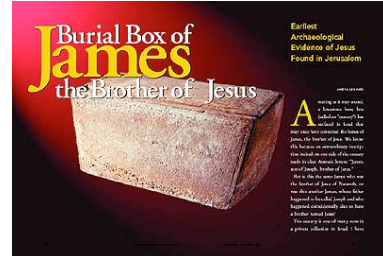


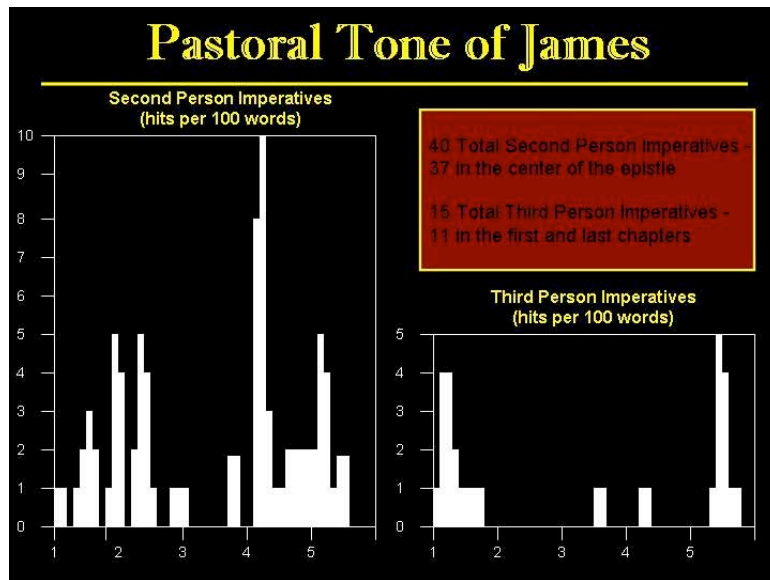
The Epistle of James

Who Was James???



Thematic Structure ... based on L.T. Johnson's *Writings of the NT*

Thematic Structure of James		
Theme	Introduced	Expanded
Enduring Trials	1:2-4, 12-15	5:7-11
Rich and Poor	1:9-11	4:13-5:6
Proper Use of Tongue	1:19-21	3:1-2
“Do the Word”	1:22-26	2:14-26
True Wisdom	1:5-8, 16-18	3:13-4:10
Prayer of Faith	1:6-7	5:12-18



Pastoral Tone:

GRAMCORD Search

11 of James' 15 3rd person IMVs

IMVs occur in 1:1-15 & 5:13-20

37 of James' 40 2nd person IMVs occur between 1:16-5:12

A Voice of Very Early Jewish Christianity

Palestinian Background...1:11; 3:11-12; 5:1-6,7

Meet in Synagogue...2:2; cf., Acts 6:9

Jewish Doctrine of God...2:19; 5:4

Abraham, "Our Father" (2:21, cf., Rom 4:1)

Direct Appeal to Jewish Law in Continuity with Christ (2:9-11; 4:11f)

Christianity Not Yet Separated from Judaism

No Gentile Presence

Inchoate, Not Developed, Problems (see below for “faith and works”)

But also a Christian, not merely a Jewish document

NB: the use of the name of Jesus Christ in 1:1; 2:1

Birth through the word (1:18, cf. 1 Cor 4:15; 1 Pet 1:23; 1 Jn 3:9)

Contacts with Jesus tradition, esp. teaching ... NB many from Sermon on Mt:

