

READING THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

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Editor

Davina C. Lopez, New Testament

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READING THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

A Resource for Students

Edited by

Eric F. Mason and Darian R. Lockett

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Abbreviations

Primary Sources

1 <i>Apol.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>First Apology</i>
1 Clem.	1 Clement
1 En.	1 Enoch
1Q26	Instruction
1Q27	Book of Mysteries
1QH	Thanksgiving Hymns
1QM	War Scroll
1QS	Rule of the Community
2 <i>Apol.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Second Apology</i>
2 En.	2 Enoch
4Q149–155	Mezuzah Scrolls
4Q184	Wiles of the Wicked Woman
4Q185	Sapiential Work
4Q299	Mysteries
4Q370	AdmonFlood
4Q414	Ritual Purity A
4Q415–418	Instruction
4Q422	Paraphrase of Genesis and Exodus
4Q423	Instruction
4Q424	Instruction-like Work
4Q426	Sapiential-Hymnic Work A
4Q436	Barkhi Nafshi
4Q473	The Two Ways
4Q474	Text Concerning Rachel and Joseph
4Q476	Liturgical Work B
4Q498	papSap/Hymn
4Q510	Songs of the Maskil
4Q524	Temple Scroll

4Q525	Beatitudes
4Q560	Exorcism
4QShirShab	Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400–407)
11Q11	Apocryphal Psalms
11Q19	Temple Scroll
11Q5	Psalms Scroll
<i>Abr.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Life of Abraham</i>
<i>A.J.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>Apoc. Ab.</i>	Apocalypse of Abraham
<i>Apos. Con.</i>	Apostolic Constitutions and Canons
<i>'Avot R. Nat.</i>	Avot of Rabbi Nathan
<i>b.</i>	Babylonian Talmud
<i>B. Qam.</i>	Bava Qamma
<i>CD</i>	Damascus Document (versions A and B from the Cairo Genizah)
<i>Cher.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Cherubim</i>
<i>Comm. Jo.</i>	Origen, <i>Commentarii in evangelium Joannis</i>
<i>Comm. Ps.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Commentary on the Psalms</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Confusion of Tongues</i>
<i>Deus</i>	Philo, <i>That God Is Unchangeable</i>
<i>Dysk.</i>	Menander, <i>Dyskolos</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	Philo, <i>On Drunkenness</i>
<i>Ep. fest.</i>	Athanasius, <i>Festal Letters</i>
<i>Epist.</i>	Jerome, <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Fam.</i>	Cicero, <i>Epistulae ad familiares</i>
<i>Fr. Jo.</i>	Origen, <i>Fragementa in evangelium Joannis</i>
<i>Garr.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De garrulitate</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	Augustine, <i>Heresies</i> ; Irenaeus, <i>Against Heresies</i>
<i>Her.</i>	Philo, <i>Who Is the Heir?</i>
<i>Herm.</i>	Shepherd of Hermas
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>Hom. Exod.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Exodum</i>
<i>Hom. Lev.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Leviticum</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	Quintilian, <i>Institutio oratoria</i>
<i>Invid.</i>	Dio Crysostom, <i>Envy</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	Jubilees
<i>Leg.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Legibus</i> ; Philo, <i>Allegorical Interpretation</i> ; Plato, <i>Laws</i>
<i>m.</i>	Mishnah

