conception of God as the tester of his people and a 'defective' understanding of God's giving. Besides, in contrast to Philo (*Leg.* 2.1-3; *Her.* 183), James' use of this idea does not seem to develop from speculation concerning the metaphysical unity of God, despite his resistance to the idea that God is subject to change (Jas 1:5, 13, 17).

4.5.2 *Jas 1:14-15: The Origin of Trials*

In verses 14-15 James proceeds to address the question of the origin of testing which arises from the statement of the fictional speaker and James' depiction of God in the previous verse. As Mussner has noted, *έκαστος* in v. 14 corresponds to the preceding *οὐδένα* and therefore tolerates no exception.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the use of *ιδιος* emphasises that the *έπιθυμία* in question belongs to humanity,¹¹⁸ and therefore the source of all human testing stems exclusively from human desire. The entirely negative usage of *έπιθυμία* has led some

¹¹⁷ Mussner, p. 88

¹¹⁸ Dibelius, p. 93

scholars to identify it with the *יצר הרע*.¹¹⁹ However, while Johnson's rejection of the presence of 'a psychology of the "two inclinations"' is based on faulty reasoning,¹²⁰ with Ropes there is no need to identify *ἐπιθυμία* with the evil inclination.¹²¹

Through his description of desire as *ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος*, James represents it as seducing the believer away from faithfulness toward God. Humans are easily defeated like fish caught on bait.¹²² Although there is no evidence that *ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος* suggest in and of themselves the practices of a prostitute,¹²³ the image of seduction and birth captured by James in vv. 14-15, the feminine gender and sexual connotation of *ἐπιθυμία* suggest that James intends the audience to think of desire as a prostitute.¹²⁴ In order to warn against the seductive advances of desire James describes its results by using *ἐπιθυμία* as the first member of a chain leading to sin and death. This forms a contrast to the chain *πειρασμός-δόκιμος-ζωή* found in v. 12, emphasising both the divergent outcomes of testing and the opposition between human desire and God. Those who hold firm to their faith despite the seductions of desire gain life, while those who succumb to desire's allure are

¹¹⁹ e.g. Marcus, 'Evil Inclination', pp. 608, 610, 621; Wall, *Community*, p. 61

¹²⁰ Johnson, p. 194. Johnson's reasoning relies on the presence of Satan in Jas 4:7. However even where the psychology of the 'two inclinations' is fully developed Satan and the evil inclination can be equated (see R. A. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology: An Introductory Study*, Edinburgh; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1961, p. 88).

¹²¹ Ropes, p. 156; so also Isaacs, 'Suffering', p. 191

¹²² Mussner, p. 88

¹²³ Ropes, p. 157

¹²⁴ Huther, p. 67; Plummer, p. 91; Davids, p. 84; J. L. P. Wolmarans, 'Male and Female Sexual Imagery: James 1:14-15, 18', *Acta Patristica Et Byzantina* 5 (1994) 134-141

led into sin and eventually death. The eschatological nature of this death is indicated by the contrast with the crown of life (1:12),¹²⁵ a gift available, not from desire, but God alone.

4.5.3 Summary: *Jas 1:12-15 The Character of God and Trials*

The 'correct' perception of both God and trials is fundamental in the teaching of Jas 1:12-15. The fictional speaker who claims to be 'tested by God' represents those who hold a faulty conception of God, while the description of the one who endures trials represents those who adhere to a 'correct' perception of God as is evident in the reception of the 'crown of life'. According to James the speaker's words are 'defective' on two counts: firstly they involve a misconception of God's character and actions, and secondly they represent a misunderstanding of trials. The misconception of God upon which James concentrates concerns the attribution to God of the human proclivity to both good and evil. In contrast to this view he insists that God is 'unable to be tested by evil'. This emphasis on God's unequivocal goodness resonates with the conception of God as the good gift-giver that is found in 1:5, 17 and 4:5-6. Furthermore, this characterisation of God supports his other claim that God does not test anyone (1:13), a claim that contradicts the traditional understanding of God. This contradiction is all the more remarkable due to James' employment of and allusions to covenant thought in 1:12-13. Moreover, it is clear that he is not only willing to employ covenant thought but also to

¹²⁵ Wolmarans, 'Male and Female', p. 135

challenge and reject it where it contradicts the 'correct' theology he is promoting.

4.6 *Jas 1:16-18: Good Gifts, Birth, and Purpose*

Following his rejection of the 'defective' theology exemplified by the speaker in v. 13 and his insistence that God is unequivocally good, James makes a direct appeal to the audience, addressing them as 'beloved brothers' (v. 16). Through this address, he emphasises his relationship with those addressed, in order both to underline the importance of his warning and to establish a rapport with them to encourage its acceptance. In addressing his warning specifically to the audience James implies that if they are not already culpable of entertaining 'defective' thoughts about God, they are at least susceptible to such thinking.

The imperative *μη̄ πλανᾶσθε* has both a spatial (i.e. wandering from a path) and a cognitive quality, as is clear from its use in 5:19-20,¹²⁶ indicating that the author is concerned with both the deception of 'defective' ideas about God and the behaviour these thoughts engender. That the deception he has in mind is related to the character of God is evident both from the placing of this warning after vv. 13-15 and the focus on God in vv. 17-18. However, the suggestion made by M. A. Jackson-McCabe, that the use of *πλανᾶω* in v. 16 combined with the reference to the 'lights' in v. 17 alludes to the idea of the wandering stars identified with the Watchers in Judaism and early Christianity (*1 Enoch* 6:2;

¹²⁶ Frankemölle, p. 289; Burchard, p. 75; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 208-209

18:1-16; 86:1-3; 90:24; *T. Naph.* 3:1-5; Jude 13) should be rejected.¹²⁷ In the first instance the variation of the 'lights' in v. 17 is only implicit, and secondly James' use of *πλανάω* is directed towards the audience and not the supposed activity of the 'lights'.

Throughout 1:2-15 James has been occupied with presenting a 'correct' perception of God and the prominent element in this depiction has been the emphasis on faithfulness. In v. 17 he returns to the subject of God's giving that was first dealt with in vv. 5-8, although it is also prominent in the teaching on trials presented in vv. 12-15. The teaching in v. 17 can be broken into two parts, the first focuses on the nature of God's gifts, while the second concentrates on the character of the giver. However, the verse as a whole can be understood as consisting of two positive statements (i.e. the use of *δόσις* and *δώρημα*, and the title 'Father of lights') and a single negated statement (i.e. that God does not change), in a similar fashion to the description of the faithful in v. 4 (perfect, whole, lacking in nothing).

As Jackson-McCabe recognises, the author's statement regarding God's gifts does not establish that *only* good things come from God.¹²⁸ However, James has already established that God is unequivocally good (v. 13) and therefore it is not possible that God is also the source of evil. In the teaching on requests found in vv. 5-8 he makes it clear that the addressees should seek to have their needs supplied by God, emphasising that those who ask in faith will receive.

¹²⁷ Contra Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 210-212; On this idea see R. J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, (WBC, 50), Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983, pp. 89-90

¹²⁸ Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 198-199; Contra Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 153

The present verse states that *πάσα δόσις ἀγαθή καὶ πᾶν δῶρημα τέλειον* come from God (cf. 2 Macc 1:25), and James ensures that the audience cannot make a mistake about this source by adding *ὁ πατήρ τῶν φώτων*. In this way he establishes beyond any doubt that God is the exclusive source of good things, and therefore the only one who can provide for the audience. Therefore, those who are undergoing trial should not be deceived by the allure of desire and so go astray,¹²⁹ but rather they should turn to God who alone is able to supply their needs.

The author first draws attention to the character of the giver through the designation *ὁ πατήρ τῶν φώτων* (cf. *Αποκ. Μοσ.* 36:3; *Τ. Αβρ.* [RB] 7:5), which suggests God's role as creator of the heavenly luminaries (Gen. 1:14-19). The allusion to creation resonates with the statement that God's gifts are good since according to Genesis the 'lights' were pronounced good.¹³⁰ However, in the following negative statement James uses the reference to creation to establish a comparison between God and the 'lights'. The text is subject to severe textual problems, but the accepted reading is *παραλλαγὴ ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα*.¹³¹ The term *παραλλαγὴ* means variation or change,¹³² while *τροπή* designates turning.¹³³ The latter term is used for the apparent turning in the course of the sun (Homer. *Od.* 15.404), and the seasonal changes of spring and autumn (Philo, *Opif.* 45). The meaning of the final term *ἀποσκίασμα* is literally

¹²⁹ so also Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 216

¹³⁰ Wall, *Community*, p. 66

¹³¹ On the textual problem see Ropes, pp. 162-164; Dibelius, pp. 100-102; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 679

¹³² LSJ p. 1134

¹³³ LSJ p. 1582

'shadow',¹³⁴ therefore giving the description of God as one in whom there is no 'variation or shadow of change'. According to this description, even if the movements of the astral bodies are understood as being ordered and regular (Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.15, 49-56; *1 Enoch* 41:5-8; 72-75), God surpasses their relative lack of variation since with him there is not even the 'variation or change of shadow'. Therefore God is wholly reliable as the source of good gifts, because his gifts and his giving do not change.¹³⁵ Furthermore, God is the ultimate exemplar of faithfulness and is therefore the total opposite of the double-minded.¹³⁶

The statement in v. 18 concerning the activity of God presents three problems for interpreters. These relate to the identity of those described as *ἡμᾶς*, the reference of the *λόγος ἀληθείας*, and the meaning of *ἀπαρχή*. The difficulty posed by James' use of *ἡμᾶς* is that following the reference to creation in v. 17 and combined with the use of *ἀποκυέω* in v. 18 it may refer to humanity in general rather than to believers in particular. In addition, Jackson-McCabe has suggested that there is an implicit comparison between *ἡμᾶς* and the 'lights' of the previous verse since God is the father of both. This comparison functions to indicate that, in the same way that the variations evident among the 'lights' are not reflective of God's character, so the *πειρασμοί* experienced by human beings are not experienced by God the creator.¹³⁷ However, even if this comparison is accepted, it offers evidence for the identification of *ἡμᾶς* with

¹³⁴ LSJ p. 197; Johnson, p. 197

¹³⁵ D. J. Versepnt, 'James 1:17 and the Jewish Morning Prayers', *NovT* 39 (1997) 177-191, p. 178; Wall, *Community*, p. 66

¹³⁶ Garland, 'Severe Trials', p. 392

believers rather than humans in general, since only those with faith can undergo *πειρασμοί*. Furthermore, such an identification is also supported by the change of imagery from paternity to maternity, a development that places the depiction of God in v. 18 in contrast to that of desire in v. 15.¹³⁸ Moreover, the use of *ἡμᾶς* in v. 18 relies on the address *ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί* (v. 16).¹³⁹ Therefore James' statement is made with specific reference to those who have faith.

The author begins his statement regarding the activity of God by stressing the role of the divine will. This stress is achieved by placing the participle *βουληθεὶς* at the start of the sentence without transition,¹⁴⁰ making it emphatic of God's sovereign and deliberate choice.¹⁴¹ Thus the difference between God and desire is seen in that God chooses to bring about something positive, while desire brings forth only sin and death. Furthermore, while those who doubt God are tossed around like waves in the sea (vv. 7-8), God is not subject to such vagaries in his decision making or actions.

The idea of God as mother is not widespread within the scriptures of Israel, although it is present both in relation to Israel (Num 11:12; Deut 32:18; Isa 42:14; 49:15; 66:13) and creation (Ps 90 (89):2; Job 38:28-29). However, the term *ἀποκυέω* is only used in the LXX at 4 Macc 15:17 where the mother of the

¹³⁷ Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 210, 212

¹³⁸ Garland, 'Severe Trials', p. 392; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, pp. 41, 44; Wall, *Community*, p. 66; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 154; Burchard, p. 77

¹³⁹ Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, pp. 42-43; Burchard, p. 78

¹⁴⁰ Dibelius, p. 103; Johnson, p. 197; Contra Davids, p. 88

martyrs is described as one who has 'brought forth perfect holiness'. A similar usage is found in Philo where this term is employed both for physical birth (e.g. *Opif.* 161) and the production of virtues and characteristics (*Det.* 114, 121; *Deus* 5; *Plant.* 135). However, as here in Jas 1:18 the birth of the believer is achieved through the *λόγος ἀληθείας*, so in Philo creation, Israel, and virtues in general are birthed through wisdom (*Det.* 116; *Deus* 5; *Mut.* 137), knowledge (*Ebr.* 30), virtue (*Post.* 63; *Congr.* 6), and righteousness (*Det.* 121). Furthermore, the idea of birth is frequently connected with conversion in the literature of early Christianity (John 1:13; 3:3-8; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:3, 23; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1; cf. 1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19; Phlm 10).¹⁴² Consequently, it is clear that James is referring to a formative event in the antecedent history of those addressed, an event that arose as a result of God's deliberate action. A significant element in this event was the *λόγος ἀληθείας*, and so it is necessary to consider how this *λόγος ἀληθείας* should be understood.

Prior to its use in Jas 1:18 the description *λόγος ἀληθείας* is used with regard to the Torah in Ps 118 (119):43, which for the Psalmist is 'the decisive factor in every sphere of life'.¹⁴³ Beyond this identification other texts within the OT that use both *λόγος* and *ἀληθεία* refer to the veracity of messages (Deut 22:20; 1 Kgs 10:6), and in this connection the correspondence between the truthfulness of God's words and his servants (1 Kgs 17:24; Jer 23:28; cf. Eccl 12:10; 2 Sam 7:24-29). In the Intertestamental literature the designation 'words of truth' is

¹⁴¹ Davids' argument (p. 88) that such placement is common in Philo is not pertinent unless it could be shown that in none of these instances is *βουληθείς* emphatic; even then it could not prescribe such a usage in James without further argument.

¹⁴² Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 45

used in relation to God's judgements and law (*1 Enoch* 104:9-11; 99:2) and the testaments of the faithful that are authoritative for their children (*T. Gad* 3:1; 4Q542 Fr. 1 2.2). Among the early Christians *λόγος ἀληθείας* is used to refer to the Christian message (2 Cor 6:7; Eph 1:13; Col 1:5; 2 Tim 2:15; Pol. *Phil.* 3:2; *Odes Sol.* 8:8),¹⁴⁴ while this message is also frequently referred to as 'the truth' (2 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 2:4; 1 Pet 1:22; 2 Pet 1:12; 1 John 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21; 3:19; 2 John 1, 2, 4; 3 John 1, 3, 12; *Diogn.* 7:2).¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, there is also evidence from Philo (*Praem.* 27, 58; *Spec.* 4.178; *Virt.* 102) and *Joseph and Aseneth* (8:9) that connects conversion with the movement towards the 'truth'.¹⁴⁶

In James *ἀληθεία* occurs a further two times (3:14; 5:19). On both of these occasions it represents the standard of thought and action that is authoritative for the author and his addressees. Furthermore, included as part of this standard is the wisdom of God (3:13-18) and the law (1:22-25; 2:8-12). Therefore it is probable that the *λόγος ἀληθείας* in James refers to God's word, including both the traditions that have led to Jesus being designated as 'Lord' (1:1; 2:1) and the law. It is through this body of 'truth' that God has brought forth the faithful. According to this depiction of 'conversion' or renewal, the relationship with God and the access to good gifts this entails is entirely

¹⁴³ A. Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, London: SCM, 1962, p. 740

¹⁴⁴ The interpretation of 2 Cor 6:7 is disputed as it may either refer to 'truthful speech' or the 'word of truth' (so Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 194, n. 5). However, it appears that the latter should be accepted in view of the use of 'truth' in 4:2. See further, C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, London: A & C Black, 1973, p. 187; R. P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, (WBC, 40), Waco: Word Books, 1986, p. 178; M. E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians Vol. 1*, (ICC), Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994, pp. 460-461

¹⁴⁵ Note that in 1 John 1:6-10 the 'truth' is identified with God's word (cf. 1 Pet 1:22-23).

¹⁴⁶ See further Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, pp. 45, 73

founded on God's choice (Deut 9:4-6; cf. 8:11-17). However, God's choice is not without purpose as is indicated by the following *εἰς τὸ εἶναι*.

Through the use of *εἰς τὸ εἶναι* James connects the birth of the believers through the 'word of truth' with the purpose of being *ἀπαρχήν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων*. The term *ἀπαρχή* in Greek literature is found to have three senses: the true 'first-fruits' of natural products, the proportionate gift of the pious giver and an offering to a deity.¹⁴⁷ In the LXX and other early Jewish literature *ἀπαρχή* is usually employed as a metaphor drawn from the first fruits of the field when applied to people, although in Pss 77 (78):51 and 104 (105):36 it is used in a non-cultic sense in relation to the idea of the firstborn of Egypt.¹⁴⁸ In Jer 2:3 Israel is described as God's first fruits using the cognate term *ἀρχή*, and according to this metaphor 'Israel is the beginning of Yahweh's harvest'.¹⁴⁹ This metaphor speaks of Israel's protected status and along with the other images in vv. 2-3 recalls the origins of the nation in contrast to its current state.¹⁵⁰ The designation of Israel as first fruits is also found in Philo, *Spec.* 4.180, where, as here in Jas 1:18, the image is presented as a simile. The point of this simile in Philo is to emphasise the distinctiveness of Israel as separated from the other nations in its dedication to the Lord (cf. *T. Moses* 1:13).

¹⁴⁷ Delling, 'ἀπαρχή', 484-486 in *TDNT Vol. 1*, p. 486

¹⁴⁸ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, pp. 815-816

¹⁴⁹ Carroll, *Jeremiah*, p. 120

¹⁵⁰ Carroll, *Jeremiah*, pp. 119-120; Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, p. 816

Although in early Christianity *ἀπαρχή* is primarily used to designate the first converts (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Thess 2:13; *1 Clem.* 42:4) or as an indication of the life to come (Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:20, 23; *1 Clem.* 24:1; *Barn.* 1:7), it is also used to designate those devoted to God (Rev 14:4) and in *1 Clem.* 29:3 is connected with God's choice of Israel from among the nations. Therefore, while the idea of the beginning of a renewal of creation may be present in Jas 1:18 due to the use of *κτίσμα* and the preceding allusion to creation in v. 17,¹⁵¹ I would suggest that the dominant element in James' usage is that of distinction from creation and dedication to God.¹⁵²

However, although the description of the audience in v. 1 as the 'twelve tribes of the diaspora' implies the idea of distinction,¹⁵³ this description should not be assumed to portray the audience in terms of the idea that believers are 'strangers in the world' (e.g. *Diogn.* 5:1-6).¹⁵⁴ Rather, this distinction is related to God's choice of Israel from among the nations, the details of which James imitates in v. 18. As was demonstrated in chapter 2,¹⁵⁵ God chooses Israel to be his people, a choice that entails Israel's fulfilment of the covenant (Exod 19:4-6). This choice is described elsewhere as the 'birth' of the nation (Deut 32:18), a birth in which the words of God perform a fundamental role (Exod 19:3-7;

¹⁵¹ So Wall, *Community*, p. 67; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 154

¹⁵² Burchard, p. 79, recognises that the first fruits image indicates that Christians belong to God.

¹⁵³ Frankemölle, p. 303; Burchard, p. 79

¹⁵⁴ Contra Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 65

¹⁵⁵ See section 2.3

20:1).¹⁵⁶ In Jas 1:18 the author depicts the event in which the renewal of the twelve tribes took place as a re-enactment of the founding of the covenant. In presenting the audience with their origins as a faith community James establishes these beginnings as a good gift from God, and through the echo with Sinai demonstrates God's faithfulness to his people. Furthermore, this depiction of the past impacts on the present as the purpose of their election is that they should be 'a kind of first fruits'. The fulfilment of this purpose is achieved only in so much as those addressed maintain the distinction inferred on them by God's choice, and this entails that they take on the characteristics of the 'word of truth'.

4.7 Conclusion

It is clear from the preceding examination that within this opening section of the letter our author's thoughts are animated by his bipolar concern with God's character and the faithfulness expected from his people. At the centre of this concern is the fundamental correspondence between 'defective' theology and unfaithfulness. His concern with promoting the 'correct' perspective is evident from the outset, as he exhorts the addressees to adopt a wholly positive understanding of trials. According to this perspective trials are to be counted as occasions of joy because it is through such testing that *ὑπομονή* is produced and it is through the continuing maintenance of this quality that the addressees

¹⁵⁶ Cf. A. Meyer, *Das Rätsel des Jakobusbriefes*, (BZNW, 10), Giessen: Töpelmann, 1930, pp. 157-159; M-E, Boismard, 'Une Liturgie Baptismale Dans La Prima Petri: II Son Influence sur l'Épître de Jacques', *RB* 64 (1957) 161-183, pp. 170-172

can be perfect, whole and lacking in nothing. Furthermore, only those who maintain their endurance and so prove faithful will receive the eschatological gift of life (1:12). Since endurance involves placing hope and dependence on God the addressees' appreciation of God's character is of fundamental importance.

The problem that a 'defective' perception of God presents for believers is depicted through James' contrast between those who ask in faith and those who doubt. This contrast relates to the preceding depiction of God as entirely dissimilar to human benefactors, since unlike humans God's generosity is free from duplicity and any intention to cause harm. In failing to accept this depiction of God, the doubter is portrayed as failing to follow the example of God's singleness and reliability, as he is tossed to and fro like a wave in the sea. The vacillation of the doubter that stems from the failure to fully accept the 'correct' perception of God not only affects his receipt of gifts from God, but also leads to unfaithful behaviour. In this way the double-minded are presented as fickle followers of God lacking the wholehearted commitment necessary to live the life of faithfulness, a presentation of unfaithfulness that corresponds to the opposition between singleness and doubleness examined in chapter 2.¹⁵⁷

From James' depiction of God as being entirely dissimilar to humanity it is implied that the 'defective' theology of the doubter is one in which God is conceived wholly or partially along anthropomorphic lines. In vv. 5-8 this involves likening God to human benefactors, while in vv. 13-15 it involves attributing the human proclivity towards both good and evil to God. Furthermore,

¹⁵⁷ See section 2.8

through the opposition between God and desire, and the author's stress on God as the only source of good things for the believer, it is also implied that this 'defective' theology involves the idea that good things are available from a source other than God. It is this latter aspect that James denies by emphasising that the only results of desire are sin and death. Both aspects of this 'defective' theology, attributing or seeking the procurement of good things from a source other than God and creating God in humanity's image, may be considered as subtle forms of idolatry in accordance with the examination of these errors in chapter 2 (Hos 2:7-8, 12; Isa 31:1-3; Jer 2:37; Ps 50:21-22; cf. Deut 8:17).¹⁵⁸ However, James does not make such an identification until 4:3-6, for which the teaching on God's unequivocal goodness and gift-giving prepares.

In contrast to the 'defective' theology in which God is likened to humanity, James' depiction of God presents him as the ultimate exemplar of the faithfulness expected from his people. As God is single-minded in his gift-giving so believers have to be wholly committed to God as they make their requests, since doubleness disqualifies the petitioner. Furthermore, in the same way that God is 'unable to be tested' and without variation, so the believer who wishes to remain faithful must be free from the vacillation of the double-minded and steadfastly fulfil God's will without being seduced by desire. It is only those who follow God's example who will receive his gifts, and therefore one's perception of God's character is extremely important since following the wrong example will lead to death.

¹⁵⁸ See section 2.6

In addition to the general correlation throughout vv. 2-18 between the character of God and the faithfulness of his people, there are also more particular ways in which the influence of covenant thought is evident. The first of these is the description of the faith community as those who love God (v. 12). This designation emphasises the need for those who have faith to demonstrate their loyalty to God through their faithful fulfilment of God's will. Such loyalty and faithfulness contrast with the person who tests God by accusing him of being involved in testing. Although James' prohibition of this testing and description of the faithful display an indebtedness to covenant thought, his insistence on the unequivocal goodness of God leads to his rejection of a central tenet of that thought in his statement that God does not test anyone. From this it is clear that the 'correct' theology is more important to our author than the maintenance of traditions, no matter how entwined they are with Israel's history. This fact is perhaps all the more remarkable given James' use of this history to depict the founding event of his own faith community. However, through this depiction James establishes that this faith community has been brought forth in order to be distinct and that this distinction involves living by the 'word of truth'. The problem and necessity of remaining distinct is taken up again in 2:1-13, while the implied audience's failure to live by God's word forms the subject of 1:19-27.

Identity, Practice, and Salvation (Jas 1:19-27)

5.1 Introduction

Having established that James is particularly concerned with the relationship between 'defective' theology and unfaithfulness in 1:2-18, the present chapter will demonstrate that his dual concern in 1:19-27 is to undermine the audience's 'defective' theology whilst establishing his alternative theology and the impact it should have on behaviour. The 'defective' theology James challenges in this passage involves a misunderstanding of God's character as gift-giver and the nature of the relationship between God and those he has chosen. These misunderstandings have led to a situation in which the audience considers their identity as those chosen by God to be sufficient for salvation regardless of their behaviour. It is this dislocation of identity and practice that James challenges as he seeks to demonstrate to the audience that their distinct status as God's chosen people involves the vocation of remaining distinct from the 'world'. In this way James shapes the identity of the audience according to covenant thought, and employs and develops its motifs in order to emphasise the importance of living the life of faithful distinction called for by God's sovereign choice.

Although there is a slight shift of focus in 1:19,¹ it is clear that James' thoughts in both vv. 2-18 and vv. 19-27 are closely connected. This is particularly apparent in his continuing concern with the character of God (vv. 20, 27). Furthermore the references to the 'word' in v. 21 and the following discussion of hearing and doing the 'word' in vv. 22-25 also connect with James' remark regarding the 'word of truth' in v. 18. However, in spite of these general connections, it is not immediately clear how v. 19 itself follows on from v. 18.

The first problem that confronts the interpreter is that posed by the textual variants. However, this decision is relatively straightforward since *ἵστε* has the earlier attestation (N*f, A, B, C) and the alternative *ὥστε* (P, Ψ) is clearly an attempt to make the connection between verses 18 and 19 more apparent. Therefore the interpreter is left with the difficult decision as to whether *ἵστε* should be understood as an indicative or imperative. If *ἵστε* is taken as an indicative it represents an appeal by the author to the knowledge of the addressees akin to those found elsewhere in the letter (1:2; 3:1; cf. 4:4).² However, throughout the letter the address *ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί* is generally associated with imperatives (1:2, 16; 2:1; 3:1; 4:11; 5:7, 10, 12).³ So, since there is no proven tendency towards using the indicative in the general style of the author, the imperative reading should be preferred.⁴ Nevertheless, it still remains unclear whether the object of *ἵστε* is the preceding statement in v. 18, or the following instructions found in vv. 19-21.

¹ Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 84

² Mayor, p. 65; see also Johnson, p. 198

³ Davids, p. 91; Burchard, p. 80

The difficulty of determining the object of *ἴστε* is eased by Davids' suggestion that there is a formal parallel between vv. 16-18 and vv. 19-21, since they both begin with an imperative and the address *ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί*, and finish with a reference to the 'word'.⁵ Furthermore, in both cases there is a contrast between God and an aspect of creation (the 'lights' v. 17; humanity vv. 19-20). In v. 16 the imperative relates both to the discussion of trials in vv. 12-15 and to that of God's faithfulness in vv. 17-18, and therefore it is probable that *ἴστε* should also be understood as relating both ways. However, since the reading ἔστω δέ is to be preferred to that which omits the δέ, on account of its earlier attestation (K, B, C) and the difficulty it presents after *ἴστε*,⁶ it is evident that this imperative relates primarily to the statement in v. 18. Therefore James exhorts his audience to know their identity, while at the same time indicating that this knowledge must lead to action. In this way the textual unit 1:19-21 acts as a bridge between the identity discussed in v. 18 and the vocation this entails as depicted in vv. 22-27.⁷

Before considering the content of v. 19 there is one more matter relating to structure that must be discussed, that is, whether v. 19 provides the structure for the rest of chapter one, or even for the majority of the letter. The correspondence between the proverb and verses 20 and 26 has been noted by

⁴ J. H. Moulton, & W. F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: II, Accidence and Word-Formation*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979, p. 222; Dibelius, p. 109

⁵ Davids, p. 91

⁶ The use of the particle *δέ* is such a problem for Davids (p. 91) and Dibelius (p. 109) that both consider its presence a consequence of the original context of the 'proverb' quoted in v. 19.

Dibelius, although he did not make anything out of it.⁸ On the other hand Baker has not only noted this correspondence, but has also suggested that the three parts of the proverb provide the structure for vv. 20-26. In his opinion 'slow to anger' is expanded upon in vv. 20-21, while the parts 'quick to hear' and 'slow to speak' are expanded upon in vv. 22-25 and v. 26 respectively.⁹ While v. 21 is obviously connected to v. 20, there is no clear sense in which it could be said that it is expanding upon 'slow to anger'. Rather it would seem that v. 21 expands upon what accomplishes the righteousness of God. Furthermore, while 'quick to hear' may prepare the audience for James' discussion in vv. 22-25, the expansion that takes place goes beyond 'quick' hearing to include action. The call to be 'slow to speak' is reflected in v. 26 with regard to control of the tongue, although I would not consider this an expansion but rather a restatement of what is meant in v. 19. The author does not expand upon what is and is not to be thought of as controlling the tongue. Despite these criticisms it is clear that Baker is correct to find the tripartite phrase of v. 19 providing the thematic structure for vv. 20-26, since James deals with anger, hearing and speech in this section.¹⁰ It is as though v. 19 is meant to prepare the audience for the discussion in the following verses.¹¹

⁷ The relationship that James draws between the origins of the community and their vocation may reflect the similar correlation between Israel's remembrance of its origins and the vocation it must fulfil (Deut 4:9-13; 5:15; 15:15; 16:3, 12). See section 2.4.3.

⁸ Dibelius, p. 108

⁹ Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 86

¹⁰ Contra Burchard, p. 82

¹¹ Note also Edgar's (*Chosen*, p. 162) suggestion that v. 19 functions as an appeal to the audience to listen to what the author has to say.

In contrast to Baker, Wall claims that v. 19 is a programmatic text, giving the topics to be dealt with in the three following sections: 'quick to hear' 1:22-2:26; 'slow to speak' 3:1-18; 'slow to anger' 4:1-5:6.¹² The possibility of a relationship between 'slow to speak' and 3:1-18 is clear in that James here deals with control of the tongue in no uncertain terms. However 'anger' is not even mentioned in 4:1-5:6 where James deals with envy, disloyalty and the treatment of the 'poor' by the 'rich'. In styling 1:22-2:26 as James' discussion of 'quick to hear' Wall identifies 'quick hearing' with 'doing the word'.¹³ However, since James makes a distinction between hearing and doing (1:22), it is illegitimate to subsume doing into the idea of 'quick hearing'. Therefore I reject Wall's reading of v. 19 as being programmatic for the majority of the text of James.

5.2 *Jas 1:19-20: 'Quick to Hear, Slow to Speak, Slow to Anger'*

As has already been made evident in the preceding discussion, James' exhortations in vv. 19-21 are made with the audience's identity as first fruits in mind. Therefore it appears strange that he begins by employing a saying of universal scope, as indicated by his use of *πᾶς ἄνθρωπος*.¹⁴ Perhaps he simply adopts a piece of advice that was universal in scope and applies it more specifically to believers. However, in making this application he indicates that there is a general standard of behaviour expected from all humanity. This recalls the preceding depiction of God as creator (vv. 17-18) and implies that for

¹² Wall, *Community*, p. 69

¹³ Wall, *Community*, p. 76; so also Verseput, 'Plutarch', p. 514

¹⁴ Huther, p. 77; Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 84

James there is no distinction between life in accordance with creation and life in accordance with the 'word' (cf. 3:9).

The main differentiation between each part of the saying in v. 19 is the variation between *ταχύς* and *βραδύς*, the former only being recommended in the first part of the saying. This part recommends that 'every person be quick to hear'. The author's placement of this saying prepares the addressees for his discussion of 'hearing' the 'word' in vv. 22-25.¹⁵ However, there is nothing in this saying itself to suggest that its application should be restricted to teachers, or the public presentation of the 'word'.¹⁶ Rather, what is recommended is that the audience be ready to listen not only to teachers and instruction but also to other people in general (cf. Sir 5:11). The achievement of such an action is not possible without also being 'slow to speak'.

Being quicker to use one's ears than one's mouth indicated the ability to control the tongue (Diogenes Laertius *VII* 23-24), an ability the truly pious needed to master (Jas 1:26). Being quick to speak was a sure way to commit sin (Sir 4:29; m. Aboth 1:17; cf. Jas 3:1-12), and so James recommends being careful in speech in order to avoid the misuse of the tongue. That the misuse of the tongue is a problem among the audience may be indicated by the attention that James pays to this topic throughout this letter (1:26; 3:1-12; 4:11; 5:12).¹⁷

¹⁵ So Huther, p. 77; Ropes, p. 168; Adamson, p. 78

¹⁶ With Dibelius, p. 108; Contra Adamson, p. 78; Verseput, 'Plutarch', p. 513

¹⁷ In this sense Mussner's (p. 100) suggestion that the author directs this exhortation against derogatory speech has some merit. However 'slowness' is recommended in speech in general, and not just that which is harmful.

However the part of the saying upon which he chooses to focus his concern is the third and final recommendation that every person be 'slow to anger'.

As Stahlin has noted, the negation of anger in v. 19 is not absolute, but rather James exhorts his audience to control their anger.¹⁸ This is in marked contrast to the exhortations found in Colossians 3:8 and Ephesians 4:31, where those addressed are admonished to put away anger along with other vices. Such a call to control one's anger is at home in both the wider Hellenistic world and the world of Jewish texts in particular. This can be seen in Plutarch (*Mor.* 456B) where anger is regarded as being unnatural. Within the Jewish wisdom literature being 'slow to anger' is extolled as a sign of great wisdom (Prov 16:32), while being quick to anger is the behaviour of a fool (Prov 14:17). So James calls his audience to act wisely in all their dealings, and control their anger.¹⁹

In addition to reading this as a straightforward call to control anger, an interesting suggestion has been made by Stahlin, a suggestion that is of some merit in view of the author's use of God as an example for his audience. His suggestion is that

the expression *βραδύς εἰς ὀργήν* might be taken as a parallel and equivalent of אַרְךָ אַפַּיִם along with *μακρόθυμος*. In this case *μίμησις* of

¹⁸ Stahlin, Fichtner, Sjöberg & Procksch, 'ὀργή', 382-447 in *TDNT Vol. V*, p. 421

¹⁹ There is no indication here that James is writing against a specific instance of anger, and so Huther's (p. 78) suggestion that the exhortation 'be slow to anger' is addressed to those who misuse the gospel for the gratification of their own censoriousness is without foundation.

God and his *μακροθυμία* is commended, and since this is very close to his *χάρις*, the exhortation is more a demand to forgive than to be angry.²⁰

The various references to God's being 'slow to anger' are predominantly concerned with his steadfast love and mercy (Neh 9:17; Pss 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah 1:3), and the LXX consistently uses the translation *μακρόθυμος*. With this background, and the concern with *ύπομονή* in the preceding section (also cf. 5:10-11 where both *ύπομονή* and *μακροθυμία* are used), it is quite probable that James intends his readers to take God's long-suffering as an example to be followed. However the present exhortation is not a 'demand to forgive' but rather a call to control anger and adopt a patient attitude. As is implied by v. 20, in following God's example the audience will distinguish themselves from humanity, among whom being 'quick to anger' is all too prevalent.

It is clear from the use of *γάρ* that v. 20 provides the foundation for the admonition 'be slow to anger'.²¹ Although there is an implicit contrast between divine anger and human anger in this verse, James' concern appears to be focused on the further implicit contrast between the human disposition towards anger, and some other as yet unspecified form of behaviour. This unspecified behaviour, unlike human anger, accomplishes the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. In order to establish the meaning of this phrase it is important to consider the use of both *δικαιοσύνη* and *ἐργάζεται* in the letter as a whole.

²⁰ Stahlin, 'ὄργη', p. 421

²¹ Huther, p. 79; Mussner, p. 100

The *δικαι-* stem is used in three other places throughout the letter: 2:23-25; 3:18; 5:16. The first of these passages deals with righteousness at the final judgement, and indicates that those who have works and not faith alone are righteous before God. This connection between righteousness and faithful action is also found in 3:18 where the 'fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace'. Here the overall character of the faithful as well as their deeds are described in terms of peacefulness, and this lifestyle is depicted as the fulfilment of God's wisdom (3:17) and as resulting from righteousness. Finally, in 5:16 the author states that 'the prayer of a righteous person effects great power'. Once more then the *δικαι-* stem is related to the life of faithfulness, since it is only those who are faithful who will receive from God (1:5-8). Consequently it is clear that the letter as a whole tends to employ the *δικαι-* stem as a positive value relating to the standard of faithfulness expected from those who belong to James' community. Accordingly *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* should be interpreted as an objective genitive referring to God's righteous standard.²² In imitating God's righteous example with regard to anger the audience will set themselves apart from humanity in general, as those who will receive temporal gifts (5:16) and eschatological salvation (2:23-25) from God.²³

The question of how this righteous standard is accomplished has been partially answered by the preceding consideration of the *δικαι-* stem. In that consideration it was indicated that a life characterised by faith and works,

²² Laws, p. 81; Davids, p. 93

²³ Burchard (p. 82) rejects the idea that *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* describes the right action God demands, although he recognises that it refers to God's acknowledgement of a person as righteous.

particularly in accordance with God's wisdom, leads to the attribution of righteousness at the eschatological judgement. Furthermore, it is also surely implied that following James' advice in 1:19-21 accomplishes righteousness. Moreover the use of *ἐργάζεται* serves to recall similar verbal ideas in 1:2-4 (e.g. *κατεργάζεται*) and to point the audience towards its further usage in 2:9.²⁴ This usage identifies *ἀμαρτίαν ἐργάσεσθε* as coming about through transgression of the law, and therefore it is clear that keeping the law also performs an important role in the fulfilment of God's righteous standard.

5.3 Jas 1:21: Implicating the Audience and the Implanted Word

The relationship between vv. 19-20 and v. 21 is clearly indicated through the use of the particle *διό*, which draws a conclusion apposite to those addressed. That is, in view of the fact that 'every human should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger', and the additional fact that 'human anger does not accomplish the righteousness of God', those addressed are instructed to adopt a twofold action of renunciation and acceptance.²⁵ These acts are complementary and, as their juxtaposition suggests, one is useless without the other.²⁶

²⁴ Huther, p. 79; Ropes, p. 169; Wall, *Community*, p. 70

²⁵ Laws, p. 82

²⁶ Laws (p. 82) notes that these acts operate as a balance for one another, while Baker (*Speech-Ethics*, p. 89) indicates that moral uncleanness and evil interfere with the reception of the 'word'. Additionally Johnson (p. 202) notes that the 'positive command corresponds to the negative one'.

The 'act of renunciation' occupies the first half of v. 21, and makes idiomatic use of the verb *ἀποτίθημι* which refers to the 'taking off' of clothes (Jos, *Ant.* 2.88).²⁷ Here James uses it in the sense of ceasing to do what one is accustomed to doing,²⁸ and so the audience are exhorted to cease all filthiness (*πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν*) and abundant wickedness (*περισσεῖαν κακίας*). This instruction, coming after vv. 19-20, implies that in contrast to the behaviour there exhorted, the audience is 'slow to hear, quick to speak, and quick to anger'. Furthermore, James' concentration on anger in the preceding verse implies that it is particularly this fault that he has in mind. This implication receives further confirmation from the use of *πραΰτης* which clearly contrasts with *ὀργή* in the preceding verse.²⁹ Moreover, the phrase *ἐν πραΰτητι* can be understood as qualifying both *ἀποτίθημι* and *δέχομαι*,³⁰ indicating that it is the whole of life that is to be characterised by meekness. Therefore, in distinction from the human disposition towards anger according to which they have been living, the implied audience are exhorted to adopt a lifestyle characterised by the meekness (3:13) and peace (3:17-18) of the wisdom 'from above' that achieves righteousness (3:18).