1:2	Joy in the midst of trial	= Mt 5:10-12
1:4	Exhortation to perfection	= Mt 5:48
1:5,17	Asking for good gifts	= Mt 7:7ff
1:6	Exercise of faith without doubting	= Mt 21:21,22
1:20	Against anger	= Mt 5:22
1:22ff	Obeying and not just hearing	= Mt 7:24ff
2:8	Love to one's neighbor as a great commandment	= Mt 22:39
2:10	Whole law to be kept	= Mt 5:19
2:13	Blessings of mercifulness	= Mt 5:7 (18:29ff)
3:1	On the desire to be called teacher	= Mt 23:8-12
3:2ff	On the dangers of hasty speech	= Mt 12:36-37
3:18	Blessings of peacemakers	= Mt 5:9
4:3	Asking and receiving	= Mt 7:8
4:4	Friendship with world as enmity against God	= Mt 6:24
4:10	Blessings of humble	= Mt 5:5
4:11-12	Against judging others	= Mt 7:1-5
5:2ff	Moths and rust spoiling riches	= Mt 6:19
5:9	The Divine Judge at the door	= Mt 24:33
5:10	Prophets as eggs	= Mt 5:12
5:12	Against oaths	= Mt 5:33-37

What About “Works versus Faith?”



1. A pre-existing problem in Jewish theology

“Remember the deeds of the fathers, which they did in their generations; and receive great honor and an everlasting name. Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (2 Maccabees 2:51-52, ca. 100 BC?).

“And it shall be that every one who will be saved and will be able to escape on account of his works, or on account of the faith by which he has believed, will survive the dangers (accompanying the end of time)” (2 Esdras 9:7, ca. late 1st cent. AD?).

“He who brings the peril at that time will himself protect those who fall into peril, who have works and have faith in the Almighty” (2 Esdras 13:23).

2. Points of Clear Agreement Between Paul and James

Rom 2:13 Not by hearing, but by doing

Rom 2:25 Law-keeping more fundamental than ethnic identity or ritual purity

Rom 2:29 Jewishness and circumcision are *inward* realities

Jas 2:10 & Gal 3:10;5:3 Violation of a part is a violation of the whole

Jas 1:23-24 & Rom 7 Law has the power to unmask

3. Is James speaking to Paul's position? Probably not. If so, he has misunderstood him:

a. If James is reacting to Paul, then 2:24 reflects his understanding of Paul, i.e., he is taking Paul's *ouk ex ergōn* (not on the basis of works ... Rom 9:12,32; 11:6) or *chōris ergōn* (without bringing works into consideration ... Rom 3:28; 4:6) as though he meant or had said *ek pisteōs monon* (on the basis of faith alone, i.e., on the basis of a kind of faith that does not have any necessary side effects). However, Paul did not say *ek pisteōs monon*. James may be responding to people saying something that sounds like Paul, but it is hard to imagine *him* getting Paul so garbled.

b. Though Paul did say *chōris* (apart from) *ergōn*, he did not mean it in the sense “unaccompanied by,” which is what James is arguing against.

chōris ergōn Rom 3:28 (of the law); 4:6

chōris nomou Rom 3:21; 7:8,9

c. Paul, frankly, would have agreed that right belief must find outward expression (Gal 5:6)

d. Though it is rightly noticed that both appeal to Abe to make contrasting points, James at any rate does not do so as though he were countering Paul's appeal. Contrast Jas 2:24 with Rom 4:1.

e. In the immediate context, the closest thing to an object of faith in James is “God is One” ... faith in Christ not in the picture ... neither is circumcision, nor inclusion of Gentiles. This is especially telling in light of the fact that James is aware of the necessity of faith in Jesus (2:1).

f. A saner assumption: James' use of Abraham probably emerges straight from his debate with Jewish Christians, not debate with Pauline theology.