<i>Magn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Magnesians</i>
<i>Mand.</i>	Shepherd of Hermas, <i>Mandate(s)</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Migration of Abraham</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Life of Moses</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Change of Names</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	Seneca, <i>Naturales quaestiones</i>
<i>Off.</i>	Cicero, <i>De officiis</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Creation of the World</i>
<i>Pan.</i>	Epiphanius, <i>Refutation of All Heresies</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	Polycarp, <i>To the Philippians</i>
<i>Phld.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Philadelphians</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	Philo, <i>On Planting</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
<i>Post.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Posterity of Cain</i>
<i>Prog.</i>	Theon, <i>Progymnasmata</i>
<i>Ps.-Phoc.</i>	Pseudo-Phocylides
<i>QG</i>	Philo, <i>Questions and Answers on Genesis</i>
<i>Resp.</i>	Plato, <i>Republic</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Rhetorica</i>
<i>Rhet. Alex.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Alexandrum</i>
<i>Rhet. Her.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>
<i>Rust.</i>	Columella, <i>De re rustica</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel</i>
<i>Sanh.</i>	Sanhedrin
<i>Sat.</i>	Horace, <i>Satires</i> ; Juvenal, <i>Satirae</i>
<i>Shev.</i>	Shevi'it
<i>Sel. Ps.</i>	Origen, <i>Selecta in Psalmos</i>
<i>Shabb.</i>	Shabbat
<i>Sim.</i>	Shepherd of Hermas, <i>Similitude(s)</i>
<i>Sobr.</i>	Philo, <i>On Sobriety</i>
<i>Spec.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Special Laws</i>
<i>t.</i>	Tosefta
<i>T. Abr.</i>	Testament of Abraham
<i>T. Dan</i>	Testament of Dan
<i>T. Iss.</i>	Testament of Issachar
<i>T. Job</i>	Testament of Job
<i>T. Naph.</i>	Testament of Naphtali
<i>T. Zeb.</i>	Testament of Zebulun
<i>Tg. Jer.</i>	Targum Jeremiah

Tg. Neof.	Targum Neofiti
Vir. ill.	Jerome, <i>Lives of Illustrious Men</i>
Virt.	Philo, <i>On the Virtues</i>
Vis.	Shepherd of Hermas, Vision(s)
Vita	Josephus, <i>The Life</i>

Secondary Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANF	Roberts, Alexander, and James Donaldson, eds. <i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> . 1885–1887. 10 vols. Repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
ANRW	Temporini, Hildegard, and Wolfgang Haase, eds. <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Rom im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Part 2, <i>Principat</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BBRSup	Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHGNT	Baylor Handbooks to the Greek New Testament
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRLJ	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BRS	Biblical Resource Series
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>

BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Neuen Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCS	Cambridge Classical Studies
CNTC	Torrance, David W., and Thomas F. Torrance, ed. <i>Calvin's New Testament Commentaries</i> . 12 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959–1972.
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
CurBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CurBS	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
CW	<i>Classical World</i>
CWE	<i>Collected Works of Erasmus</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974–.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
ECM	Editio Critica Maior
EDEJ	Collins, John J., and Daniel C. Harlow, eds. <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church
FF	Foundations and Facets
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HThKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HvTSt	<i>Hervormde theologiese studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JAJ	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal of the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>

JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
LB	Desiderius Erasmus. <i>Opera Omnia</i> . Edited by Jean Le Clerc. 10 vols. Leiden: van der Aa, 1703–1706.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LW	<i>Luther's Works</i> . American Edition. Original ed. 55 vols. New series 14 vols. St. Louis: Concordia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955–1986, 2010–.
NA ²⁷	Aland, Barbara, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds. <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . 27th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
NA ²⁸	Aland, Barbara, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds. <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . 28th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.
NAC	New American Commentary
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NIB	Keck, Leander E., ed. <i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i> . 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995–2004.
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTR	New Testament Readings
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTT	New Testament Theology
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs

OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
OTP	Charlesworth, James C., ed. <i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . 2 vols. ABRL. New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985.
PBTM	Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs
PilNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
RelSRev	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RHR	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
RIBLA	<i>Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBJT	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SCHT	Studies in Christian History and Thought
SIG	Dittenberger, Wilhelm, ed. <i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . 3rd ed. 4 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–1924.
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
ST	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
SSEJC	Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SWBA	Social World of Biblical Antiquity
SymS	Symposium Series
TC	<i>TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism</i>
TCS	Text-Critical Studies
TDNT	Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary

TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UBS ⁵	Aland, Barbara, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds. <i>The Greek New Testament</i> . 5th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014.
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
WLAW	Wisdom Literature from the Ancient World
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

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Introduction

Darian R. Lockett and Eric F. Mason

Despite its lively examples and practical focus, the Epistle of James has had an uneven reception in both the church and the academy. Though purported to have been written by James, the brother of Jesus and early leader of the Christian movement in Jerusalem, there is surprising silence regarding its use in the earliest church. The first clear reference to James is found in the writings of Origen in the third century and even thereafter the letter is somewhat sparsely used. In the era of the Reformation, Martin Luther famously characterized James as a “strawy epistle” (*strohern Epistel*) in comparison to Paul’s letters, which “show thee Christ” (preface to the New Testament, 1522; see *LW* 35:362). However, in practice Luther felt no scruples against preaching from James as Christian Scripture.