However, as has already been indicated, the adoption of such a lifestyle not only involves renunciation, but also, and more positively, it requires an act of

²⁷ LSJ, p. 202; G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 217; Laws, p. 81. The moral sense 'cast off' dominates the NT occurrences of this verb (Rom 13:12; Eph 4:22, 25; Col 3:8; Heb 12:1; 1 Pet 2:1)

²⁸ J. P. Louw, & E. A. Nida, *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*, New York: United Bible Societies, 1988, p. 659

²⁹ Dibelius, p. 112; Mussner, p. 101; Frankemölle, p. 330; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 139, n. 14; Verseput, 'Plutarch', p. 513

acceptance. It is this act that forms the focus of the second half of v. 21 and presents a number of problems for the interpreter, all of which are more or less interrelated. The three problems presented by this text relate to the identity of the *ἔμφυτος λόγος*, the meaning of *ἔμφυτος*, and the meaning of *δέχομαι* in combination with *ἔμφυτος*. In addition to these problems the interpreter must also consider why James should choose to describe the *λόγος* with which he is concerned as *ἔμφυτος*, as the combination *ἔμφυτος λόγος* is not found in any surviving Greek texts outwith early commentaries on this letter.³¹

Perhaps the easiest issue to resolve from the text of the letter itself is the identity of the *λόγος* which James describes in this verse as *ἔμφυτος*. Apart from the present reference, the term *λόγος* is used a further four times in the letter as a whole, and three of these occur in the present opening chapter (1:18, 22, 23; 3:2). The use of *λόγος* in 3:2 appears to be largely unrelated to those in the opening chapter as it refers simply to the words used in the everyday act of communication. The single reference to *λόγος* that precedes 1:21 is found in v. 18, where James refers to the 'word of truth'.

It has already been established that this 'word of truth' represents the standard of thought and action that is authoritative for James and his addressees. Therefore through his use of *λόγος ἀλήθειας* he refers to God's word, including both the traditions that have led to Jesus' place of honour (1:1; 2:1), God's wisdom (1:5; 3:13-18) and the law (1:22-25; 2:8-12; 4:12). That James

³⁰ Laws, p. 82; also Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 89

³¹ see PG 119.468 (Oecumenius); 125.1145 (Theophylactus)

continues to have this *λόγος* in mind in v. 21 is clear from the relationship between verses 18 and 19, and the allusions to the life of wisdom created by the use of *πραΰτης* in v. 21. However, it is also clear that in the material that follows and develops from v. 21, *λόγος* is more specifically defined as *νόμος* (v. 25). Therefore, it is clear that although the *λόγος* referred to in v. 21 is the 'word of truth',³² it cannot and should not be assumed that the traditions about Jesus included in this word, take precedence over or exclude the law.³³

5.3.1 *The Antecedents and Precedents of ἔμφυτος λόγος*

The debate concerning *ἔμφυτος* is largely centred on whether this term should be understood as meaning 'implanted' or 'innate'. In addition to this question there is also the issue of whether the use of this term in combination with *λόγος* indicates that James has been influenced by Greek philosophy.³⁴ Under such influence the term *ἔμφυτος* would be understood to mean 'innate' or 'natural', and the *λόγος* may be read as law or reason. According to Dibelius this idea of philosophical influence would identify the *λόγος* as reason and should be rejected since 'it would hardly be said of reason that it is able to save souls'. Moreover, the theme of 'hearing and doing' that follows in vv. 22-25 'demands a reference to the word, indeed, the 'saving' word – hence, the gospel'.³⁵ However, contrary to Dibelius' assertion that reason would not be connected

³² Huther, p. 83; Mussner, p. 102; Burchard, p. 83

³³ Contra Huther, p. 83; Laws, p. 83; Davids, p. 95; T. Laato, 'Justification according to James: A Comparison with Paul', *Trinity Journal* 18 (1997) 43-84, p. 49

³⁴ Dibelius, p. 113; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 7-27, 135-154

³⁵ Dibelius, p. 113

with saving souls, such a connection is found in Philo (*Leg.* 3.137). This demonstrates that the use of such language does not necessarily indicate the employment of philosophical concepts without reference to their original sense.³⁶ In addition, according to the development of the theme of 'hearing and doing' in vv. 22-25, the *λόγος* is more narrowly defined as law, not 'the Gospel'.

In view of these arguments the interpreter must not simply dismiss the idea of philosophical, and particularly Stoic influence in relation to James' use of the term *ἐμφυτος* in combination with *λόγος*.³⁷ Indeed, the probability that such a connection is present receives support from the early interpreters of this letter among whom the phrase *ἐμφυτος λόγος* is understood as 'that, according to which we become rational, distinguishing between the better and the worse'.³⁸ Furthermore, for Dionysius bar Salibi the *ἐμφυτος λόγος* is natural law implanted by God in our nature so that it should love that which is good and avoid that which is bad.³⁹ These interpretations clearly espouse the influence of Stoic tradition and seem to base their use of these traditions on the appearance of the phrase *ἐμφυτος λόγος*.⁴⁰ Therefore it is clear that at least by the time that these interpretations were formed the phrase *ἐμφυτος λόγος* was understood in connection with a philosophical tradition correlating natural law and human reason.⁴¹ However, it must be noted that despite the use of this phrase in Jas

³⁶ So also Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 138

³⁷ Contra Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 164, n. 23

³⁸ Theophylactus: PG 125.1145 (trans. my own); 119.468

³⁹ I. Sedlacek, *Dionysius bar Salibi in Apocalypsim et Epistulas Catholicas*, (CSCO, Scriptorum Syri 2.101), Rome: de Luigi, 1901, pp. 91-92

⁴⁰ see Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 131-133

⁴¹ On this tradition see Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 29-103

1:21, the author does not define the law explicitly as commanding and forbidding (Cicero, *Leg.* 1.18-19; 1.42; Philo, *Ios.* 29; *Praem.* 55; *Migr.* 130), nor does he refer to the ideas of implanted preconceptions and the potential *λόγος* that are associated with this philosophical tradition.⁴² Therefore, one must be careful not to allow this philosophical tradition to simply dictate the meaning and implications of James' use of the phrase *ἐμφυτος λόγος*.

There are two positions within scholarship on James regarding the meaning of *ἐμφυτος*. The majority interpret this term with the meaning 'implanted',⁴³ while the sense 'innate' or 'natural' is preferred by a few.⁴⁴ This latter sense is common in Philo (*Deus* 101; *Fug.* 122; *Spec.* 3.138; *Virt.* 23; *Praem.* 5) and Josephus (*J.W.* 1. 88; 4.647; 7.86; *Ant.* 16.232), where it is most often connected with vice.⁴⁵ It is in this sense that *ἐμφυτος* is used in Wis 12:10 to describe the wickedness of the ungodly. However, since in this context God is described as giving such people time to repent, it is clear that the author considers it possible for those who are innately wicked to turn from their wickedness. Therefore, although the usage of *ἐμφυτος* in this verse suggests that the wickedness of these people is habitual and even natural, nevertheless it is possible for them to adopt an alternative lifestyle.

⁴² see Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 33-43, 137

⁴³ Dibelius, p. 113; Mussner, p. 102; Adamson, pp. 98-100; Davids, p. 95; Johnson, p. 202; Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 91; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 136; Laato, 'Justification', p. 60; Wall, *Community*, p. 73; Bauckham, *James*, p. 146

⁴⁴ Ropes, p. 172; Laws, p. 83.

⁴⁵ In contrast Philo uses *ἐμφύω* in a positive sense to describe God's planting of right instruction in the soul (*Ebr.* 224), and how God's word implants strength and power to practise the commandments (*Somn.* 1.69).

In contrast to this usage of *ἐμφυτος*, a more positive employment of the term is found in the *Epistle of Barnabas* (1:2; 9:9). Here the term is connected with the only two occurrences of 'gift' (*δωρέα*) in *Barnabas*,⁴⁶ and appears with both the meaning 'innate' and 'implanted'. In 1:2 the author is celebrating the blessings of God that those addressed enjoy, describing their reception of the gift of the spirit with *ἐμφυτος*. Here the term is obviously intended to emphasise that the addressees' reception of this gift is so complete that their possession of the spirit is in fact natural. The idea of receiving a gift is also present in 9:9 where the gift in question is the teaching of Jesus, which is implanted in the hearts of the believers. Therefore it is clear that the term *ἐμφυτος* can be employed with both senses in relation to the reception of a gift from God, and that at least for Barnabas this reception relates specifically to believers.

The context in James displays a number of correspondences with the use of *ἐμφυτος* in these texts. As in Wis 12:10, it is obvious in Jas 1:21 that the description of the *λόγος* as *ἐμφυτος* does not indicate that those who possess this *λόγος* automatically conform to its demands. This is clear whether *ἐμφυτος* is understood as meaning 'innate' or 'implanted', since in both cases it is implied that the audience already possess this *λόγος* that James instructs them to receive. Additionally, since the *λόγος* that must be received is identified with the 'word of truth' (v. 18) and the 'perfect law of freedom' (v. 25), it is clear that the *ἐμφυτος λόγος* should be understood as a good gift from God. However, does James, like Barnabas, understand the initial reception of the *ἐμφυτος λόγος* to

⁴⁶ R. Hvalvik, *The Struggle for Scripture and Covenant*, (WUNT, 2/82), Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996, p. 51

have occurred with the foundation of the community, or at the creation of the world?

As already noted with regard to v. 18, James displays a possible interest in the renewal of creation, although his primary emphasis is on the identity of the audience as being chosen to be distinct through the fulfilment of the 'word of truth'.⁴⁷ Therefore the possibility that v. 21 may involve a reference to creation is not impossible, especially since the philosophical tradition that influenced the early interpreters of James indicates that the concept 'ἐμφυτος λόγος or νόμος consistently denotes something given to all people at God's initial creation of humanity' (e.g. *Apos. Con.* 8.12.18).⁴⁸ However, there are a number of factors that indicate that vv. 19-21 are primarily concerned with the covenant identity of the audience and the behaviour expected from them.

In the first instance vv. 19-21 form an integrated unit introduced by an imperative for the audience to 'know' their identity as God's first fruits, and the exhortations in vv. 19-21 concern the lifestyle that is commensurate with this identity. The behaviour called for in v. 19 may represent a general standard for humanity, but from v. 20 it is clear that James applies it to the distinct vocation of the audience as those birthed through the 'word of truth'. Only if they follow the example of God and are 'slow to anger' can the audience accomplish God's righteous standard, and the accomplishment of this standard is seen among those who live by the wisdom 'from above' (3:18), those who are God's friends (2:23), not humanity in general. Furthermore, although James can countenance

⁴⁷ See section 4.6

the possibility of the faithful poor inheriting the kingdom (2:5),⁴⁹ the teaching of 5:19-20 makes it clear that he considers the faith community to be the locus of salvation. In view of this fact it is more probable that the *ἔμφυτος λόγος*, the reception of which results in salvation (1:21), is understood as being initially received in the audience's birth through the 'word of truth'. This probability is further confirmed by the identification, already established,⁵⁰ between the *ἔμφυτος λόγος* and the 'word of truth'. Moreover, the use of *λόγος* and *νόμος* in the following discussion (vv. 22-25) clearly develops from the exhortation to receive the *ἔμφυτος λόγος* in v. 21, indicating that the external and physical form of the *ἔμφυτος λόγος* belongs to those addressed. The purpose of describing the 'word' received by the audience in their birth as the 'implanted word' will be discussed below.

5.3.2 *The Purpose Behind the Description?*

In considering the purpose of James' description of the *λόγος* as *ἔμφυτος* it is first necessary to consider other places where the idea of the internalisation of God's word is found. In Sirach 24:12 and 4 Ezra 9:30-31 (cf. 2 Apoc. Bar. 32:1) the giving of the law to Israel is reinterpreted in terms of the language of planting. According to Sirach 24:12 wisdom (the law v. 23) takes root in Israel, while 4 Ezra 9:30-31 describes God sowing the law within the Israelites. In both of these passages the depiction of internalisation is intended to encourage

⁴⁸ Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 192

⁴⁹ See section 6.4

⁵⁰ See section 5.3

obedience among God's people. Similar ideas are found in the Dead Sea Scrolls where the law is described as being engraved in the hearts of those who belong to the community (1QH 12 [4]:10). Moreover, in 4QdibHam^a (Fr. 1-2, 2:12-16) those belonging to the community call upon God to put his law in their hearts. The result of God's intervention is indicated as being the prevention of, and freedom from, sin.

Further passages that are analogous with James occur in Deuteronomy, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The prophecy of the new covenant found in Jeremiah 31:33 is frequently connected with Jas 1:21.⁵¹ According to this prophecy there will be a new beginning for Israel brought about and enabled by God. This new beginning will involve God putting the law within the hearts of his people, an action that is supposed to ensure that under the new covenant the people will fulfil the law. A similar situation is described in Ezek 11:19-20 and 36:26-28, where, as in Jer 31:33, the result of God's intervention is that the law will be kept and these law keepers will be God's people, and God will be their God.⁵² However, while there are similarities between these texts and the context of Jas 1:21,⁵³ there are no clear allusions.⁵⁴ This is also true to some extent of the

⁵¹ Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 91; Bauckham, *James*, p.146; Laato, 'Justification', p. 53

⁵² The promise of a fresh start can also be found in Deut 30:1-10; Jer 24:5-7; 32:37-41; Ezek 16:53-63; Zech 7:7-8:17; Bar 2:29-35 (J. Krasovec, *Reward, Punishment and Forgiveness: The Thinking and Beliefs of Ancient Israel in the Light of Greek and Modern Views*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, p. 452). The early Christian tradition continues to make use of the idea of the proximity of the law and its implanting, e.g. *1 Clem.* 2:8; *Herm. Sim.* 8.3.3.

⁵³ see Bauckham, *James*, p. 146

⁵⁴ Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 192

passage in Deut 30:11-14,⁵⁵ although it is connected to the context of Jas 1:21 through its concern with hearing and doing. In contrast to the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel this passage stresses the normal proximity of the law in everyday life. In this way it communicates that keeping the law is not difficult, and therefore encourages Israel to fulfil the law.

The passages considered above offer various analogies to James' description of the *λόγος* as *ἐμφυτος*, and present a possible reason for James' choice of this description. It is clear that internalisation of the law functions to both encourage and enable its fulfilment. Through the fulfilment of the law that results from this internalisation the people of Israel are seen to fulfil their identity as God's people (Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:20; 36:27-29). Therefore, through his description of the *λόγος* as *ἐμφυτος* James indicates to those addressed that it is possible, and they themselves are able, to fulfil it. Furthermore, this internalisation reflects the bond between the audience and God (cf. Isa 51:7), a bond that requires that they live according to the righteousness of God (Jas 1:20). Accordingly, in vv. 19-21 it is the covenant identity of those addressed that is at stake, an identity that should be manifested in their distinction from humanity through the fulfilment of the 'word of truth'. That it is with the lack of this fulfilment that James is particularly concerned will be demonstrated further below with regard to the relationship between the reception of the 'implanted word' and salvation.

⁵⁵ Klein, (*Vollkommenheit*, p. 136) considers this passage to be the foundational text for understanding Jas 1:21.

5.3.3 Receiving the implanted word and accomplishing God's righteousness

The final problem presented by the text of Jas 1:21 is the meaning of *δέχομαι* in combination with *ἐμφυτος*, since it is unclear how something that is already possessed can nevertheless be received. Although the idea of reception is clearly present in the discussion of God's giving in the preceding verses (vv. 5-8, 12, 17)⁵⁶ and James frequently returns to the topic of prayer (4:3; 5:14-18), he only uses *δέχομαι* in the present verse. In view of this fact, several interpreters note that despite the odd exception (Acts 7:38), the New Testament generally employs *δέχομαι* with *λόγος* to indicate the reception or acceptance of the Gospel (Mark 4:20; Luke 8:13; Acts 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:13).⁵⁷ Nevertheless, these texts display a number of differences in their use of *δέχομαι*, indicating that it can refer to an initial reception of the apostolic preaching (Acts 8:14; 11:1) involving the examination of scripture (Acts 17:11) or a corresponding way of life (1 Thess 1:6; 2:13). This is particularly clear from its use in the parable of the sower, where it is evident that accepting the word does not necessarily indicate that commensurate deeds are produced (Mark 4:20; Luke 8:13). Therefore it is far from evident that the 'stock characteristic of the language of receiving the word' can be understood simply as meaning accepting and acting upon the word.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Davids, p. 94

⁵⁷ Dibelius, p. 114; Laws, p. 82; Johnson, p. 202; cf. Davids, p. 95

⁵⁸ Contra Davids, p. 95; Note that Davids refers to some passages other than those cited above (e.g. Deut 30:1; 1 Cor 3:6; Matt 13:4-15, 18-23; 1QH 12 [4]:10). However, these passages either fail to use *δέχομαι* or fail to show that it means both accepting and acting upon something.

However, such a use of the *δέχομαι* word group is found in Philo, *Praem.* 79, where accepting God's precepts is further delineated as not merely hearing them but also carrying them out. This delineation of accepting God's word is particularly striking considering James' treatment of the theme of 'hearing and doing' in 1:22-25, and the stress on the proximity of the word in both Jas 1:21 and Philo, *Praem.* 80.⁵⁹ So it is probable that James uses *δέχομαι* in a similar fashion to call the audience once more to pay attention to the fulfilment of God's will.⁶⁰ This entails that they believe that the implanted word is true and act upon it, living faithfully according to the truth found therein.⁶¹ That this involves both hearing and doing is not only clear from the following verses, but also from the relationship between this acceptance and salvation.⁶²

According to James the acceptance of the *ἐμφυτος λόγος* enables salvation, and therefore presents a parallel to v. 20 in which he indicated that it is necessary to accomplish God's righteous standard. The relationship between fulfilling God's word and salvation indicates the seriousness of the implied audience's failure to adhere to the 'word of truth'. If they fail to respond appropriately their eschatological future will be placed in jeopardy.⁶³ Although Baker is correct to suggest that the 'word's' power to save is here connected to its fulfilment, it should be noted that the power of salvation is not attributed to the works of the audience. Rather, while

⁵⁹ Note especially that following this delineation of accepting God's precepts Philo goes on to refer to Deut 30:11-14 (cf. 80-82).

⁶⁰ Ropes, p. 172

⁶¹ Johnson, p. 202; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 137; Wall, *Community*, p. 72

⁶² Contra Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 188

⁶³ Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 91

salvation is a collaborative enterprise between a gracious God and an obedient humanity, where mutual obligations must be met in order for promised blessings to be dispensed,⁶⁴

the power to save belongs to God (4:12) and by extension to all that comes from him (e.g. the *ἐμφυτος λόγος*).⁶⁵

5.4 Summary: Jas 1:19-21 Identity, Vocation, Distinction and Salvation

In 1:19-21 James exhorts those addressed to 'know' that they have been birthed by God through the 'word of truth' (v. 18). The exhortations that follow this imperative indicate that the audience's knowledge of their identity as those called to be distinct from creation has particular ramifications for their behaviour. The tripartite saying with which the author begins indicates that there is a general standard of behaviour expected from humanity. He applies this standard to the audience, and indicates through v. 20 that fulfilment of this standard will set them apart from humanity in general with its proclivity towards anger. In contrast to human anger the audience should follow God's example and be 'slow to anger', living a life characterised by meekness. However, the call for repentance in v. 21 indicates that the audience has failed to adopt this distinctive lifestyle.

⁶⁴ Wall, *Community*, p. 72

⁶⁵ Both Mussner and Laato stress that the saving power belongs to the word and not the works of those here addressed (Mussner, p. 103; Laato, 'Justification', p. 60).

In failing to adopt the distinctive lifestyle that would accomplish God's righteous standard, the audience is depicted as those accustomed to a way of life characterised as consisting in all filthiness and abundant wickedness. Moreover, their present behaviour indicates that they fail to fulfil the 'word' implanted in them at the foundation of their relationship with God. In presenting this 'word' as 'implanted', James draws the attention of those addressed to the possibility of fulfilling this 'word'. Indeed, it was for this purpose that they were chosen by God (v. 18). However, the audience is depicted as failing to heed James' exhortation to 'know' their identity, since their behaviour associates them with humanity, not God (v. 20). In terms of the approaching judgement and the enjoyment of salvation this association with humanity rather than God is undesirable. The objectionable nature of this association is due to the fact that fulfilment of the 'implanted word' and not its possession results in salvation (v. 21). Therefore those addressed should put off their life of contamination and receive the 'implanted word', because election (v. 18) is not sufficient for salvation. That James is particularly concerned with the possibility that his audience is deceived about the conditions for salvation and their connection to the fulfilment of God's word will be made clear in the following treatments of 'hearing and doing' (vv. 22-25) and true religion (vv. 26-27).

5.5 Jas 1:22-25: Hearing and Doing the Word

Although Mussner recognises that vv. 22-25 expand upon the acceptance of the implanted word referred to in v. 21, he reads the particle *δέ* in an adversative sense implying that accepting (*δέχομαι*) this word is not the same as actively

fulfilling it.⁶⁶ However, given that it has already been demonstrated that *δέχομαι* is used to express the audience's need to fulfil the implanted word, it is clear that this particle should be understood with a more continuative sense.⁶⁷ Therefore the author uses *δέ* to mark the transition to his expansion and resumption of the demand in v. 21.

He begins this resumption with the imperative *γίνεσθε*, which can be translated as 'be' or 'become'. Ropes, Davids and Wall prefer the former translation since it suggests that the 'doing of the word' should be an essential and continual activity of the audience.⁶⁸ However, the latter translation emphasises what has already been implied in the preceding call to repentance, that is, the audience are not 'doers of the word'.⁶⁹ It is clear that each of these senses is equally possible in the context of the present verse, and James probably uses *γίνεσθε* to demand that the audience make a new start by doing the word and that they continue in this practice. Accordingly since the simple imperative 'be' can incorporate both of these senses it should be preferred.

The addressees have already been prepared for James' remarks about hearing the word through the general exhortation to be 'quick to listen' in v. 19. The implied audience's fulfilment of this admonition is cast into some doubt by the following call to repentance, although this appears to be primarily concerned with the exhortation to be 'slow to anger'. However, in v. 22 it is clear that

⁶⁶ Mussner, pp. 103-104

⁶⁷ Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 92; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 121

⁶⁸ Ropes, p. 174; Davids, p. 96; Wall, *Community*, p. 78

⁶⁹ Johnson, p. 206

James is not concerned with hearing in general, but rather with hearing the word. Furthermore, the discussion focuses upon the need for hearing to be accompanied by deeds. Therefore, it is evident that James is not redefining hearing in terms of doing the word.⁷⁰

It is immediately clear from the use of the Hebraism *ποιηταὶ λόγου* that James' treatment of the theme of 'hearing and doing' is indebted to Jewish and early Christian usage (Deut 4:1, 5-6; 1 Macc 2:18, 33; 1QpHab 7:11; Rom 2:13),⁷¹ as it is obviously not a demand that the audience become poets (Acts 17:28). However, James D. G. Dunn has suggested that the contrast between hearing and doing found in Christian texts such as Rom 2:13, Matt 7:24-27 and Jas 1:22-25 would have sounded odd 'in the ears of a devout Jew'.⁷² That this claim is largely without foundation is clear from teaching on hearing and doing employed elsewhere, according to which the command to hear is accompanied by a command to do (Deut 5:1; Jer 11:3-4). Furthermore, the contrast between hearing and doing present in these early Christian texts is also found in Philo, *Praem.* 79, and Ezek 33:30-32. Consequently it is evident that such a contrast would not necessarily have appeared odd to those of the Jewish faith.

In addition to this unwarranted statement, Dunn also claims that Jews could be described as 'hearers of the law'.⁷³ Although Dunn makes this suggestion in relation to the idea that hearing (*שמע*) had a more positive content than is found

⁷⁰ Contra Wall, *Community*, p. 78

⁷¹ Ropes, p. 175; Burchard, p. 84; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 136

⁷² J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, (WBC, 38A), Dallas: Word Books, 1988, p. 97

⁷³ Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, p. 97

in the contrast between hearing and doing in texts such as Jas 1:22, the suggestion is nevertheless intriguing. In support of this idea Dunn cites a couple of texts from Josephus (*Ant.* 5.107, 132) and *Sib. Or.* 3:69-70.⁷⁴ In the latter text the 'faithful, chosen Hebrews' are contrasted with 'lawless men who have not yet listened to the word of God'. From this contrast it is implied that the faithful who are law abiding are those who have 'listened to the word of God'. Whether the listening itself involves obedience to the word of God is unclear since such obedience is evident from the contrast with 'lawless men'.

In the texts from Josephus it is clear that hearing the law is the proper occupation of the people of Israel. In *Ant.* 5.132 Josephus describes the sinfulness of the Israelites after the invasion of the promised land and in this context indicates that they were no longer careful to hear their laws. This implies that there is a connection between unfaithfulness and the failure to listen. However, as in *Sib. Or.* 3:69-70, it is unclear whether hearing itself has a more positive content. Finally, in Josephus *Ant.* 5.107 the description of the offending tribes as hearers of the laws given by God is clearly intended to identify them as part of Israel. Accordingly it appears that those belonging to Israel could indeed be described as 'hearers of the law'.

This suggestion is intriguing for the interpretation of Jas 1:22-25 since, as will be shown below, James is concerned to extricate the audience from the false assurance of salvation that underlies their failure to act in accordance with

⁷⁴ His additional reference to Acts 15:21 is not entirely relevant to the point in question as it simply refers to the common Jewish practice of the preaching and reading of Moses on the Sabbath.

God's will. It is possible that this false assurance stems from their perception of themselves as God's people based on their hearing of the word. Although this suggestion is speculative, it receives further support from James' insistence in v. 21 that possession of the implanted word is not enough to ensure salvation.⁷⁵

The theme of 'hearing and doing' is found throughout Jewish literature appearing both with and without *λόγος*. In the passages that do not use *λόγος* the object of the people's hearing is usually God's voice or the voice of his servant (Gen 26:5; Exod 19:5; Deut 5:1; 4 Kgdms 18:12; Jer 11:4).⁷⁶ In Gen 26:5 Abraham is described as someone who listened to God's voice and kept his injunctions. This description is significant for the future of Israel since in this passage it forms the basis for their inheritance of the land. Furthermore, the actions of Abraham can be understood as prefiguring those expected from Israel as they are instructed to hear God's voice and do his commands (Deut 5:1; 4 Kgdms 18:12; Jer 11:4). It is through adherence to such a course of actions that Israel maintains its distinction from the nations (Exod 19:5) and demonstrates that it belongs to God (Jer 11:4).

Other passages that refer to both hearing and doing without using *λόγος* are found in both the Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament. In both *T. Job* 4:2 and *Jos. Asen.* 24:4, the theme is connected with the idea of being a faithful servant, although in the latter text the object of hearing is the will of pharaoh rather than God. In addition to these texts, the idea of hearing and doing is also present in *Jos. Asen.* 12:2, where its object of hearing is once more the voice of

⁷⁵ For the idea that the people of God are those in whom the law is internalised see Isa 51:7.

God and that of doing is the commandments. The New Testament employment of this theme without *λόγος* is infrequent and the object of hearing may be either the gospel (Rev 3:3) or even the 'will' of the devil (John 8:38).

In contrast, the New Testament writings employ this theme more frequently with the term *λόγος*. In Luke 8:21 the theme is used to designate those belonging to Jesus' family in a manner that parallels its use in the texts examined above as marking covenant belonging. In this instance and that found in Luke 11:28, where those who hear and do are pronounced blessed, the object of this action is the word of God. In addition to these instances, the theme is also used more specifically in relation to the words of Jesus (Matt 7:24; Luke 6:49; John 12:47) and the words of prophecy (Rev 1:3). Furthermore, as already noted in passing, Paul contrasts the hearer with the doer of the law in Rom 2:13.

The necessity of actually doing the law that is asserted by Paul is quite clear throughout Jewish literature (Josh 1:17; 22:5; 2 Kgs 17:34; Ezra 10:3; 2 Chr 14:4; 1 Macc 2:67; 1QpHab 7:11; 12:4; m. Aboth 1:17) and particularly in Deuteronomy (4:1, 5-6; 5:1, 27, 31; 6:3; 11:32; 26:16; 27:10; 29:29; 32:46). The connection of the theme of 'hearing and doing' with the maintenance of the covenant has already been shown with respect to those texts that do not use *λόγος*. Furthermore, it should be noted that the term *λόγος* is frequently used to refer to the law.⁷⁷ Therefore it is not surprising to find the theme of 'hearing and

⁷⁶ An exception is found in Sirach 3:1.

⁷⁷ E.g. Exod 20:1; 34:27-28; 35:1; Lev 8:36; Deut 1:18; 9:10; 10:4; 12:28; 27:3, 26; 29:1, 9; 31:12, 24; 32:46, 47; Ezra 7:11; 9:4; Neh 8:9; Ps 104 (105):8; Ps 118 (119):9, 16, 25

doing' applied to fulfilling the law when *λόγος* is used (Exod 19:7-8; 24:3; Deut 28:58; 4 Kgdms 22:13; Jer 11:3, 6).⁷⁸

The considerable amount of evidence for the connection of the 'hearing and doing' thematic with the background of covenant and law suggests that James would not only have been aware of such a connection but is probably making use of it. This probability receives further support from James' concern to connect the audience's identity, as depicted in 1:18, with the vocation of fulfilling God's word. In this regard it is significant that it is through hearing and doing that Israel maintains its distinction from the nations and demonstrates the vitality of its relationship with God, since these are clearly prominent issues for James (1:5-8, 12-15, 18, 19-21; 4:1-6). In addition, it will be shown below that James employs and adapts the covenantal motif of remembering and forgetting in vv. 23-25. Moreover, while the external nature of the *λόγος* in vv. 22-25 evidenced by the audience's ability to hear and see it does not necessitate that it is understood as law, it is clear from the parallelism between the *ποιηταί λόγου* (v.22) and the *ποιητής ἔργου* (v.25) that for James this *λόγος* is increasingly identified as *νόμος*.⁷⁹ Therefore Davids' suggestion that James is using *λόγος* to refer to the gospel message rather than the law is highly improbable, as it fails to take the narrowing identification of this *λόγος* as *νόμος* seriously and assumes an opposition between the traditions of Jesus and the law that is not

⁷⁸ 1 Enoch 99:10 refers to the hearing and doing of the words of wisdom, by which those who follow the path of the Most High will be saved. Note also that Ps 102 (103):20 uses this theme more generally with reference to God's will.

⁷⁹ Mussner, p. 104, also recognises this parallelism.

evident from the letter itself.⁸⁰ Thus it is clear that James is drawing on the idea of hearing and doing the covenant to exhort his audience to fulfil the will of God, particularly as it is revealed in the law.

The participle *παραλογιζόμενοι*, as Dibelius has argued, should be read with the subject of the imperative *γίνεσθε* and not with *ἄκροαταί*.⁸¹ Therefore *παραλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτούς* means 'deceiving yourselves' rather than 'who deceive themselves'. Thus the audience need to become doers of the word in order to avoid the life of deception within which they are currently entangled. In this way James moves beyond the idea raised in v. 16 that they are simply susceptible to deception. The problem of deception is a particular concern for James as is demonstrated by the following illustration in vv. 23-24 and his account of true religion in vv. 26-27. According to James such deception inevitably leads to unfaithfulness (vv. 13-18; 5:19-20) and is therefore of the utmost concern, since it endangers the implied audience's receipt of eschatological salvation.

5.5.1 *Jas 1:23-24: Hearers and Spectators in the Mirror Simile*

The simile in vv. 23-24 compares someone who hears but does not practise the word with a man who looks at himself in a mirror. The issues that divide interpreters with regard to this simile involve James' use of

⁸⁰ Contra Davids, p. 97; Johnson, p. 206, also claims that the *λόγος* referred to in this verse has nothing to do with the Torah.

⁸¹ Dibelius, p. 114

τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ and *κατανοέω*. The positions regarding the latter term are twofold as scholars are divided as to whether it means a quick and non-committed glance,⁸² or a careful observation.⁸³ However, the comparison is not meant to illustrate the plight of the careless hearer but rather that of one who is a hearer and not a doer, and therefore any sense of casualness would be inappropriate. Furthermore the meanings 'observe carefully' or 'apprehend' are well attested.⁸⁴ Therefore, the point being made in v. 23 is that the mere hearer is like a man who looks at *τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ* in a mirror, and not the implementation of the observation itself.

Although the idea of looking at one's face in a mirror is quite natural, the qualification of *πρόσωπον* with *τῆς γενέσεως* presents a number of difficulties relating to its meaning and purpose. According to Ropes the qualification *τῆς γενέσεως* should be understood in the sense of 'from nature', being used with the purpose of emphasising that the man looks at the 'face that nature gave him'. In supporting this reading Ropes rejects the possibility that *γένεσις* may mean 'birth', since the person looking in the mirror would see the acquisition of experience in the mirror and not simply the gift of birth.⁸⁵ In agreement with Ropes, Johnson also argues that although the phrase *τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ* has the literal meaning 'of his origin' the probable meaning

⁸² Mayor, p. 72; Mussner, p. 106; Adamson, p. 83; Johnson, p. 208

⁸³ Ropes, p. 175; Laws, p. 86; Davids, pp.97-98; Wall, *Community*, p. 80

⁸⁴ See both LSJ, p. 765, and BAGD, p. 154

⁸⁵ Ropes, p. 176; Dibelius, p. 116; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 123

here in v. 23 is 'natural'.⁸⁶ These scholars find the significance of the qualification of *πρόσωπον* in the contrast it offers with what may be seen in the law. However, it is important to make sense of this qualification within the confines of the simile itself before examining how it relates to the description of the law in v. 25.⁸⁷ That James is not simply concerned with the 'natural' visible face is indicated both by his previous concerns with origin (vv. 17-18, 21) and the movement from observing the face to observing the self suggested by the rephrasing with *ἐαυτόν* in v. 24.⁸⁸ Therefore it is apparent that James is not simply interested in the fact that this person looks in the mirror, but is also concerned with what is seen in this mirror.⁸⁹

The mirror is used within the philosophical literature of the Graeco-Roman world in many ways, but it is its connection with the revealing of the self that is important with regard to v. 23. As Seneca states

Mirrors were invented in order that man may know himself, destined to attain many benefits from this: first, knowledge of himself; next, in certain directions, wisdom.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Johnson, p. 207

⁸⁷ Cf. Adamson, p. 82; Laws, p. 86

⁸⁸ Both Mussner (p. 106) and Laato ('Justification', p. 51) also recognise this movement.

⁸⁹ Contra Davids, p. 98

⁹⁰ Seneca, *Nat.* 1.17.4; cf. *Clem.* 1.1.1, and Plato, *Alc. maj.* 132c-133c. See N. Denyer, 'Mirrors in James 1:22-25 and Plato, *Alcibiades* 132c-133c', *TynBul* 50 (1999) 237-240.

Therefore, since James is concerned with the image seen in the mirror, it is important to establish what this image is and what implications it has for the audience with regard to their hearing without doing.

The use of *γένεσις* suggests the possibility that James is highlighting that the man sees the face of his creation in the mirror. This reading receives additional support from the reference to creation in vv. 17-18. Furthermore, it is clear that the creation of humanity in the likeness of God is connected with living by the will of God in 3:9,⁹¹ and that the face is significant in this respect in other texts (2 *Enoch* [J] 44:1-5; Philo, *Leg.* 1.31, 39; *Spec.* 4.123). Moreover, as Johnson notes 'patristic commentators tended to read...the "face of his birth" as the face of "rebirth" into the *eikona tou theou* (scholia)'.⁹² So it is possible that this sense is indeed present in James.⁹³ In this sense the man looking into the mirror would see himself as God intended and so understand what action is required from him in order that he fulfil the divine purpose. His actions of going away from the mirror and forgetting would then parallel those of the hearer who does not do the word. This action represents a denial of creation and a rejection of the creator's grace, as his gift is spurned through forgetfulness and inactivity.

However, the allusions in vv. 17-18 refer to creation in general and not humanity in particular. Furthermore, where humanity is in view (v. 18), the allusion to

⁹¹ Martin, p. 50, makes this connection with the image of God according to which humanity was created.

⁹² Johnson, p. 207

⁹³ Oesterley, p. 433, suggests that the man is looking into his conscience, looking at what he was meant to be. A similar idea is found in Klein (*Vollkommenheit*, p. 123) who suggests that the man sees himself as he is from nature.

creation is subservient to James' description of the foundation of the faith community. That the use of *γένεσις* should be understood in terms of this foundational event is suggested by a number of factors. Firstly, the importance of the identity announced in v. 18 for James and his concern with the audience's failure to live a life of distinction has already been established with regard to vv. 19-21, and vv. 22-25 develop this teaching. Secondly, throughout vv. 22-25 James employs and develops covenant thought. Thirdly, and most importantly, the foundational event of v. 18 is depicted in terms of the audience's birth through the 'word of truth'.⁹⁴ So the image seen in the mirror is that of the identity of the audience bestowed on them through God's choice and sovereign action,⁹⁵ an action that involved the 'word of truth' and which necessitates that they live a life of dedication and distinction. Thus the implied audience, through its hearing of the word, is made aware of who they are and the connection between their identity and the gracious activity of God. The self-awareness that comes about through looking in the mirror or hearing the word should encourage them to put this new identity into practice, both through the correction of faults and the fulfilment of commands.⁹⁶ However, like the man in the simile, the audience demonstrates that they forget who they are through their failure to do the word.

⁹⁴ Laato, 'Justification', p. 52, n. 41; Burchard, p. 85; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 142, n. 26. In addition to v. 18, the imagery of birth is also used in v. 15, although there it refers to the birth of sin as opposed to the birth of the audience.

⁹⁵ For the idea that the face can reflect the identity of the faithful see *1 Enoch* 38:4 (cf. 1QH 12:27).

⁹⁶ The idea of mirrors being used to correct faults is common in antiquity (Plutarch, *Mor.* 14A, 456.B.1; Philo, *Migr.* 98). Philo, *Contempl.* 78, also makes a comparison between the law and a mirror.

The combination of themes dealt with in vv. 22-24 suggests that James' use of the mirror simile should be understood as a representation and adaptation of the covenantal memory motif. As has been demonstrated in chapter 2, the appearance of this motif is concentrated in Deuteronomy where it is clear that Israel's remembering is intended to ensure covenant faithfulness (5:15; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:18). Furthermore, forgetfulness is inextricably linked to covenant unfaithfulness (4:23-24; 8:19; Judg 3:7; 1 Sam 12:9-10; Pss 44:17; 119:16, 61, 139; Jer 3:21; Hos 4:6; 1 Macc 1:49).⁹⁷ Moreover, the importance of self-knowledge in connection with forgetfulness found here in Jas 1:22-24 is also present in Deuteronomy where the exhortation *πρόσεχε σεαυτῷ* is found frequently in connection with the commands both to do the law and not to forget it (4:9-13, 23; 6:12; 8:11; 12:13, 19, 30; 15:9). Indeed, it is also clear that such admonitions against forgetting are aimed at the prevention of self-deception regarding the enjoyment of God's blessings (Deut 8:11-18). Therefore, in representing this motif through the mirror simile James depicts the implied audience's failure to turn their hearing into doing as transgressing their relationship with God and a failure to live up to their identity as the distinct people of God. Instead of being those who fulfil the word that reveals their identity, the audience are depicted as those among whom this word is so quickly forgotten that it recedes from their lives as suddenly and immediately as a reflection disappears from a mirror (cf. Seneca, *Nat.* 1.4.2; 1.6.4).⁹⁸

⁹⁷ See section 2.4.3. The association with hearing and doing is absent from the NT usage of the language of forgetting (Matt 16:5; Mark 8:14; Luke 12:6; Phil 3:13; Heb 6:10; 13:2, 16).

⁹⁸ The frequent association of the language of forgetting with apostasy may also serve to prepare the audience for their depiction as apostates in Jas 4:4-6.