4. Is Paul speaking to James' position? Perhaps one like, but not identical to, James'. Cf., Gal 1:12; Ac 15:1,24

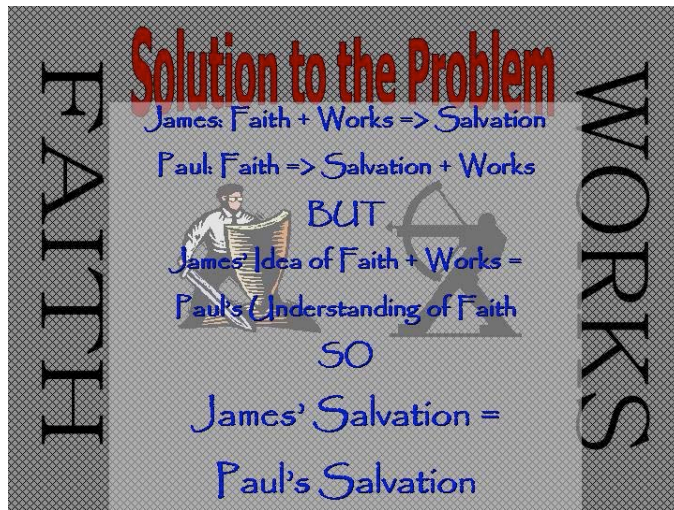
a. Rom 4:1...only Paul introduces Abe in such a way as to suggest he might be replying to an objection.

b. Paul has an additional consideration. Between James' proposition that the Law can reveal who we are and serve as ethical guide, Paul introduces the caveat: but the law cannot enable what it requires! James' thought is not yet there.

Gal 3:21 ... The law cannot impart life.

James assumes he is talking to people who have been made alive (1:18)

In the end, Paul is operating out of what the Reformers came to call the "1st Use of the Law," while James is championing the "3rd Use of the Law."



Calvin's summary of the situation: Jas 2:14ff is not talking about *dikaiosunē* in the sense of attaining righteousness ... good works are required *of* righteousness, but they do not have the power of conferring it.

Calvin notes that the actual imputation of imputation of Abe's righteousness was some 30 years prior to the offering up offering up of Isaac, the act by which Jas which Jas says Abe was justified. James' James' intent, asserts Calvin, is to demonstrate that that imputation bore a

bore a certain fruit (Gen 15:16 was "fulfilled" in the obedience shown in Gen 22) and that the kind of faith Abe had was, "not inactive, not fading, but capable of making him obedient to God, as we may read at Heb. 11:8. The conclusion given immediately...(in v. 24) is precisely in this sense. A man is not justified by faith alone...that is, only by a bare and empty awareness of God. He is justified by works...that is, his righteousness is known and approved by its fruits."

The Grace-Substructure of James' Ethics

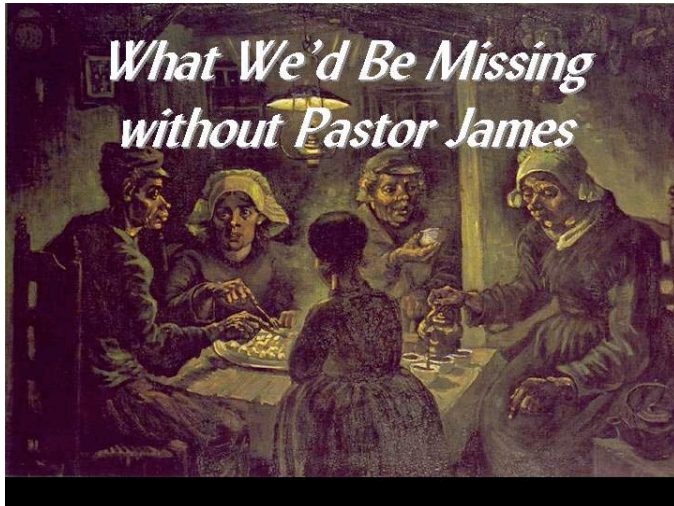
(Thanks to Dennis Johnson, WTS/California, for these observations)

Important Themes:

- 1) God Reverses the Priorities of Human Society

2) Eschatological Regeneration Has Already Begun for Christians

3) Present Sufferings Are an Anticipation of the End



The Canonical Importance of James

Vis-a-vis the Psalter and Wisdom Tradition

Vis-a-vis the Synoptic Tradition