The letter’s uneven reception continues in modern scholarship. In his recent commentary on James, Dale C. Allison (2013, 1) reflects upon the “unusually diverse” scholarly assessment of the letter. While some argue that the letter ranks among the earliest Christian texts and was written by the Lord’s brother, others contend it was written perhaps several centuries later in the name of James. Readers will notice that the following essays take a range of views regarding the authorship of James. Whereas some will specifically argue for or against authorship by the historical James, the central insights of most of the essays are not dependent upon deciding this issue either way. Beyond the question of authorship, it is not uncommon for interpreters to lament any clear structure or plan in the letter, while others discern an intricate rhetorical or literary structure. Some argue that due to the letter’s paraenesis there is no clear social-historical situation behind the letter, yet various commentators argue that the social situation of the first-century poor is vital for understanding the letter. Such diversity of assessment leads some interpreters to articulate a degree of skepticism regarding the letter, as explained in the opening two sentences

of Andrew Chester's (1994, 3) work on the theology of James: "James presents a unique problem within the New Testament. The questions that loom over it are whether it has any theology at all, and whether it should have any place in Christian scripture." Perhaps such an assessment is most acute when expecting the theological message of James to conform to a Pauline matrix. In this context, some have puzzled over James as an "enigma" (Deissmann 1901, 52) and have even described the letter as "the 'Melchizedek' of the Christian canon" (Penner 2009, 257). This negative assessment of James might be summarized in the words of Martin Dibelius (1976), one of James's most influential interpreters of the twentieth century. He concluded that the disconnected sayings of the letter are so incoherent that the letter "has not theology" (21).

The past twenty-five years, however, have witnessed a renaissance in James scholarship, and many of the judgments that have dominated discussion of James have undergone fresh assessment. This new turn is a welcome development, especially as much of this fresh assessment has been committed to reading James on its own terms. An important group of newer commentaries embody this approach to James, including those by Luke Timothy Johnson (Anchor Bible [1995] and *New Interpreter's Bible* [1998]), Douglas J. Moo (Pillar New Testament Commentary [2000]), Scot McKnight (New International Commentary on the New Testament [2011]), and Dale C. Allison (International Critical Commentary [2013]). Each of these volumes approaches James with a fresh set of eyes intending to appreciate James's unique contribution to early Christian thought. Richard Bauckham's seminal investigation of the historical and literary contexts of James not only reads the letter on its own terms, but also sets the book within its canonical context within the Christian Scriptures (1999). Additionally, Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert Wall (2009) have edited a collection of helpful essays that addresses the Catholic Epistles broadly and includes a section specifically on James. We hope that the present volume will continue this helpful trajectory of reading and appreciating James on its own terms.

The title of our book is *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*. Both phrases in this title are very important and intentional. The first part reflects our task to address major issues in the interpretation of this epistle. Most members of our international team of contributors are leading scholars of James who have previously published numerous articles, monographs, and/or commentaries on the book, often including lengthy treatments of the very same topics they address more concisely in

this volume. Other contributors have not normally published on James but bring fresh perspectives as experts in other related fields of study. In all cases the chapters reflect the most recent trends in contemporary scholarship, yet they are designed for classroom use by undergraduate, seminary, and graduate students, in accord with the second part of the book's title. We assume that most readers of this book will use it alongside one or more standard commentaries of James. We have sought to provide focused discussions of key interpretative issues in James that go beyond the discussions usually possible in commentaries, but in forms particularly designed for student readers in terms of content, length, and level of complexity. The editors are most familiar with the needs of undergraduate students in North America who are studying James closely in an academic context for the first time, but we trust the chapters here will also prove beneficial and illuminating for readers elsewhere and for those at more advanced educational levels.