Throughout the simile and the general context of vv. 22-24 (e.g. vv. 21, 25), James' concern regarding the behaviour of the audience is continuously and persistently focused on their failure to fulfil the word.⁹⁹ In depicting them as hearers in contrast to doers James establishes that their failure is a symptom of their overestimation of hearing alone.¹⁰⁰ The overall context suggests that this overestimation of hearing without doing is related to what James consistently and resolutely demonstrates to result from hearing and doing. That is, the fundamental element of their deception is that hearing without doing accomplishes God's righteous standard and has the power to save their souls (vv. 20-21, 25). Therefore the deception referred to in v. 22 involves their belief that hearing alone identifies them as those who will receive eschatological salvation.¹⁰¹ Thus it appears that the speculative idea that the audience connect their identity as hearers with their status as God's people is correct. In holding such a perception of reality they not only deceive themselves, but also forget the true character of God and the identity he graciously bestowed on them.

5.5.2 *The Mirror of the Perfect Law of Freedom*

The majority of interpreters only consider the simile in vv. 23-24 with regard to the supposed comparison between the mirror (v. 23) and the law (v. 25).¹⁰² However, Dibelius has objected to this practice on the grounds that while v. 25

⁹⁹ Davids, p. 98; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 122

¹⁰⁰ Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 141

¹⁰¹ So also Dibelius, p. 114; Mussner's (p. 105) suggestion that the deception concerns the nature of true religion amounts to much the same thing.

¹⁰² e.g. Ropes, p. 176; Adamson, p. 82; Laws, p. 86

takes its starting point from this simile, these verses say nothing about a comparison of the word and the mirror. Indeed, for Dibelius there is no reason to identify the law as a mirror and the imagery of seeing is only employed in v. 25 to make a connection with vv. 23-24.¹⁰³ However, as is clear from the above discussion, the word and the mirror are indeed identified as the objects of hearing and looking. Furthermore, rather than dropping the imagery of vv. 23-24 the author employs the language of forgetting and hearing in addition to that of seeing. This illustrates that for James v. 25 is an integral part of the theme of hearing and doing which has formed the focus of his thoughts from v. 22 onwards. Moreover, it suggests that he intends to identify the law as a mirror as he strives to make it absolutely manifest to the audience that they must keep the law if they are to enjoy God's blessing.

In spite of the problematic reasoning Dibelius employs, his point regarding the relationship between v. 25 and vv. 23-24 is not entirely off the mark. In fact it is aimed at those interpreters who only discuss the simile in terms of its relationship to v. 25. These interpretations tend to make at least one of two suggestions regarding the law and the mirror: they contrast either *κατανοέω* and *παρακύπτω*, or the image seen in the mirror with that seen in the law. Although *παρακύπτω* can be used to refer to a careless glance,¹⁰⁴ such a meaning is ruled out in v. 25 because of its connection with *παραμένω*.¹⁰⁵ Therefore the idea of a contrast between *κατανοέω* and *παρακύπτω* is based on reading the

¹⁰³ Dibelius, pp. 115-116

¹⁰⁴ LSJ, p. 1138; Laws, p. 86; Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 95

¹⁰⁵ Oesterley, p. 433; Mayor, p. 72; Ropes, p. 177; Adamson, p. 84; Martin, p. 50; Johnson, p. 209

former of these terms as referring to a 'hasty' or 'casual' look. However, it has already been shown that *κατανοέω* does not have such a sense in vv. 23-24 and that this meaning is quite foreign to the purpose of the whole simile.¹⁰⁶ Therefore the supposed contrast between *κατανοέω* and *παρακύπτω* can be dismissed.¹⁰⁷

As already noted, the second contrast mooted by interpreters in relation to vv. 23-25 is that involving the supposed difference between the images seen in the mirror and the law. Accordingly Ropes suggests that there is a comparison between the natural face and the ideal face or character set forth in the law.¹⁰⁸ Similarly Laws argues that a fuller image than the face of v. 23 is found in the law, that is, the law shows the man his true self.¹⁰⁹ However, although mirrors could distort images both positively and negatively (cf. Seneca, *Nat.* 1.5.8-14), there is nothing to suggest that this is a problem in Jas 1:23. Moreover, there is no indication in v. 25 that a better image is found in the law than in the mirror, nor any suggestion that this is an issue for James. Therefore, whatever the nature of the relationship between the mirror and the law, it does not involve a contrast between the images seen therein.

¹⁰⁶ Contra Mayor, p. 72; Mussner, p. 106; Adamson, p. 83; Johnson, p. 208

¹⁰⁷ So also Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 143, n. 30; Contra Mussner, p. 106; Johnson, pp. 208-209; Wall, *Community*, p. 79

¹⁰⁸ Adamson shares much the same point of view (Adamson, p. 82; Ropes, p. 176).

¹⁰⁹ Laws, pp. 86-87 (similarly L. T. Johnson, 'The Mirror of Remembrance (James 1:22-25)', *CBQ* 50 (1988) 632-645, p. 640). Laws argues that the qualification of *πρόσωπον* in v.23 may suggest that another image is to be found in the law.

The consideration of the simile and the meaning and purpose of *τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ* has already indicated the importance of the mirror's role in providing self-knowledge and correcting faults. In the simile James implies that a similar function is performed by the word, and through the use of the vocabulary of seeing, attributes this role to the law. Therefore the law through narrative and commands depicts faithfulness and unfaithfulness. In this way it makes plain what the audience should be, what they should not be, and what they are. The idea of imitating exemplars was connected with the use of mirrors in antiquity (Plutarch, *Mor.* 85.B.2), and although it is not clear that James' reference to the mirror functions in this way, Johnson's suggestion that the addressees could find such exemplars in the law has some merit.¹¹⁰ A similar conclusion may be drawn with regard to the use of the mirror as a filter of divine revelation as found in some Jewish texts (Lev. R. 1:14; Tg. Y. Exod 19:17).¹¹¹ Although the law is divine revelation and reveals knowledge of God and self to those who look into it, its use as a kind of filter through which God is seen is not immediately apparent in James' identification of the mirror and the law.

Having established that the law functions like the mirror by showing the audience not only what they should be, but also what they are, it is important to once more consider the contrast between vv. 23-24 and v. 25. As Davids has noted, the *δέ* in v. 25 transports the reader back to the beginning of v. 23 where

¹¹⁰ Johnson, 'Mirror', p. 642

¹¹¹ On the Targumic reference see J. Marcus, "Under the Law": The Background of a Pauline Expression', *CBQ* 63 (2001) 72-83, p. 77, n. 24

James singles out the hearer of the word who is not a doer.¹¹² Therefore this particle is used to indicate a contrast between the man described in the illustration of vv. 23-24 and the person who not only hears, but also does the word. The former 'goes away and immediately forgets' while the latter 'remains'.¹¹³ The verb *παραμένω* means more than simply 'to remain', it has the sense of continuing in an occupation or state of being, remaining faithful or standing fast.¹¹⁴ Here in v. 25 it seems to prepare the audience for the identification of this person as someone who hears and does the law, since it signals a continuing relationship quite absent from the portrayal of the mere hearer in vv. 23-24. In this way the preceding calls for *ὑπομονή* (1:2-4, 12) are recalled to emphasise the unfaithfulness of being mere hearers, while also highlighting the fact that only those who are faithful will receive God's blessing (1:12, 25; cf. Luke 11:28; *1 Enoch* 99:10). In view of this fact James encourages those addressed to continually make use of the 'perfect law of freedom', not only to correct faults but also to reveal their identity as God's people and the vocation this entails.

The description of the law as *τέλειος* is often understood as indicating that James is seeking to distinguish it from some other (imperfect) law.¹¹⁵ Such a usage is evident in Philo (*Prob.* 46), although in this case the apologetic purpose of the author is clear from the context as a whole not simply his description of the law. Furthermore, God and his works are frequently

¹¹² Davids, p. 98

¹¹³ Mayor, p. 74, notes that *παραμείνας* is contrasted with *ἀπελήλυθεν*.

¹¹⁴ LSJ, p. 1136; BAGD, p. 620

characterised as being perfect (Deut 32:4; 2 Sam 22:31; Pss 18:30; 19:7; Matt 5:48; Rom 12:2). Therefore it cannot simply be assumed that this description is used apologetically or polemically to distinguish the law James has in mind from some other law. Moreover, the identification of such an alternative with the Mosaic law is certainly not what James intends,¹¹⁶ since such an understanding would conflict with his description of God as both lawgiver (4:12) and giver of perfect gifts (1:17). This does not remove the possibility that James may refer to more than just the Mosaic law through the description 'perfect law',¹¹⁷ although this is more evident from the correspondence between law and the 'word of truth' (1:18) than the use of the epithet *τέλειος* in v. 25. However, there are a number of factors that suggest James is referring particularly to the Mosaic law. These include not only the general covenantal thematic running through vv. 22-25, but also the treatment of the 'law of freedom' in 2:8-12 where it is clear that the law God has given (4:12) is particularly identified with the words spoken at Sinai and Lev 19.

The description of the law as *τέλειος* immediately relates it to James' earlier uses of this term in verses 4 and 17. The latter text indicates that God is the source of perfect gifts, while the former refers to the faithfulness expected from the addressees. This has the effect of establishing that the law is a good gift

¹¹⁵ Mayor, p. 74; Davids, p. 99; Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 95; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 68; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 152

¹¹⁶ Contra Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 68; cf. Mayor, p. 74; Davids, p. 99; Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, p. 95

¹¹⁷ Ropes, pp. 177-178; Davids, p. 99; cf. Johnson, p. 214; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 165

from God,¹¹⁸ and that it is through the fulfilment of this law that faithfulness can be achieved and maintained. Furthermore, since this law is a perfect gift the reality it reveals must be that in which God is unequivocally good. Therefore when the addressees look into this law they not only see their own obligations towards God, but also the goodness and faithfulness of the God who gave them birth (1:18). In this way the law forms the best possible foundation for living, recalling the discussion of the implanted word in v. 21. In addition to the reassurance and encouragement the law's perfection offers to the addressees, James highlights once more that this law can be fulfilled through its designation as *νόμος ἐλευθερίας*. This designation has long been considered a *crux interpretum* in scholarship on James.¹¹⁹

The problems confronting the interpreter involve the derivation of this designation and the meaning and purpose of its use in James. Although the idea of freedom is frequently found in Jewish literature it is most often connected with the social state of being free.¹²⁰ In spite of the apparent dearth of interest in the abstract value of freedom two suggestions regarding James'

¹¹⁸ Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 68; Johnson, p. 209; Wall, *Community*, p. 81; Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 80

¹¹⁹ E. Stauffer, 'Das „Gesetz der Freiheit“ in der Ordensregel von Jericho', *TLZ* 9 (1952) 527-532, p. 527

¹²⁰ e.g. 1 Kgdms 17:25; 3 Kgdms 20:8; Exod 21:2, 5, 26, 27; Deut 15:12-13, 18; *T. Jud.* 21:7; *T. Naph.* 1:10; *T. Jos.* 1:5; 13:6; 14:1; *T. Abr.* [RA] 19:7; *Ep. Arist.* 27, 37. It does not appear that James is concerned with the social state of freedom, although it is not impossible that he is developing such ideas in a more abstract manner. See also Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 145-147

designation of the law have been produced on the basis of Jewish literature.¹²¹ The first of these is that the rabbinic teaching found in Aboth 6.2 that *ḥārūth* (graven) should be read *ḥērūth* (freedom) is applicable to the phrase חוק חרות in 1QS 10:6,8,11.¹²² However, this suggestion is improbable on the grounds that it is difficult to establish the date and influence of the rabbinic teaching and that there is no suggestion in the context of the 1QS passage that any meaning other than 'engraved' is intended.¹²³

In contrast to this possibility C. Marucci argues that James' designation of the law should be understood against the background of free will. As Marucci demonstrates, the thought of free will is found throughout Jewish literature (e.g. Deut 11:26-28; 30:15-19; Jer 21:8; Sir 15:11-20; *Pss. Sol.* 9:4-5; *T. Jud.* 20:1; *Ps-Phoc.* 50-52).¹²⁴ In addition to this evidence other interpreters recognise that freedom formed a topic of discussion in Graeco-Roman philosophy.¹²⁵ According to Stoic teaching only the wise man is free (Diogenes Laertius 7.121), and this freedom is defined as having the power of independent action, that is, being subject neither to compulsion nor hindrance (Epictetus, *Diatr.*

¹²¹ As Jackson-McCabe (*Logos*, p. 145) recognises the development of such an interest in the Jewish literature coincides with the Hasmonean and early Roman periods (1 Macc 2:11; 15:7; 2 Macc 2:22; 9:14; cf. *T. Jud.* 4:3; 1 Esdr 4:49)

¹²² So Stauffer, 'Das „Gesetz der Freiheit“', p. 527; for a detailed rejection of this idea see C. Marucci, 'Das Gesetz der Freiheit im Jakobusbrief', *ZKT* 117 (1995) 317-331, p. 322.

¹²³ Contra Stauffer, 'Das „Gesetz der Freiheit“', p. 527

¹²⁴ Marucci, 'Das Gesetz der Freiheit', pp. 323-328

¹²⁵ Dibelius, pp. 116-118; H. Frankemölle, 'Gesetz im Jakobusbrief: Zur Tradition, kontextuellen Verwendung und Rezeption eines belasteten Begriffes', 175-221 in K. Kertelge (ed.), *Das Gesetz im Neuen Testament*, Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1986, p. 188; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 145, 148-150

4.1.1). Furthermore, although laws can secure political freedom (Dionysius, *Ant. rom.* 5.70.4), those who follow the moral law of their own accord are said not only to be free, but also to be 'friends of God' (Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.3.9). The influence of these philosophical views is clearly seen in the writings of Philo where those who live in accordance with the law are free (*Prob.* 17-18, 45-47, 159; cf. 4 Macc 14:2).¹²⁶ Moreover, the rabbinic text employed by Stauffer indicates that freedom belongs to the one who studies the law (m. Aboth 6.2) and 4QDibHam^a (Fr. 1-2, 2:12-16) witnesses to the idea that God has freed his people from sin following a request that God should implant the law in their hearts.

This evidence indicates that the ideas of free will and the freedom that comes from living in accordance with the law may be present in Jas 1:25. This possibility receives further external support from Irenaeus' use of the phrase *lex libertatis* (*Haer.* 4.13.1-2, 34.3-4, 37.1, 39.3).¹²⁷ In these passages the ideas of the freedom of the will and acting in accordance with the 'law of liberty' without compulsion are clearly complementary elements in the faithfulness expected from Christians. While for Irenaeus the gospel message is clearly primary, his use of the description 'law of liberty' also performs an apologetic function against the Marcionite rejection of the Mosaic law, indicating that although this law is extended by Jesus, its role in the life of Christians has not been eliminated.

¹²⁶ Frankemölle, 'Gesetz im Jakobusbrief', p. 188; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 149-150

¹²⁷ Marucci, 'Das Gesetz der Freiheit', pp. 329-330; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 250, n. 30

Therefore it is probable that James employs this designation of the law in order to underline the fact that the choice between obedience and disobedience lies with those addressed. That is, the audience is not compelled to live in accordance with the law as opposed to their own desires, but rather are able to live as they wish.¹²⁸ However, this freedom of choice also indicates that they are able to do the law of their own free will and therefore have no excuse for failing to implement its commands in their lives. Indeed, the true freedom that comes through this law is not simply the ability to choose to do the law, but the ability bestowed through the possession of this law, both internally (v. 21) and externally (vv. 22-25), to act independently from the seductions of desire and selfish ambition.¹²⁹ The importance of such freedom will be further emphasised in 1:27 in terms of the implied audience's need to remain distinct from the 'world', and more explicitly with relation to the law in 2:8-13.¹³⁰ The law sets the audience free from their own deceptions and presents them with the choices of faithfulness and unfaithfulness so that they might choose aright and fulfil their identity.¹³¹ This entails that they become hearers who do the law and don't forget.

¹²⁸ Cf. Mayor, p. 73

¹²⁹ Cf. Martin, p. 51; Bauckham, p. 146 This is akin to the idea of the Law as the antidote for sin (see E. E. Urbach, *The Sages: their Concepts and beliefs*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975, p. 472). For the identification of the 'implanted word' and the law see Dibelius, *James*, p. 116; Frankemölle, 'Gesetz im Jakobusbrief', p. 204; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 144.

¹³⁰ While Kleinknecht and Gutbrod are correct to claim that this 'freedom is freedom through the bond of obedience to God', their claim that the law of freedom 'does not tie the individual down to fixed commandments' is shown to be fallacious by the teaching in 2:8-12 (H. Kleinknecht & W. Gutbrod, *Law*, London: A & C Black, 1962, p. 129).

¹³¹ Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 82. The suggestion that the 'law of freedom' is a reference to the Levitical law of jubilee in particular is without foundation, since the teaching in James does not

5.5.3 Summary: Freedom from forgetfulness

The problem James is concerned with in vv. 22-25 involves the implied audience's failure to fulfil the vocation attendant on their identity as God's people. Through James' treatment of the theme of 'hearing and doing' it has become clear that this failure is particularly related to a deception involving the overestimation of hearing without doing. This overestimation involves the audience's understanding that their status as those who hear the word is indicative of their future receipt of eschatological salvation. In an attempt to undermine this false perspective and encourage faithfulness the author employs a simile couched in the terms of the covenantal memory motif.

The simile itself establishes that hearing must lead to doing on the basis that those who look into a mirror must take action if what is seen is to have any continuing positive effect. In addition to this idea, James emphasises the connection between the audience's identity and their vocation by depicting the image seen in the mirror as the 'face of [their] birth'. This image cuts through their deception to reveal who they are and the ramifications of this identity for their everyday lives. The importance of meeting these ramifications is emphasised through the use of the language of forgetting to establish the dangerous nature of their current unfaithfulness. Furthermore, since the word is the 'law of freedom', the implied audience is left with no excuses for failing to

appear to draw on this legislation despite its use of Leviticus 19 (Contra Wall, *Community*, p. 93).

fulfil it and therefore it is of the utmost importance that they remain free from forgetfulness.

5.6 *Jas 1:26-27: Deception and the Religion of God*

The object upon which James has been resolutely focused throughout 1:19-25 is the implied audience's failure to fulfil the vocation that accompanies their identity as those birthed by God. This failure and the deceptions it involves are addressed by James in vv. 26-27 with relation to the nature of *θρησκεία*, although the deception he is concerned with is once more only a possibility among those addressed (cf. v. 16). However, his concern in these verses is not to contrast 'mere worship' with 'doing good' as Ropes has proposed, but rather to demonstrate that *θρησκεία* consists in 'doing good' and avoiding pollution (v. 27).¹³²

The construction of v. 26 appears awkward with *ἀλλὰ ἀπατῶν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ* appearing in the protasis rather than the apodosis as might be expected.¹³³ However, rather than eliminating this unexpected structure by reading *ἀπατάν* as 'giving pleasure',¹³⁴ it is probable that the translation 'deceiving' should be retained since the theme of deception is so prominent in the preceding verses (vv. 6-8, 19-21, 22-25). The connection made through the use of *ἀπατῶν* with

¹³² Ropes, p. 181

¹³³ Mayor, p. 76; Johnson, p. 210

¹³⁴ While *ἀπατή* can mean 'pleasure' (see BAGD, p. 82), the meaning 'deception' seems more appropriate in several of the examples Johnson offers (e.g. Philo, *Decal.* 55; *Herm. Sim.* 6.2.1; 6.4.4; 6.5.1). Johnson, pp. 210-211

the preceding material on deception indicates that James is not concerned with vocal claims to be 'religious', triumphalistic speech, nor the practice of teachers within the community.¹³⁵ Rather, he is concerned with religion that tolerates and fails to avoid sin.¹³⁶ That is, James is concerned with the person who is deceived about his status before God (vv. 20-21), since he considers himself religious while failing to control his tongue (v. 19).

The conclusion that James intends the addressees to make from the teaching in v. 26 is not that the person depicted 'deceives his heart', but that the religion of this person is worthless. As already noted, this person's deception lies in the thought that he is religious whilst he continues to tolerate sin. Therefore he is deceived concerning the standard according to which being *θησεκός* is judged. The vanity of this person's religion is apparent in the act of deception itself, for such deception involves holding a belief about reality that one knows to be false.¹³⁷ Therefore, although this person knows that to be religious involves avoiding sin, nonetheless he continues to consider himself religious. Thus his behaviour corresponds to that of the implied audience who deceive themselves by thinking that mere hearing accomplishes God's righteous standard.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Contra L. T. Johnson, 'Taciturnity and True Religion (James 1:26-27)', 329-339 in D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, & W. A. Meeks (eds.), *Greeks, Romans and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990, p. 339; Wall, *Community*, p. 100; Davids, p. 101

¹³⁶ Dibelius, p. 121

¹³⁷ D. O. Via, *Self-Deception and Wholeness in Paul and Matthew*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990, p. 1

¹³⁸ Both Huther and Mayor recognise the correspondence between the deception mentioned here in v. 26 and that intimated in v. 22. Huther, p. 92; Mayor, p. 76

As several interpreters have recognised, the term *μάταιος* is frequently connected with pagan religion and the apostasy of Israel (Isa 1:13; Jer 2:5; 8:19; Hos 5:11; Acts 14:15).¹³⁹ In view of his preceding depiction of the audience's deception and failure to fulfil the law in terms of the covenantal memory motif (vv. 23-25), the possibility that James intends to echo this usage of *μάταιος* is increased. Johnson suggests that this term is used to depict the religion of the person who fails to control his tongue as idolatry.¹⁴⁰ That James may be open to such an idea is clearly possible considering the later identification of the audience's unfaithfulness with idolatry (4:1-6), although here such an identification of 'vain' religion is far from explicit. However, the contrast between this 'vain' religion and 'true' religion in vv. 26-27 can be thought of as preparing the audience for James' identification of their 'religion' as 'friendship with the world' (4:4).

The contrast between this 'vain' religion and the description of *θρησκεία* that is acceptable before God recalls the righteousness of God and the exhortation to repent in vv. 20-21.¹⁴¹ In correspondence with the twofold exhortation found in v. 21 James describes true religion as involving the avoidance of pollution and the fulfilment of covenant obligations. The obligation to care for orphans and widows is not only a covenant stipulation for Israel to fulfil (Exod 22:20-21; 23:9; Lev 19:9-10; Deut 26:12-15),¹⁴² but also involves their imitation of an attribute of

¹³⁹ Laws, p. 88; Johnson, p. 211; Wall, *Community*, p. 100

¹⁴⁰ Johnson, p. 211

¹⁴¹ Adamson, p. 85

¹⁴² Johnson, p. 212

God (Deut 10:17-19; 24:17-18; Ps 146:9).¹⁴³ This not only prepares the audience for the discussion of partiality that follows,¹⁴⁴ but also indicates that their generosity is expected to follow the example of the unambiguous generosity of God (1:5, 17).

The exhortation to remove all filthiness and the idea of accomplishing God's righteous standard are recalled and represented in the depiction of the religion acceptable before God in terms of purity and distinction from the 'world'.¹⁴⁵ This suggests that in spite of the conditional framework employed in vv. 26-27 James intends this description of true religion to offer a sharp contrast with the unfaithfulness of the audience. Indeed, this contrast prepares for the following depiction of them as failing both in their duty towards the 'poor' and their maintenance of distinction from the 'world'. Furthermore, the identification of God as 'Father' may suggest an opposition between God and the 'world' as sources of benefaction (v. 17). Such a reference at this point would emphasise the earlier teaching that God is the source of good gifts and should be the exclusive benefactor from whom believers seek such gifts. In this way James prepares for both his discussion of partiality in 2:1-13 and his indictment of the addressees in 4:1-6.

¹⁴³ This attribute of God is connected with his impartiality in Deut 10:17 where Yahweh is portrayed as the cosmic king (see J. M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom*, Chico: Scholars Press, 1982, p. 12). This may be of some significance in relation to the focus upon im-/partiality in Jas 2:1-13, especially with regard to the use of βασιλικός in 2:8.

¹⁴⁴ Johnson, p. 212

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 75

5.7 Conclusion

The exhortations in Jas 1:19-27 are animated by James' dual concern to undermine the 'defective' theology of the audience whilst establishing his own theology and the impact it should have on the behaviour of those addressed. As in 4:1-6 and 1:2-18 the 'defective' theology James challenges involves a faulty view of God's giving. In the present passage the audience are depicted as failing to accept that those who are unfaithful will not receive anything from God (1:5-8). This failure to accept a key aspect of God's character as good gift-giver is manifested in the deception that God's gifts, and particularly that of salvation, will be enjoyed by those who belong to him by birth through the 'word of truth', whether or not they are faithful. Therefore this deception involves not only a misunderstanding of the character of God, but also a misunderstanding of the relationship between God and those who belong to him.

In order to reveal this deception and to challenge it James exhorts his audience to 'know' their identity. That those addressed already have some understanding of their identity as those chosen by God is evident from the fact that they equate this identity with the assurance of salvation. The truth in this selective understanding is found in the fact that the implied audience has been chosen by God. However, James' exhortation for the audience to 'know' their identity is concerned to invoke their whole identity and not just this selected and isolated aspect. In order to encourage such a holistic understanding James follows this imperative with a series of exhortations that together emphasise the need for those chosen by God to exhibit a faithfulness of distinction.

This faithfulness of distinction involves following God's example and fulfilling the 'implanted word'. The first element indicates that, as in 1:2-18, faithfulness requires a 'correct' perception of God according to which God and his standards are significantly dissimilar to humanity. In vv. 19-20 this dissimilarity is highlighted with regard to the problem of human anger. It is in these verses that James indicates that living unfaithfully has consequences for the future receipt of salvation. These consequences are made plain by his statement that the righteousness of God is not accomplished through human anger. Since the accomplishment of this standard is necessary for the receipt of temporal gifts (5:16) and salvation (2:23-25) it is clear that being associated with behaviour in contradiction with this standard is highly undesirable.

The second element in the faithfulness of distinction is provided by the 'implanted word'. In relation to this element the consequences of behaviour for salvation are made even clearer for the implied audience through the author's statement that it is the reception of this 'implanted word' that is able to save their souls (v. 21). The initial reception of this 'word' occurred with the foundation of the faith community, so that in their failure to fulfil this 'word' the audience's covenant identity and salvation are at stake. That failure in this respect is particularly prevalent among the implied audience is evident from the development of this point in the teaching of vv. 22-25.

The problem of the audience's deception is addressed in vv. 22-25 through James' employment of the overarching covenant thematic of 'hearing and doing' and his development of the covenantal memory motif in his mirror simile. The

audience is guilty of overestimating their identification as God's people through the hearing of the word as securing God's eschatological benefit. The relationship between the audience and the word is depicted in terms of that between a man and a mirror. The man is depicted as looking in the mirror at the 'face of his birth', but without taking any action he goes away and forgets. The audience's situation is depicted accordingly as involving only a brief encounter with their identity as those chosen by God, rather than the sustained and fulfilling encounter that leads to God's blessing. By employing the language of forgetting, James establishes such behaviour as covenant unfaithfulness that breaches the relationship with God. In contrast to such unfaithfulness the audience should strive to fulfil the law of freedom. The depiction of the law in this way indicates that the unequivocally good God does not compel them to obey the law, but rather leaves the decision to obey or disobey in the hands of the audience. Moreover, this presentation of the law, as also that of the 'implanted word', encourages the audience with the thought that they are able to fulfil the law.

The deception of the audience is once more addressed in vv. 26-27 where it is made clear that the type of religion that emerges from hearing without doing, that is, religion that tolerates sin, is worthless. Furthermore, those who consider themselves religious whilst tolerating the presence of impure behaviour fail to remain distinct from the 'world', neglecting the behaviour that follows God's example.

Therefore, it is evident that James makes use of and employs covenant thought in 1:19-27 to challenge and evaluate 'defective' theology whilst establishing an alternative theology and its concomitant pattern of behaviour. The relationship between God and the audience is depicted in terms akin to that between God and Israel established at Sinai. This relationship involves both a distinct status as those chosen by God and a distinct vocation as those who should both follow God's example and fulfil the law. The audience's failure to fulfil their distinct vocation will be addressed once more in 2:1-13 with particular regard to their failure to remain distinct from the 'world', while their false assurance regarding their enjoyment of salvation will be challenged afresh in 2:14-26.

Partiality Breeds Judgement (Jas 2:1-13)

6.1 *Introduction*

In the preceding considerations of Jas 1:2-27 it has been demonstrated that James is concerned to combat a 'defective' theology and the detrimental effects this has on the faithfulness of the audience. Throughout the presentation of this thematic he has employed and adapted covenant thought according to his own purposes and theology. Significantly he has used such adaptations to establish God's role as not only the ultimate benefactor, but also the exclusive benefactor for the addressees. Furthermore, it has been shown that deception concerning God's giving is a fundamental element in the unfaithfulness of the implied audience, especially with regard to the receipt of God's eschatological gift of salvation. In the present chapter it will be demonstrated that these themes continue to be of the utmost importance. In particular it will be shown that the problem of partiality is connected with the audience's failure to accept God as their exclusive benefactor, and that this failure involves them in behaviour that is far from being distinct from the 'world'. In addition, it will be demonstrated that James counters the threat of assimilation by reminding the audience of their origin as those chosen by God and the implications this has for living by an alternative honour code to that represented by the 'world'. Moreover, it will be shown that according to this alternative honour code, honour accrues to those who both follow God's impartial example and keep the law. It will be seen that

failure to adopt such impartial behaviour leads to judgement, of both the human (2:2-4) and divine (2:12-13) varieties.

Although there is an apparent abruptness in the transition between 1:26-27 and 2:1,¹ it is generally agreed that 2:1-13 represents a continuation or a re-presentation of themes already raised in 1:2-27.² Indeed, 1:26-27 might even be considered a bridge between vv. 19-25 and 2:1-13 rather than the end of any one section, since the basic contrasts found therein continue to be prominent throughout Jas 2.³ The opposition between vain and pure religion stated in 1:26-27 is taken up in the implicit contrast between 'those who hold the faith with partiality' and those who 'hold the faith without partiality' in 2:1. Furthermore, this antithesis also corresponds to the opposition between God and the 'world' in 1:27 and forms the axis of the author's argument in 2:1-13. In 1:27 this antithesis is used to indicate that, unlike God, those who operate by the standards of the 'world' do not assist the 'poor'.⁴ As already suggested this opposition prepares the audience for James' discussion of impartiality and partiality in 2:1-13 since God's action of visiting widows and orphans

¹ Burchard, p. 96

² Laws, p. 93; Davids, p. 105; Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth*, p. 48; Johnson, pp. 218-219, 221; Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 183

³ Cf. Burchard, p. 96

⁴ D. J. Smit, 'Exegesis and Proclamation: "Show no partiality..." (James 2:1-13)', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 71 (1990) 59-68, p. 62. Smit notes the importance of Deut 10:17-19 for Jas 2:1, and that the normal behaviour of the world is to 'act with respect of persons', and ignore the widows and orphans. However, Jack Freeborn ('Lord of Glory: A study of James 2 and 1 Corinthians 2', *ExpTim* 111 (6, 00) 185-189, p. 185) overstates the case when he writes that 'The two consecutive verses, James 1:26[27] and 2:1, actually read like a quotation of Deuteronomy 10'.

demonstrates his impartiality (Deut 10:17-18), and implies that partiality is connected with the 'world'.

In addition to the general agreement regarding the continuation of themes from 1:2-27 in 2:1-13, there is similar agreement that 2:1 represents the beginning of a new and well-structured stage in the letter.⁵ This understanding is based on the use of the vocative *ἀδελφοί*, the reference to Jesus and the concern with partiality. This latter element forms the explicit focus of concern throughout 2:1-13 demonstrating that 2:1 is the primary proposition that James intends to prove in this section.⁶ Moreover, the argument found in 2:1-13 is so well-structured that it has been described by Dibelius and Johnson as employing the style of the Graeco-Roman diatribe,⁷ while others such as D. F. Watson, W. H. Wachob, and J. S. Kloppenborg Verbin argue that it follows a rhetorical pattern of argumentation witnessed to in Pseudo-Cicero's *Ad Herennium* 2.28-29.⁸ Whether or not such representations of the structure of 2:1-13 are more or less accurate, they indicate that this section of James is designed to persuade the audience to move from 'one mode of behaviour to another'.⁹ This is also clear from the fluctuation between a didactic and reproving tone throughout the section.¹⁰ Therefore, it appears that James is concerned to persuade his

⁵ Dibelius, p. 124; Laws, p. 93; Davids, p. 105; Johnson, p. 218

⁶ D. F. Watson, 'James 2 in the Light of Greco-Roman Schemes of Argumentation', *NTS* 39 (1993) 94-121, p. 102

⁷ Dibelius, p. 124; Johnson, p. 218

⁸ This pattern of argumentation consists of five elements: proposition, reason, proof of reason, embellishment and résumé. Wachob, *Voice*, pp. 59-63; Kloppenborg Verbin, 'Patronage Avoidance', pp. 759-763

⁹ Johnson, p. 218

¹⁰ Dibelius, p. 125

audience to desist from acts of partiality that demonstrate their assimilation to the 'world'.

6.2 Jas 2:1: *Partiality, Faith and Glory*

As has already been noted, the author begins this new section with the vocative *ἀδελφοί*. In addition to this address James also refers to *τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, establishing that the addressees, like himself (1:1), are those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. By grounding his appeal in this way, he emphasises the relationship between himself and those addressed in an attempt to ensure that his exhortation will be accepted. This in itself suggests that the audience is susceptible to the practice of partiality. This possibility is further enhanced by James' provision of an argument to support his proposition that partiality is incompatible with faith (2:2-13), and the fluctuation in tone throughout this argument. Furthermore, if one accepts Maynard-Reid's suggestion that the imperative *μὴ ἔχετε* 'prohibits the continuance of a condition or action that is existing or in progress',¹¹ then it is clear that the implied audience is depicted as not only susceptible to acting with partiality, but also culpable of such practice.¹² The accuracy of this understanding will be confirmed through the examination of 2:2-7.

¹¹ Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth*, p. 49 There is general agreement that *μὴ ἔχετε* should be understood as an imperative; Ropes, p. 186; Mussner, p. 115; Davids, p. 105; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 64.

¹² Cf. Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 114

The prohibition found in 2:1 concerns the combination of *προσωποληψία* and *ἡ πίστις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης*. The difficulties and meaning of the latter phrase will be dealt with in detail below. However, first it is important to consider James' choice of the term *προσωποληψία* and the implications this has for the passage as a whole. Although the group of terms to which *προσωποληψία* belongs is predominantly and almost exclusively attested in Christian writings,¹³ it is thought to have developed from the septuagintal phrase *πρόσωπον λαμβάνειν* which is itself modelled on the Hebrew *פָּנֵי אִשׁ*.¹⁴ In the LXX this concept appears in contexts dealing with justice, and particularly where this involves those of unequal status (Lev 19:15; Deut 1:17; 10:17-19; Sir 35 (32):12-15).¹⁵

It is clear from these texts that one aspect of Israel's covenant relationship was the requirement that they act without partiality. The connection of this requirement with the character and activity of God is evident in several of these texts and is explicit in the requirement that Israel's judges act impartially because they represent God (2 Chr 19:7; cf. Luke 20:21).¹⁶ The close connection between judgement and impartiality continues in the Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls and early Christian literature. Throughout this diverse range of literature God is frequently depicted as a just judge who

¹³ BAGD, p. 720

¹⁴ BAGD, p. 720; N. J. Vyhmeister, 'The Rich Man in James 2: Does Ancient Patronage Illuminate the Text?' *AUSS* 33 (1995) 265-283, p. 274

¹⁵ Mayor, p. 78; Johnson, p. 221

¹⁶ As noted by Freeborn ('Lord of Glory', p. 185), here the 'divine characteristic is associated with "our Lord Jesus Christ of glory!" From the connection with care for the orphans and widows

acts with impartiality accepting neither persons, nor gifts/bribes (*Jub.* 5:15-16; 21:4; 30:16; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 13:8; *T. Job* 43:13; 1QH 7 [15]:27; Gal 2:6).¹⁷ Furthermore, in this context the impartiality of God is frequently employed as motivation towards the fulfilment of God's will, since the basis of acceptance before God is the same for all humanity (*Jub.* 33:18; *T. Job* 4:8; Acts 10:34; Rom 2:9-11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; 1 Pet 1:17; *Barn.* 4:12). That is, these texts insist that those who do good will receive good from the Lord, while those who transgress God's commands will receive punishment. Moreover, the association of this thematic with caring for the 'poor', and unjust judgement, continues to be made in exhortations addressed to Christians (*Pol. Phil.* 6:1; *Did.* 4:3; *Barn.* 19:4).¹⁸

In the introduction it was suggested that James' concern with the implied audience's 'defective' understanding of God's gift of salvation is continued in 2:1-13. This continuation is evident in the reference to the standard of judgement in vv. 12-13, a standard that must be fulfilled (vv. 8-13, 14-26). In view of such judgement James insists on the unity of the law and that it is transgressed through acts of partiality (cf. Lev 19:15). The unspoken assumption of this treatment is that God's judgement is impartial, an

one may infer an identification of the character of the 'father' (1:27) and Jesus (2:1), in much the same way as is suggested by 1:1.

¹⁷ Jackson-McCabe (*Logos*, p. 160) recognises that in the Intertestamental literature the most prominent usage of the thematic of partiality/impartiality is that involving the subversion of justice, whether or not it is associated with a formal judicial setting.

¹⁸ The fact that this discussion of partiality and impartiality follows the author's only use of *πρόσωπον* (1:23) may not be coincidental, since it is apparent from vv. 22-25 that God does not accept the 'face' (identity) of the implied audience as the grounds for their receipt of eschatological judgement.

assumption that is based on the common associations of James' term *προσωποληψία*. Further evidence that he is employing this term in relation to its ubiquitous associations is found in the connection between 1:27 and 2:1, and the description of the audience as unjust judges in v. 4. Therefore James' choice of the term *προσωποληψία* places the following discussion of discrimination within a context that allows him to exploit its common associations with judgement and particularly God's judgement.¹⁹ However, the extension of God's impartial justice beyond the courtroom (Deut 10:17-19),²⁰ and the reference to caring for the 'poor' in 1:27 indicate that the judicial parlance of James' treatment should not be understood as restricting his definition of *προσωποληψία* to the judicial acts of a court.

6.2.1 *Glory, Faith and Jesus?*

The grammatical difficulties of the phrase *ἡ πίστις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης*, and particularly that presented by the genitive *τῆς δόξης*, are notorious. Indeed, according to Allison the awkward syntax and the difficulty posed by *τῆς δόξης* should be solved by removing *ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*.²¹ The difficulty with positing such an interpolation is that it has no attestation in the

¹⁹ Verseput ('Plutarch', p. 515) also recognises the judicial parlance into which the issue of partiality is placed through the use of *προσωποληψία*.

²⁰ Bassler, *Divine Impartiality*, pp. 9-11

²¹ Allison, 'Fiction', pp. 541-544

textual tradition,²² and is unnecessary since the text can be understood as it stands.²³

There are essentially four possible ways of understanding the grammar of this verse without resorting to textual emendation.²⁴ The first two of these possibilities are similar in that they understand this phrase as a hyperbaton. On this understanding *ἡ δόξα* is either connected with *ἡ πίστις* or *ὁ κύριος*. The second of these options is unlikely because the phrase *ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* is stereotypical in early Christian literature (Acts 15:26; Rom 5:1; 1 Pet 1:3; 1 Clem 20:11; Barn. 2:6).²⁵ The first option is therefore to be preferred, although it should also be rejected on the grounds that there appears to be no reason for James to adopt such a complicated word order if he intends *ἡ δόξα* to be read with *ἡ πίστις*.²⁶ Therefore the interpreter is left with a choice between taking *ἡ δόξα* in apposition to *ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*,²⁷ or as a genitive of quality modifying the whole of *ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*.²⁸

²² The textual tradition is clearly in favour of the reading *τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης* (ℵ, A, B, P, Ψ), with later evidence witnessing to the difficulties of this reading as they either reposition *τῆς δόξης* (206, 429, 436, 522, 614) or remove it altogether (33, 631).