The first section of the book includes four essays discussing possible sources and backgrounds utilized by the author of James. Though the words of Jesus are never quoted directly in James, the book clearly bears the influence of the Jesus tradition. Richard Bauckham considers the allusions to the sayings of Jesus in James in his chapter titled "James and Jesus Traditions." Bauckham argues that the data are best explained by recognizing the author of James as a wisdom teacher in the tradition of Jewish sages like Ben Sira. Such sages were deeply indebted to the wise sayings of their predecessors, but they did not merely repeat those sayings. Rather, they performed variations on them and crafted their own new aphorisms inspired by them. In a similar way, the wise sayings of Jesus were James's inspiration as he composed his own wisdom sayings in the tradition of Jesus's wisdom. Bauckham suggests that James is in fact more indebted to the teaching of Jesus than a few clear allusions would suggest.

The letter's connection to biblical and postbiblical Jewish tradition has also been long acknowledged. Eric F. Mason's "Use of Biblical and Other Jewish Traditions in James" reflects on this Jewish background of James, specifically considering the epistle's use of biblical and related traditions. Mason observes that whereas the Epistle of James includes only a few explicit quotations of Scripture, its contents are infused with biblical language. Also, the author appeals on several occasions to examples of biblical characters (including Abraham, Rahab, Job, and Elijah) as models for the ethical expectations presented in the letter. Mason notes especially the extended comments about Abraham in Jas 2, and he argues that the

author assumes certain interpretative traditions about the patriarch that he expects are shared by the audience of the text.

Though the Letter of James is often considered one of the most Jewish works of the New Testament, its Hellenistic character has been no less obvious to critical scholars. The relatively polished Greek language and style, the apparent reflection of Hellenistic rhetorical conventions, and the familiarity with imagery and themes of the Greco-Roman moralists and philosophers all speak to a work as thoroughly embedded in the Greco-Roman as in the Jewish and Christian discourse of its time. In “The Letter of James and Hellenistic Philosophy,” Matt Jackson-McCabe argues that Hellenistic philosophical concepts are entwined inseparably with Jewish and Christian ones within the very warp and woof of the epistle’s fabric. In particular, a popular philosophical dichotomy between *logos* and desire lies at the heart of the theological worldview and ethical instruction of James, seamlessly integrated into its other central themes of faith and works, rich and poor, wisdom and perfection, and even speech and prayer.

Benjamin Wold considers the intersection of sapiential (or wisdom) instruction and eschatology in his chapter titled “James in the Context of Jewish Wisdom Literature.” One of the questions that has transformed the study of early Jewish sapiential traditions is how eschatology, and especially issues of future reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked, came to be part of wisdom literature’s discourse. Wold addresses the cosmology of James alongside that of other early Jewish literature to better understand how such literature informs and shapes exhortations and ethics. Wold concludes that eschatology has come to be seen as part of a larger cosmology that shapes ethical instruction and that the integral combination of wisdom and eschatological concerns in ethical instruction is something demonstrated in James itself.

The next section of the book includes two chapters reflecting on the genre and structure of James. Luke L. Cheung and Kelvin C. L. Yu consider the genre of James in light of Jewish wisdom traditions in “The Genre of James: Diaspora Letter, Wisdom Instruction, or Both?” They note several proposals for the genre of James (including an allegory on Jacob’s farewell address patterned on the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Greek diatribe, Hellenistic-Jewish homily, protreptic discourse, and Hellenistic paraenesis) but argue that James fits in well with diaspora letters and Jewish wisdom instructions in terms of form, content, and function. Furthermore, they contend that the Letter of James should be understood as an example of blending the genre of diaspora letter and wisdom writing.

Identifying rhetorical features in New Testament letters has been a helpful way of understanding how the original authors of the texts sought to give shape to their arguments and to ensure that the letter would be persuasive. Focusing on the rhetorical context of James, Duane F. Watson's "The Rhetorical Composition of the Epistle of James" argues that James exhibits a unique blend of rhetoric common to the Jewish rhetorical tradition and Greco-Roman rhetorical instruction. James has sections of traditional exhortation that use many rhetorical figures, but the book also contains portions constructed according to the Greco-Roman instruction for development of a particular thesis. Though James does not precisely conform to Greco-Roman rhetorical convention, Watson concludes that the author of James comes from a Jewish background influenced by Hellenistic rhetoric. Furthermore, he argues that the rhetoric of James helps the audience understand their newfound status, both in continuity and discontinuity with their former lives.

As noted above, the modern scholarly view of James has been heavily influenced by Dibelius's assertion that the letter is void of any theology. Resisting this assessment, Peter H. Davids, Mariam Kamell Kovalishyn, Ryan E. Stokes, and Scot McKnight reflect on the theology of James in our volume's next section. Davids begins "The Good God and the Reigning Lord: Theology of the Epistle of James" by focusing on the most prominent divine figure in the letter, God the Father. He notes how James presents God as creator and the good giver whose gift is life. Furthermore, when James speaks of Jesus, it is always in regal terms: glorious Lord, coming judge, and, possibly, royal lawgiver. Davids argues that speaking in such terms gives James a unique texture among early Christian writings in its depiction of God and of Jesus Christ. He concludes that James expresses a kind of binitarian theology with God the Father functioning as creator and giver of good gifts and with Jesus as the exalted Lord, who rules now and whose teaching is the law of the community.

In "Salvation in James: Saved by Gift to Become Merciful," Kovalishyn seeks to reveal the soteriology of the letter. She argues that the epistle presents the full story of salvation, from initial birth into the new creation, to the life lived in keeping with God's character and law, to the final judgment before God. As in the story of Israel, the work of salvation in James begins with the prior work of God. Salvation, understood as reconciliation with God, is the ultimate good gift of God (1:16–18), the God who is the unchangingly good and generous giver, and this gift is implanted by God in his people (1:21, with echoes of the new covenant promises

of Jer 31). Kovalishyn's overarching point is that the picture of salvation in James is holistic, arguing that, in the end, sanctification is inseparable from salvation.

Stokes's "The Devil and Demons in the Epistle of James" situates James's understanding of sin within the context of early Jewish debates regarding moral evil. Stokes notes that while James's concern in 1:13–18 is to exonerate God of any part in human transgression, he nevertheless allows for humans to be led astray by demons and by the devil (3:15; 4:6). In doing so, James charts a middle course between the two alternatives of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. This discussion takes place within James's developing notions of evil superhuman beings. Stokes suggests the possibility that James's thinking about demons resembles that of the Book of Watchers, where the devil and demons are the proponents of sin and the enemies of God.

Stressing that any Bible reading is an exercise in seeing and making connections, McKnight's "Poverty, Riches, and God's Blessings: James in the Context of the Biblical Story" offers a reading of James in the context of the Bible's story about justice, wealth, and poverty. Rather than a historical-critical reconstruction of these themes in the Jewish Scriptures, McKnight describes the narrative resources the author of James would have had when speaking about poverty and wealth. He concludes that James brings the biblical story correlating obedience with material flourishing and disobedience with material diminishment into relationship with the identification of God with the oppressed poor and God's use of testing. McKnight argues that James functions like one of the prophets lifting up the poor with words of encouragement and castigating the rich for their injustice against the poor.

In the renaissance of James scholarship mentioned above, several important insights into the letter's social, cultural, and narrational meaning have emerged through the application of new methodologies to the study of James. In the next section, chapters by Alicia J. Batten, Elsa Tamez, and Peter J. Gurry and Tommy Wasserman consider various methodologies for reading and interpreting James.

In her chapter titled "Reading James with the Social Sciences," Batten describes the general features of Mediterranean economic life with the aid of anthropological and sociological models, and then pays specific attention to the characterization of the rich, of the poor, and of the deity in James. Batten notes how the use of the social sciences illuminates how the author of James contrasts the rich and poor throughout the letter,

especially when one takes into account the centrality of honor and shame concepts and the importance of ideas about what it meant to be masculine and noble.