²³ Cf. Dibelius, pp. 126-128; Mussner, p. 116; Davids, p. 106

²⁴ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 75

²⁵ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 76, n. 152; Burchard, p. 97

²⁶ Contra Burchard, pp. 97-98; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 136; With Mayor, p. 80; Dibelius, p. 127; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 76

²⁷ Mayor, pp. 81-82; Adamson, pp. 103-104; Laws, pp. 95-97

²⁸ Ropes, p. 187; Dibelius, p. 128; Mussner, p. 116; Davids, p. 106; Frankemölle, p. 375; Tsuji, *Glaube*, pp. 76-77; although Johnson, p. 221, prefers to understand this genitive in combination with the title Lord and the personal pronoun, in distinction from *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, giving the translation 'faith of Jesus Christ, our glorious Lord'. However this rearrangement of the text

The problem with the latter option is that although James uses genitives of quality elsewhere in the letter (e.g. 1:25; 2:4), it is 'improbable that such a genitive would be appended to a phrase which is already complete in itself'.²⁹ Furthermore, this reading disrupts the self-contained phrase 'our Lord Jesus Christ',³⁰ and continues to involve an awkwardness that even its own supporters admit.³¹ In contrast to these difficulties the greatest difficulty with regard to the appositional reading is whether or not the abstract *δόξα* could be used of a person in the manner proposed.³²

The possibility of such a usage in James gains some support from the parallel form in John 14:6 (i.e. 'the truth'), although this in itself does not decide the issue. In addition to this evidence Mayor puts forward a number of further texts that witness to Jesus' possession of glory and the connection between this glory and that of God (Col 1:27; John 1:14; 17:22; Heb 1:3).³³ Perhaps the most important reference among this evidence is 2 Pet 1:17 which is a striking example of the use of the genitive *τῆς δόξης* in a periphrasis for God (*τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης*).³⁴ Furthermore, *1 Clem.* 9:2 describes service to God as service 'to his excellent glory'.³⁵ The possibility that the abstract *δόξα* could be used as a title is further enhanced by the designation of God as 'the

seems to be somewhat arbitrary, and contradicts the early Christian usage of *ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*.

²⁹ Mayor, p. 80; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 68

³⁰ Laws, p. 95

³¹ Davids, p. 106; Johnson, p. 221; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 68

³² Mayor, p. 81; Ropes, p. 188; Davids, p. 106; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 76

³³ Both Mayor (pp. 81-82) and Adamson (p. 104) also suggest a connection with the Shekinah, although their evidence for this is limited.

³⁴ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, p. 218

glory of Israel' (1 Sam 15:29; כְּבוֹד), and 'the great glory' (1 Enoch 14:20; 102:3; T. Levi 3:4; Mart. Isa. 9:37; 11:32).³⁶ Moreover, in T. Abr. [RA] 8:3 the angel Michael addressing God asks 'what do your glory and (your) immortal Kingship command now?'³⁷ Therefore since it is possible that James could use the abstract δόξα in the appositional manner proposed, this reading of the text should be preferred to that which accepts the genitive of quality.

In addition to the problems dealt with above, there is another grammatical issue concerning whether ἡ πίστις τοῦ κυρίου should be understood as an objective or subjective genitive. In more recent years interpreters have tended to favour the subjective reading. In support of this reading Johnson asserts that the Christology of the letter as a whole makes the phrase 'faith in Christ' unnatural, especially since elsewhere faith is clearly directed to God (2:19, 23), and the author's usage of Jesus' sayings makes a subjective reading more plausible.³⁸ However, it is not clear how the allusions and parallels to Jesus' sayings make the subjective reading more plausible, since none of them relate to Jesus' deeds. Furthermore, the theocentric character of the letter and the direction of faith towards God do not simply rule out the objective reading. Rather, it is clear from the description of Jesus as 'Lord' in both 1:1 and 2:1 that obedience and loyalty are not only directed towards God, but also towards Jesus. Indeed, the

³⁵ Lake, *Apostolic Fathers 1*

³⁶ It should be noted that the description of God found in 1 Sam 15:29 is not found in 1 Kgdms 15:29 which is widely variant from the Hebrew text.

³⁷ E. P. Sanders, 'Testament of Abraham: A New Translation and Introduction', 871-902, in Charlesworth, *OTP 1*. It should also be noted that Michael himself is designated the 'glorious one' in 3 Bar (Slav) 13:4.

³⁸ Johnson, p. 220; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 65; Wall, *Community*, pp. 107, 109-110

use of *κύριος* in relation to both God (1:7; 3:9; 5:4, 10, 11) and Jesus (1:1; 2:1) makes its use in the remaining references indeterminate (4:10, 15; 5:7, 8, 14-15; cf. 2:5).³⁹ This indeterminacy serves to blur the distinction between God and Jesus. Moreover, although the description of Jesus as 'the glory' in the present verse indicates a positive evaluation of his life, there are no further references to his deeds of faithfulness. Indeed, the following discussion of partiality focuses on the lives of those addressed, suggesting that it is particularly the incompatibility of their own faith and these actions that James is concerned with in 2:1. Therefore there are no grounds for preferring the subjective reading, whereas the objective reading coheres with James' practice in the letter as a whole and with his purpose of encouraging the audience to be faithful in 2:1-13.⁴⁰

The implications of James' description of Jesus as 'the glory' are intriguing for the study of the Christology of early Christianity. However, for the purposes of the present argument, the importance of this description is found in its designation of Jesus as one who was vindicated by God as a faithful servant, and is recognised as honourable.⁴¹ In the context of Jas 2:1-13 such an identification of honour with Jesus functions to announce an alternative system of honour to that of the 'world'. Although James does not refer explicitly to the faithfulness of Jesus, the basic contrast between impartiality and Jesus has the effect of suggesting that Jesus acted (and acts?) impartially in like manner to

³⁹ So also R. J. Bauckham, 'James and Jesus', 100-137 in B. Chilton & J. Neusner (eds.), *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission*, Louisville; London; Leiden: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, p. 134

⁴⁰ So also Mayor, p. 79; Ropes, p. 187; Bauckham, 'James and Jesus', p. 133

the 'Father' (1:27).⁴² This is also suggested by the contrast between the honour of Jesus and the contamination of the 'world'. In this way James suggests that honour does not result from assimilation to the 'world', but rather from following the example of God (1:27) and living faithfully. Furthermore, this alternative system of honour contrasts sharply with the status evaluations that James criticises in 2:2-7, as he makes the incompatibility between faith and partiality incontrovertible.⁴³

6.3 *Jas 2:2-4: The Community and Partiality*

The use of *γάρ* at the beginning of v. 2 indicates that the example in Jas 2:2-4 is an illustration of why *προσωποληψία* is incompatible with faith. However, the relationship between the example and the situation of those addressed is much less clear. According to Dibelius, this example 'cannot be used as a historical source for actual circumstances within Christian communities'.⁴⁴ In making this point he is attempting to counter the tendency to reconstruct a community on the basis of the examples in the letter, a tendency that Dibelius considers to be

⁴¹ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 68; Cf. Frankemölle, p. 375

⁴² It should be noted that Jesus is recognised as being impartial in the Gospel tradition (Mark 12:14; Luke 20:21). Indeed, in the Lukan telling it testifies to Jesus' relationship to God. For an interpretation of Jas 2:1b with regard to impartiality see Freeborn, 'Lord of Glory', pp. 185-186.

⁴³ The opposition between the *δόξα* of Jesus and the *δόξα* of the 'world' or the 'rich' is recognised by Mussner, p. 116; Frankemölle, p. 375; Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 185; J. S. Kloppenborg, 'Status und Wohltätigkeit bei Paulus und Jakobus', 127-154 in R. Hoppe & U. Busse (eds.), *Von Jesus zum Christus Christologische Studien: Festgabe für Paul Hoffmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, (BZNW, 93), Berlin; NY: Walter de Gruyter, 1998, p. 151

⁴⁴ Dibelius, p. 129

contrary to both the 'stylised' nature of examples in James, and the literary character of the letter.⁴⁵

While the use of *ἐάν γάρ* 'may point to a hypothetical situation', it should be noted that

the very examples one uses and how one expresses them may indicate one's cultural context better than any other feature of one's speech.⁴⁶

Surely this is what Dibelius meant by his idea that the 'stylised' example is the typical example. Dibelius does not deny that the example corresponds to the cultural situation of the author or those addressed, rather he denies that the specific circumstances of a community can be reconstructed from it.⁴⁷ This example can furnish the interpreter with information about what James considered to be typical behaviour, and suggests that those addressed share the same cultural situation. However, the interpreter cannot simply assume that the example actually represents the behaviour of the readers.⁴⁸ With regard to the present case it is not immediately clear that the example represents the behaviour of the audience.

⁴⁵ A 'stylised' example is a 'typical example, typically depicted. As with modern poster design, the brilliance of the colours is more important here than the agreement of every brushstroke with reality', (Dibelius, pp. 128-129).

⁴⁶ Davids, p. 107; Cf. Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 114

⁴⁷ It appears to me that Dibelius would have no problem with the idea that the social example corresponds to 'what might have or could have occurred', (Wachob, *Voice*, p. 76).

⁴⁸ So, as Watson ('James 2', p. 98) suggests, 'historical information' can be gleaned from this example, although this information is more clearly related to the rhetorical situation than the addressees *Sitz im Leben*.

The example in 2:2-4 is proposed in a conditional interrogative sentence, the particle *ov* indicating that James expects those addressed to agree with the conclusion drawn in v. 4. This implies that the audience will share his evaluation of the behaviour in the example, something that is by no means clear from the rhetoric in 2:5-7. Indeed, there seems to be a discrepancy between their expected evaluation of the behaviour in the example, and the behaviour of which James accuses them in 2:6. Therefore the implied audience are depicted as operating according to two opposed systems of evaluation and behaviour; James hopes to persuade them to put aside such double-mindedness and adopt wholeheartedly God's perspective on status and behaviour.

However, the issue of the relationship between the behaviour found in the example and the behaviour of the implied audience remains to be resolved. That the conditions of the example could be fulfilled among the audience is clear from the use James makes of it. If there was no possibility that such behaviour could occur, they would simply reject the example and the conclusions drawn from it (especially v. 6).⁴⁹ The example itself gives no indication that its conditions are fulfilled by the audience, yet the accusation in v. 6 that they 'dishonour the poor' seems to be based on the behaviour described in 2:2-3. Therefore it is probable that the audience should be considered as practising behaviour akin to that described in 2:2-3,⁵⁰ that is, it can be inferred

⁴⁹ According to Kloppenborg Verbin ('Patronage Avoidance', p. 763), the example contained in 2:2-3 occurs in the *ratio*, and a defective *ratio* would render the whole argument ineffective. Therefore this example must not rest on a false supposition.

⁵⁰ Wachob (*Voice*, p. 183) takes 2:2-4 as suggesting that one of the elect is behaving like the typically 'rich' (2:6).

that the implied audience typically acts with partiality, rather than impartiality, to the detriment of the 'poor'.

6.3.1 *The Nature of the Meeting*

It not only follows from James' proposition in 2:1 but also from the details found in vv. 2-4 that this example of partiality is set within the assembly of those addressed. The most obvious indicator of this fact is the use of the second person plural throughout the example to refer to the agents of action.⁵¹ As Theissen recognises, the use of the second person plural has the effect of distinguishing the implied audience from the two people who enter the assembly.⁵² This distinction is evident in the designation *συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν* and the instructions issued to the 'rich' man and 'poor' man, both of which 'point not only to membership rights, but to [the] domestic authority' of the audience.⁵³ Therefore it is an assembly of those who acknowledge the lordship of Jesus that is in view (*Ign. Pol. 4:2; Herm. Man. 11:9*), rather than a Jewish synagogue.⁵⁴

Having identified the meeting as belonging to those addressed, how should this gathering be understood? According to R. B. Ward, the meeting should be

⁵¹ The use of the singular *μου* (v. 3) in the instruction to the 'poor' man is the exception. So also Burchard, p. 99; Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 190

⁵² Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 191. This suggests that the two men are not members of the community that encompasses the author and the audience, although James is more concerned with the depiction of partiality itself than the membership of these two men (cf. Dibelius, p. 135).

⁵³ Dibelius, p. 132; cf. Mayor, p. 83; Ropes, pp.188-189

⁵⁴ Contra Maynard-Reid, *Poverty and Wealth*, p. 55; Allison, 'Fiction', pp. 549-550

understood, not as a gathering for worship, but as a judicial assembly.⁵⁵ This suggestion is based on various parallels to Jas 2:2-4 found in Rabbinic literature that Ward considers as reflecting judicial procedure of the early Tannaitic period.⁵⁶ The general acceptance of Ward's thesis within scholarship on James can be seen in Wachob's unsubstantiated statement, that 'the social example compares the antithetic treatments the men receive at the hands of the judicial assembly'.⁵⁷ However, while Ward's examples condemn the practice of having one litigant stand whilst the other sits 'as an instance of unjust judging and partiality',⁵⁸ the parallel structure of the instructions in Jas 2:3 does not simply present a contrast between sitting and standing.⁵⁹ This is evident from the fact that while the wealthy man is instructed to sit, the 'poor' man is instructed to stand or sit. Furthermore, although Ward is correct to see the different apparel of the two men as leading to partiality,⁶⁰ this does not necessitate that the situation portrayed is that of a judicial assembly.⁶¹ Therefore, although James' depiction of partiality employs the background of judgement, the partial

⁵⁵ R. B. Ward, 'Partiality in the Assembly: James 2:2-4', *HTR* 62 (1969) 87-97, pp. 92-94. It should be noted that, although Ward's article has been the main impetus behind this view in recent scholarship, the view itself is witnessed to in literature on James dating from the 17th century. See D. C. Allison, 'Exegetical Amnesia in James', *ETL* 76 (2000) 162-166, pp. 162-165

⁵⁶ These parallels are found in Deut. R. V, 6 (to Deut 16:19); b. *Shebu.* 31a; Sifra Kedoshim 4, 4 (to Lev 19:5); m. *Sanh.* VI, 2

⁵⁷ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 75

⁵⁸ Ward, 'Partiality', p. 91

⁵⁹ Contra Ward, 'Partiality', p. 91

⁶⁰ Ward, 'Partiality', p. 91

⁶¹ See also Burchard, p. 99; Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 184; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 117; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 161; Verseput, 'Plutarch', p. 515

behaviour of the implied audience should not be restricted to the confines of the judicial assembly.⁶²

6.3.2 *The Depiction of Partiality*

The differences between the two men who enter the meeting and the contrasting treatment they receive, are emphasised by the parallel structure of the example. The example exploits both the common connection between appearance and status in the ancient world and the associated background already suggested by the use of *προσωπολημψία* in v. 1. The description of the first man as wearing gold rings establishes not only his wealth (Seneca, *Nat.* 7.31), but also his status (Pliny, *Nat.* 33.12; Juvenal, *Sat.* 1.25-30). This man's wealth and status is further demonstrated by his splendid garment, which is forcibly contrasted with the filthy clothes of the 'poor' man. The description of the first man displays his 'power and arrogance',⁶³ while the 'poor' man not only lacks the apparel of this wealthy man but also 'the qualities associated with them'.⁶⁴

The failure of James to specifically identify the wealthy man with the term *πλούσιος* can be understood on the basis of texts such as Lev 19:15 (Sir 35 (32):12-15) where the *πτωχός* is contrasted with the powerful (cf. Deut 1:17).

⁶² See section 6.2

⁶³ Johnson, p. 226; Laws, p. 98; Vyhmeister, 'Rich Man', pp. 275-276; Kloppenborg Verbin, 'Patronage Avoidance', p. 765; Kloppenborg, 'Status', p. 151

⁶⁴ G. Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine: First Three Centuries C.E.*, Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1990, p. 73

Furthermore, in not using *πλούσιος* he is also able to draw out the fact that the treatment these men receive is based on appearances, a fundamental aspect of partiality in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Apart from this correspondence, the description of the two men offers an implicit contrast to the letter's previous references to purity and filthiness (1:21, 27). Whereas James is concerned with the moral impurity of unfaithful actions, the implied audience acts according to the physical appearance of cleanliness and dirt. This implicit contrast functions to highlight the contrasting standards of evaluation employed by James and the audience. This contrast will be made explicit in v. 5 where James reminds the audience of God's action in favour of the 'poor'.

In addition to these implicit allusions to other aspects of the letter and the traditional treatment of impartiality, in using *ἐπιβλέπειν* James employs what amounts to a synonym for *προσωπολημπτείν*.⁶⁵ This explicitly marks out the following behaviour of the audience as an act of partiality. The man of status is politely directed to an honourable seat within the community's gathering, as is indicated both by the use of *καλῶς* and the contrast with the treatment afforded to the 'poor' man.⁶⁶ The latter treatment does not take the form of a polite request, but rather appears to be a mocking demand from an indifferent community. The indifference of the community is displayed in the direction to stand or sit; it seems that they are not particularly concerned with directing this man to a specific place. That the instruction is a mocking demand is clear from the instruction to 'sit under my footstool'. In contrast to the wealthy man the 'poor' man is not offered a worse seat, but rather he is instructed to 'sit on the

⁶⁵ Ward, 'Partiality', p. 93

floor'.⁶⁷ However, the incongruence between the use of the singular pronoun in this instruction and the plural speakers suggests that this instruction has an additional sense. That is, it designates the 'poor' man as being 'beneath' or 'subservient' to the implied audience whose own power is asserted as they instruct this 'poor' man to 'sit under [their] footstool' (Ps 110:1; 99:5; Isa 66:1; Matt 5:35).⁶⁸ Therefore, with this mocking instruction their humiliation of the 'poor' man is complete.

The conclusion that James draws from the example, and expects the implied audience to agree with, consists of two elements. The first of these elements is the subject of some disagreement as interpreters are divided concerning the meaning of *διεκρίθητε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*. The issue that divides interpreters is whether this phrase relates to internal dividedness,⁶⁹ or simply the distinctions made among those gathered together in the assembly.⁷⁰ The former interpretation is supported by the use of *διακρινόμενος* in 1:6, where the meaning 'doubt' is assured by the contrast with faith. This understanding may find additional support in the implicit double-mindedness of the implied audience whose

⁶⁶ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 75; Wall, *Community*, p. 113

⁶⁷ Dibelius, p. 132; Burchard, p. 99

⁶⁸ Cf. Ward, 'Partiality', p. 92; Johnson, p. 223; P. A Tiller, 'The Rich and the Poor in James: An Apocalyptic Proclamation', *SBLSP* 37 (1998) 909-920, p. 915

⁶⁹ Mayor, p. 85; Ropes, p. 192; Mussner, p. 119; Laws, p. 102; Johnson, p. 223 It should be noted that Johnson also argues for the retaining of a more active understanding of *διακρίνω* than the internal reading requires.

⁷⁰ Dibelius, p. 136; Ward, 'Partiality', p. 93; Davids, p. 110; Cargal, *Restoring*, p. 106; C. H. Felder, 'Partiality and God's Law: An Exegesis of James 2:1-13', *JRT* 39 (1982) 51-69, p. 55

expected agreement is in blatant contradiction to their action (v. 6).⁷¹ However, there is no explicit reference to faith in v. 4 and the combination of *διεκρίθητε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς* with the phrase 'you have become judges' suggests that the meaning 'to separate, make distinctions' should be preferred.⁷² This meaning is also supported by the details of the example itself, which involve the audience in the activity of distinguishing between those assembled on the grounds of their apparent status. The use of *ἐν ἑαυτοῖς* has led some interpreters to conclude that the two men in the example are believers.⁷³ However, it is quite possible that *ἐν ἑαυτοῖς* can mean 'among yourselves', or 'within your assembly', without any resolution of the actual status of those who enter the meeting in the example.⁷⁴ Furthermore, such a reading contradicts the implicit distinction between the audience and the visitors that runs throughout the example. If any identity beyond that of being in the assembly is suggested by the use of *ἐν ἑαυτοῖς* it is probably their common identity as humans,⁷⁵ an identity that coheres with the example's purpose of rejecting the practice of partiality.

The second element of the conclusion drawn from the example casts the role of the audience in terms of judges and relies on the traditional association of

⁷¹ It should be recognised that for James the 'internal' division caused by doubt is integrally related to unfaithful behaviour, an association that is implicit in the present text through the connection of evaluation and action.

⁷² Dibelius, p. 136

⁷³ Davids, p. 110; Cargal, *Restoring*, p. 106

⁷⁴ Felder, 'Partiality and God's Law', p. 55

⁷⁵ Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 184

partiality and impartiality with judgement.⁷⁶ As has already been indicated, righteous judgement, in both divine and human terms, requires impartiality (Lev 19:15; *Jub.* 5:16; *T. Job* 43:13; *Did.* 4:3; *Barn.* 19:4; *Pol. Phil.* 6:1; cf. *Did.* 5:2). Therefore, James' conclusion, that partiality results in the audience becoming 'judges with evil motives', involves an implicit contrast between God's impartiality and that expected from his faithful representatives (Deut 1:17; 2 Chr 19:7; cf. Luke 20:21), and the partial behaviour of the implied audience towards the wealthy and against the 'poor' man (cf. *Sir* 35 (32):13).⁷⁷ The humiliation of the 'poor' man and exaltation of the wealthy stand in marked contrast to the earlier description of God's action (1:9-11) and pure religion (1:27).⁷⁸ The latter contrast implies that such partiality is representative of the 'world', not God. Therefore the description of the audience as 'judges with evil motives' serves to identify their partial thoughts and behaviour as witnessing to their assimilation with the 'world' and their failure to remain 'pure and undefiled' in the face of its contaminating influence (1:27; cf. 1:21).

Although the nature of the audience's 'evil motives' is not explicitly specified in v. 4, the illustration in vv. 2-3 is typical of a cultural context in which patronage represents 'one of the fundamental mechanisms by which social hierarchy was

⁷⁶ Contra Ropes, p. 192, who finds that the idea of judgement is foreign to the context, only being explained by the word play between *διακρίθητε* and *κριταί*, and perhaps the topic of partiality.

⁷⁷ Davids, p. 110

⁷⁸ Wall (*Community*, p. 112) notes the correspondence between 2:2-3 and 1:9-11 and the eschatological peril faced by those who pursue a preferential option for the 'rich'.

articulated and the redistribution of wealth effected'.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Kloppenborg Verbin notes,

when Hellenistic moralists and satirists describe similar scenes involving well dressed and bejewelled men in a public assembly, they normally have to do with patrons advertising their benefactions or seeking additional clients.⁸⁰

The probability that the nature of the 'evil motives' in v. 4 should be understood against this background of patronage is increased by James' concern throughout the letter to combat the audience's 'defective' understanding of God's giving (1:5-8, 12-15, 17; 4:1-6). In particular, they are depicted in 4:1-6 as acting unfaithfully as they seek honour and gain from, and according to the standards of, the 'world'. In addition to this internal support, the judicial background of James' treatment also makes an association between unjust judgement and the acceptance of gifts or bribes (Sir 35 (32):12; *Jub.* 5:16; 21:4; 33:18; *T. Job* 4:8). Therefore Jas 2:2-3 presents an example in which the implied audience are depicted as seeking to gain the patronage of the man of high standing, while the 'poor' man is treated with contempt because he cannot provide such benefaction.⁸¹ This activity is clearly informed by the status evaluations of the 'world' and depicts them as adopting another benefactor in addition to God. This latter action indicates that their unfaithfulness involves a

⁷⁹ Kloppenborg Verbin, 'Patronage Avoidance', pp. 759, 755; Kloppenborg, 'Status', p. 130; cf. Wachob, *Voice*, p. 76; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 118; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 162, n. 118

⁸⁰ Kloppenborg Verbin, 'Patronage Avoidance', p. 765

⁸¹ Vyhmeister, 'Rich Man', p. 280; Johnson, p. 224; Davids, p. 33

failure to accept that God is the only source of good things and that their relationship with him excludes all other (false) sources of benefaction. Therefore the example in Jas 2:2-4 demonstrates the incompatibility between faith and partiality by emphasising the unfaithfulness of the latter action and its contamination by the standards of the 'world'. Furthermore, as Kloppenborg Verbin has argued, the legitimacy of patronage is undermined.⁸²

6.3.3 *Summary: Alternative Systems of Honour*

The system of honour employed by the 'world' is depicted through the example of Jas 2:2-4 as implacably opposed to the reality exposed through the audience's relationship to God. The former system is depicted as being inherently concerned with appearances rather than character or actions. It is a system in which status accrues to those who possess wealth and are able to provide services. As a means to an end the 'poor' man is worthless and therefore not only neglected, but also abused as the audience insists on their own status. In this system it is partiality that opens avenues to new and exciting benefits. Although the example primarily focuses on this warped honour-code, it also indicates that there is an alternative system. This system is one in which impartiality, as opposed to partiality, is revered as an honourable and important practice. According to this system, that which is good and pure is behaviour modelled on that of God, and this behaviour involves assisting the 'poor' rather

⁸² Kloppenborg Verbin, 'Patronage Avoidance', p. 772; Kloppenborg, 'Status', pp. 130, 15. It is further suggested by Kloppenborg ('Status', pp. 130), that Jas 2:1-3 stands in blatant opposition to the deferential behaviour towards benefactors exhorted by Paul (e.g. 1 Cor 16:15-18).

than humiliating them. It is the contrast between these alternative systems of honour that James addresses in 2:5-7.

6.4 *Jas 2:5-7: God's Choice, Honour and Absurdity*

The use of the address 'my beloved brothers' at the beginning of v. 5 serves to direct attention back to the incompatibility of partiality and faith announced in v. 1. In addition to this, the juxtaposition of verses 4 and 5 implies a contrast between God's choice (v. 5) and the behaviour exemplified by 'judges with evil motives'. That this contrast should be apparent to the implied audience is suggested by the use of *οὐχ*, indicating that James' rhetorical question (v. 5) expects an affirmative answer.⁸³ This suggests that he is reminding them of a fact that they already know,⁸⁴ and his question appears to have something of an incredulous tone. The fundamental importance of the description of God's action contained in this question is emphasised by James' appeal to his addressees to 'listen'.

The possibility that the teaching embodied in the rhetorical question found in v. 5 was already known among the audience is not surprising. The reference to both the 'poor' and the kingdom in this verse links it to other texts that witness to a Jesus-saying in which the 'poor' are pronounced blessed (Matt 5:3; Luke 6:20; *Gos. Thom.* 54; *Pol. Phil.* 2:3). The possibility that the beatitude in Luke 6:20 underlies this text has been suggested by some interpreters, although the

⁸³ Davids, p. 110; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 85; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 121

⁸⁴ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 80; Johnson, p. 224

teaching in Jas 2:5 parallels terminology found in the Matthean beatitudes.⁸⁵ The possibility that a saying of Jesus may be alluded to is further increased by the reference to Jesus found in v. 1,⁸⁶ although, as Bauckham suggests, if James has used a Jesus-saying he has reformulated it in such a way as to make the central thought his own.⁸⁷ In addition to the possibility of an allusion to a Jesus-saying, Jas 2:5 is also compared to 1 Cor 1:26-28,⁸⁸ a passage in which Paul establishes that the prized social distinctions of the Hellenistic world 'have no relevance to God and no place in the church'.⁸⁹ This emphasis indicates that the foundational criteria of the Corinthian church are completely at odds with the values of the *κόσμος*,⁹⁰ and a similar opposition between the foundation of the implied audience's relationship with God and the 'world' is found in Jas 2:5.

The opposition between God and the 'world' is immediately clear from God's choice of the 'poor'. The phrase *πτωχούς τῷ κόσμῳ* is a dative of reference or respect meaning 'those who are poor according to the world'.⁹¹ Therefore the implied audience are reminded that God chose those who had nothing to offer, those deemed poor by the standards of the 'world'. In highlighting God's choice

⁸⁵ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 138; Dibelius (p. 138) and Hartin (*James and Q*, p. 150) consider that Lk 6:20 may underlie the saying in James, although Hartin recognises that there is an amalgamation with terminology from beatitudes in Matthew.

⁸⁶ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 139; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 113

⁸⁷ Bauckham, *James*, p. 87

⁸⁸ Johnson, p. 224; Bauckham, *James*, p. 191

⁸⁹ E. Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000, p. 114

⁹⁰ Adams, *Constructing the World*, p. 116

⁹¹ Mayor, p. 85; Ropes, p. 193; Dibelius, pp. 137-138; Johnson, p. 224; Burchard, p. 100; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 112

of the audience in contrast to their evaluation by the 'world', James prepares them for his indictment of their fundamental disloyalty in 4:4. This disloyalty involves the audience in accepting the system of values that defines their life as worthless, a system rejected by God through his choice of those it deems to be poor.⁹² At the same time as it accepts the material sense of the term *πτωχός*, the modifier *τῷ κόσμῳ* criticises it as being false.⁹³ Therefore the behaviour of the implied audience, like that of Israel before them (Deut 24:18, 22), should be informed by the precedent set by God's choice of the 'poor', and not the example of the 'world'.

The teaching in v. 5 takes the form of a rhetorical question, but also displays some characteristics of the beatitude. That is, it declares both the action of God and represents an anticipated eschatological verdict.⁹⁴ Furthermore, this verse is related to the use of *μακάριος* in 1:12 by its reference to 'those who love God'.⁹⁵ Like those who remain steadfast under trial, the 'poor' are identified as those who will receive what has been promised to 'those who love God',⁹⁶ indicating that there is some kind of identification between the 'poor' and 'those who love God'.⁹⁷ This identification is further enhanced by the use of *πλουσίους ἐν πίστει* in connection with the 'poor' in 2:5. The preposition *ἐν* should be taken as indicating the sphere or area in which the 'poor' are chosen

⁹² As Kloppenborg Verbin ('Patronage Avoidance', pp. 760-761) notes, God's choice associates the 'poor' with the honour of the divine King.

⁹³ Tiller, 'Rich and Poor', p. 919

⁹⁴ Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, p. 94

⁹⁵ Wachob (*Voice*, p. 140) considers that 2:5 is related to both uses of 'blessed' in 1:12 and 1:25.

⁹⁶ For the idea of 'loving God' in covenant thought see section 4.5.

to be rich; they are chosen to be 'rich in the sphere of faith'.⁹⁸ That is, like 'those who love God' in 1:12, the anticipated eschatological verdict found in 2:5 is connected with the faithfulness of the 'poor'. Therefore the 'poor' will not automatically inherit the Kingdom; rather they are identified as heirs whose final inheritance is assured through their faithful actions. Furthermore, such an understanding coheres with the author's insistence throughout 1:19-27 that election and salvation are not simply synonymous, and with the implicit characterisation of God as an impartial judge in 2:1-13.

On this understanding, God's choice of the 'poor' is not necessarily restricted to those who are among James' addressees, but applies to all those who are *πτωχοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ*. However, it is also clear from the correspondence between 1:12 and 2:5 that the audience should probably be included among the 'poor according to the world's standards', a conclusion supported by their recourse to the benefactions of the wealthy. Further support for this conclusion is found in vv. 6-7 where the audience's behaviour towards the 'rich' is criticised with reference to their identity as God's people (v. 7). Therefore Edgar's suggestion that the distinction between the audience and the 'poor' in v. 6 indicates that the 'poor according to the world's standards' referred to in v. 5 are a wholly different group from James' addressees should be rejected.⁹⁹ Moreover, his additional suggestion that this group ought to be understood as socially marginal itinerants

⁹⁷ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 82

⁹⁸ Dibelius, p. 138; Mussner, p. 120; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 84

⁹⁹ Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 114

of the early Jesus movement places too much weight on the use of *πτωχός* and should be dismissed as unnecessary and implausible.¹⁰⁰

6.4.1 *Jas 2:6-7: Dishonour and Absurdity*

The accusation found in v. 6 relates to the practice of partiality as described in the earlier example (vv. 2-4). The pronoun *ὑμεῖς* is emphatic, posing a strong contrast between God's choice of the 'poor' and the audience's treatment of the 'poor'.¹⁰¹ This opposition places them with the 'world' and highlights the fact that their faith is contaminated by the evaluations and practices of the 'world'. In addition to this contrast, they are also distinguished from the 'poor' and the 'rich' throughout vv. 6-7 by James' use of the second person plural.¹⁰² This implies that he does not consider material wealth an absolute boundary marker for those addressed (cf. 1:9-11), an implication that coheres with his emphasis on the connection between identity and behaviour throughout the letter as a whole (1:19-27; 3:13-18; 4:1-6). Furthermore, the element of distinction focused upon by James throughout vv. 6-7 is that exemplified by behaviour, rather than the relative prosperity of the various actors.

The implied audience is criticised for adopting a course of behaviour that blatantly contradicts their knowledge of God's choice of the 'poor'. It is not only that in dishonouring the 'poor' they fail to follow the precedent set by God (v. 5),

¹⁰⁰ Edgar, *Chosen*, pp. 107-108, 113-114, 121

¹⁰¹ Watson, 'James 2', p. 105

¹⁰² Tiller, 'Rich and Poor', p. 915, n. 26; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 114

but also that such behaviour amounts to a renunciation of the basis of their own relationship with God.¹⁰³ The absurdity of the assimilation to the 'world' involved in the adoption of its status values, and the concomitant honouring of the 'rich' this involves, is emphasised in James' depiction of the behaviour of the 'rich' towards those addressed in vv. 6-7.¹⁰⁴

James highlights the absurdity of the audience's behaviour and their need to distinguish themselves from the 'rich' by employing rhetorical questions relating to their experiences at the hands of those they seek to honour.¹⁰⁵ According to his description, the 'rich' oppress the audience and drag them into court, and yet in spite of this experience and God's gracious election they favour the 'rich' and denigrate the 'poor'. Furthermore, the 'rich' are also described as blaspheming 'the honourable name which was called over' the audience, and are therefore wholly dishonourable. Moreover, this depiction also emphasises that honouring such people is fundamentally at odds with the identity of the audience. This is clear from the use of *τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς*, which is used to designate that something belongs to the person named (e.g. 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Chr 6:33; *Herm. Sim.* 8.6.4) and, used in relation to God, identifies his people (Deut 28:10; Isa 43:7; 11Q14 Fr. 1 2:15; 4Q418 Fr. 81 line 12; 4Q285 Fr. 1 lines 9-10).¹⁰⁶ In Jas 2:7 the use of this phrase indicates that the implied audience belong to the one in possession of the 'honourable name'.¹⁰⁷ It is possible that this name belongs to God (*Pss. Sol.* 17:5; cf. Matt 6:9; Luke 11:2; *Did.* 8:2;

¹⁰³ Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 185

¹⁰⁴ Mussner, p. 120

¹⁰⁵ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 88

¹⁰⁶ Burchard, p. 102; Tiller, 'Rich and Poor', p. 915, n. 28; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 122

10:2), but in view of the title found in v. 1 (i.e. 'the glory'), it is probable that James has the name of Jesus in mind.¹⁰⁸ Therefore in honouring the 'rich' the audience associate with the dishonouring of the name of Jesus, an association that is clearly at odds with the possession of faith (v. 1).

6.5 *Jas 2:8-13: Partiality, Law and Judgement*

The immediate problem presented in v. 8 concerns its connection with the preceding argument, a connection the author indicates through his use of the particle *μέντοι*.¹⁰⁹ In addition to the use of this particle it is clear that the discussion of the law is connected to vv. 1-7 since it is associated with judgement (vv. 12-13) and deals explicitly with partiality as a transgression of the law (v. 9).¹¹⁰ In view of this latter aspect there is a parallel between the law and faith.¹¹¹ This parallel may imply that the fulfilment of the law should be concomitant with the possession of faith.

The primary issue concerns the use of *μέντοι*, and whether it should be interpreted with an adversative or concessive force. The majority of scholars assume that James uses this particle with concessive force, meaning 'really', and interpret v. 8 accordingly as 'If you really fulfil the royal law according to the

¹⁰⁷ Mayor, p. 87; Ropes, p. 196; Dibelius, p. 140; Johnson, p. 226

¹⁰⁸ Contra Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 123

¹⁰⁹ Dibelius, p. 141

¹¹⁰ Davids, p. 115; Frankemölle, 'Gesetz im Jakobusbrief', p. 209; Johnson, p. 235; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 94

¹¹¹ Frankemölle, 'Gesetz im Jakobusbrief', p. 209

scripture, 'Love your neighbour as yourself;' you do well'.¹¹² In contrast to the scholarly tendency to favour the concessive force, the evidence of other New Testament writings strongly favours an adversative reading (John 4:27; 7:13; 12:42; 20:5; 21:4; 2 Tim 2:19; Jude 8), although this evidence is obviously swelled by an individual document (cf. LXX Prov 5:4; 16:25, 27; 22:9; 26:12).¹¹³ In the end, the difference between the two readings is slight, as is indicated by the fact that both Mayor and Ropes have suggested that James is countering a possible excuse for the audience's treatment of the 'rich'.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the adversative reading should be preferred.

The adversative reading suggests not only a connection with the preceding discussion of partiality, but also a contrast with the actions of the audience. The use of *καλῶς* to describe the fulfilment of the law recalls the use of *καλός* in v. 7, designating the fulfilment of the law as an honourable pursuit (1:25). Therefore it appears that the contrast James has in mind is with the dishonourable behaviour of vv. 6-7.¹¹⁵ However, although the condition in v. 9 is fulfilled on the basis of James' depiction of the audience's partiality, there is no indication that the interpreter should assume that the condition in v. 8 is fulfilled. Therefore it should not be assumed that James is countering the implied audience's excuse that their treatment of the 'rich' stems from their need to fulfil the love

¹¹² Ropes, p. 198; Dibelius, pp. 141-142; Adamson, p. 113; Laws, p. 107; Martin, p. 67; Johnson, p. 230; Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 82; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 91; Burchard, pp. 103, 105; cf. Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 173, n. 152; Verseput, 'Plutarch', p. 515

¹¹³ The adversative reading receives further support from BDF § 450 (1), and is preferred by Mayor, p. 89; Mussner, p. 123; Davids, p. 114

¹¹⁴ Mayor, p. 89; Ropes, p. 197

¹¹⁵ Dibelius, p. 142; Davids, p. 114; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 91

command.¹¹⁶ Rather James is intent on establishing the law as God's standard of evaluation.

In order to establish the honour of the law and its fulfilment James describes it with the epithet *βασιλικός*. According to Ropes this epithet is merely decorative, and 'the interpretation of *βασιλικόν* as 'given by the King' (God or Christ) has nothing to recommend it'.¹¹⁷ However, the possibility that it denotes the fact that the law is given by or belongs to the king is supported by the use of this adjective in other texts (Num 20:17; 1 Esdr 8:24; 2 Macc 3:13; Acts 12:20; Philo, *Post.* 101-102).¹¹⁸ It is clear from Philo's commentary on Num 20:17 that God's word could be described as the 'royal road' because it belongs to him and leads to him (*Post.* 101-102).¹¹⁹ Furthermore, the adjective is also used to refer to the law's origin in 1 Esdr 8:24, and could also be used to designate its jurisdiction.¹²⁰ Moreover, in view of the close proximity of the reference to the kingdom (Jas 2:5), and James' concern with honour it is clear that it is not merely a decorative title.

As a result of the term *βασιλεία* in v. 5 several interpreters understand the designation of the law in v. 8 as indicating that it is the 'law of the Kingdom', that

¹¹⁶ Contra Mayor, p. 89; Ropes, p. 197

¹¹⁷ Ropes, p. 199, 198

¹¹⁸ Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 187

¹¹⁹ Dibelius, p. 143; Laws, p. 109

¹²⁰ A. Deissmann, (trans. L. Strachan), *Light from the Ancient East*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927, p. 362 n. 5; Laws, p. 109; W. Popkes, 'The Law of Liberty (James 1:25; 2:12)', 131-142 in Faculty of Baptist Seminary Ruschlikon/Switzerland (eds.), *Festschrift Gunter Wagner*, Berlin; New York: Peter Lang, 1994, p. 134; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 92

is, the law that comes from the King and is applicable to the Kingdom of God.¹²¹ Most of these interpreters connect James' description of the law with Jesus, on the basis of the place given to the love command in his teaching (Matt 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; cf. Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14). In view of the reference to Jesus in verses 1 and 7 it is possible that James may intend to connect the law with Jesus. However, he cites Lev 19:18 according to its place in scripture,¹²² and not on the authority of Jesus. Furthermore, God himself is the King in v. 5, and in v. 11 James refers to the giving of the law at Sinai. Moreover, as will be shown below, the designation 'law of the kingdom' or 'royal law' applies to the whole law and not only Lev 19:18. Although the possibility of an allusion to the importance of the love command in the teaching of Jesus cannot be ruled out completely, caution should be exercised in identifying the 'royal law' as the 'law articulated and ratified by Jesus'.¹²³

However, the designation 'law of the Kingdom' is not misplaced even if there is no allusion to Jesus, for as already noted v. 5 identifies God as the King. It is probable that this description serves to identify the law as originating with God (v. 11), and as being applicable to all those who would inherit his Kingdom. The authority of the law is thereby reinforced and its importance is asserted in contrast to that law used by the 'rich' (v. 6). Indeed, those who live according to this law might even be thought to acquire its characteristics (1:25; cf. 1:12; 4

¹²¹ Laws, p. 109; Davids, p. 114; Johnson, p. 230; Bauckham, *James*, p. 142; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 92; D. H. Edgar, 'The Use of the Love-Command and the Shema' in the Epistle of James', *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 23 (2000) 9-22, p. 14

¹²² V. P. Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament*, London: SCM, 1972, p. 177; Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 187

¹²³ Johnson, p. 230; Cf. Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 131

Macc 14:2),¹²⁴ and therefore their honour outstrips that accorded to the 'rich' by their honour-codes. Furthermore, like Israel before them (Isa 33:22), the implied audience must relate to God as their King, lawgiver and judge (2:5, 8-13; 4:11-12). This threefold depiction of God is also found in Exod 19-20,¹²⁵ and since the event described there is alluded to in Jas 2:11, it is possible that James' description of the law is intended to evoke the covenant relationship between the audience and God.