Tamez reads the letter of James from the perspective of immigrants and the marginalized. In “Don’t Conform Yourselves to the Values of the Empire,” she argues that the letter’s recipients suffer economic problems and persecution and that the author recognizes the danger of living in an attractive and seductive Greco-Roman society. The author, therefore, urges the recipients not to follow certain cultural and moral values that are contrary to the prophetic tradition and the Jesus movement, such as the system of patronage and the desire to accumulate money. The author tries to comfort his readers in their situation of oppression and discrimination, but at the same time he invites them to exemplify a genuine and integral spirituality and faith, which is made visible through solidarity with those most in need and through personal integrity. Such behavior includes the wise use of the tongue.

The discipline of textual criticism certainly is not new, but new methodologies in this field have influenced particular readings of the Greek New Testament. The publication of the first installment of the *Editio Critica Maior* (ECM) of the Epistle of James in 1997 was a milestone in the history of New Testament Textual Criticism. In “Textual Criticism and the *Editio Critica Maior* of James,” Gurry and Wasserman consider these new developments and how they have shed new light on our understanding of James. A new method—the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method—was applied in the reconstruction of the “initial text” of James, in particular for the second edition of the ECM (ECM2). This method resulted in the detection of several significant textual witnesses in James that were previously relatively unknown and thus a reevaluation of the critical text of James as compared with that printed in the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Gurry and Wasserman briefly introduce the ECM2 and the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method, then examine a number of significant textual issues in James.

The final three chapters in this volume examine how James has been interpreted and received. John Painter considers the sometimes conflicting appraisals of whether the historical James was associated with our letter at all. Next, Darian R. Lockett and Stephen J. Chester consider the history of James’s reception in the patristic and Reformation eras, respectively.

Painter’s “James ‘the Brother of the Lord’ and the Epistle of James” considers traditions about the historical James and his relationship to the

letter that bears his name. Painter argues that whereas the historical James focused his attention on the Jewish church in Jerusalem, the book's author was a Greek-speaking diaspora Jew who inherited the Jamesian tradition sometime after the Jerusalem-centered Jewish mission had ceased. Thus, the Epistle of James is best understood as the adaptation of the Jamesian transmission of the Jesus tradition that is intended for the needs of Greek-speaking Jews of the diaspora. Painter also discusses biblical and interpretative traditions relevant to understanding the figure of James and other siblings of Jesus.

Lockett takes up the issue of early use of the Epistle of James (or the lack thereof) in the patristic period in "Use, Authority, and Canonical Status of James in the Earliest Church." He considers the reception history of the epistle through the end of the fourth century, by which time the letter had been received as canonical. Specifically, Lockett sifts through the epistle's literary relationships with 1 Peter, 1 Clement, and the Shepherd of Hermas for hints about the date of composition of James. Then, starting with the use made of the letter by Eusebius, Lockett works backward to weigh evidence of early knowledge and use of James in patristic citations and in early canon lists. Attention finally turns to the manuscript tradition and what such early Christian artifacts might suggest about the use and authority of James.

In the concluding chapter, "Salvation, the Church, and Social Teaching: The Epistle of James in Exegesis of the Reformation Era," Chester addresses a question that was especially acute during the Reformation: how was James to be read in relation to the soteriology expressed in the Pauline epistles? Here the contents of the second chapter of James were of crucial significance. James 2:19 ("even demons believe—and shudder") was read by medieval exegetes in concert with Gal 5:6 ("in Christ Jesus ... the only thing that counts is faith working through love") to suggest that for faith to rise above the level of cognitive assent to historical facts, it must be formed by love so that it might become living and active in good works. Similarly, the assertion of Jas 2:24 that "a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" indicated for medieval exegetes that Paul's assertion that justification is "not by works of the law" must exclude only those works performed before baptism. Chester explores the arguments presented by both Protestant and Catholic proponents to establish alternative ways of coordinating these texts and examines the responses they received from their opponents.