Having established the significance of the epithet *βασιλικός* it is important to establish the extent of its referent. That is, does the description of the law as *βασιλικός* apply to the whole law,¹²⁶ or only to Lev 19:18?¹²⁷ The fact that James uses *νόμος* rather than *ἐντολή* suggests that the adjective *βασιλικός* is applied to the whole law.¹²⁸ In addition, the contradiction between the conditions in verses 8 and 9 are explained in v. 10 (*γάρ*) in terms of the whole law and the transgression of a single command.¹²⁹ Moreover, the condition in v. 9 relates to the context of Lev 19:18 (i.e. v. 15) and not simply the love command itself.¹³⁰ In

¹²⁴ Burchard, p. 104; Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', pp. 187-188; Frankemölle ('Gesetz im Jakobusbrief', p. 201) notes that the use of *τελείν* recalls the description of the law in 1:25.

¹²⁵ M. Greenberg, 'Three Conceptions of Torah in Hebrew Scriptures', 365-378, in Eds. E. Blum, C. Macholz, & E. W. Stegemann, *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990, pp. 370-371

¹²⁶ Ropes, p. 198; Davids, p. 114; Bauckham, *James*, p. 142; Furnish, *Love Command*, p. 179; Johnson, p. 230; Hartin, *Spirituality*, p. 82; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 92

¹²⁷ Laws, p. 108; M. Hogan, 'The Law in the Epistle of James', *SNTSU* 22 (1997) 79-92, p. 87; Wall, *Community*, p. 122; Edgar, 'Love-Command', pp. 13-14

¹²⁸ Ropes, p. 198; Davids, p. 114; Bauckham, *James*, p. 142; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 92

¹²⁹ Dibelius, p. 142; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 169-170

¹³⁰ Laws, p. 107; Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 184; Frankemölle, 'Gesetz im Jakobusbrief', p. 208

addition to this evidence, the honourable behaviour described in v. 8 is fulfilling the *νόμος βασιλικός κατὰ τὴν γραφήν* 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Now, although this attributes some significance to the love command, it also implies its distinction from the 'royal law' since otherwise James' statement would be hopelessly tautologous. Therefore, the adjective *βασιλικός* is applied to the whole law and not Lev 19:18 alone.

As suggested above, James' statement in v. 8 attributes some kind of significance to Lev 19:18 in particular even though his focus is on the fulfilment of the whole law.¹³¹ It is possible and perhaps probable that he is aware of the use of the love command elsewhere in the early Christian tradition (Matt 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14) and Judaism in general (Sir 13:15-20; *Jub.* 7:20; CD 6:20; cf. b. Shabb. 31a).¹³² It is even possible that he is aware of the double love command based on Deut 6:4-9 and Lev 19:18 (Matt 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; *T. Iss.* 5:1-2; cf. Philo, *Spec.* 2.63), since he emphasises love for God (1:12; 2:5) and makes various connections between the present treatment of Lev 19:18 and God's unity (2:11, 19; 4:12).¹³³

¹³¹ Dibelius, p. 142, suggested that Lev 19 might exercise an important role in the formulation of James' paraenesis, as it does in the poem of Pseudo-Phocylides. The validity of Dibelius' suggestion has since been demonstrated by L. T. Johnson ('The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James', *JBL* 101 (1982) 391-401). It should also be noted that Lev 19 plays an important role in the Didache (see J. S. Kloppenborg, 'The Transformation of Moral Exhortation in Didache 1-5', 88-109, in ed. C. N. Jefford, *The Didache in Context: Essays on its Text, History and Transmission*, Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, 1995, pp. 99, 102-104). This suggests that Lev 19 was important for the formation of early Christian Halakah.

¹³² Bauckham, *James*, p. 142; Edgar, 'Love-Command', p. 19; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 165-166, 179, 248

¹³³ Edgar, 'Love-command', pp. 15-16; cf. Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 189; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 174

However, the phrase *κατὰ τὴν γραφήν* suggests the sense of fulfilling the royal law 'in correspondence with the scripture',¹³⁴ rather than as summarised in the scripture Lev 19:18. Therefore, it appears that James' use of the love command relates to the manner or spirit in which the law is to be kept. As Theissen has suggested, this involves the renunciation of status, since each believer must love his neighbour *ὡς ἑαυτόν*.¹³⁵ This contrasts sharply with James' depiction of the audience in vv. 2-4, according to which they not only favour the wealthy, but also insist upon their own status in relation to the 'poor' man. Accordingly James is not only concerned to emphasise the need to do the law, a point he has already made in 1:22-25, but also the manner in which it is kept. This point is made explicit by the reference to partiality in v. 9 which probably alludes to Lev 19:15, demonstrating that even though Lev 19:18 has an important function, it is nevertheless one command among others.¹³⁶ This idea anticipates James' concern with the unity of the law in vv. 10-11.¹³⁷

The impossibility of being honourable while committing acts of partiality is made explicit in v. 9 where in place of the biased and evil judgement of the implied

¹³⁴ Johnson, p. 231

¹³⁵ Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', pp. 182, 189

¹³⁶ Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, pp. 173-174

¹³⁷ Jackson-McCabe (*Logos*, pp. 170-173, 179, 248) considers that James' argument combats the reductionist usage of the love command in Paul (Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:14) while accepting its summarising function. Although the argument in James insists on the whole law, and in this, contrasts with Paul's usage of the love command, the tone of James' discussion is more didactic (see *T. Iss.* 5:1-2) than polemical. This suggests that the discussion of the law is not framed with the intention of polemicising against Paul, but simply to insist on the proper and complete fulfilment of the law as the honourable behaviour expected from believers. Furthermore, even the author's own interpretation of the significance of Lev 19:18 is implicated as worthless if another command in the law is broken.

audience stands the law that is from God. The law is personified as judging their behaviour,¹³⁸ and since it belongs to God and will be used at the eschatological judgement (2:12), it should be assumed that it shares in his characteristic of impartiality. That is, its judgements reflect the reality of the audience's standing before God. Therefore, they are convicted as transgressors of the law because of their partiality, and this behaviour is also depicted as sin. This latter identification recalls James' depiction of them in 1:20 and 1:25, further emphasising their failure to live by God's standard of righteousness.¹³⁹ Consequently the audience are depicted as actively rebelling against their King since they not only fail to do the law (1:22-25), but also adopt practices that are directly opposed to this law. This rebellion indicates that they are not 'those who love God' (1:12; 2:5) and therefore their lack of loyalty endangers their receipt of eschatological salvation. In view of this fact the audience must demonstrate their loyalty afresh through obedience to the whole of God's law (cf. 4 Macc 5:13, 16-21).¹⁴⁰

6.5.1 *Jas 2:10-11: The Required Obedience*

It has already been noted that the use of *γάρ* in v. 10 expresses its relationship to vv. 9-10, indicating that it provides the reason for the evaluation in the preceding verse. This connection is also evident from the parallels between sin and failure in one point of the law, being 'convicted by the law' and being 'guilty

¹³⁸ Mayor, p. 91

¹³⁹ Johnson, p. 230; Wall, *Community*, p. 124

of the whole law'.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, there is also a connection with v. 8 as the phrase *ἅλον τὸν νόμον τηρήσῃ* is a linguistic variation of *νόμον τελείτε βασιλικόν*.¹⁴² The point is that failure in one command makes it impossible to fulfil the whole law in accordance with the love command.¹⁴³

The unitary conception of the law in vv. 10-11 bears some resemblance to the Stoic teaching of the unity of the virtues.¹⁴⁴ In view of the probable influence of Stoic ideas concerning the law (1:21, 25), such an influence cannot be ruled out. However, it is clear that for James the unitary conception of the law is grounded in the person of the lawgiver (v. 11; cf. *T. Asher* 2:1-10; 4 Macc 5:16-21).¹⁴⁵ That is, the unity of the law is a result of its parts being given by one and the same God,¹⁴⁶ and therefore one's attitude to the law reveals one's attitude to the lawgiver.¹⁴⁷ The emphasis here is on the metaphysical unity of God, that is, that there is only one God and he is not broken into disparate parts, rather than the singleness of his action. Although the lawgiver is no doubt single-minded in giving the law, this aspect of his character is left unstated, as James

¹⁴⁰ This requirement coheres with that found in first century Judaism (see E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, p. 194).

¹⁴¹ Wachob, *Voice*, pp. 100-101

¹⁴² Frankemölle, 'Gesetz im Jakobusbrief', p. 201

¹⁴³ James is not concerned with the identification of the single command mentioned in v.10, but rather that the law is a whole. Thus such an identification is irrelevant (see Mayor, p. 92; Dibelius, p. 144), although it is most likely that the author has Lev 19:15 in mind. (with Mayor, p. 92; contra Dibelius, p. 144)

¹⁴⁴ Dibelius, p. 145; M. O. Boyle, 'The Stoic Paradox of James 2:10', *NTS* 31 (1985) 611-617

¹⁴⁵ Both Mussner (p. 124) and Davids (p. 116) note the importance of Deut 27:26 in establishing a unitary conception of the law.

¹⁴⁶ Mayor, p. 93; Wachob, *Voice*, p. 102; Kloppenborg Verbin, 'Patronage Avoidance', p. 762; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 171

¹⁴⁷ Dibelius, p. 146; Davids, p. 117

seeks to emphasise the importance of keeping the whole law rather than the imitation of God's singleness or metaphysical unity.¹⁴⁸ His point is that there is no intermediate position between obedience and transgression; the believer is either loyal or disloyal to God. The audience's relationship to God demands complete obedience to his revealed will; anything less amounts to rebellion.¹⁴⁹

The concern with social behaviour is particularly strong throughout the letter as a whole (1:19-20, 27; 2:1-9, 15-16; 3:1-4:6; 4:11; 5:1-6), and therefore it is unsurprising to find James concentrating on the second table of the Decalogue (2:11).¹⁵⁰ However, this emphasis on what has been designated the 'ethical' commandments should not be interpreted as indicating that the law James is urging his audience to obey has been stripped of its 'ritual' elements.¹⁵¹ This separation of the law into 'ritual' and 'ethical' categories is not only anachronistic, but also misleading.¹⁵² James is not concerned with such classifications of the law. Rather he is concerned with persuading his audience that the standard of obedience God requires is complete fulfilment of the law as a whole. In order to make his point, James chooses the commandments that prohibit murder and adultery (v.11).

¹⁴⁸ Contra Laws, p. 30; 'Doctrinal', p. 304

¹⁴⁹ As Kloppenborg Verbin ('Patronage Avoidance', p. 762) notes, obedience to the law is treated as a matter of personal allegiance to a superior.

¹⁵⁰ The first table of the Decalogue may be covered by the idea of 'loving God' (1:12; 2:5), although as already argued this idea encompasses the concept of fulfilling all of God's commands (see section 4.5). In any case it is clear that James is concerned to combat a 'defective' theology (1:5-8, 12-18; 4:3) and so it is evident that he is also implicitly concerned with the first table. For the division of the law into two tables see Sanders, *Judaism*, p. 193; R. M. Grant, 'The Decalogue in Early Christianity', *HTR* 40 (1947) 1-17, p. 1.

¹⁵¹ Contra O. J. F. Seitz, 'James and the law', *SE* 2 (1964) 472-486, p. 477

¹⁵² Sanders, *Judaism*, p. 194

Although his choice of these commands is in part due to their inclusion in the Decalogue, the giving of which is evoked by the emphasis on God's speaking (cf. Exod 20:1),¹⁵³ it may be asked why James chooses these two in particular. Both Mussner and Davids recognise that refusal to love one's neighbour and discrimination against the 'poor' are frequently associated with murder in the preceding tradition (Jer 7:6; 22:3; Sir 31 (34):22).¹⁵⁴ That this association may have led to James' choice of this command is supported by the close proximity of the citation of Lev 19:18 and the contrast with the practice of partiality that discriminates against the 'poor' (2:6, 9). Therefore it is possible that his choice of the prohibition against murder stems from its association with refusing to love one's neighbour. However, this fails to offer any reason for its being accompanied by the prohibition against adultery.¹⁵⁵

The presentation of the two commands in v. 11 makes it clear that the terms *φονεύω* and *μοιχεύω* are intended to be taken literally. Therefore any metaphorical rendering of either term in relation to this verse should be rejected. As is recognised by most scholars, James refers to both murder and adultery elsewhere in the letter (4:2, 4; 5:6).¹⁵⁶ While he uses the terminology of adultery metaphorically to describe the behaviour of the audience in 4:4,¹⁵⁷ this usage

¹⁵³ Laws, p. 114

¹⁵⁴ Mussner, p. 126; Davids, p. 117

¹⁵⁵ As Davids, p. 117, suggests, this may be due to its proximity to the prohibition against murder in the Decalogue. Additional support for the above argument may be offered by the identification of partial behaviour with the 'rich', since the 'rich' are accused of murder in 5:6.

¹⁵⁶ Davids, p. 117; Johnson, p. 233; Wall, *Community*, p. 127; Theissen, 'Nächstenliebe', p. 189

¹⁵⁷ See section 3.6.1

should not be read forward into 2:11.¹⁵⁸ However, the emphasis on loyalty and disloyalty in both 2:8-11 and 4:1-4 suggests that the commandment against adultery is not only chosen because of its proximity to that concerning murder, but also in order to prepare for the metaphorical usage in 4:4.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the choice of the prohibition against murder. The choice of this commandment prepares for the usage in 4:2 and 5:6.¹⁵⁹ In 2:11 the one who commits murder transgresses the law, even if he abides by other commands such as that prohibiting adultery. Thus murder is established as constituting transgression of the law, so that, whether it is used metaphorically (4:2) or literally (5:6), the one accused of murder is accused of rebelling against God. Therefore James' choice of these commands is probably due to a combination of reasons, encompassing their place in the Decalogue, the association of murder and Lev 19:18, and the author establishing categories to be used in the argument found later in the letter.

6.5.2 *Jas 2:12-13: The Future Judgement*

Up to this point, the future judgement has mainly been referred to implicitly in terms of the future reward the faithful will receive (1:12, 25; 2:5). With vv. 12-13 the certainty of future judgement (1:9-11), and the standard of judgement, are

¹⁵⁸ Contra Mussner, p. 126, who considers that for James coveting favour with the 'rich' is a kind of adultery. While such a conclusion may be drawn from 4:4 it is not evident in the argument of which 2:11 is a part. With regard to Jas 4, Davids, p. 117, notes what he calls the audience's adultery with wealth.

¹⁵⁹ See section 3.3

made obvious as James tries to motivate his audience to dissociate themselves from their current behaviour, and act in a way that, being consistent with their election, will result in a favourable verdict at the eschatological judgement. The relationship with the preceding argument is clear with regard to v. 12 because of its use of *οὕτως*, while v. 13 has often been considered an independent saying.¹⁶⁰ However, even if v. 13 was originally a free-floating saying, the use of *γάρ* indicates that James saw some connection to what precedes.¹⁶¹

The conclusion presented in v. 12 is not surprising, since James has made it clear that nothing short of total obedience will do when it comes to meeting God's standards. It is God's law that is the basis for measuring sin and transgression (2:8-11),¹⁶² and it is this same law, as opposed to that used by the 'rich', that will be the standard at the coming judgement. Therefore, since it is God and not the 'world' who will hold them to account,¹⁶³ the audience should persevere in doing the law (1:25).¹⁶⁴ That such perseverance is possible is evident from the context within which the audience speaks and acts, the context of the 'law of freedom'.¹⁶⁵ This designation of the law recalls the earlier discussion of fulfilling the law in 1:22-25.¹⁶⁶ This discussion emphasised the

¹⁶⁰ Dibelius, p. 147; Laws, p. 118

¹⁶¹ Davids, p. 118; cf. Ropes, p. 201; Johnson, p. 233

¹⁶² Felder, 'Partiality and God's Law', p. 66

¹⁶³ Johnson, p. 233

¹⁶⁴ Both Felder ('Partiality and God's Law', p. 66) and Klein (*Vollkommenheit*, p. 145) note that 2:12 represents the rationale for the perseverance exhorted in 1:25.

¹⁶⁵ Laws, p. 116

¹⁶⁶ Jackson-McCabe (*Logos*, p. 249) suggests that James' association of freedom and the law can be 'understood as part of a broader attempt to counter Pauline positions regarding the significance of the law' (Rom 5:20-21; 7:13-8:17; Gal 2:4; 4:21-5:1). However, James' presentation of the law in association with freedom does not appear to have an apologetic or

implied audience's responsibility for their own actions, and their ability to actually do the law. In doing the law they maintain their distinction from the 'world' and are able to act independently from their desires and selfish ambition. In view of such freedom, it is imperative that the audience make the right choice, since slavery to the prevailing order (2:2-7) fails to accomplish the ultimate freedom, that is, salvation.

Having established the fairness of the standard employed by God and exhorted the audience to live in accordance with this standard, James provides them with additional motivation to fulfil the law.¹⁶⁷ In correspondence with the traditional treatment of partiality and impartiality, James indicates what is implicit in v. 12: the judgement will be according to deeds (*Jub.* 5:15-16; 33:18; *T. Job* 43:13; *Rom* 2:11; *Eph* 6:9; *Col* 3:25; *1 Pet* 1:17; *Barn.* 4:12). His presentation of this idea in terms of judgement without mercy draws on the traditional presentation of God's judgement of the wicked and the righteous in the Jewish literature. According to this tradition, the wicked are judged in accordance with their wickedness and are therefore destroyed (*Ps* 94:23; *1 Enoch* 95:5; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 54:21; *Jub.* 5:11; *1QpHab* 7:16; *1QS* 2:7).¹⁶⁸ Therefore James is reminding his addressees that those who fail to live by God's standards face certain destruction, for their judgement will be without mercy (*Pss. Sol.* 17:8-9). The threat of merciless judgement may be thought to undermine the author's

polemical motive, but rather is directed towards his concern to establish the law as the absolute marker of honour and dishonour in distinction from the 'world'. Cf. Wachob, *Voice*, p. 132; Popkes, 'Liberty', p. 138

¹⁶⁷ *Contra* Dibelius, p. 147; *Laws*, p. 118

¹⁶⁸ On the connection of judgement according to deeds and mercy see further Yinger, *Judgement*, pp. 63, 85, 135, 288

insistence that God is unequivocally good. However, this is not an issue for James whose insistence on God's role as judge (2:4; 4:11-12) provides no indication that God's judgement is anything other than good. Indeed, the possibility of merciless judgement may even be thought of as guarding God's judgement against accusations of partiality, since it underscores the fact that judgement will be based on deeds for all of humanity, including the elect.

The second element with which he seeks to motivate the audience is that 'mercy boasts over judgement'.¹⁶⁹ This statement indicates that those who are faithful will face judgement with God's mercy (Ps 103:10-11; Sir 16:12-14; *Jub.* 5:17-19; *Pss. Sol.* 2:33-36; 1QH 14:7-9; cf. Matt 5:7; *1 Clem.* 13:2; 22:8; 28:1), and therefore will receive their good reward. It is God's mercy and judgement that is primarily in view, as James indicates that those characterised by faithfulness will receive salvation in spite of their failings.¹⁷⁰ Together with the former statement this provides motivation against the practice of partiality and towards deeds of mercy (Sir 16:14; cf. Eccl 12:14). The emphasis on mercy connects v. 13 with v. 8 and the citation of the love command,¹⁷¹ so that it is clear that doing mercy involves doing the law. Furthermore, since the implied audience's judgements have to be just and impartial like God's, their judgements should also be subject to mercy. In adopting such behaviour they

¹⁶⁹ Wall (*Community*, p. 129) suggests that 'boasting' recalls 1:9 and God's future benefaction to the 'poor'. This future benefaction warns against the unjust discrimination against the 'poor' in the present.

¹⁷⁰ The assurance offered by James applies to those whose life is characterised by faithfulness but not necessarily perfection, preventing God's mercy from becoming another excuse for the audience to continue in unfaithfulness.

¹⁷¹ Wachob, *Voice*, p. 117

would be distinct from the 'world', doing mercy to those less fortunate than themselves.¹⁷²

6.5.3 Summary: *The Ultimate Honour-Code*

The incompatibility of faith and partiality is re-framed in 2:8-13 in terms of the law. This establishes that the honour-code that counts with God is found in the law. The distinction from the 'world' that James insists upon is possible through and delineated by the law, which he describes as 'royal' and the 'law of freedom'. However, the possibility of receiving the greatest honour that can be bestowed on anyone, that is, salvation, is endangered by the audience's participation in partiality. Such activity involves a blatant disregard for God as King, lawgiver and judge. This position is untenable for those who possess faith and hope in God for their eschatological salvation. Therefore the discussion of partiality and the law functions to confront the audience with their unfaithfulness and, in view of the certainty of judgement, with their need to repent and fulfil the law.

6.6 Conclusion

In Jas 2:1-13 the author confronts the implied audience with the distinction between God and the 'world'. In doing so he seeks to highlight the fundamental

¹⁷² Cf. Felder, 'Partiality and God's Law', p. 69; Edgar, *Chosen*, pp. 131-132 As noted by Davids, p. 118, the need to show mercy also provides a link to the following verses.

incompatibility between their assimilation to the 'world' through the practice of partiality and their identity as God's people. This incompatibility is presented through examples, rhetorical questions and teaching on the necessity of doing the law in view of the future judgement. It is James' hope that his argument will persuade them to dissociate themselves from the 'world' and live the life of distinction to which they have been called.

The first presentation of the problem of partiality is framed in terms of faith (2:1). This presentation is informed by the categories of the preceding verses (1:26-27) so that partiality is associated with the 'world' and vain religion, while faith is related to religion that is acceptable before God. According to this presentation the audience are those who acknowledge the lordship of Jesus Christ, i.e. they possess faith. In terms of the categories that underpin the whole of 2:1-13 this identification serves to place the audience with God in opposition to the 'world', implying that their behaviour should be that which is acceptable before God and therefore distinct from the 'world'. However, in the following argument James makes it obvious that this correlation between faith and lifestyle is missing among the audience.

The audience is depicted as those who adopt the status evaluations and concomitant behaviour of the 'world'. This involves the practice of partiality, a practice that values the apparent status of the wealthy over that of the 'poor' because they may be a potential source of benefaction. That the implied audience is aware that such behaviour is opposed to both that exemplified by God and that expected from his representatives is indicated implicitly in v. 4.

However, despite such knowledge they act with partiality towards the 'rich', indicating that they fail to accept the fundamental importance of living in accordance with their faith and the exclusive nature of God's benefaction.

The discrepancy between their identity and behaviour is made explicit by James as he reminds them that God has chosen the 'poor' as heirs of his Kingdom. In their treatment of the 'poor', the audience act in contradiction to their own origins (1:18; 2:5; cf. Exod 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:34; Deut 15:1-11, 15; 24:17-22) and instead of following God's example adopt the behaviour exemplified by the 'world'. The absurdity of this assimilation to the 'world' is highlighted by James' depiction of the treatment the audience has received at the hands of the 'rich'. In view of such abuse it is unthinkable that they should favour the 'rich', especially since such partiality associates them with the dishonouring of Jesus. This partiality is therefore incompatible with their identification as Jesus' possession, an identification that re-frames the covenant relationship in terms of the faith announced in 2:1.

In contrast to their assimilation to the 'world' the audience are exhorted to adopt the honourable practice of fulfilling the law (2:8-13; cf. 1:22-25). The author emphasises the origins of this law, both to highlight its authority and to contrast it with the law employed by the 'rich' (2:6). This law comes from the King and will be used at the future judgement. Therefore, in contrast to their present lack of concern for faithfulness, it is imperative that they speak and act in accordance with the law, since only then will their identity as God's people be vindicated at the judgement.

It is clear from Jas 2:1-13 that the connection between identity and behaviour that was found to be of great importance in covenant thought is fundamental for James. Furthermore, it is also evident that this aspect of covenant thought continues to be related to the need for God's people to maintain their distinction in the face of the threat of assimilation posed by the 'world'. Moreover, as in Exod 19:5-6 the distinct status bestowed on the implied audience through the sovereign activity of God involves fulfilling the law. Indeed, the idea of imitating God is also present implicitly throughout the passage, and explicitly in the precedent of God's choice of the 'poor'. However, there is at least one significant modification.

The confusion between divine and messianic categories has already been noted with regard to the use of *κύριος* in the letter as a whole. This confusion is increased further by the implicit reference to Jesus as the one to whom the honourable name belongs (2:7). Furthermore, the indication that the implied audience belongs to Jesus contrasts with the usual covenantal idea that Israel belongs to God. This fact and the idea that Jesus' name can be blasphemed, implies a further identification between God and Jesus that tends towards the elevation of Jesus to divine status.

The argument of 2:1-13 implies that the only status of any consequence is one's status vis-à-vis God's law. However, the emphasis on God's unqualified choice of the 'poor' (v. 5) indicates that material poverty is an important, though not absolute, identity marker. The implication of this is that the audience is predominantly 'poor', an implication that coheres with James' hesitant

identification of the 'rich' as brothers in 1:9-11. These aspects of the letter overturn the values of the 'world' according to which the 'rich' are exalted and the 'poor' humiliated. Furthermore, they also suggest that in spite of the implicit insistence on impartiality throughout 2:1-13, there is in God's order a bias towards the 'poor'. This implication is supported by James' concentration on partiality towards the 'rich', and contrasts with the even-handed approach to this topic in Lev 19:15.

The author's concern with the relationship between 'defective' theology and unfaithfulness is addressed in 2:1-13 in terms of partiality. In addressing this issue James establishes that such activity is incompatible with faith and that the standard of judgement is the law. In view of the nature of the judgement, the audience are exhorted to keep the law, that their status as God's people may be confirmed at the eschaton. However, it is precisely in regard to the relationship between deeds and judgement that they were found wanting in 1:19-27, and it is their 'defective' understanding of judgement that James addresses in 2:14-26.

The Benefit of Salvation and the Necessity of Works (Jas 2:14-26)

7.1 Introduction

The examination of Jas 1:2-2:13 in the preceding chapters has revealed that James is attempting to persuade the implied audience that their practice is contaminated by the 'world' and involves a 'defective' theology. It is particularly clear that a significant aspect of the audience's deception relates to God's giving, especially with regard to the gift of salvation. In 2:14-26 James continues to address this problem, although rather than focussing on the character of God, he chooses to challenge the audience's misunderstanding of their relationship with God. It will be demonstrated that this misunderstanding involves the audience's false assurance that the possession of faith itself apart from works is a sufficient condition for salvation. In opposing this belief James insists that the audience's reception of benefits, whether present or eschatological, is connected with the fulfilment of the obligations concomitant with their faith. The author's argument presents the audience with the covenantal choice between life and death and insists that it is covenant faithfulness and not simply covenant membership that will result in their reception of the title 'friend of God' at the eschaton.

The unity of 2:14-26 is evident from James' recurring conclusion that faith without works is of no benefit (vv. 17, 20, 24, 26). This conclusion provides the answer to the rhetorical questions found in v. 14, indicating that the argument

found in vv. 18-26 follows on from that found in vv. 14-17. Furthermore, the unity of vv. 14-17 is emphasised by the inclusio formed by the use of *τί τὸ ὄφελος* in verses 14 and 16.¹ In view of the structuring influence of the questions in v. 14 and the conclusion drawn from them (vv. 17, 20, 24, 26), it is clear that the proposition James wants to persuade the audience to accept is that faith without works is not sufficient to ensure survival at the judgement. Moreover, it is his questioning of the relationship between faith and salvation that provides the connection between this treatise and 2:1-13.² This is made evident by the use of *σῶσαι* in v. 14, since this refers to salvation at the final judgement depicted in vv. 12-13.³

In addition to this connection, a further relationship between 2:1-13 and 2:14-26 is evident in the use of *πίστιν ἔχειν*, which having been used in v. 1 is picked up again in v. 14. This relationship indicates that the theme introduced in v. 1 is continued and developed in 2:14-26.⁴ Indeed the implication of this relationship is that the questioning of the salvific power of faith apart from works in 2:14-26 is specifically concerned with the faith possessed by both the author and his addressees, i.e. the faith of those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord. However, in v. 1 James' emphasis was on the incompatibility of this faith and the practice of partiality, whereas v. 14 is concerned with the absence of works that are

¹ Burchard, p. 115

² Contra Dibelius, p. 149

³ So also Mussner, pp. 129,131; Laws, p. 119; M. Lautenschlager, 'Der Gegenstand des Glaubens in Jakobusbrief', *ZTK* 87(1990) 163-184; Frankemölle, p.424; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 207; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p.77; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 168;

⁴ So also Mussner, pp. 128,129; C. Burchard, 'Zu Jakobus 2:14-26', *ZNW* 71 (1980) 27-45, p. 27; Martin, pp. 78, 81; Watson, 'James 2', p. 108; Frankemölle, p. 424; Johnson, p. 237

compatible with faith. The connection between these two emphases is that in both cases those with faith will fail to survive the judgement (vv. 13, 14-17; cf. 1:22-27). Furthermore, these positions are inextricably linked, since possessing faith and behaving with partiality involves failing to fulfil the law and therefore a lack of works, and an absence of works also involves failing to fulfil the law, a failure that results in behaviour incompatible with faith (cf. 4:17). Therefore it is probable that James continues the depiction of the implied audience found in vv. 1-13 in the argument of vv. 14-26.

This probability is further confirmed by the depiction of the audience as 'hearers' and not doers of the law in 1:22-25. Indeed, the contrast between 'hearing alone' and 'hearing and doing the word' found in that passage corresponds to and makes a connection with the contrast between 'faith alone' and 'faith and works' in 2:14-26.⁵ Therefore it is evident that 2:14-26 is not an isolated unit treating the relationship of faith and works. Rather it should be read in relation to and in continuation with James' thoughts in the rest of the letter, particularly 2:1-13 and 1:22-25.

7.2 *Jas 2:14: Faith, Works and Salvation*

The discussion of the relationship between faith, works and salvation begins in v. 14 with the formula *τί τὸ ὄφελος*. Although this formula is infrequent in the biblical writings (Job 15:3; 1 Cor 15:32), it occurs frequently elsewhere (Epict.

⁵ Watson, 'James 2', p. 108; Johnson, pp. 238-239; D. J. Verseput, 'Reworking the Puzzle of faith and Deeds in James 2:14-26', *NTS* 43 (1997) 97-115, p. 110

Diatr. 1.4.16; 1.6.3; 3.1.30; Philo, *Post.* 86, 87; *Deus* 152). Its use here raises the issue of the advantage or benefit to be derived from faith without works. James' primary concern is the benefit of this faith without works in regard to salvation at the judgement, a fact that is evident from his use of *σώζω*. This term is used predominantly in an eschatological sense throughout the letter, especially in connection with *δύναμαι* (1:21; 4:12; 5:20). However, the use of *τί τὸ ὄφελος* in v. 16 suggests that he is also concerned with the benefit (or lack of it) the 'poor' brother or sister derive from situations similar to that described in vv. 15-16.⁶ That is, James continues to draw a correlation between the reception of the eschatological benefit of salvation and the present actions of those who possess faith (cf. 1:20-27; 2:5-6, 8-13). Consequently, his inclusion using *τί τὸ ὄφελος* (vv. 14, 16) provides implicit support for his own view that faith must be combined with works in the present if it is to have any advantage in the eschatological future.

There are a number of issues that arise from the two rhetorical questions in v. 14. The first of these involves the meaning of *πίστιν ἔχειν*, and whether the subjunctive *λέγῃ* should be understood as indicating that the faith in question is somehow a sham. That is, some interpreters argue that the use of the subjunctive *λέγῃ* indicates that the faith with which James is concerned is only alleged or professed.⁷ However, the use of the subjunctive is due to the hypothetical construction, and therefore should not be used to suggest that the

⁶ Such a possibility is noted by Laws, p. 119; Martin, p. 82; Wall, *Community*, p. 133

⁷ Mitton, p. 99; Adamson, p. 121; Davids, p. 120; Wall, p. 133; cf. Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 169

faith of the speaker is a sham.⁸ Furthermore, James' point is not made on the basis of the speaker's statement alone, but rather on the basis of his own authorial qualification of this statement. That is, the hypothetical speaker simply states that he possesses faith, a statement that is qualified by James' comment that this person lacks works.⁹

The nature of the faith possessed by the speaker is that shared by both the author and the audience as is clear from the use of *πίστιν ἔχειν* in verses 1 and 14. In v. 1 James warns those addressed against the possibility of 'having faith in Jesus' and practising partiality, indicating that it is possible, though certainly not advisable, to possess faith while at the same time acting in a manner wholly at odds with that faith. The additional and concomitant possibility of possessing faith and lacking works is prepared for by James' insistence on the need for the audience to fulfil the law (2:8-13; cf. 1:22-25). Furthermore, his concentration on the active fulfilment of the law and deeds of mercy in 2:8-13 also prepares for the use of *ἔργα* in v. 14.¹⁰ This use of *ἔργα* is informed by the preceding discussion, so that the works that the hypothetical speaker lacks are those that fulfil the royal law of freedom (2:8, 12; 1:25), particularly with regard to merciful deeds towards the 'poor' (2:13, 15-16).¹¹

⁸ If the argument rejected was to be followed to its logical conclusion it would imply that the author's statement regarding the absence of works is also a sham. However, in both cases the subjunctive is only employed because of the *ἐάν*-construction used by the author. See also Dibelius, p. 152; Ropes, p. 208; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 208; Burchard, p. 112

⁹ Burchard, p. 111

¹⁰ Burchard, 'Zu Jakobus 2:14-26', p. 27

¹¹ Mayor, p. 96; Mussner, p. 131; Burchard, 'Zu Jakobus 2:14-26', p. 31

The hypothetical speaker is identified as a member of the same faith community as James and his addressees through his possession of faith. The implication of this identification is that the *πίστις* - confession (*ἐγὼ πίστιν ἔχω*) has become a recognised marker of belonging to the community (2:1; cf. Rom 10:9), in the same way that 'hearing' the word identifies those chosen by God (1:22-25). In the earlier passage (1:22-25) James insisted that God's blessing is reserved for those who both hear and do the law, and not for those who are only hearers. Through this insistence he undermines the audience's 'defective' understanding of God's giving and particularly the relationship between their status as God's people and their receipt of eschatological salvation. In continuation with this 'defective' thought the statement of the hypothetical speaker is presented as implicitly representing a perspective in which possession of faith (without works) saves. The idea that faith saves is of course found throughout early Christian literature (Luke 7:50; Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 1:21; Eph 2:8; 1 Pet 1:5; Ign. *Phld.* 5:2; *Barn.* 12:7; *Herm. Vis.* 3.8.3), as is the identification of membership through the possession of faith (Mark 16:16-18; Acts 2:44; 4:32; 5:14; 15:5-11; 19:18; Rom 10:9; Heb 4:3; 1 Pet 2:7), indicating that such a view as that implicit in Jas 2:14 is not necessarily purely hypothetical. Therefore the view that James rejects through the rhetorical questions of v. 14, is that which considers that being a member of the community identified by its possession of faith in Jesus is sufficient to ensure survival at the eschatological judgement regardless of works.¹²

¹² So Ropes, p. 203; Dibelius, p. 152; Burchard, 'Zu Jakobus 2:14-26', p. 30; Frankemölle, p. 429; Johnson, p. 237; Verseput, 'Reworking', p. 97

It is this understanding of the relationship between belonging to God and salvation that James combats throughout vv. 14-26. He begins by raising the simple issue of the benefit of possessing faith in the absence of works, and then through the use of the negative particle *μή* in the second rhetorical question, indicates that this faith without works is not able to save (Matt 7:21-23; *Barn.* 4:12-13; *2 Clem.* 4:1-3).¹³ Indeed, such an understanding of the efficacy of faith without works is in blatant contradiction with the depiction of judgement found in vv. 12-13. According to this depiction deeds are not merely important, but fundamental to the believer's survival at judgement. It is this perspective that informs the argument of 2:14-26 as James tries to persuade those addressed that they must add works to their faith in order to survive the judgement.

7.3 *Jas 2:15-16: Benefits in the Community*

In 2:15-16 James deals with the giving and receiving of benefits within the community against the backdrop of judgement and salvation. At first it is not immediately clear whether the illustration in these verses should be treated as an example of faith without works, or another type of specific instance for comparison.¹⁴ While the illustration can be interpreted as an example of the lack of benefit derived from speech if it is not accompanied by deeds,¹⁵ there is no need to treat the words spoken as if they did not represent faith but only

¹³ The use of *ἡ πίστις* indicates that the faith that is unable to save is faith that has no works. Mayor, p. ccxi; Dibelius, p. 152; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 208

¹⁴ Dibelius, p. 149

¹⁵ Johnson, p. 238-239

goodwill.¹⁶ Rather, as it is possible to interpret the words spoken in v. 16 as an expression of faith, these verses should be taken as an example of faith without works.¹⁷ As Davids notes, the use of *ἐάν* in v. 15 allows those addressed to hear the example without becoming defensive.¹⁸ The hypothetical character of the example indicates that the interpreter should not simply assume that it involves the depiction of a real situation among the addressees.¹⁹

The similarity between vv. 15-16 and the conditional example found in vv. 2-4 has been recognised by some interpreters.²⁰ The plight of the 'poor' man who enters the assembly wearing filthy clothes is indeed similar to that of the brother and sister who are now described as being naked.²¹ In contrast to vv. 2-4, where the behaviour described takes place within a meeting of the community, in v. 15 no location is explicitly stated. However, it is probable that this example should also be set within a community gathering, as all of those involved are described as community members and James moves from a single speaker to the indictment of the community as a whole with the words *μὴ δώτε δὲ αὐτοῖς*.²² So in both examples we find the 'poor' neglected within a community setting,

¹⁶ Contra Ropes, p. 206; Dibelius, p. 149; Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 75; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 215

¹⁷ So Mayor, p. 96; Oesterley, p. 444; Adamson, p. 124; Davids, p. 121; Wall, *Community*, p. 134; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 77

¹⁸ Davids, p. 121

¹⁹ With Mussner, p. 132; Contra Martin, p. 82; cf. Edgar, *Chosen*, pp. 169-170

²⁰ Mussner, p. 131; Edgar, *Chosen*, pp. 169-170; Burchard, p. 115

²¹ As noted by many commentators, *γυμνός* should not necessarily be thought to mean literal nakedness, it is also used in the sense of 'ill clad' (e.g. Job 22:6; John 21:7). However, the shocking nature of the action in v. 16 is better conveyed if the use of 'naked' is retained in v. 15. See Mayor, p. 97

although here not only those who perpetrate the neglect but also those who are neglected are clearly defined as community members.²³ The irony of this situation cannot be lost on anyone who has followed James' argument throughout vv. 2-7. In the example in vv. 2-4 the 'rich' who enter the community's assembly are treated honourably while the 'poor' are dishonoured. I have argued that the 'rich' were treated in this way so as to secure them as patrons of the community, presumably with the intention of providing for the needs of the 'poor'. However, whether or not such services were attained, the same community is depicted as failing to provide benefits for their 'poor' members.²⁴ This failure is not portrayed as being the result of ignorance, since the speaker's words correspond directly to the conditions of hunger and nakedness.²⁵ Nor is it the result of a lack of means on the part of those belonging to the community, since if this were the case James' criticism regarding their failure to give would make no sense. Rather he suggests that it is an example of faith without works.

The example of faith chosen by James in vv. 15-16 is expressed in the form of speech. However, this should not lead the interpreter to assume that this faith is

²² Davids, p. 122. Additional evidence for a community setting is offered by Tsuji's (*Glaube*, p. 78) suggestion that the words spoken could represent a formula spoken at the end of a service.

²³ The parallelism between the two examples, and especially the neglect of the 'poor', implies that vv. 15-16 should be understood as continuing the depiction of the implied audience found in vv. 1-7.

²⁴ Therefore the example in vv. 15-16 offers a challenge to potential reasons for pursuing the practice of partiality. The connection of vv. 14-16 with the argument against partiality is noted by Martin (p. 82) and Watson ('James 2', p. 109).

²⁵ Johnson, p. 239

only expressed in speech,²⁶ or that such speech represents a failure to control the tongue.²⁷ Once more, as in v. 14, the focus is on the absence of works and not the form of faith exemplified. The community member begins by telling the 'poor' brother or sister to 'go in peace'. This expression was not only used as a salutation of farewell (1 Sam 20:42; 29:7), but also as a formula of blessing (Judg 18:6; 1 Sam 1:17; Jdt 8:35).²⁸ Since the expression is used here as an example of faith it should probably be read in accordance with the second sense. As Wall suggests, the blessing is 'offered to the needy 'brother or sister' in anticipation of its realisation in their lives'.²⁹ The expectation is that God will bless the 'poor' brother or sister with his peace. After giving this blessing the speaker goes on to say *θερμαίνεσθε και χορτάξεσθε*. If these terms are taken in the present middle (i.e. warm yourself, fill yourself), it results in a rather harsh statement that appears as complete mockery. While this would correspond well with the harsh treatment of the 'poor' man in v. 3 it restricts the example of faith to the words 'go in peace' (cf. 3:18). Therefore one should probably interpret these terms in the present passive, which produces the reading 'be warmed and be satisfied'. Taken in this way, the words may represent a reverential periphrasis expressing the hope that God will provide all that these 'poor' members need.³⁰ Apart from this prayer-wish, the speaker and the community

²⁶ The judgement scene in Matt 7:21-23 indicates that those who believed themselves to be disciples were not wholly reliant on speech alone to demonstrate their faith (see section 7.10.1).

²⁷ Contra Johnson, p. 239 If any significance is to be given to the expression of faith in the form of speech it may reflect the double component of the judgement as described in 2:12.

²⁸ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 78

²⁹ Wall, *Community*, p. 134

³⁰ Laws, p. 121

as a whole offer no assistance to the 'poor' brother or sister, as is made clear in James' criticism that they do not give what is needed for the body.³¹

In the same way that the example in vv. 2-4 depicts the audience as treating the 'poor' dishonourably, so here in vv. 15-16 it is clear that the behaviour portrayed falls woefully short of the standard of honour articulated in the preceding argument. While the 'poor' do not suffer as a result of partiality in this example, they are not treated in accordance with the royal law. In failing to honour the 'poor' the audience is depicted as failing to accept the obligations that accompany their faith, and this in turn represents a failure to acknowledge God as both King and lawgiver (2:9-11; 4:11-12). In addition to these failures, James' choice to focus on the giving and receiving of benefits recalls God's role as benefactor of the community, so that the failure to give what is needed can be interpreted as neglecting to follow the example of God's giving found in 1:5-8 and the implicit example of his care for the 'poor' found in the practice of pure religion (1:27). Such neglect and failure is not only a problem from the temporal perspective, but also from the perspective of judgement. Those who possess faith and do not give will not receive the benefit of salvation, since they have failed to show mercy to those in need.³² From the example of faith's inability to benefit the 'poor' in the present James supports his argument that faith that has no works is unable to benefit the believer at the judgement.³³

³¹ Contra Laato ('Justification', p. 64) who argues that some service may be rendered to the 'poor', and that the problem is therefore the failure to satisfy all their needs.

³² Their fate is like that of the double-minded who expect to receive good gifts from God, but will in fact receive nothing.

³³ The similarity between this example and the judgement scene in Matt 25:31-46 is noted by Mitton, p. 101; Hartin, *James and Q*, p. 191

7.4 Jas 2:17: Faith without works is dead!

Here in 2:17 the author strikes a conclusive note that will be a constant refrain throughout the following verses (vv. 20, 24, 26). In this verse James draws his conclusion from the preceding discussion of the benefit of faith in the community and at the judgement. The use of the article before *πίστις* indicates that the statement he makes concerns that faith which was mentioned in v. 14.³⁴ As I have argued, James has not been concerned with depicting this faith as in some way false, but rather in demonstrating that it is of no benefit without works. With this in mind one should not interpret this faith as if it were 'not faith at all' but 'an unjustified claim to faith, or that this faith is the wrong kind of faith'.³⁵ Furthermore, while Ropes may be right in pointing out that there is an implicit opposition between a dead faith and a living faith,³⁶ as far as James is concerned the only difference between dead faith and its implicit counterpart (living faith) is the absence or presence of works.³⁷

The use of the ambiguous expression *καθ' ἑαυτήν* in connection with *ἡ πίστις* presents itself as a puzzle, since it could be understood as either 'in itself' or 'by itself'. Mayor supports the first sense, taking it as indicating that the faith in question is dead to the core.³⁸ Nevertheless, it is more probable that the

³⁴ Martin, p. 85

³⁵ Contra Mitton, p. 107; Ropes, p. 207

³⁶ Ropes, p. 207

³⁷ As Verseput ('Reworking', p. 99) has pointed out, 2:26 indicates that faith and works are separate entities that must be joined to bring life.

³⁸ Mayor, p. 99; Johnson, p. 239

expression *καθ' ἑαυτήν* should be taken in the second sense of 'by itself', since such an interpretation finds support in both the biblical and extra-biblical usage (LXX Gen 30:40; 43:32; 2 Macc 13:13; Philo, *Mos.* 2.194; Plutarch, *Mor.* 722, 764D), and the parallel with *μόνον* in v. 24.³⁹ While this interpretation appears to produce a tautological sentence, the tautology is only apparent since James uses the expression to emphasise and highlight that his concern is with the absence of works and not the content or form of faith that is declared dead.

The use of *νεκρά* to highlight that faith without works is not efficacious, either in the community's assembly or at the judgement, is not in itself unusual. The term is frequently used in this figurative sense to indicate that something is unfruitful or barren (Epict. *Diatr.* 3.23,28; 3.16.7). However, that this term is applied to *πίστις* and not *ἔργα* is unusual with respect to early Christian literature where it is more normal for works to be described as dead, either in order to denote their sinfulness (Heb 6:1; 9:14; cf. Rev 3:1) or the separation of speech and deeds (*Herm. Sim.* 9.21.2).⁴⁰ Nevertheless, James' concern with faithfulness is similar to the concern ancient moralists showed regarding both the 'necessary unity between attitude and action' (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1168a2-4),⁴¹ and that demonstrated with regard for the need for ethical behaviour to accompany the worship of the divinity (Plato, *Leg.* 4.716e; Seneca, *Ben.* 1.6.3).⁴²

³⁹ Dibelius, p. 153; Mussner, p. 132; Davids, p. 122; Verseput, 'Reworking', p. 10 n. 19

⁴⁰ The figurative use of *νεκρός* is also employed with regard to sin (Rom 6:11; Eph 2:1,5; Col 2:13).

⁴¹ Johnson, p. 247 (quote); Yinger, *Judgement*, p. 159

⁴² Verseput, 'Reworking', p. 104

This latter concern is also found in the Old Testament prophets where the efficacy of sacrifice without obedience is denied (Jer 6:20; Hos 6:6). The reason that the sacrifices are unacceptable to God in Jer 6:20 is that the community has rejected his words,⁴³ a situation that corresponds to that attacked by James, as the implied audience reject the law through their failure to do it (1:22-25; 2:1-13). The passage from Hosea also bears some relation to James' treatment of the issue as it emphasises the need for mercy (Jas 2:13, 15-16; cf. Matt 25:31-46) and knowledge of God (i.e. since the lack of such knowledge is connected to the people's failure to fulfil their social obligations).⁴⁴ Therefore, whether or not James has been influenced by ideas akin to those found in these passages, his treatment of the absence of works being unacceptable before God coheres with the connection they draw between the efficacy of sacrifice and obedience (cf. 1:26-27). Furthermore, it is also clear that such a correlation of faithfulness, blessing and *life* is part of the covenant between God and Israel (Deut 28:1-68). Moreover, the choice between fulfilment and non-fulfilment is presented as that between life and death (Deut 30:15-19), and James has already drawn on this depiction in 1:12-15.⁴⁵ Therefore it is possible that James' reference to dead faith echoes this idea so that the absence of works is thought of as leading to death, while faith with works receives life (1:12). In addressing this issue it is clear that Jas 2:14-17 represents a Christian depiction of a problem of widespread concern in antiquity.

⁴³ Carroll, *Jeremiah*, p. 201

⁴⁴ Davies, 'Walking in God's Ways', p. 106; See section 2.4.1

⁴⁵ See section 4.5

7.5 Summary: Contrasting Views on Salvation

The argument in 2:14-17 presents two divergent perspectives on salvation and judgement: one associated with the implied audience and the other endorsed by the author. The difference between these perspectives centres upon the role of faith and works. In the understanding of judgement associated with the audience, the possession of faith is presented as being a sufficient condition for salvation. This elevation of faith stems from its role in identifying James and the audience as members of God's people. In this way the role of faith corresponds to that attributed to 'hearing' the word in 1:22-25. This view of judgement assumes that the temporal faith community and those who inherit the eschatological Kingdom are one and the same. In opposition to this 'defective' perspective on salvation and judgement, James insists that being a member of God's people is not in and of itself a sufficient condition of salvation. This is clear from the fact that the eschatological judgement will be made on the basis of works (2:12-13) and therefore there is no advantage in possessing faith without works since this leads to certain destruction. However, in attacking this 'defective' understanding of salvation and judgement James is also concerned with the unhealthy impact it has on the conduct of the audience. Indeed, by emphasising the danger the absence of works poses in both the present and the future, he hopes to motivate the audience towards actively fulfilling the law, particularly through their social behaviour. If they fail to accept the need for works their status as God's people will be of no advantage at the judgement, as they face the death towards which their 'faith apart from works' will inevitably lead.

7.6 Jas 2:18-19: Is faith really not efficacious?

The most difficult problem facing interpreters of Jas 2:14-26 is found in v. 18 which is described by Ropes as 'one of the most puzzling cruces of New Testament exegesis'.⁴⁶ In this verse the author's employment of the rhetorical techniques of the diatribe are most evident, although such techniques are also used elsewhere in this passage and the letter as a whole.⁴⁷ In v. 18 James employs an interlocutor in order to further his own argument that faith without works is not efficacious at the judgement. The question of whether this interlocutor supports or opposes the position of James must be dealt with below, although it should be noted here that even if we find that the latter is true this does not necessarily indicate that a hostile relationship is implied. Rather, as noted by Bauckham and Laws, the diatribe style was used in a school setting and therefore the opposing view can be thought of as belonging to a perplexed listener.⁴⁸ In the following investigation the elements of vv. 18-19 will be discussed in accordance with the scheme set out below.

18a ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις· σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις, κἀγὼ ἔργα ἔχω.

18b δειξόν μοι τὴν πίστιν σου χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων,

κἀγὼ σοι δείξω ἐκ τῶν ἔργων μου τὴν πίστιν.

⁴⁶ J. H. Ropes, "Thou Hast Faith and I Have Works", (James 2:18)', *The Expositor 7th Series 5* (1908) 547-556, p. 547; so also Dibelius, p. 154

⁴⁷ S. K. Stowers, 'The Diatribe', 71-84 in D. E. Aune (ed.), *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988, p. 82; Dibelius, p. 38

⁴⁸ Bauckham, *James*, pp. 125, 57-60; Laws, p. 123 also see S. K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981, pp. 76-77

19a *σὺ πιστεύεις ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, καλῶς ποιεῖς·*

19b *καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια πιστεύουσιν καὶ φρίσσουσιν.*

The consideration of this passage will proceed by first examining the main solutions to the difficulties found in these verses proposed by previous interpreters of James. Through this examination it will be established that the proposed solutions are inadequate, and that there is a reasonable interpretation that provides an alternative solution. This alternative involves understanding v. 18a as establishing a level playing field, that is, the interlocutor places James in the same category as himself. This removes the author's grounds for objection as presented in v. 14, that is, the absence of works. The argument of the interlocutor is intent on demonstrating that there is no such thing as the author's category of faith apart from works, and so in v. 18b he calls on James to demonstrate that faith can exist apart from works. In contrast to other interpretations it will be shown that the interlocutor's remarks incorporates both verses 19a and 19b. In these verses the interlocutor demonstrates that even the most basic item of faith (v. 19a) does not exist apart from works by reference to its effects upon demons in the practice of exorcism (v. 19b). However, although James does not explicitly reply to the interlocutor's point that faith apart from works does not exist (v. 20), the ambiguity of v. 19b and his characterisation of the interlocutor as a fool (v. 20) casts doubt upon the foregoing argument. In this way the interlocutor's argument is implicitly deconstructed since the same demons who possess faith will be destroyed at the judgement. Therefore I intend to demonstrate that James employs the interlocutor in order to

deconstruct the 'defective' theology of the audience from within, so as to motivate them to faithfulness.

7.6.1 *Establishing the Objection?*

The interpretations of v. 18 can be divided into two main groups, centring upon the way in which the words *ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις* are understood, introducing the interlocutor as supporting or objecting to the position of James. A minority of interpreters hold the former position,⁴⁹ while the latter position may be taken as representing something of a consensus opinion.⁵⁰ Those who hold the former position argue that *ἀλλά* can be understood in a strengthening sense, rather than as introducing a contrary opinion.⁵¹ Despite such a possibility having external support (Sextus, *Math.* 3.53),⁵² the internal evidence indicates that v. 18a should be understood as introducing an objection.⁵³ This is clear from the author's use of *ἀλλά* elsewhere in the letter (1:25, 26; 3:15; 4:11), the position of v. 18 after the argument of vv. 14-17 and the censure directed against the interlocutor in v. 20. This censure not only characterises the interlocutor as ignorant, but also sets up the following verses as a further argument to convince this interlocutor of the uselessness of faith without works. Furthermore, it serves to identify the *τις* as representing the view that faith without works is useful, and

⁴⁹ Mayor, p. 99; Mussner, p. 137; Adamson, pp. 124-125

⁵⁰ Oesterley, p. 445; Ropes, p. 211; Dibelius, p. 150; Laws, p. 123; Burchard, 'Zu Jakobus 2:14-26', p. 35; C. E. Donker, 'Der Verfasser des Jak und sein Gegner: Zum Problem des Einwandes in Jak 2:18-19', *ZNW* 72 (1981) 227-240, p. 239; Davids, p. 124; Johnson, p. 239

⁵¹ Mayor, p. 99

⁵² Verseput, 'Reworking', p. 107

⁵³ Ropes, p. 214; Laws, p. 123; Davids, p. 123; Verseput, 'Reworking', p. 107

therefore implies that the interlocutor's remarks should be read as an objection to the author's position in vv. 14-17. Therefore James introduces the interlocutor as an opponent of his own position, and a defender of the efficacy of faith.

Despite the above argument establishing the probability that the interlocutor's remarks represent an objection, the task facing the interpreter remains problematic. The first major problem is that of understanding the interlocutor's opening words in v. 18a, *Σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις, κἀγὼ ἔργα ἔχω*. The first question that must be addressed is whether *Σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις* should be understood as a question expressing doubt concerning the author's faith and as representing the full extent of the interlocutor's objection.⁵⁴ Although this interpretation has been gaining support on the basis of Heinz Neitzel's article, it represents an earlier interpretation that has been revived. This is evident from Ropes' rejection of this interpretation on two grounds: firstly, in order to call the author's faith into question, 'the opponent would have had to say *μὴ σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις*', and secondly, there is an 'obvious parallelism [in] *σὺ ἔχεις, κἀγὼ ἔχω*, in which the presence of *καί* and the lack of any sufficient introduction to the second part make it impossible to assume that we have a question and answer'.⁵⁵ However, as Neitzel recognises, the distinguishing particle *μὴ* is not required in order to understand *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις* as a question expressing doubt.⁵⁶ Indeed, such questions are found in Matt 27:11 and Acts 22:27, although in both these cases the nature of the question is made clear from the context. Therefore it appears

⁵⁴ H. Neitzel, 'Eine alte crux interpretum im Jakobusbrief 2:18', *ZNW* 73 (1982) 286-293, pp. 289-290; Frankemölle, pp. 438-439, 444; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 71; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 170; Cf. Donker, 'Der Verfasser', p. 233

⁵⁵ Ropes, p. 212

possible that *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις* could be understood as a question, although, as Neitzel notes, this creates difficulties of its own and seems to fall foul of Ropes' second objection that this 'theory neglects the obvious parallelism of *σὺ ἔχεις, κἀγὼ ἔχω*'.⁵⁷

The difficulty that arises from reading *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις* as a question is posed by the following clause *κἀγὼ ἔργα ἔχω*. According to Neitzel's interpretation, the interlocutor's objection is restricted to the question *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις* and therefore the author's reply begins with *κἀγὼ*. This creates parallels between *κἀγὼ* and *τις*, and *πίστιν ἔχεις* and *ἔργα ἔχω*, apparently side-stepping Ropes' second objection.⁵⁸ However, *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις* in v. 18a parallels *σὺ πιστεύεις* in v. 19a, suggesting that *κἀγὼ ἔργα ἔχω* should be understood in parallel to *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις* rather than *τις*. Furthermore, the opposition between *σὺ* and *κἀγὼ* found in v. 18a is continued in v. 18b. However, the main difficulties posed by Neitzel's interpretation relate to the change of speaker signified by *κἀγὼ* and the assumption that there is an element of doubt in the words *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις*. Neitzel attempts to overcome the latter difficulty by referring to the faith described in v. 19a. However, in appealing to this text he assumes that the interlocutor and James do not share the same faith, an assumption that is without foundation both with regard to the preceding argument in vv. 14-17 and that which follows in vv. 20-26. Indeed, it is imperative for the author's argument that he and the objector share the same faith, since his aim is to convince those who hold the same faith as himself of the necessity of works for surviving the

⁵⁶ Neitzel, 'Jakobusbrief 2:18', p. 289; BDF § 440, 1

⁵⁷ Ropes, p. 212

⁵⁸ Neitzel, 'Jakobusbrief 2:18', p. 290; BDF § 480, 6

judgement. Therefore, there is nothing in the context to indicate that James' faith is in doubt.

In an attempt to overcome the difficulty posed by *κἀγώ* Neitzel directs attention to the possibility of an ellipse where otherwise *ἐρῶ* might be expected. In addition to asserting the grammatical possibility Neitzel also draws attention to evidence, both biblical and extra-biblical, that he considers to indicate that an ellipsis is not only possible in v. 18a but also probable.⁵⁹ The biblical evidence that Neitzel brings forward is found in Acts (9:5, 10-11; 22:17-21; 25:22). In three of these passages (9:5, 10-11; 25:22) there is an ellipsis involving a change of speakers, although in all of these cases it is very clear that a dialogue is taking place and the change of speakers is evident from the content of their speech. However, in 22:17-21 there is no such ellipse regarding the change of speaker, this change being indicated through the use of the verb and appropriate pronoun (e.g. v. 19 *κἀγὼ εἶπον*). The extra-biblical evidence cited by Neitzel shows only that the verbs employed for speaking are often displaced (Plato, *Hipp.* 1.290, a4, b2; Plutarch, *Mor.* 932a; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.11.9; cf. Theophilus, *Autol.* 1.2), and does not indicate that *κἀγώ* was often used on its own to mark the change of speaker.⁶⁰ Therefore, Neitzel fails to establish that the ellipsis he posits in Jas 2:18a is any more than a possibility. In view of this conclusion and the other difficulties already highlighted, Neitzel's reading of v. 18a should be rejected. In contrast to this reading it will be argued below that the whole of v. 18a represents the speech of the interlocutor, and that through

⁵⁹ Neitzel, 'Jakobusbrief 2:18', p. 290

⁶⁰ Of all the references cited by Neitzel only that in Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.11.3 fails to use the verbs and in this case the context makes the change of speaker obvious.

this speech he places himself and James in the same category, that is, as those who possess faith and works.

Having rejected the reading of v. 18a proposed by Neitzel, the second major problem facing the interpreter relates to the use of *σύ* and *καὶ γὰρ* throughout the whole of v. 18. The problem is that the opponent appears to attribute the position of 'faith alone' to the author, while making James' position of works his own.⁶¹ Thus, in order to overcome this problem, a large number of interpreters understand the terms *σύ* and *καὶ γὰρ* as 'one...and the other'.⁶² While this suggestion may be grammatically possible,⁶³ such a possibility does not find support in the quotation of Teles (Stobæus, *Anthol.* 3.1.98) as is often suggested.⁶⁴ As Ropes himself notes, all this quotation indicates is a failure to maintain the roles in the dialogue, and not the use of *σύ* and *καὶ γὰρ* in the sense of 'one...the other...'.⁶⁵ The major difficulty with reading *σύ* and *καὶ γὰρ* as 'one...the other...' is that throughout vv. 18b-19 the pronouns are used in their normal sense.⁶⁶ Furthermore, there is a strong parallel between the use of *σὺ πιστεύεις* in v. 19a and *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις* in v. 18a, suggesting that the pronoun is used in the same sense and with regard to the same person.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Such an understanding is reached on the basis of the second half of v.18 where interpreters find two distinct positions represented, e.g. Dibelius, pp. 155-156

⁶² Ropes, p. 209; Dibelius, p. 155; Mitton, p. 108; Laws, p. 122; Davids, p. 124; Martin, p. 87; Johnson, p. 240; Wall, *Community*, p. 136

⁶³ Davids, p. 124. Although, as Z. C. Hodges ('Light on James Two from Textual Criticism', *BSac* 120 (1963) 341-350, p. 342) points out, there are plenty of other idioms to express this idea.

⁶⁴ Ropes, p. 209

⁶⁵ Ropes, p. 209. For further criticism of Ropes' use of this passage see Adamson, p. 137

⁶⁶ Laws, p. 124; Donker, 'Der Verfasser', p. 230; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 219

⁶⁷ Mayor, p. 100; Hodges, 'Light', p. 348; Donker, 'Der Verfasser', p. 236

Indeed this parallelism suggests that the interlocutor's remarks should be interpreted as extending beyond v. 18a into v. 19.⁶⁸ Therefore, if at all possible, it is preferable to interpret the pronouns in v. 18a as referring to two individuals, the author and the opponent.

As noted above, the problem of the pronouns derives from understanding the term *πίστις* as meaning faith alone and the term *ἔργα* as representing the author's position of faith and works. However, the opponent does not say, 'You have faith alone', or 'I have faith and works', and to interpret his speech in these terms is to introduce James' conceptions of faith and works without warrant. Throughout both the preceding (vv. 14-17) and following argument (vv. 20-26), remarks about faith without works and faith with works are clearly differentiated. Here in vv. 18-19 the opponent is objecting to such a differentiation, since it is on the basis of this differentiation that James is able to make his argument that faith does not save. Instead the opponent opens by establishing a level playing field, that is, he places James in the same category as himself and removes the grounds for objection raised in v. 14. In placing James in the same group as himself and removing the basis of his objection, the opponent suggests that faith will be efficacious for both of them at the judgement.⁶⁹ In what follows (vv.

⁶⁸ Support for extending the interlocutor's remarks beyond v.18a has been on the increase since the latter half of the last century, e.g. see Hodges, 'Light', p. 344; Donker, 'Der Verfasser', p. 233; Martin, p. 88; Laato, 'Justification', p. 80; Wall, *Community*, p. 136

⁶⁹ Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 221 Whether the opponent recognises any distinction between the works he possesses and those James has argued to be absent in vv. 15-16 is not clear, and somewhat irrelevant to his argument which intends to demonstrate that even the author's putative example of 'faith without works' is useful.

18b-19) the opponent seeks to establish that faith is useful by attacking James' category of faith without works.

7.6.2 *The Opponent's Objection*

The obvious end point for the opponent's objection is at v. 20 where the author censures the interlocutor. However, the interlocutor's remarks have often been limited to v. 18a with James' response commencing at v. 18b.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, as I have already indicated, it is likely that the interlocutor's remarks extend into vv. 18b-19, on the basis of the parallel between *σὺ πιστεύεις* and *σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις*.⁷¹ Those who recognise that the interlocutor's speech continues in vv. 18b-19 often accept a reading of the Greek text that replaces *χωρίς* with *ἐκ*.⁷² Although this reading has the support of the majority of later manuscripts (5, 218, 322, 323, 621, 945, 1127, 056, 61), the reading of *χωρίς* should be retained and preferred since it is well attested by several important (and earlier) witnesses (N, A, B, P, Ψ, 33, 81). Furthermore, it represents an important element of James' argument in the preceding verses, and is used by the

⁷⁰ Ropes, p. 209; Dibelius, pp. 154-156; Burchard, 'Zu Jakobus 2:14-26', p. 37; Laws, p. 122; Davids, p. 124; Lautenschlager, 'Der Gegenstand des Glaubens', p. 175; Watson, 'James 2', p. 112; Verseput, 'Reworking', p. 109

⁷¹ However, Donker's ('Der Verfasser', p. 236) suggestion of a chiasmic structure based around *σὺ* and *ἐγώ* should be rejected since the proposed structure is unbalanced and fails to end at a reasonable point. See I. H. Thomson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters*, (JSNTSup, 111), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995

⁷² Hodges, 'Light', p. 344; Wall, *Community*, p. 136

opponent to challenge that same argument.⁷³ Therefore the opponent continues his objection by challenging the author to demonstrate faith apart from works.

The challenge reads, 'Show me your faith apart from works, and I, from my works, will show you my faith'. At first sight this challenge appears to attribute the position attacked in vv. 14-17 to James who attacks it. However, as has already been argued, the opponent and the author possess the same faith. This fact is evident from the preceding argument in vv. 14-17 where James attacks the idea that the faith that he and his addressees possess is sufficient by itself, that is, apart from works, to enable salvation. Since vv. 18-19 continue this argument it is safe to assume that the interlocutor and the author possess the same faith. The validity of this assumption is confirmed by the censure in v. 20 and the unity of the argument in vv. 14-26 as a whole. Therefore the challenge is not concerned with demonstrating the difference between types of faith,⁷⁴ nor does it establish 'faith without works' and 'faith and works' as two alternative paths to salvation.⁷⁵ Rather it is concerned with demonstrating that the author's category 'faith without works' is empty.⁷⁶ That is, for the interlocutor *δείξόν μοι* introduces an unfulfillable challenge, whereas *ἔγω δείξω* introduces a condition that can be fulfilled.

⁷³ The question of which reading represents the more difficult reading is not at all clear; this can be seen in the varying views of Hodges ('Light', p. 350) and Wall (*Community*, p. 139).

⁷⁴ Contra Donker, 'Der Verfasser', pp. 232-235

⁷⁵ However, those who have argued for this interpretation are correct in pointing out that the background of this passage remains that of judgement and salvation. Lautenschlager, 'Der Gegenstand des Glaubens', p. 17; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 72; Wall, *Community*, p. 136

⁷⁶ Contra Ropes, pp. 208-210

In the absence of true dialogue the interlocutor assumes that James' reply to his challenge takes the form of belief that God is one, a belief that is the most basic item of faith in their shared tradition (Deut 6:4; Mk 12:29, 32; 1 Cor 8:4; Gal 3:20; *Herm. Man.* 1.1; cf. Rom 3:30).⁷⁷ Many interpreters understand this belief to be 'intellectual' in a derogatory sense.⁷⁸ However the opponent recognises this proposed 'faith apart from works' as honourable in the same manner employed by James with regard to the 'royal law' in 2:8 (*καλῶς ποιεῖς*).⁷⁹ Furthermore the reaction of the demons in the latter half of the verse indicates that more than intellectual assent is in view.⁸⁰ It is not the opponent's intention to deride this faith through the parallel with the demons' faith. Rather he intends to show that this apparent example of 'faith apart from works' is in fact an example of 'faith and works', thus demonstrating the emptiness of James' category.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Following Dibelius the reading *εἰς ἑστίν ὁ θεός* is preferred to the other alternatives; for a full discussion see Dibelius, p. 158 n.50. Others who understand v. 19a as forming part of the interlocutor's speech include Mayor, p. 101; Hodges, 'Light', p. 348; Donker, 'Der Verfasser', p. 234; Martin, p. 89; Laato, 'Justification', p. 80

⁷⁸ Mayor, p. 100; Mitton, p. 110; Adamson, 125; R. N. Longenecker, 'The "faith of Abraham" theme in Paul, James and Hebrews: A Study in the Circumstantial Nature of New Testament Teaching', *JETS* 20 (1977) 203-212, p. 206; Martin, p. 89; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 171; cf. Laato, 'Justification', p. 81

⁷⁹ Laws, p. 126; Burchard, 'Zu Jakobus 2:14-26', p. 39; Donker, 'Der Verfasser', p. 238; Wall, *Community*, p. 137

⁸⁰ Laws, p. 126; Burchard, 'Zu Jakobus 2:14-26', p. 39

⁸¹ This contrasts with the arguments of other interpreters who recognise the whole of v. 19 as the interlocutor's remarks. These interpreters variously argue that the interlocutor is seeking to establish the separation of faith and works (Martin, p. 88; Laato, 'Justification', pp. 80-81), the impossibility of demonstrating faith from works (Hodges, 'light', p. 348), or that the faith that cannot save is only faith that 'God is one' (Donker, 'Der Verfasser', pp. 232-235). In addition to these interpreters, Mayor, p. 101, also recognises the whole of v. 19 as the interlocutor's remarks, although he argues that the interlocutor speaks in support of the author.

Since the interlocutor's speech continues in v. 19b the dominant interpretation which depicts the demons' fear at the judgement is highly inappropriate since it indicates that faith cannot save.⁸² However, the verse is open to another interpretation. The term *φρίσσω* expresses fear, and is commonly used in this sense within the LXX and Pseudepigrapha (Pr Man 4; T. Abr. [RA] 9:5; 16:3). This usage is also found in Justin Martyr, although here it is attributed to the 'demons, and all principalities and powers of earth' when faced with the power of God in Christ (*Dial.* 49:8). The common feature of these texts is fear and the power of God; those who fear may be either servants or enemies of God. The term *φρίσσω* is also used with regard to magic and exorcism,⁸³ and demons are often described as being fearful in these contexts.⁸⁴ Indeed, in the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (IV.3015-3020), demons are depicted as trembling 'at the name of God inscribed on [an] amulet'.⁸⁵ Furthermore 'the belief that the Shema, credal recitations, and the charms of magic names gave protection from demons' was common in Jewish literature.⁸⁶ Against this background, it is probable that the illustration in v. 19b is intended to demonstrate the

⁸² Ropes, p. 215; Dibelius, p. 160; Mussner, p. 139; Mitton, p. 110; Adamson, p. 127; Lautenschlager, 'Der Gegenstand des Glaubens', p. 178; Watson, 'James 2', p. 113; Frankemölle, p. 447; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 72; Wall, *Community*, p. 137; Bauckham, *James*, p. 121; Burchard, p. 124

⁸³ See Dibelius, p. 160; Laws, p. 127

⁸⁴ Philostratus, *Vit. Apollonii* 4.20

⁸⁵ W. L. Knox, 'Jewish Liturgical Exorcism', *HTR* 31 (1938) 191-203, pp. 194, 192; Cf. *PGM* IV.355-360

⁸⁶ Adamson, p. 126; R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine*, London: Penguin, 1986, p. 327 Cf. *PGM* XII.235-240 where the god whose hidden name is ineffable and yet terrifying for demons is invoked as part of a spell.

effectiveness of the belief approved in v. 19a in the realm of exorcism.⁸⁷ In this way the opponent is able to argue that the apparent 'faith apart from works' expressed in v. 19a is powerfully effective in exorcising demons, and therefore demonstrates that the category 'faith apart from works' is empty. In demonstrating that this category is empty, the opponent undermines James' argument in vv. 14-17, and is therefore implicitly able to remain confident that faith is efficacious at the judgement.⁸⁸

7.6.3 *Deconstructing the Objection*

It has been shown that the interlocutor introduced by James raises an objection to his argument in vv. 14-17. This objection undermines the category of 'faith apart from works' with the intention of demonstrating that the faith possessed by both the audience and James is efficacious at the judgement. In order to make his point, the interlocutor focuses on the belief that 'God is one', a belief he shares with James. The effectiveness of this belief in the practice of exorcism is then taken as an indication that the 'faith apart from works' criticised by the author in vv.14-17 is in reality 'faith with works' and is therefore efficacious at the judgement. However, this last step between the advantage of such faith in

⁸⁷ Laws (p. 126) notes the background of exorcism that stands behind this illustration, while Laato ('Justification', p. 81) argues that 'faith without works' is here advocated with reference to the powerful effect of the statement of faith (v. 19a) in exorcising demons (v. 19b). Note also J. Jeremias, 'Paul and James', *ExpTim* 66 (1954-55) 368-371, p. 370

⁸⁸ The assumption that the practice of successful exorcism indicates that one will be accepted at the judgement is evident in Matt 7:21-23. In this passage such activity on the part of those who confess 'Lord, Lord' fails to enable their salvation (see section 7.10.1). Furthermore, exorcism is one of the identifying marks of believers given in Mark 16:16-18.

the practice of exorcism and its ability to save is left unspoken, leaving the reference to the demons' fear ambiguous.

It is this ambiguity that allows the author to deconstruct the foregoing argument when he censures the interlocutor as *ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ* in v. 20. This censure marks the beginning of James' reply to the interlocutor's objection in vv. 18-19, a reply in which he does not explicitly address the main point of vv. 18-19, that is, that 'faith apart from works' does not exist, but rather, presuming its existence, proceeds to address the uselessness of such faith. However, this verse also criticises the interlocutor, not only for forgetting the example of Abraham, but also for the objection he has made in vv. 18-19. The author uses the term *κενός* to characterise the interlocutor as a 'foolish person', someone whose words are empty and deficient.⁸⁹ This person's error is not to see that 'faith apart from works' is useless.⁹⁰ The objection that precedes this verse is therefore depicted as that of a fool, and it is implied that this foolish argument has not demonstrated that faith will save at the judgement.

The author uses the censure in v. 20 to throw doubt upon the argumentation in v. 19, implying that the movement from v. 19a to v. 19b does not show that 'faith apart from works' is salvific, but rather that it is unsalvific. According to the interlocutor's argument, the demons believe that 'God is one' and shudder, the shuddering being a sign of fear in response to this belief being used against them in exorcism. In attributing this belief to demons that are certainly without

⁸⁹ BAGD, pp. 427-428

⁹⁰ Davids, p. 126 The use of *ἀργός* in v.20, along with *ἔργα*, is commonly recognised as a play on words (e.g. see Watson, 'James 2', p. 114).

the works desired by God, the interlocutor actually demonstrates that 'faith apart from works' exists. Furthermore, since these demons who possess 'faith apart from works' will be destroyed at the judgement, it is evident that 'faith apart from works' is not efficacious at the judgement.⁹¹

Implicit in this deconstruction of the interlocutor's argument is the idea that the demons do not possess works. That the interlocutor would accept this fact is entirely probable, especially since he is depicted as claiming that exorcism is a 'work'. That there may be a discrepancy between what the interlocutor (audience) identifies as works and what the author identifies as works is perfectly plausible in view of the insistence throughout the letter that only certain forms of action are acceptable before God (1:20-21, 25, 26-27; 2:8-13; 3:13-18). Furthermore, although James does not address this issue directly in vv. 18-19, his characterisation of the interlocutor as a 'fool' (v. 20) suggests a lack of wisdom, and wisdom is necessary for the faithful fulfilment of God's will (3:13-18). Moreover, as is evident from 2:8-13 and from 2:20-25, James is not simply concerned with individual actions, but rather he is concerned that life as a whole should be characterised by faithfulness. Such a conclusion cannot be drawn on the basis of exorcistic deeds alone.⁹² Indeed, the examples of Abraham and Rahab emphasise James' concern to depict works of obedience and mercy as those that should accompany faith. However, although implicit within the objection, the debate over what works in particular are acceptable before God is

⁹¹ The opposition between God and the devil in 4:7, and the use of exorcism here in 2:19, indicates that the demons are thought of as being opposed to God.

⁹² The possibility of performing such acts and still being an evildoer is presented in Matt 7:21-23.

not the point at issue in vv. 18-19. Rather the issue is whether or not 'faith apart from works' exists, and whether such faith is efficacious at the judgement. Therefore James passes over the issue of what works count before God, being satisfied that his implicit deconstruction of the interlocutor's objection has established that 'faith apart from works' is not sufficient to enable the possessor of faith to survive the judgement.

7.7 Jas 2:20-24: Another Proof that 'Faith Apart from Work' is Useless

As I have already noted, Jas 2:20 is a transitional verse marking the beginning of the author's reply to the interlocutor's objection in vv. 18-19.⁹³ That James is in fact replying to the interlocutor is evident from his use of the second person singular throughout vv. 20-23. However, the conclusion to this argument is directed towards the implied audience as is indicated by the use of the second person plural *ὁρᾶτε* in v. 24. This indicates that there is no great distinction between the audience and the interlocutor, and supports the identification of the interlocutor as defending the position attributed to the addressees in vv. 14-17. As Frankemölle has argued, there is a parallel between James' concluding statement in v. 17 and his aim in v. 20 to further demonstrate that 'faith apart from works is useless'.⁹⁴ In order to show that 'faith apart from works is useless' James employs the example of Abraham, who was '*par excellence* the exemplar of faith in God' within Second Temple Judaism.⁹⁵ Furthermore,

⁹³ Frankemölle, p. 448; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 227

⁹⁴ Frankemölle, p. 447; also Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 227

⁹⁵ Bauckham, *James*, p. 122

Abraham was also 'widely regarded as... the first monotheist' (*Jub.* 12:1-21; *Apoc. Abr.* 1-8; *Jos, Ant.* 1.154-157; *Philo, Virt.* 212-216).⁹⁶ In focusing on Abraham, James intends to demonstrate that even he whose faith was reckoned to him as righteousness was justified by works, and therefore not saved by faith alone. In this way he hopes to demonstrate conclusively that 'faith apart from works is useless', even if it is monotheistic.⁹⁷

7.7.1 Abraham, Justification and Faithfulness

James begins his argument with a rhetorically effective question that expects the agreement of even the 'foolish person' of v. 20.⁹⁸ The question concerns 'our father Abraham' and the offering of Isaac. The identification of Abraham as 'our father' cannot be used to suggest that the audience is made up entirely of Jewish-Christians since other early Christian writings use the title in addressing groups of mixed ethnicity (*1 Clem.* 31:2; cf. *1 Cor* 10:1).⁹⁹ While deductions about the ethnicity of the group are not possible, the description of Abraham as 'our father' demonstrates that both the interlocutor and James share the same religious heritage.¹⁰⁰ In turn this implies that Abraham is significant within the sacred history of the audience itself.

⁹⁶ Bauckham, *James*, p. 122

⁹⁷ Abraham's role as the first monotheist is not stated explicitly in James' argument, although it is possible that this role offers an important contrast to the use of such belief in v. 19. See Bauckham, *James*, p. 122; Davids, p. 129

⁹⁸ Mussner, p. 141; Watson, 'James 2', p. 115

⁹⁹ With Dibelius, p. 161; Mussner, p. 141; contra Mayor, p. 102; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 172, n. 46

¹⁰⁰ Johnson, p. 242

The statement with which the interlocutor is expected to agree is that Abraham 'was justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar'. Here James departs from using *σώξω* to describe surviving the judgement and instead uses *δικαίω*; this may be due to his use of Gen 15:6.¹⁰¹ The use of the passive indicates that it is God who justifies Abraham;¹⁰² it is according to God's judgement that Abraham is declared just. James is employing the example of Abraham in order to demonstrate that justification at God's judgement requires works.

The use of the plural *ἔργων* in relation to the single work of the 'Aqedah appears slightly incongruent. Although James has made use of the plural *ἔργα* throughout the preceding argument (vv. 14, 17, 18, 20), it still appears strange that a single work should be referred to as if it were plural.¹⁰³ There are a number of explanations for this discrepancy; it may be an allusion to Abraham's ten trials,¹⁰⁴ a reference to Abraham as an example of hospitality,¹⁰⁵ or simply a way of referring to Abraham's conduct in general.¹⁰⁶ While James may intend the audience to think of Abraham's hospitality, this is far from explicit within the passage as a whole, and such an interpretation tends to rely on a restriction of the meaning of *ἔργα* to 'works of mercy'.¹⁰⁷ It is possible that the use of the plural recollects the various tests that Abraham underwent, although perhaps,

¹⁰¹ Ropes, p. 217; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 234

¹⁰² Mussner, p. 141; Klein, *Vollkommenheit*, p. 74

¹⁰³ Contra Laws, p. 135; Verseput, 'Reworking', p. 113

¹⁰⁴ Dibelius, p. 162; Davids, p. 127; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 173

¹⁰⁵ R. B. Ward, 'The Works of Abraham: James 2:14-26', *HTR* 61 (1968) 283-290, p. 286; Watson, 'James 2', p. 115; Wall, *Community*, p. 146

¹⁰⁶ Dibelius, p. 162

with the argument of 1:13 in mind, the author would not want to emphasise this aspect of the sacrifice of Isaac. In my opinion it is more likely that the easy interchange between the plural and the singular is grounded in a holistic view of human deeds.¹⁰⁸ From this perspective, the sacrifice of Isaac is singled out as representative of the consistent pattern of Abraham's deeds, and the plural *ἔργα* indicates that it is this consistent pattern that James is concerned with.¹⁰⁹

Assuming the agreement of his interlocutor, James proceeds to point him towards the deduction that must be drawn from the example of Abraham.¹¹⁰ Having avoided mentioning Abraham's faith in the previous verse, James now focuses upon the role of both faith and works in the sacrifice of Isaac. While the use of the imperfect *συνήρογει* indicates that Abraham's faith was active,¹¹¹ it also shows that James thinks of faith and works as two related but separate entities. The point is that Abraham believed in God and his promises, and acted accordingly by 'offering Isaac his son on the altar'. Through the co-operation of faith and works Abraham's faith was completed i.e. it attained the goal of divine approval (Gen 22:16-18).¹¹² Therefore it is clear that the deduction drawn from the example in v. 21 is that works are necessary in order that those who have faith should receive divine approval.

¹⁰⁷ Ward, 'Works', pp. 289-290

¹⁰⁸ Yinger, *Judgement*, p. 25

¹⁰⁹ Yinger, *Judgement*, pp. 25-26

¹¹⁰ Contra Johnson, p. 243, the use of *βλέπεις* does not pick up the image of the mirror used in 1:22-25.

¹¹¹ Adamson, p. 130; J. G. Lodge, 'James and Paul at Cross-Purposes? James 2:22', *Bib* 62 (1981) 195-213, p. 199

¹¹² Dibelius, p. 163; Verseput, 'Reworking', p. 113

However, although Abraham received divine approval after the offering of Isaac (Gen 22:16-18), he also received such approval at an earlier point in time on the basis of his faith (Gen 15:6). In order to remove this temporal distinction and the possibility of an objection that Abraham is an example of 'faith without works' receiving divine approval, James interprets the offering of Isaac as the fulfilment of the divine speech in Gen 15:6. Making the connection between Gen 15:6 and the rest of Abraham's life does not set James apart from other Jewish literature. As Davids suggests, such a connection was frequently made in Jewish exegesis (Philo, *Abr.* 262; *Deus* 4; 1 Macc 2:52).¹¹³ Rather, the originality of James' treatment is found in his description of the 'Aqedah as 'fulfilling' the divine speech of Gen 15:6.¹¹⁴ Since he is primarily concerned in 2:14-26 with the promise of salvation and its fulfilment at the judgement, it is probable that the fulfilment spoken of in v. 23 should be understood against this background.

In Gen 15 God promises Abraham that a son will be his heir and that his descendants will be innumerable, to which Abraham responds with faith. On account of this faith God reckons Abraham righteous, i.e. in right relationship with him. It is this identity as a righteous person that Abraham fulfils in offering Isaac on the altar; through his works Abraham is revealed as being faithful (Jas 2:21). Through his faithfulness Abraham fulfils what God has said about him, and is justified by God whose promise to Abraham is fulfilled through his

¹¹³ Davids, p. 129

¹¹⁴ Wall, *Community*, p. 144, n. 114, notes that the use of the fulfilment idiom links the discussion of Abraham here in vv. 21-23 with the comment made on the 'royal law' in 2:8.

merciful sparing of Isaac. However, the ultimate benefit Abraham receives is indicated through his description as the 'friend of God'.¹¹⁵

The idea of 'friendship with God' has already been investigated in some detail, and particularly with reference to Abraham's designation as the 'friend of God'.¹¹⁶ In the consideration of Abraham's friendship with God it was demonstrated that the title 'friend of God' indicates that Abraham was not only a covenant member, but also a covenant keeper (*Jub.* 19:9; 30:20-21; CD 3:2-3). That is, this description of Abraham was particularly connected with his faithful fulfilment of God's will (*T. Abr.* [RA] 15:12-15; *1 Clem.* 10:1; Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.* 2:7). Indeed, this covenant faithfulness results in his name being recorded in heaven as a friend (*Jub.* 19:9; 30:20-21; CD 3:2-3), indicating that this title signifies not only covenant faithfulness, but also the salvific benefits that accrue to those who maintain the covenant. That James is aware of the covenantal associations of this language and the reception of blessing that friendship entails has already been shown in relation to 4:4. These findings are further confirmed here in 2:23 as Abraham's friendship is related to his justification in the context of a discussion about salvation at the eschatological judgement. The idea of being a 'friend of God' implies enjoying the benefits of the life that only God can give, and therefore Abraham's faith and works offer a sharp contrast to the dead faith of the implied audience. In using Abraham as his first exemplar of faith and works James indicates that the eschatological benefit of salvation is

¹¹⁵ The OT occurrences of this description of Abraham are found in passages recalling the fulfilment of the divine promise concerning his descendants (2 Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8). The title is used in connection with Gen 15:6 in Philo, *Abr.* 273.

¹¹⁶ See section 3.6.2

not received on the basis of covenant membership displayed through the possession of faith, but involves fulfilling the obligations that are concomitant with such membership. Therefore the interlocutor (and the implied audience) must not merely possess faith, but demonstrate their faithfulness through the fulfilment of the 'royal law' (2:8).

In v. 24 there is an abrupt change of address as James moves from arguing with the interlocutor to addressing the audience directly. This change indicates that it is the audience James is concerned to convince, and that they are intended to 'overhear' the preceding argument.¹¹⁷ Here he deduces from the specific example of Abraham a conclusion regarding the justification of humanity in general (*ἄνθρωπος*). This conclusion is extremely clear, 'a person is justified by works and not by faith alone' (cf. Gal 2:16; Rom 3:20). James uses *μόνον*, not as a way of signifying monotheistic belief or intellectual/confessional faith,¹¹⁸ but rather as the equivalent of *πίστις καθ' ἑαυτήν* in v. 17.¹¹⁹ The adverb is used to indicate that a person is not justified by 'faith apart from works', i.e. the possession of faith is not efficacious at the judgement. Therefore in order for the audience to receive the benefit of salvation they must have works that demonstrate their faithfulness. Although justification is clearly described as being based on works and not faith, the adverb 'alone' should not be added to the statement 'justified by works' as though surviving the judgement does not involve faith.¹²⁰ Such a reading of this verse not only

¹¹⁷ Martin, p. 95

¹¹⁸ Contra Martin, p. 95; Davids, p. 132

¹¹⁹ Mussner, p. 132; Johnson, p. 245; Versepit, 'Reworking', p. 106 n. 19

¹²⁰ Contra Lautenschlager, 'Der Gegenstand des Glaubens', p. 181

ignores the fact that faith and works are not opposed to one another in James, but also fails to acknowledge the role of faith in the example of Abraham from which this conclusion is deduced. It is those who possess faith that James is concerned with, and it is the combination of faith and works that will meet with divine approval at the judgement. Those who are shown to be faithful by their works will survive the judgement and receive the promised Kingdom (2:5).

7.8 *Jas 2:25: A Final Encouragement to Faithfulness*

In other early Christian literature Rahab appears as a model of faith (Heb 11:31), and of faith, hospitality and prophecy (*1 Clem.* 12).¹²¹ In both of these texts the example of Abraham is dealt with in the larger context (Heb 11:8-19; *1 Clem.* 10). However, here in *Jas 2:25* the author does not make any explicit mention of her faith but instead brings her forward as a parallel example to Abraham that a person is justified by works. That the condition of Rahab's justification is the same as Abraham's is shown by the use of *ῥατοῖα* and the choice of Rahab the prostitute demonstrates that the conclusion in v. 24 is truly universal.¹²² Even someone of such dubious character as Rahab was justified according to works, and so such justification is not only the future hope of those who walk perfectly with God, but also of those who are far from perfect. While

¹²¹ Note that in *1 Clem.* 12:1 Rahab is saved on the basis of her faith and hospitality.

¹²² Ropes, pp. 224-225; Adamson, p. 134

James does not mention Rahab's faith, it is probable that this faith is to be taken-as-read and does not indicate that salvation is by works alone.¹²³

Although James' reference to Rahab's works is extremely contracted, the description of that work in the words that follow is significant: *ὑποδεξαμένη τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ ἑτέρα ὁδῶ ἐκβαλοῦσα*. The use of *ἀγγέλους* is particularly intriguing since these 'messengers' are not the ambassadors of the King that are sent to find the spies, but the spies themselves.¹²⁴ The identification of the spies as 'messengers/angels' creates an allusion to the deeds of Abraham in Gen 18. This allusion creates another parallel between Abraham and Rahab, demonstrating that works of mercy are not the preserve of people like Abraham.¹²⁵ In the latter half of the description James notes that Rahab sent these 'messengers' a different way. This action is different from the biblical account in which she hides the spies and tells the searching soldiers that she does not know where the spies have gone (Josh 2:4-7). Rather, it implies that she sent the messengers in a different direction from that in which the soldiers had gone. Such a confusion of directions is present in Clement of Rome's account of this story (*1 Clem.* 12:4), suggesting that the account in that

¹²³ Contra Lautenschlager, 'Der Gegenstand des Glaubens', p. 181. For a discussion of Rahab's faith in connection with this passage see Bauckham, *James*, p. 124

¹²⁴ F. W. Young, 'The relation of 1 Clement to the Epistle of James', *JBL* 67 (1948) 339-345, p. 343

¹²⁵ Wall (*Community*, pp. 152-153) notes this allusion and agrees that it depicts Rahab as an exemplar of neighbourly love. However, Wall also argues that the point James is making through his use of *ἀγγέλους* is that the scouts served the same purpose as the angels in Gen 18 i.e. they tested and confirmed Rahab's membership in the 'true' Israel. In my opinion this reads too much into both Jas 2:25 and Gen 18.

text may be related to that which is found in James.¹²⁶ It is possible, as Wall suggests, that James intends this action of Rahab to be interpreted as an instance of his own advice in 5:19-20.¹²⁷ However, while Rahab's directing of the 'messengers' saves them from death, these 'messengers' were not brought back from 'wandering from the truth'.

That James' concern here in v. 25 remains focused on the problem first raised in v. 14 is clearly evident from v. 26 where the refrain that 'faith apart from works is dead' is struck once more. According to James the example of Rahab demonstrates that works must be added to faith in order that a person should survive the judgement. The argument is therefore seen to challenge that perspective which considers the possession of faith to be efficacious at the judgement, and its attendant ethos of unfaithfulness. The goal that the audience wishes to obtain can only be reached if their faith acts together with their works; the alternative is 'death'. That 'faith apart from works' is dead is presented as being a simple matter of fact, in the same way that the body is dead without the spirit. The author's argument is therefore shown to represent the true reality faced by the audience, breaking down their deception concerning salvation and encouraging an ethos of faithfulness in view of the coming judgement.

¹²⁶ See D. A. Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome*, (NovTSup, 34), Leiden: Brill, 1973; Young, 'Relation', p. 344

¹²⁷ Wall, *Community*, p. 156

7.9 Conclusion

In 2:14-26 James continues to challenge the 'defective' theology of the implied audience, primarily with regard to the fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of their relationship with God which this theology involves. The situation the author is responding to is similar to that addressed in 1:22-25 in that the 'defective' theology he is countering involves the audience's overestimation of an aspect of their relationship with God as indicating that they will receive God's good gifts. However, while in 1:22-25 this overestimation involved hearing without doing, the present passage seeks to undermine the belief that the possession of faith is a sufficient ground for the reception of the gift of salvation at the eschaton. Consequently, it is evident that the possession of faith is understood as delineating the boundary of the temporal and eschatological people of God, implying that the *πίστις*-confession (*ἐγὼ πίστιν ἔχω*) had become a recognised mark of Christian belonging for both the author and those addressed.

In contrast to this 'defective' theology and in order to challenge the lack of faithfulness perpetuated by the audience's acceptance of it, James seeks to establish that from both a temporal and eschatological perspective the possession of faith without works is of no advantage. Using an *inclusio* and a hypothetical example he demonstrates that membership of the covenant is not necessarily synonymous with enjoying its eschatological benefits. On the contrary, those who belong to the covenant continue to be faced with the choice between life and death (Deut 30:15-19). This means that if the implied audience

is to enjoy the benefits of their special relationship with God, they must fulfil the obligations concomitant with their faith rather than rely on faith alone.

Anticipating the audience's possible response, James introduces an objection through the use of an interlocutor. This objection is that James' category of 'faith apart from works' is empty. That is, the interlocutor does not seek to establish the separation of faith and works, nor that faith and works are alternative paths to salvation. Rather, he seeks to undermine the author's argument in vv. 14-17 by establishing that there is no such thing as 'faith apart from works'. This is achieved through his description of the powerful effect that the belief that 'God is one', a belief central to the covenant (Deut 6:4), has on demons in the practice of exorcism. However, the ambiguity in this argument and the characterisation of the interlocutor as a fool in v. 20 presents an implicit deconstruction of this objection. Indeed, the fact that the demons possess faith, and yet, have no works that James would recognise as works, indicates that 'faith apart from works' exists and that it is not salvific. Furthermore, the author's choice of the belief that 'God is one' may be intended to draw attention to the context of this belief in the *Shema*. Such an allusion would support the author's insistence that works accompany faith, since here belief that 'God is one' is connected with loving God through the keeping of the covenant.

The author's point is pressed further in vv. 21-24 where he reminds the interlocutor of Abraham's example. The close identification of the audience as those who consider 'faith apart from works' to be a sufficient ground for salvation found in vv. 14-17, continues throughout vv. 18-24, indicating that it is

not necessary to read this passage as a polemic against a specific unidentified opponent (e.g. Paul). The choice of Abraham is due to his reputation as the ultimate exemplar of the possession of faith. Through this example James demonstrates that the implied audience will be justified by works, since even Abraham was not justified by faith alone. Therefore, if the audience want to receive the title 'friend of God', a title that speaks of both covenant membership and covenant faithfulness, like Abraham they must fulfil the obligations that their relationship with God involves.

Having established that 'faith apart from works' is not efficacious at the judgement, James offers the implied audience a final encouragement and warning in vv. 25-26. The encouragement comes in the form of Rahab's justification, since even Rahab, whose life was far from perfect, was justified according to deeds. However, in case this positive motivation to faithfulness might be ignored he reminds them once more that 'faith without works' leads to certain death. The associations of death within the letter indicate that this death is eschatological (1:12-15; 5:19-20) and since there is an expectation that judgement will come soon (5:9) it is imperative that the audience adopt James' theology and become doers of the law. It is only if they accept that their relationship with God involves not only a distinctive status but a distinctive vocation, and take the appropriate action, that they will enjoy the covenant benefit of life.

7.10 *Excursus: The Relationship Between James and Paul*

The preceding exegesis of Jas 2:14-26 has endeavoured to interpret this passage in relation to and continuity with 1:22-25 and 2:1-13. This has revealed that James is challenging an attitude in which the possession of faith is understood to secure the benefit of salvation. Therefore, before comparing James and Paul it is important to consider whether such a concern is restricted to Jas 2:14-26 or is part of a wider polemic within early Christianity.

7.10.1 *Behaviour, Belonging, and Sufficient Conditions of Salvation*

In Josephus membership of the covenant is not simply a matter of physical descent but rather involves obedience to the law (*Ant.* 4.2; 5.97, 109).¹²⁸ This concern to establish that descent is not a sufficient condition of salvation is also found in the gospels. Both Matt 3:7-10 and Luke 3:7-9 depict John the Baptist warning against the presumption that Abrahamic descent can substitute for repentance and its fruits, although in contrast to Josephus, the importance of descent is nullified since God can raise up children of Abraham from the stones (Matt 3:9; Luke 3:8). This nullification stands in distinction from the approach taken in John 8:31-59 where descent remains an important element of belonging to God's people, although in this case the descent in question is not physical descent from Abraham but behavioural 'descent' from God. However, in Matthew, Luke and John actions and not only belief are a fundamental element of the relationship with God.

The importance of behaviour for belonging is also found in Paul, where in addition to the idea that faith should be accompanied by a different way of life (1 Cor 5:1-2), those who prove unrighteous are depicted as failing to inherit the Kingdom of God (6:9-11; cf. Eph 5:5). The connection between how the believer lives and the end result is made clear in Gal 6:7-8, where Paul warns against the deception that one might sow to the flesh and still reap eternal life, since 'God is not mocked' (v. 7). He will not be tricked into bestowing blessing instead of judgement,¹²⁹ and so the Galatians should not grow weary in sowing to the spirit (vv. 9-10; cf. Pol. *Phil.* 5:1). It appears then that Paul is refuting a possible source of laziness in performing good works based on a misunderstanding of God's character and the future judgement.¹³⁰ This deception has at its heart the thought that future blessing is assured regardless of whether one sows to the Spirit or to the flesh.

Although Paul gives no indication as to why this thought may have arisen, other early Christian texts suggest some possibilities. There is a concern in *1 Clement* 32:3-4 that the teaching of justification by faith may be used as grounds for laziness in doing good. The author opposes such a position by emphasising the need to do good as the judgement will be according to works (33:1; 34:3-4).¹³¹ This concern is also evident in *Barn.* 4:9-13, where it is stated that 'the whole time of our life and faith will profit us nothing unless we resist' (4:9; *Did.* 16:2). This warning is followed by an encouragement to keep the commandments

¹²⁸ Spilsbury, 'Josephus', pp. 250-251

¹²⁹ R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, (WBC, 41), Dallas: Word, 1990, p. 280

¹³⁰ Likewise the allusion to Gal 6:7 in Pol. *Phil.* 5:1 is used to discourage laziness in fulfilling God's commandments, particularly in view of inheriting the future promise (5:2-3).

(4:10-11) and a reminder that the judgement that is according to deeds will be impartial (v. 12). However, while *1 Clement* was concerned with justification by faith, the problem for *Barnabas* consists in relying on one's calling. Nevertheless, as in the former case, such reliance does not result in blessing, but in judgement (*Barn.* 4:14). Therefore, as 2 Pet 1:10 teaches, the believer must confirm his call and election by proving fruitful.

It is evident from this brief survey that the argument of Jas 2:14-26 is not an isolated phenomenon among the writings of early Christianity. Furthermore, other texts provide evidence that some early Christians relied on confession or profession to demonstrate their membership of God's people. In Matthew (7:21; 25:11) and Luke (6:46) the expression 'Lord, Lord' is understood as a claim to belong to those who follow Jesus, while Titus 1:16 implies that profession alone has been understood in a similar fashion amongst those addressed in this letter. However, in both cases confession is rejected as an identifying mark unless accompanied by deeds. In particular it is clear from Matt 7:21-23 that membership in the earthly community, whether demonstrated through confession alone or confession accompanied by 'charismatic gifts and extraordinary deeds',¹³² is not the definitive mark of those who belong to the eschatological people of God.

¹³¹ See also Hagner, *Clement of Rome*, p. 249

¹³² Allison, *Matthew*, p. 714

7.10.2 Comparing James and Paul

It is clear that both James (2:14-26), and Paul (Gal 6:7-8), address issues that are the subject of a widespread internal polemic in early Christianity. From James, and the other non-Pauline texts examined, it has been established that this polemic addresses a prevailing tendency to consider membership in the present earthly people of God as synonymous with belonging to the eschatological people of God. Although Paul leaves the possible source of this problematic tendency undisclosed in Gal 6:7-8, the other texts examined indicate that, as in James, it is connected with faith's role in justification and as a boundary marker of the early Christian community.¹³³ Therefore it is with regard to this background that the relationship between Jas 2:14-26 and Paul's discussion of justification by faith should be considered.

The relationship between Jas 2:14-26 and Paul has elicited a disproportionate amount of scholarship from interpreters of James and the comparisons drawn have 'often been overemphasised and distorted'.¹³⁴ The correspondence between the language used in Jas 2:20-24 and Gal 2:16, Rom 3:28 and 4:1-3 is remarkable,¹³⁵ and this has led many to assume that the argument in James presupposes Paul's discussion of faith and works.¹³⁶ However, there are also

¹³³ The role of faith in identifying members of the early Christian community is witnessed to in Mark 16:16-18; Acts 2:44; 4:32; 5:14; 15:5-11; 19:18; Rom 10:9; Heb 4:3; 1 Pet 2:7

¹³⁴ Johnson, p. 58

¹³⁵ Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 51; F. Avemarie, 'Die Werke des Gesetzes im Spiegel des Jakobusbriefes: A Very Old Perspective on Paul', *ZTK* 98 (2001) 282-309, p. 289

¹³⁶ Longenecker, 'Faith', p. 206; M. L. Soards, 'The Early Christian Interpretation of Abraham and the Place of James within that context', *IBS* 9 (1987) 18-26, p. 24; Ropes, p. 205; Dibelius,

those that consider Paul to be using James,¹³⁷ or even that James is responding to Hebrews.¹³⁸ The range of positions already delineated indicates the diversity of opinion that exists among interpreters, even before the issue of whether or not James and Paul contradict each other with regard to justification is addressed.

In both James and Paul Genesis 15:6 is cited in a form that agrees against the LXX, using *δέ* after *ἐπίστευσεν*, and *Ἀβραάμ* rather than *Ἀβραμ*.¹³⁹ However, the citation of Gen 15:6 in almost identical form is found in Philo (*Mut.* 177), and all the references to Abraham found in the New Testament are *Ἀβραάμ* (Matt 1:1-2; 3:9; Luke 3:8; John 8:33; Heb 11:8).¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, 1 Macc 2:51-52 connects Abraham's faithfulness in trial with Gen 15:6, in a fashion similar to that found in Jas 2:20-24 (cf. *1 Clem.* 31:2; *Barn.* 13:7).¹⁴¹ Moreover it is clear from Matt 3:7-10, Luke 3:7-9, and John 8:31-59 that Abraham was often appealed to in arguments concerning membership of God's people. Therefore it

p. 179; Laws, p. 129; Ludwig, *Wort als Gesetz*, p. 188; V. Limberis, 'The Provenance of the Caliphate Church: James 2:17-26 and Galatians 3 Reconsidered', 397-420 in C. A. Evans & J. A. Sanders (eds.), *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, (JSNTSup, 148), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, pp. 411-419; Jeremias, 'Paul and James', p. 368; J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of earliest Christianity*, London: SCM, 1977, p. 251; S. Dowd, 'Faith that works: James 2:14-26', *RevExp* 97 (2000) 195-205, p. 199; Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 248; Avemarie, 'Old Perspective', p. 299

¹³⁷ Mayor, pp. xci-xcvii; Robinson, *Redating*, pp. 126-127

¹³⁸ B. W. Bacon, 'The Doctrine of Faith in Hebrews, James, and Clement of Rome', *JBL* 19 (1900) 12-21, p. 19; A. T. Hanson, 'Rahab the Harlot in Early Christian Tradition', *JSNT* 11 (1978) 53-60, p. 59

¹³⁹ Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 51

¹⁴⁰ Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 67

¹⁴¹ See further Bauckham, *James*, pp. 120-127, 130

is not necessary to presume that James and Paul are dependent upon one another on the basis of their use of Gen 15:6.

Another issue that relates to the similarity of the language used is the nature of faith and works. Several interpreters argue that the faith that James is concerned with in 2:14-26 is different from that found in Paul's teaching on justification by faith since it is merely intellectual.¹⁴² However, I have already demonstrated that the faith James is concerned with throughout 2:14-26 is not simply intellectual, and that the faith that is possessed by the unidentified speaker in v. 14 is faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁴³ In being a claim to membership of God's people this faith is no different from that found in Gal 2:16 where Paul is concerned with the decision of faith as indicated through the aorist *ἐπιστεύσαμεν*.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, any attempt to read this faith as a cipher for the idea that faith is necessarily and automatically accompanied by moral 'works' fails to take into account Paul's own awareness of the dangers of his teaching on justification by faith both here in Gal 2:17 and in Rom 3:7-8 and 6:1.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² J. Reumann, J. A. Fitzmyer, & J. D. Quinn, *'Righteousness' in the New Testament*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982, p. 156; Bacon, 'Doctrine', p. 16; Longenecker, 'Faith', p. 200; Mayor, p. 218; Oesterley, p. 442; Mitton, p. 99; Bauckham, *James*, p. 122; Jeremias, 'James and Paul', p. 370; Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 56; Dowd, 'Faith', p. 202; C. Ryan Jenkins, 'Faith and Works in Paul and James', *BSac* 159 (2002) 62-78, p. 65

¹⁴³ See Sections 7.2 and 7.6.2

¹⁴⁴ H. Räisänen, 'Galatians 2:16 and Paul's break with Judaism', *NTS* 31 (1985) 543-553, p. 545; Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 85

¹⁴⁵ Contra Bauckham, *James*, pp. 127-129; Cf. the comments of Wall (*Community*, p. 293), 'Ebionism correctly detected certain features in the Pauline calculus that would lead the church toward a glib fideism and secularised antinomianism and away from the covenantal nomism of its Judaic roots'.

In a move parallel to that taken with regard to faith, several interpreters emphasise that by 'works' Paul and James mean different things.¹⁴⁶ However, although it is true that James does not use the specific phrase *ἔργα νόμου*, it is evident that the doing of the law is included within the remit of his general use of *ἔργα* (1:25; 2:8-13).¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the phrase *ἔργα νόμου* in Paul probably encompasses not only circumcision and other 'ritual' requirements, but also the 'moral' commandments delivered at Sinai.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, the possibility that James and Paul disagree can not be mitigated or even side-stepped by an appeal to their divergent usage of the terminology of faith and works, since the meaning of these terms in both authors overlaps significantly. However, this similarity in language does not necessitate that either author has the other in mind as a polemical target, nor does James' usage of this language necessarily presuppose Paul. This latter point is clear from Gal 2:16 which purports to represent a doctrine shared among all Jewish Christians,¹⁴⁹ a point that may also find support in Rom 3:27-29.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Reumann, *'Righteousness'*, p. 156; Longenecker, 'Faith', p. 207; Ropes, p. 204; Mitton, p. 107; Johnson, pp. 60, 63; Jeremias, 'James and Paul', p. 370; Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 56

¹⁴⁷ Jackson-McCabe, *Logos*, p. 244; Avemarie, 'Old Perspective', pp. 287, 307,

¹⁴⁸ T. R. Schreiner, "Works of the Law" in Paul', *NovT* 33 (1991) 217-244, p. 226; C. E. B. Cranfield, *On Romans and Other New Testament Essays*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998, pp. 1-14; Cf. J. M. G. Barclay, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988

¹⁴⁹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 83; J. L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (AB, 33A), New York: Doubleday, 1997, p. 246; B. Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, p. 171; A. A. Das, 'Another Look at *ἐάν μὴ* in Galatians 2:16', *JBL* 119 (2000) 529-539, pp. 533, 537-538

¹⁵⁰ R. B. Hays, "Have we found Abraham to be our forefather according to the flesh?" A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1', *NovT* 27 (1985) 76-98, p. 85

In Gal 2:16 Paul states that 'works of the law' perform no role in justification, and that justification is by faith. This is in clear contradiction to Jas 2:24 where James indicates that no one is justified by faith alone, but rather by (faith and) works. The differing targets that the arguments of Paul and James address do not mitigate this contradiction. On the contrary both are concerned with membership in God's people and the impact this has on behaviour and salvation. However, there is a significant difference between James and Paul. The former is addressing the overestimation of faith as the sufficient condition for salvation and encouraging those addressed to faithfully fulfil the law. In contrast to this line of argumentation, which corresponds to that found in Rom 2, Paul is arguing that justification is by faith and that therefore there is no need to fulfil the law. While James is seeking to encourage his addressees to be distinct from the 'world', Paul is attempting to remove the distinctions between Jews and Gentiles.¹⁵¹ Therefore, while their teaching is contradictory,¹⁵² the different issues that they are addressing suggest that neither of the authors has the other, or some form of their teaching, in view as a polemical target.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Paul's use of the doctrine of justification by faith and not works to undermine ethnic distinctions and boundaries contrasts with the statement of Peter in Acts 10:34-35 where it is 'any one who fears God and does what is right' that is acceptable before God.

¹⁵² Contra Davids, p. 21; Johnson, p. 62

¹⁵³ Contra Ropes, p. 35; Mussner, p. 130; Donker, 'Der Verfasser', p. 239; Limberis, 'Provenance', pp. 419-420; Dunn, *Unity*, p. 252

Covenant Thought in Jas 3-5

The preceding chapters have demonstrated that the significance of covenant thought for this letter is not restricted to Jas 4:1-6, since it is also employed and modified by the author throughout 1:2-2:26 to expose the inadequacies of the implied audience's theology and behaviour. The purpose of this present chapter is to provide a summary analysis of those parts of James that have not already been the subject of detailed discussion, that is, Jas 3:1-18 and 4:7-5:20. This analysis will confirm that covenant thought performs a significant role in the letter as a whole, and that the utilisation of this ideology provides a coherent structure within which the author's theology and ethics are elaborated and developed. Pursuant with this aim the following consideration will begin with 3:1-18 before examining the teaching of the letter as it unfolds in 4:7-5:20.

8.1 *Jas 3:1-18: Distinction and Assimilation*

It is generally recognised that the author's discussion of the difficulties posed by the tongue marks a return to a topic already touched upon earlier in the letter (1:19, 26; 2:12).¹ This topic first appears in 1:19 where the audience is instructed to be 'slow to speak', a recommendation that, if followed, should help them to avoid the misuse of the tongue.² The significance of this instruction is

¹ Mayor, p. 107; Laws, p. 140; Davids, p. 138; Martin, p. 104; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 80

² See section 5.2

revealed in 1:26 and 2:12. In the first of these verses James indicates that failure to control the tongue is incompatible with religion that is acceptable before God,³ while the second brings this incompatibility into explicit relationship with the future judgement.⁴ Moreover, in both cases, controlling the tongue is connected with maintaining distinction from the 'world'.

These previous references to the issue of controlling speech inform the present passage. In addition to the explicit reference to judgement in v. 1, which provides a connection to 2:12, the use of *χαλιναγωγέω* in v. 2 forcibly recalls 1:26.⁵ It is the use of this term that provides the point of departure for the author's concentration on controlling the tongue in vv. 3-4. In these verses James uses metaphors to emphasise that the effects of the tongue belie its small size, and that the one who controls the tongue can control the whole body.⁶ However, rather than concentrate on the positive benefits of controlling the tongue (Prov 21:23), James chooses to focus on the destructive influence of an uncontrolled tongue (3:5-6). In this choice, the optimism that the tongue can be controlled, apparent in vv. 2-4 (cf. 1:19, 26), gives way to a pessimistic account of the tongue.⁷

The description of the tongue in v. 6 as 'the world of evil established among our members' reveals that the author understands the tongue as representing, at an

³ See section 5.6

⁴ See section 6.5.2

⁵ Davids, p. 138; cf. Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 275, n. 47

⁶ Mayor, p. 112; Ropes, p. 229; Adamson, p. 143

⁷ Johnson, p. 254; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 179; contra Dibelius, p. 186; cf. Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 278

intimate level, the threat of assimilation posed by the 'world'.⁸ This connection between the tongue and the 'world' is underlined by James' use of *σπιλώω* (v. 6), a term that serves to recall his exhortation to remain unstained by the 'world' (1:27; *ἄσπιλος*).⁹ The effects of the tongue's perfidious liaison with the 'world' are not restricted to the area of speech, but rather defile the whole body. Furthermore, these effects are not simply traced back to the 'world', but to demonic origin through James' reference to Gehenna,¹⁰ indicating the fundamental opposition between of the uncontrolled tongue and God. It is this rebellious influence that lies behind the tongue's resistance to human efforts to subdue it in line with the rest of creation (vv. 7-8; Gen 1:26-28).¹¹

This presentation of the difficulties of controlling the tongue is further accentuated by James' use of *ἀκατάστατος* in v. 8, a term that reminds the audience of the portrait of the double-minded man in 1:8.¹² By recalling this portrait the author suggests that such instability is incompatible with the behaviour expected from the audience. This suggestion is pressed home through the use of *κακόν*, since evil is certainly opposed to the will of the unequivocally good God of James' theology. Indeed, in contrast to the promise of life offered to those who remain steadfast (1:12; cf. 2:17, 26), the tongue is full of deadly poison. In this respect those who fail to control their tongue are liable to face the judgement announced in 2:12, even if the primary referent of

⁸ Cf. Laws, p. 150; Davids, p. 142; Wall, *Community*, p. 169; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 80

⁹ Mayor, p. 115; Johnson, p. 259; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 277; Burchard, p. 143

¹⁰ Dibelius, p. 198; Laws, p. 152; Davids, p. 143

¹¹ Mayor, p. 119

¹² Martin, p. 117; cf. Burchard, p. 148

the tongue's deadly poison is the harm it causes in inter-human relationships (Sir 28:17-22).

Having established the danger posed by the tongue and the difficulty, or apparent impossibility, of taming the tongue, vv. 9-12 present an argument that underlines the necessity of controlling the tongue.¹³ In vv. 9-10 James portrays both himself and his audience as being susceptible to the duplicities of the tongue. The allusion to Gen 1:26-28 implicit in Jas 3:7 is now made explicit.¹⁴ This allusion draws the audience's attention to the fundamental deception involved in using the tongue to worship God and harm humanity (cf. 1:26). This deception involves the failure to recognise that the curse directed towards humans is also directed towards God in whose image they have been made,¹⁵ and involves an action diametrically opposed to that of God who blesses humankind (Gen 1:28).¹⁶ Consequently, James states that such behaviour ought not to be found among those who worship God (3:10).

The images in vv. 11-12 involve a movement that prepares for the teaching found in vv. 13-18. The first image, that of a spring producing both fresh and bitter water highlights the impossibility of both good and bad products being produced by the one source.¹⁷ This supports James' conclusion that blessing and cursing should not come from the same mouth, and indicates that a fundamental distinction ought to exist between those who worship God and

¹³ Cf. Dibelius, p. 201

¹⁴ Johnson, p. 262; Burchard, p. 149

¹⁵ Davids, p. 146

¹⁶ Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 180; cf. Laws, p. 156

those who use abusive speech towards their fellow humans. This note of distinction is also sounded in the second image that emphasises the impossibility of a fig tree producing olives, or a grapevine, figs. As in other parts of James (e.g. 1:19-27) this presents a correlation between the implied audience's identity and vocation, both of which involve maintaining distinction from the 'world' which in this case is represented by the evils of the uncontrolled tongue (3:6-8). Finally, the third image points to the impossibility of salt water producing fresh water, emphasising that something that is bad cannot produce something that is good.¹⁸ Therefore, those who produce evil through their use of the tongue cannot produce what is good; their religion is a deception (1:26).

The profound difficulties encountered with regard to controlling the tongue demonstrate that 'not many' of the implied audience should 'become teachers'. However, the necessity of controlling the tongue is not only applicable to those who hold the position of teacher, but to all those who would loyally serve God. Consequently, the author's question in v. 13 and the elaboration of the wisdom from above and its earthly counterpart apply as much to the audience as a whole as to those who would be teachers.

In this respect it is intriguing that James should choose to ask 'who is wise and understanding (*σοφός και ἐπιστήμων*) among you?' The adjective *ἐπιστήμων* is found only here in the New Testament, and its combination with *σοφός* is not widespread (LXX Deut 1:13; 1:15; 4:6; cf. Dan 5:12; Philo, *Migr.* 56-58).¹⁹ The

¹⁷ Davids, p. 144; Bauckham, *James*, p. 90; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 180

¹⁸ Bauckham, *James*, p. 90

¹⁹ Contra Hoppe, *Der theologische Hintergrund*, p. 45

combination is used in Deut 1:13, 15 with regard to the choice of tribal leaders for the twelve tribes, a situation akin to that in James where it is also the question of leadership of the twelve tribes (1:1), as represented in the position of teacher, that is addressed.²⁰ Furthermore, the exact phrase *σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων* is used in Deut 4:6 with regard to the people as a whole. According to this passage, the distinction of Israel will be found in its identification by the other nations as a people who are wise and understanding, with the presence of God among them and their obedience to the law engendering the admiration of the nations.²¹ It appears that James is deliberately recalling the distinctive identity of Israel in 3:13, emphasising, that as in Deut 4:6, such distinction involves loyalty evidenced in deeds.

It is against this background of the need for distinction that James returns to the issue of the sources underlying behaviour that he raised in his discussion of the tongue (3:5-8). The threat of assimilation is now presented in terms of a contrast between wisdom from above and earthly wisdom. As in the case of the tongue, the wisdom that is not from above is under demonic influence and inspires destructive behaviour (vv. 14-16). In contrast, the wisdom from above is pure (v. 17), indicating that it is free from assimilation with the 'world' (1:27; 3:6). Furthermore, this wisdom is *ἀδιάκριτος*, a characteristic that distinguishes it from the instability of the tongue (3:8) and the double-minded (1:8). Therefore, the audience is faced with choosing between allegiance to God, displayed through speech and behaviour consistent with the wisdom from above, and

²⁰ Martin, p. 127; Wall, *Community*, p. 181; cf. Davids, p. 150; Burchard, p. 154

²¹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p. 64

assimilation to the 'world' evident in speech and behaviour that promote disunity and bitterness.

8.2 *Jas 4:7-5:20: Restoration, Warning & Encouragement*

The depiction of the threat of assimilation in terms of wisdom from below in 3:13-18 is further developed in 4:1-6, where the implied audience are portrayed as succumbing to this threat through their liaison with the 'world'.²² According to this portrayal the audience have failed to accept the exclusive nature of their relationship with God and God's role as giver of good gifts (4:4-5). Accordingly they are identified as those who arrogantly oppose God (4:6). The co-ordinating conjunction *οὖν* presents 4:7-10 as a call to repentance connected with the preceding denunciation of the audience as 'adulteresses'.²³

The use of *ἀδελφοί* and the negative command in vv. 11-12 appear to indicate that these verses mark the beginning of a new section.²⁴ In this case it might be concluded that these verses form a transition to the author's teaching in 4:13-5:6. This passage consists of two sections related to one another by their use of *ἄγε νῦν* (4:13; 5:1),²⁵ even though there is an obvious escalation in the author's

²² See sections 3.3-3.7

²³ See section 3.7.2; Contra Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 151

²⁴ Dibelius, p. 228; Mussner, p. 187; Adamson, p. 176; Laws, p. 186; Johnson, pp. 291-292

²⁵ Dibelius, p. 230; B. Noack, 'Jakobus wider die Reichen', *ST 18* (1964) 10-25, p. 11; Laws, p. 195; Davids, p. 171; Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 151; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 148; R. Bauckham, 'The Relevance of Extracanonical Jewish Texts to New Testament Study', 90-108 in J. B. Green (ed.), *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, p. 98

condemnation of the 'rich' in 5:1-6 in comparison with the merchants in 4:13-17.²⁶ These seemingly distinct sections can be understood more coherently, as is clear from the observation that they are linked by a common thematic, whether this is presented as arrogance,²⁷ the problem of a worldly disposition,²⁸ or neglect of God.²⁹ More importantly, this coherence is signalled by the use of *ἀντιτάσσεται* in 5:6, as this recalls the citation in 4:6.³⁰

The relationship between 5:6 and 5:7 is indicated by the use of *οὖν*. The use of this conjunction should be understood as drawing conclusions, with regard to the behaviour expected from the implied audience, from the extended discussion of opposition to God in 4:11-5:6.³¹ Here the author directs his attention once more to the audience as *ἀδελφοί*,³² and this address is used frequently throughout 5:7-20 as James seeks to warn and encourage his audience to adopt his theology and ethics. The repetition of *ἰδοὺ* in vv. 7, 9 and 11 suggests that vv. 7-11 may be understood as constituting a section distinct from vv. 12-20.³³ This is further confirmed by the problematic use of *πρὸ πάντων* at the beginning of v. 12, a use that seems to mark the conclusion to the letter as a whole.³⁴ This section incorporates teaching on responding to

²⁶ Laws, p. 195

²⁷ Johnson, p. 292

²⁸ Dibelius, p. 230; Davids, p. 171; cf. Tsuji, *Glaube*, pp. 90-92

²⁹ Ropes, p. 276

³⁰ L. Alonso Schökel, 'James 5:6 and 4:6', *Bib* 54 (1973) 73-76, p. 74; Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 154; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 203; cf. Wall, *Community*, p. 210

³¹ Mussner, p. 200; Martin, p. 189; Penner, *Eschatology*, p. 150; cf. Schökel, 'James 5:6 and 4:6', p. 75; Laws, p. 208; Wall, *Community*, p. 251

³² Mussner, p. 200; Johnson, pp. 311, 327; Wall, *Community*, p. 251

³³ Johnson, p. 311; cf. Adamson, p. 190

³⁴ Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 209

both positive and negative situations, particularly those involving illness. In this latter case prayer is an important factor in bringing healing and it is not surprising, given the author's emphasis on the implied audience's problematic understanding of prayer (4:3), that he should choose to highlight this topic once more in 5:16-18. Following this teaching on prayer, James calls for the audience actively to seek to restore those who have wandered from the truth (vv. 19-10), a call that echoes his own purpose in writing.

8.2.1 *Jas 4:7-10: Covenant Restoration*

The use of *ὑποτάσσομαι* in 4:7 alludes to the preceding citation of Prov 3:34 and the call for the implied audience to humble themselves in Jas 4:10.³⁵ This allusion is further reinforced by James' employment of the term *ἀντίστητε* in v. 7 recalling the use of *ἀντιτάσσεται* in v. 6.³⁶ These connections confirm the earlier suggestion that the audience are portrayed in terms of the proud who are resisted by God, rather than the humble who are 'friends of God'.³⁷

The idea of submitting to God presented through the use of *ὑποτάσσομαι* is unusual within the New Testament,³⁸ where, in addition to the present verse, it is only found in Heb 12:9 (cf. Rom 8:7; 10:3; Eph 5:24). Its use here in Jas 4:7 in opposition to *ἀντίστητε* serves to highlight both the nature of the implied audience's relationship with God, and their abuse of this relationship through

³⁵ Adamson, p. 174; Davids, p. 165

³⁶ Schökel, 'James 5:6 and 4:6', p. 74; Laws, p. 180; Burchard, p. 175

³⁷ See section 3.7.2

assimilation to the 'world'. Their relationship with God is once more revealed as involving exclusive loyalty to God, not simply as friend, but also as Lord. This loyalty goes beyond that which is maintained on the basis of the reception of goods and services (cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, VII.34.1-2), that is, the kind of contingent loyalty condemned in the preceding verses. In operating by such standards the implied audience not only failed to resist the devil, but also subordinated themselves to him as they resisted God. Consequently, in order to restore their relationship with God this movement towards the devil and away from God must be reversed. James encourages this movement by assuring the audience that their submission to God and resistance of the devil will result in the devil fleeing from them (cf. *T. Dan.* 5:1; *T. Iss.* 7:7; *T. Naph.* 8:4; *T. Benj.* 5:2; *Herm. Man.* 12.2.4; 12.4.7).

The movement of the devil away from the audience forms a subtle contrast to the author's next exhortation to draw near to God.³⁹ The term *ἐγγίξειν* is commonly used to describe the distance between people, places and times (LXX Gen 12:11; 27:21; 33:3; Lev 25:25; Deut 15:9; Matt 21:1; 26:46; Mark 11:1; 14:42; Luke 7: 12; 12:33; Acts 7:17; 1 Pet 4:7). However, as is frequently noted, the language of drawing near is particularly frequent with regard to the priesthood.⁴⁰ It is clear in this connection that those who would draw near to God need to be holy (Exod 3:5; 19:21-22; Lev 10:3; 21:21-23; Ezek 42:13). This requirement of holiness is also applicable to the people as a whole (Isa 29:13;

³⁸ Ropes, p. 268

³⁹ Mayor, p. 145

⁴⁰ Mayor, p. 146; Adamson, p. 174; Laws, p. 183; Martin, p. 153; Johnson, p. 284; Burchard, p. 176

55:6; 58:2; Amos 6:3; Zeph 3:2), whose distinction from the other nations involved approaching God (Deut 4:7; Ps 148:14; cf. Sir 36:12).⁴¹ The call in James can therefore be understood in relation to the prophets' exhortation for apostate Israel to return to its covenant with Yahweh (Hos 12:6; cf. Zech 1:3; Mal 3:7).⁴² James stresses God's reciprocity, and so draws attention to his gracious generosity and faithfulness as announced in 4:6.

Confirmation of James' use of covenant thought here in 4:8 is found in his call for the audience to purify themselves, as the necessary condition for their drawing near to God. Their need for such purification is revealed in the author's characterisation of them as both 'double-minded' and 'sinners', although it is more generally evident from their defiling liaison with the 'world' (1:27; 3:6).⁴³ Therefore, in order to restore their relationship with God the implied audience must once more become distinct from the 'world', and this involves being pure in both thoughts and deeds. In addition James calls them to be miserable, using a term (*ταλιπορέω*) that is used in the LXX with reference to the catastrophes visited upon God's people for their apostasy (Hos 10:2; Joel 1:10).⁴⁴ This background is also suggested by the author's call for the audience to lament and weep (Jer 4:8; 9:12-22; Joel 2:12-13; Mic 2:4; Zech 11:2). However, in contrast to such passages, the audience is called to adopt this behaviour of repentance voluntarily rather than as the result of an approaching calamity.⁴⁵ In this way James avoids any suggestion that God brings disastrous calamity upon

⁴¹ Johnson, p. 284

⁴² Cf. Davids, p. 166; Martin, p. 155; Johnson, 283; Burchard, p. 176

⁴³ Ropes, p. 270; cf. Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 86

⁴⁴ Johnson, p. 285; cf. Burchard, p. 177

his people, ensuring that his depiction of God's unequivocal goodness is upheld.

This distinction is also evident in James' call for the audience to let their laughter be turned into mourning and their joy into dejection (4:9). The associations of laughter and folly (Prov 10:23; Eccl 2:2; 7:2-6; Sir 21:20), and laughter or joy with the indulgence of life's luxuries (Amos 8:10; Tob 2:6; Luke 6:21, 25) appear to inform the author's exhortation.⁴⁶ Therefore, those who would humble themselves before the Lord must abandon those activities that have characterised them as 'friends of the world'.⁴⁷ In doing so their relationship with God will be restored and they will be exalted (v. 10), since God is a faithful friend.

8.2.2 *Jas 4:11-5:6: Illustrating Arrogance*

In 4:11-12 James returns to the topic of speech (1:19, 26; 2:12; 3:1-12, 14),⁴⁸ with all its problematic implications for the audience's relationship with God. Once again he places particular stress on his relationship with the audience through his repetition of *ἀδελφοί*, even though this repetition is required by the different grammatical constructions he employs.⁴⁹ Indeed, James emphasises

⁴⁵ Johnson, p. 285

⁴⁶ K. H. Rengstorff, 'γελάω', 658-662 in *TDNT Vol. 1*, p. 659; Martin, p. 154; Wall, *Community*, p. 209

⁴⁷ Mussner, p. 186; Davids, p. 167; Johnson, p. 286

⁴⁸ Mayor, p. 148; Martin, p. 162; Burchard, p. 178

⁴⁹ Mayor, p. 148; Adamson, p. 176

the existence of this bond, not only between himself and the audience, but also between the abuser and the abused with his use of the personal pronoun *αὐτοῦ*.

The sin of evil speaking, or slander, is often found in vice lists (*T. Gad* 3; *Rom* 1:30; *2 Cor* 12:20; *1 Clem.* 30:1, 3; *Barn.* 20) and is particularly characteristic of a life of wickedness.⁵⁰ However, James proceeds to present this behaviour in relation to judgement and the law, revealing that it involves not only an arrogant appropriation of the role of judge with regard to one's brother, but also an arrogant usurpation of a role that belongs to God alone.

The problem is that in speaking against one's brother one speaks against the law and judges the law. This stance vis-à-vis the law reveals that such a person is not a doer of the law (cf. 1:25),⁵¹ but one who forgets it and the God on whose authority it rests (cf. *Ps* 49 (50):18-20).⁵² This forgetfulness fails to take account of God's unique position (*εἰς*) as lawgiver (*Jas* 2:11; cf. *Exod* 24:12; *2 Macc* 3:15; *4 Macc* 5:25) and judge (*Jas* 2:13; cf. *Gen* 18:25; *Rom* 14:3-10, 13),⁵³ a uniqueness that recalls *Jas* 2:19 and *Deut* 6:4-9.⁵⁴ In addition, James emphasises that it is God alone who is 'able to save and to destroy' (*Jas*

⁵⁰ Dibelius, p. 228

⁵¹ Wall, *Community*, p. 214; cf. Dibelius, p. 229; Mussner, p. 187; Davids, p. 169; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 87; Burchard, p. 179

⁵² Cf. *Laws*, p. 188

⁵³ Ropes, p. 275; Dibelius, p. 229. On the connection of God's characterisation as lawgiver and judge with covenant thought see section 6.5

⁵⁴ Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 198; Johnson, p. 294; cf. *Laws*, p. 188

4:12).⁵⁵ Although this expression is not found in the LXX it finds precedent in descriptions of God's sovereignty over life and death (Deut 32:29; Ps 68:20; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7; cf. Matt 10:28; *Herm. Sim.* 9.23.4). In view of God's authority and power it is sheer folly to assume that one can usurp his role as judge,⁵⁶ a folly that is brought out in James' question, 'who are you to judge your neighbour?' The use of *πλησίον* alludes to the role of Lev 19:18 described in Jas 2:8,⁵⁷ providing further indication that the practice of *καταλαλέω* is incompatible with the distinct vocation of fulfilling the law.

The emphasis on God's sovereignty and the arrogance involved in speaking against fellow brethren found in 4:11-12 provides a connection with 4:13-17 even though this passage is more particularly related to 5:1-6 through their common use of *ἄγε νῦν*. In 4:13-17 James directs his attention towards those designated as *οἱ λέγοντες*, a group whose speech suggests that they are merchants. The absence of the term *ἀδελφοί* throughout 4:13-17 and 5:1-6, and its use in 4:11-12 and 5:7 suggests that this mercantile group is understood as being distinct from the religious community formed by the implied audience.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ The idea that God can destroy may be considered as being inconsistent with James' insistence that God is unequivocally good. However, as in 2:13 (see section 6.5.2) James' comment is connected with God's role as judge, and God's fulfilment of this role is distinguished from that of humanity by his impartiality. Consequently, it is evident that God's judgement is good, and that for the author the description of God's ability to destroy does not imply that he is a source of evil.

⁵⁶ Cf. Mussner, p. 188

⁵⁷ Mayor, p. 148; Dibelius, p. 228; Mussner, p. 187; Laws, p. 187; Davids, p. 170; Martin, p. 162; Johnson, p. 293; Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 87; Burchard, p. 179; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 198

⁵⁸ Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 198; Contra Davids, p. 171

The passage appears to function as a warning similar to that found in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21; cf. Sir 11:18-19).⁵⁹ The merchants are depicted as making business plans with the aim of making profit (Jas 4:13). These plans display a concentration on this present life that assumes that life is entirely within the control of humanity and presumes to know what will happen tomorrow (v. 14; Prov 27:1). In contrast to such an arrogant view (Jas 4:16) James draws attention to the transient character of human life through the image of a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes (v. 14; cf. 1 *Clem.* 17:6). As Bauckham has demonstrated, similar images of the transient life carry overtones of judgement for the wicked (Ps 37:20; Hos 13:3; Wis 5:14; 1QM 15:10; 4 Ezra 7:61; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 82:6).⁶⁰ That such overtones are present here is evident from the characterisation of the merchants' speech as evil boasting, a description that reveals their assimilation to the 'world' (Jas 3:6, 8, 14; cf. 1 John 2:16).⁶¹ In contrast to this assimilative arrogance James recommends that the merchants recognise God's sovereignty over their plans and their existence. Making one's submission to the will of God evident through such phrases as *εἰάν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ* was a widespread custom (Acts 18:21; Heb 6:3; Phil 2:24; *Aristophanes. Plut.* 114; Xenophon, *Hipparch.* 9.8; Plato, *Theaet.* 151d; *Alc.* 1.135d; Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 18.11),⁶² and so the merchants' failure to employ it is without the excuse of ignorance. As James concludes, those who fail to do what they know is right commit sin (4:17) and so

⁵⁹ Mayor, p. 149; Davids, p. 174

⁶⁰ Bauckham, 'Relevance', p. 100

⁶¹ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 91

⁶² Mayor, p. 151; Dibelius, pp. 233-234; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 149, n. 320

the implied audience is warned against arrogantly forgetting God in the pursuit of trade and profit.

The author continues his illustration of arrogance by drawing attention to the behaviour of the 'rich' and the judgement that awaits them. The author's choice of *ὀλολύζω* and *ταλαιπωρία* depicts these 'friends of the world' in terms of the prophetic denunciations of the nations who opposed God (Isa 10:10-12; 13:6-13; 15:2-6; 23:1-14; Jer 28 (51):56; Zech 11:2).⁶³ This recalls James' previous depiction of the 'rich' as enemies of God and of the implied audience in 2:5-7.

The charges against the 'rich' begin in 5:2-3 with the description of the present decay of their wealth, the perfect forms being understood with reference to the present rather than the future given that the future tense itself is used in v. 3.⁶⁴ The language is symbolic, since while garments may become moth-eaten, precious metals such as gold and silver do not rust.⁶⁵ The first charge against the 'rich' is that they have hoarded their wealth without using it to aid others less fortunate than themselves (cf. Sir 29:10),⁶⁶ and so this decay will bear witness against them at the judgement with devastating effect (Jas 5:3). The contrast with the partial judgement depicted in 2:1-4 could not be more pronounced.⁶⁷

⁶³ Ropes, p. 283; Laws, p. 197; cf. Johnson, p. 299

⁶⁴ M. Mayordomo-Marín, 'Jak 5,2.3a: Zukünftiges Gericht oder gegenwärtiger Zustand?' *ZNW* 83 (1992) 132-137, p. 134; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 155; cf. Ropes, p. 284; Laws, p. 197; contra Dibelius, p. 236; Adamson, p. 185; Davids, p. 175; Martin, p. 176

⁶⁵ Ropes, p. 284; Dibelius, p. 236

⁶⁶ Mayor, p. 155; Dibelius, p. 236; Martin, p. 178; Mayordomo-Marín, 'Jak 5,2.3a', p. 134; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 154

⁶⁷ Cf. Johnson, p. 299

Furthermore, the irresponsibility of the 'rich' is not restricted to the past, since they continue to store up wealth, and therefore judgement, in the last days.⁶⁸

The second accusation is that the 'rich' have kept back the wages of those who have harvested their fields (5:4). This charge continues the depiction of the 'rich' as those who are opposed to God, since paying the labourer his wages is a clear stipulation of the covenant (Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15 (LXX vv. 16-17)) and the image of unpaid wages is used to describe covenant unfaithfulness (Jer 22:13; Mal 3:5). The idea that the wages themselves cry out against this oppressive behaviour recalls the witness of the decayed wealth referred to in Jas 5:3 (cf. Gen 4:10). However, in the remainder of the verse it is the workers who cry out to God (Deut 24:14-15; cf. Exod 2:23; 5:8; 22:22-23),⁶⁹ and their cries are described as having reached the 'ears of the Lord of hosts' (Isa 5:9). Through this depiction God is portrayed as the champion of the oppressed (Jas 1:27), and the judgement of the 'rich' is assured.

In addition to oppressing the labourers by withholding their wages the 'rich' are also accused of living a life of luxury (5:5), as one might expect given their splendid clothing and gold rings (2:2). However, their luxurious display of 'friendship with the world' is misguided since, as with their storing up of wealth (5:3),⁷⁰ this simply prepares them for judgement as God's enemies (Isa 34:2, 5-8; Jer 12:3; Ezek 39:17; Lam 2:21-22; cf. *1 Enoch* 94:9; 1QH 7:20).⁷¹ Of course

⁶⁸ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 92

⁶⁹ Cf. Johnson, p. 302

⁷⁰ Cf. Dibelius, p. 238

⁷¹ Davids, p. 178

wealth not only brings luxury, but also legal control (Jas 2:6),⁷² and so the 'rich' are finally charged with abusing this power by condemning and killing the righteous (5:6; cf. Ps 10:8-9; Prov 1:11; Isa 3:10; Amos 5:12).⁷³ This charge and those that precede it illustrate the arrogant defiance of God perpetrated by the 'rich'. In view of such defiance the author returns to the citation of Prov 3:34 in Jas 4:6, as is evident from the use of the present *ἀντιτάσσεται*,⁷⁴ and asks 'Does [God] not resist you?' (5:6).⁷⁵ Through this climatic question James brings his illustration of arrogance to a close, emphasising that such arrogance identifies its perpetrators as 'friends of the world' and therefore enemies of God.

The illustrations of arrogance found in 4:11-5:6 present various activities that exemplify the 'adulteress' assimilation to the 'world' condemned in 4:1-6. In each case the sovereignty of God is ignored, as those depicted fail to submit to God. The importance of submitting to God is brought out through references to God's role as lawgiver and judge, his power over life and death, and his resistance of the arrogant. This continues the depiction of the relationship between God and the audience as involving exclusive loyalty, and the importance of avoiding the threat of assimilation. In order to distinguish

⁷² Davids, p. 178; Burchard, p. 194; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 202; cf. Mussner, p. 199

⁷³ Ropes, p. 291; Laws, p. 204; Davids, p. 178

⁷⁴ Schökel, 'Jas 5:6 and 4:6', pp. 73-74. As Schökel argues the rarity of the verb *ἀντιτάσσομαι* (LXX 3 Kgdms 11:34; Esth 3:4; 4:17; Hos 1:6; Prov 3:15, 34; Acts 18:6; Rom 13:2; 1 Pet 5:5) and its appearance in both Jas 4:6 and 5:6 cannot be accidental and speaks in favour of a connection between the two verses.

⁷⁵ In addition to the evidence for a connection between Jas 4:6 and 5:6, the present reading also finds support in that it continues the author's alternation in 5:1-6 between the activity of the 'rich' and their judgement. With Schökel, 'Jas 5:6 and 4:6', p. 74; Johnson, p. 305; Konradt, *Christliche Existenz*, p. 158; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 203; contra Mayor, p. 160; Ropes, p. 292; Dibelius, p. 239; Mussner, p. 199; Laws, p. 207; Davids, p. 180; Wall, p. 232

themselves' as those belonging to God the audience must do what they know to be right, that is, they must submit to God by fulfilling the law.

8.2.3 *Jas 5:7-20: Encouragement Towards Faithfulness*

The use of *οὐν* in 5:7 suggests that James is making a conclusion with regard to the preceding illustrations of arrogance, particularly that of the 'rich'.⁷⁶ In continuity with the earlier call that the implied audience should be 'slow to anger' (1:19),⁷⁷ the present passage exhorts them to be patient until the coming of the Lord. The importance of being patient is illustrated by the description of a farmer waiting to harvest his fruit until it has received 'the early and late rain'. Although these rains are a climatic characteristic of Palestine,⁷⁸ the present reference is most probably a literary allusion.⁷⁹ This is suggested by the lack of interest in the possibility that these rains might fail,⁸⁰ something that would distract from James' purpose of assuring and encouraging his audience that God will faithfully deliver them from their oppression at the hands of the 'rich' and reward them for their endurance (vv. 10-11; cf. 1:12).

The literary allusion to Deut 11:14 conveys that the rains on which the farmer depends are a gift from God. Through this allusion James motivates renewed faithfulness among the audience, in the same way that God's gift of rain is used

⁷⁶ Ropes, p. 293; Mussner, p. 200

⁷⁷ See section 5.2

⁷⁸ Ropes, pp. 295-296; Mussner, p. 202; Davids, p. 183; cf. Johnson, p. 315

⁷⁹ Dibelius, p. 244; Laws, p. 212; cf. Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 205

⁸⁰ Dibelius, p. 244

to encourage the maintenance of the covenant in Deut 11:10-17.⁸¹ Furthermore, the probability of the allusion to Deut 11:14 is increased by the fact that this covenantal tradition was developed with regard to the deliverance of Israel (Joel 2:23; Zech 10:1) and God's coming (Hos 6:4), since it is within this context that James makes use of the tradition.

The character of God is particularly important throughout 5:7-11, as is already evident from the allusion in v. 7 to God's role as giver of gifts. The emphasis on the coming of the Lord, whether this refers to God⁸² or Jesus,⁸³ also testifies to the continuing importance of this aspect of covenant thought. In view of the nearness of the Lord's coming the audience must be patient and strengthen their hearts (v. 8; cf. Sir 6:37; 22:16) so as to remain loyal to him, neglecting to do so will turn an encounter of deliverance into one of judgement (v. 9). In addition, the audience are instructed to learn from the examples of the prophets (cf. Matt 5:12; *1 Clem.* 17:1) and Job (cf. Ezek 14:14, 20; *1 Clem.* 17:3). However, the motivation for endurance that these examples provide is further enhanced through reference to the end (*τέλος*) of the Lord in relation to Job (Jas 5:11; cf. Job 42:10-17). Here James refers to the reward Job receives for his steadfast loyalty to God as evidence not only that blessing belongs to those who endure (v. 11; cf. 1:12),⁸⁴ but also that God is merciful and compassionate. This description recalls Exod 34:6 (cf. Ps 103:8),⁸⁵ and by alluding to this

⁸¹ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 128-129

⁸² Laws, p. 212; cf. Dibelius, p. 242

⁸³ Ropes, p. 293; Mussner, "Direkte" und "Indirekte", p. 112; Adamson, p. 190; Davids, pp. 182, 185; Martin, p. 192; Johnson, p. 314; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 205

⁸⁴ Tsuji, *Glaube*, p. 95

⁸⁵ See Obermüller, 'Hermeneutische Themen', p. 236

passage James assures the implied audience that 'God is not vicious; he does not love watching people suffer. Rather he is compassionate'.⁸⁶ Therefore it is clear that God's character performs an integral role in engendering faithfulness among the audience, especially as the focus of their hope for deliverance.⁸⁷

The use of *πρό πάντων* in Jas 5:12 suggests that the prohibition of oaths forms the culmination of a series of imperatives.⁸⁸ It is difficult to understand how this prohibition could form such a conclusion to the imperatives of vv. 7-11. However, the reference to speech and the possibility of facing judgement provide a connection with v. 9 (cf. 4:11-12),⁸⁹ and so the saying on oaths is not entirely isolated.⁹⁰ Furthermore, it marks an interest in different forms of speech used in the community⁹¹ and can be considered as the last negative admonition addressed to this topic in the letter.⁹²

The prohibition itself resembles the Jesus-saying found in Matt 5:34-37,⁹³ and seems to be a radicalisation of an ethical tendency evident elsewhere (Sir 23:9; Philo, *Decal.* 84-85; Diog. Laert. 8.22; Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 47).⁹⁴ In forbidding oaths James is modifying covenant thought (Deut 6:13), although he is

⁸⁶ Davids, p. 188

⁸⁷ See section 4.2.2

⁸⁸ Mayor, p. 165; Laws, p. 219

⁸⁹ Cf. Ropes, p. 300; Davids, p. 188

⁹⁰ Contra Dibelius, p. 248

⁹¹ Laws, p. 220; Johnson, p. 327

⁹² W. R. Baker, "Above All Else": Contexts of the Call for Verbal Integrity in James 5.12', *JSNT* 54 (1994) 57-71, p. 58; cf. Adamson, p. 194; Davids, p. 188

⁹³ See Dibelius, pp. 250-251; Davids, pp. 189-190; P. S. Minear, 'Yes or No: The Demand for Honesty in the Early Church', *NovT* 13 (1971) 1-13, p. 7

⁹⁴ Dibelius, p. 249; see Baker, 'Contexts', pp. 59-70

reflecting the concern that oaths should be kept (Num 30:2; Lev 19:12; Deut 23:21-23). The problem with oaths is that they suggest that some forms of speech are more honest than others.⁹⁵ In view of the difficulty of controlling the tongue such a perspective can only increase the probability of assimilating to the 'world' through false speech (cf. 3:14). Consequently, the author warns the audience to avoid the use of oaths and speak honestly on all occasions so that they will not fall under judgement.

The control of the tongue involved in the honesty commended in Jas 5:12 will set the audience apart from the 'world', and this distinction is also found in the responses recommended in the following verses. The audience is instructed to respond to suffering with prayer, to happiness with singing and to illness by calling for the elders (vv. 13-14). Each of these responses is ultimately directed to God and displays a trust and dependence upon him as the source of good things. However, it is the theme of prayer that becomes the focus of vv. 14-18.⁹⁶ In continuity with 1:6 it is the prayer of faith that will be heard by God,⁹⁷ and God's benefaction is seen in that he faithfully responds to such prayer by saving the sick person and raising him up. Additionally, if this person has sinned he will be forgiven, although James is careful to avoid any necessary causal relationship between illness and sin along the lines of the covenantal curses (Deut 28:15-68),⁹⁸ thus avoiding the implication that God may be responsible for

⁹⁵ Adamson, p. 194; Davids, p. 190

⁹⁶ Ropes, p. 303; Davids, p. 191; Martin, p. 205

⁹⁷ Davids, p. 194; Johnson, p. 331; Edgar, *Chosen*, pp. 210, 212

⁹⁸ Johnson, p. 333; cf. Mussner, p. 223; M. C. Albl, "Are any among you Sick?" The Health Care System in the Letter of James', *JBL* 121 (2002) 123-143, p. 134

the audience's suffering. Consequently, since God is willing to heal and forgive, the audience is exhorted to confess their sins and pray for one another.

The important connection between prayer and faithfulness established in Jas 1:5-8 is repeated in 5:16-18 with reference to the example of Elijah.⁹⁹ It is the prayer of the righteous that will achieve great things, and so the audience must live by God's standards in distinction from the 'world'. James introduces Elijah as someone who shares the same nature (v. 17; *ὁμοιοπαθής*) with himself and the audience,¹⁰⁰ emphasising that his effectiveness in prayer was not peculiarly his own (cf. Sir 48:1-11).¹⁰¹ Employing a traditional account of the Elijah story James draws attention to his prayers as bringing first drought and then rain (cf. 4 Ezra 7:109).¹⁰² The reasons for these prayers are left unspoken, but given the allusion in Jas 5:7 and the assumption that this example is well known, it is probable that James intends a further allusion to Deut 11:13-17.¹⁰³ In this passage idolatry results in the withholding of the rains while faithfulness brings forth God's gift of rain producing fruit from the land. Such an allusion would reveal that Elijah's prayers were in accordance with God's will,¹⁰⁴ a pertinent point for James given his earlier rebuke of the implied audience for pursuing their desires through prayer (4:3). The example indicates that those who are faithful, like Elijah, will receive good gifts from God.

⁹⁹ K. Warrington, 'The Significance of Elijah in James 5:13-18', *EvQ* 66 (1994) 217-227, p. 219

¹⁰⁰ Ropes, p. 311; Dibelius, p. 257; Martin, p. 212

¹⁰¹ Mussner, p. 229; Johnson, p. 336; cf. Ropes, p. 311

¹⁰² Dibelius, p. 256

¹⁰³ Cf. Johnson, p. 337; Warrington, 'Significance', pp. 225, 226 n. 51

¹⁰⁴ Warrington, 'Significance', p. 225

In the final two verses of the letter, the nature of the relationship between God and the implied audience is once more presented as one in which loyalty is of the utmost importance if one is to enjoy its eschatological benefits. This is evident in the author's assurance that anyone who brings someone back to the 'truth' (v. 19; cf. 3:14) will 'save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins' (v. 20). These verses act both as an encouragement to mutual correction, and as a warning to any among the implied audience who may fail to heed James' teaching. The author's hope is that his letter will have brought those addressed back to the 'truth', ensuring that they will enjoy God's good gift of salvation.¹⁰⁵

8.3 Conclusion

The foregoing analysis indicates that covenant thought continues to provide the framework within which the author's teaching is elaborated and developed. This is particularly evident with regard to the author's continuing employment of the basic structures of covenant thought.¹⁰⁶ It is clear that the character of God continues to perform a significant role in the author's teaching, and that he remains concerned to demonstrate that the audience's relationship with God requires exclusive loyalty in the face of the threat of assimilation posed by the 'world'. In addition to this evidence the author's use of various terms (e.g. *ἐγγίξειν* (4:8), *ταλιπορέω* (4:9; 5:1)) connect his teaching with scriptural passages where the nature of the covenant relationship is apparent, either in

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Davids, p. 198; Cargal, *Restoring*, p. 46; Edgar, *Chosen*, p. 214

¹⁰⁶ See section 2.1

terms of the distinction it should involve, or the absence of this distinction as a result of assimilation. Moreover, the author makes significant use of allusions to texts that refer to the covenant relationship between God and Israel (3:13; 5:4; 5:7, 17-18), and these allusions serve to depict the behaviour required from those who belong to the covenant if they are to receive God's good gifts.

In 3:1-18 the use of covenant thought has been particularly evident in James' concern to highlight the threat of assimilation posed by the tongue and the impossibility of serving God whilst succumbing to this threat. Through the presentation of this concern James establishes once more that the implied audience's relationship with God is exclusive in nature, involving not only a distinctive identity, but also the distinctive vocation of living in accord with God's wisdom. Furthermore, although the emphasis on God's character in 3:9 unmistakably occurs under the influence of creation theology, it is nonetheless consistent with the framework of covenant thought. Moreover, the underlying sources evident in the destructive effects of the tongue and earthly wisdom are opposed to the presentation of God and his wisdom in such a way as to emphasise his unequivocal goodness.

In view of the significant usage of covenant thought in Jas 4:1-6 it is not surprising to find that the restorative action called for in vv. 7-10 is presented as a return to the covenant. Here James continues to depict the sin of the implied audience in terms of apostasy from the covenant by recalling the prophetic denunciations of Israel (v. 9). The audience's apostasy is now presented in terms of submitting to the devil and resisting God (v. 7). This presentation

underscores the exclusivity of their relationship with God and the absolute loyalty required to maintain this relationship. In order to restore the covenant the audience must distinguish themselves from the defilement of the 'world' by purifying their thoughts and deeds (v. 8). This purification involves abandoning all that makes them 'friends of the world' (v. 9) so that they might be distinctively identified as those who draw near to God (v. 8). Throughout this call for restoration God's goodness is depicted in terms of his faithful response to repentance. Moreover, the faithfulness and generosity of God identifies him as a good friend. Furthermore, the unequivocal goodness of God is ensured by removing any implications that he brings present calamity on the audience for their apostasy (v. 9); on the contrary, it is God who is the audience's benefactor (v. 10).

The importance of remembering God is emphasised in the author's illustrations of arrogance found in 4:11-5:6. In the same way that allowing the 'world' to usurp God's position as benefactor is incompatible with the distinctive identity and vocation of the implied audience (4:4), so usurping his position as lawgiver and judge reveals a fundamental disloyalty towards him (vv. 11-12). This display of disloyalty involves a neglect of the distinct vocation of keeping the law described in 2:8-12, and fails to recognise the significant role performed by God's character in determining the behaviour expected from his people.

This warning against adopting behaviour incompatible with the vocation of keeping the law is followed by two further illustrations of arrogance, the first relating to a group of merchants (4:13-17), and the second to the 'rich' (5:1-6).

The passage dealing with the merchants reveals the folly in assuming that one has control of life, an assumption that forgets God's sovereignty. This neglect of God is also seen in the behaviour of the 'rich' who are depicted as the enemies of God in continuity with the depiction of the 'world' in 4:4. The judgement of the 'rich' depicted in 5:1-6 offers a sharp contrast with the audience's partiality towards them dealt with in 2:1-7. Indeed, the covenantal emphasis on God's concern for the 'poor' evident in that earlier passage is made explicit in 5:4 where God is presented as the champion of the oppressed. It appears that 5:1-6 may be a deliberate reversal of the actions of the audience depicted in 2:1-4, highlighting that the 'rich' may presently enjoy power and influence, but in the end they too will face judgement according to God's honour-code. In view of God's resistance towards the 'rich' and all those who are arrogant, the audience ought to distinguish themselves from the behaviour condemned in 4:11-5:6, and choose instead to follow humbly James' encouragement towards faithfulness (5:7-20).

The influence of covenant thought is evident in 5:7-20 particularly with regard to the importance of God's character in engendering faithfulness and the necessity of faithfulness if the audience is to enjoy God's good gifts. The relationship with God requires loyalty and since the coming of the Lord is near it is essential that the audience remain steadfast (vv. 8, 10-11). In doing so they, like Job before them, will receive God's blessing since God is merciful and compassionate. This positive depiction of God continues in vv. 14-18 as he is variously depicted as willing to forgive and heal, and as answering prayer. This depiction continues to establish God's unequivocal goodness in relation to prayer as first developed

in 1:5-8. Furthermore, it is evident that the faithfulness called for in 5:7-20 will distinguish the audience from the 'world', confirming once more that their relationship with God requires exclusive loyalty (vv. 19-20).

Conclusion

On the basis of his designation of James as paraenesis, Dibelius concluded that this letter has no theology, since paraenesis 'provides no opportunity for the development and elaboration of religious ideas'.¹ In the introduction the variety of responses that Dibelius' claim has drawn from interpreters was considered and found wanting.² In particular, previous attempts to identify the theological unity of the letter have not been successful. However, the preceding investigation has demonstrated that James consistently employs and modifies covenant thought in order to evaluate, shape, and correct the theology and behaviour of the implied audience. Furthermore it has been established that James' use of covenant thought is directed towards three interrelated aspects: God's character, the nature of the covenant relationship, and the threat of assimilation. In considering the teaching of James with regard to these aspects, it has been shown that the author is concerned to combat a situation in which the audience has succumbed to the threat of assimilation posed by the 'world' as a result of their 'defective' theology.

The 'defective' theology that James is concerned to combat involves two significant misunderstandings, one relating to the character of God and the other to the nature of the covenant relationship. The audience's misunderstanding of God is particularly connected to God's role as the benefactor of his people. Instead of accepting that God gives wholeheartedly

¹ Dibelius, p. 21

and without reproach (1:5), they conclude from their continuing state of want that God must be an envious gift-giver (4:4-5). This understanding of God's character is all too anthropomorphic for James who insists in contrast that God is unequivocally good (1:13, 17).

The author's concern to correct the implied audience's understanding of God's character in relation to his gift giving is also connected to their misunderstanding of their relationship with God. They are depicted as violating their relationship with God through their attempts to procure 'good' things from sources other than God (1:14-15; 4:1-6). This behaviour involves not only a failure to accept that all good things come from God, but also the failure to accept the exclusive nature of the covenant relationship. Furthermore, the doubleness involved in the adoption of this 'defective' theology and its concomitant pattern of behaviour is evident from the fact that the audience continue to consider themselves as God's people while they become 'friends of the world'.

The opposition between 'friendship with God' and 'friendship with the world' is a modification of the covenantal distinction between Israel and the nations. It has been shown that this transformation of covenant thought highlights the disloyalty involved in the audience's idolatrous attribution of God's gift-giving character to the 'world'. In combination with the metaphor of adultery it emphasises the fundamental breach in the relationship between God and the audience caused by the latter's assimilation to the thought and behaviour of the

² See section 1.4

'world'. Furthermore, the audience's assimilation to the 'world' is compounded by their proud reassessment of God's character as is clear from James' indictment and correction in 4:5-6. In regard to 4:5, it was demonstrated that previous solutions to the problems presented by this verse are inadequate and a more plausible interpretation was offered in their stead. This interpretation indicated that the audience is fundamentally mistaken about God's gift-giving character, since they understand him to be an envious benefactor.

The problem of doubleness seen in the audience's 'friendship with the world' is particularly evident in their certainty that, even though they fail to live according to God's standards, they will receive his eschatological gift of salvation (1:22-27; 2:14-26). At the heart of this doubleness is their misunderstanding of both God's character and their relationship to God. In order to correct these misunderstandings and the behaviour that accompanies them James insists that their identity as God's people requires the fulfilment of a distinctive vocation through the doing of the law (1:22-25; 2:8-13). Furthermore, James makes implicit use of the *imitatio Dei* ethic in order to encourage the audience to adopt the pattern of behaviour appropriate to their status as God's people. Only through following the example of God and living in accordance with his word, law and wisdom, will they be able to become and remain distinct from the 'world'.

Through the interpretation of Jas 2:14-26 on its own terms, in distinction from its relationship to Paul, it has been established that it is part of a wider internal polemic employed in early Christianity. Moreover, this has also led to an original

reading of the controversial passage found in Jas 2:18-19 as part of this polemic, that presents a plausible alternative to the inadequate solutions that have been previously proposed. This polemic addressed 'defective' understandings of God's character and the divine-human relationship, particularly with regard to the overestimation of faith as a sufficient condition of salvation. The pervasive nature of this polemic suggests that the problem of combining incompatible behaviour with being God's people was a clear and present danger within early Christianity.

It has clearly been established that theology is fundamental for the ethical instruction contained in this letter, and that James' use of covenant thought provides the letter with the coherence it is often thought to be lacking. This is evident both from the detailed exegetical investigation carried out with regard to Jas 1-2 and 4:1-6, and from the summary analysis of 3:1-18 and 4:7-5:20. Additionally, it is clear that James continues in 3:1-18 and 4:7-5:20 to challenge the implied audience to adopt the pattern of behaviour concomitant with a theology in which God is unequivocally good.

On the basis of the foregoing investigation James can be understood as an important witness to the use of covenant thought, providing the 'new' faith community with its own self-definition as those belonging to God. According to this self-definition Israel's covenant identity has been appropriated by the faith community so that their antecedent history is understood in terms of the establishment of the Sinai covenant. It is this faith community that stands to inherit the promises made to the 'twelve tribes', both in the present and at the

eschaton. However, as the distinct status of Israel required them to keep the covenant, so the faith community is required to maintain their distinction from the 'world' through their fulfilment of God's will. In particular this requirement involves obeying the whole law in accordance with the love command. However, the covenant relationship has also undergone significant development as is clear from James' indication that the audience are those who belong to Jesus and acknowledge him as Lord.

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that religious ideas are developed and elaborated in the Letter of James, and that theology performs a fundamental and integral role in its ethical instruction. In particular this theology is developed within and through the employment and development of covenant thought, so that the letter as a whole functions to call the implied audience to remember their covenant relationship with God by loyally fulfilling God's will. In fulfilling this purpose the letter finds a plausible home within the diaspora letter tradition, and provides an important insight into one author's understanding of the theology and behaviour appropriate for the community that has inherited Israel's covenant through faith in Jesus.

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