



An Exegesis of Teaching About Christian Maturity in James 1:1-15

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ABSTRACT

When you experience a new birth, you will not automatically experience spiritual maturity. To achieve the journey to spiritual maturity requires a process. There is wisdom that will be the measure. James 3:13-18 offer an answer. James describes that wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy, good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy, righteousness, and peace. Wisdom, in the book of James, benefits individual and community (chapter 1 and 3). With wisdom will go through the various struggles of life.

Keywords: *Maturity, Wisdom, Trials*

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INTRODUCTION

Carson and Moo offer the outline of the book of James (620-621):

- 1) Trials and Christian maturity (1:1-18).
- 2) True Christianity seen in its works (1:19-2:26).
- 3) Dissensions with the community (3:1-4:12).
- 4) Implications of a Christian worldview (4:13-5:11).
- 5) Concluding exhortations (5:12-11).

Based on the outline provided by Carson and Moo, a possible research method for studying the book of James could be a thematic analysis of each section. This could involve identifying key themes, ideas, and arguments in each section, and examining how they relate to the overall message of the book. For example, in section 1, the theme of trials and Christian maturity could be explored in depth, examining how James encourages his readers to endure trials

and grow in faith. In section 2, the theme of true Christianity seen in works could be analyzed, exploring the relationship between faith and good deeds. In section 3, the theme of dissensions within the community could be examined, considering how James addresses conflict and promotes unity. In section 4, the implications of a Christian worldview could be explored, examining how James encourages his readers to live in light of their faith. Finally, in section 5, the concluding exhortations could be analyzed, considering how James sums up his message and encourages his readers to persevere in their faith. This method would involve close reading and careful analysis of the text, as well as engagement with scholarly literature and theological reflection on the themes and ideas presented in the book.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research methodology used in this academic work is the exegesis literature research methodology, which is a research approach conducted on a text or writing, especially in the context of religion or theology, with the aim of understanding the original meaning of the text. This methodology involves language analysis, historical and cultural context, as well as theological understanding of the author and the community that received the writing. In conducting exegesis literature research, researchers need to gather information about the historical background, social and cultural context, as well as the language and grammar used in the text. After that, researchers analyze and interpret the text, taking into account these aspects to obtain an accurate understanding of the original meaning of the text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Verse 1

Text

Ἰάκωβος, θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ δοῦλος, ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ, χαίρειν.

Analysis

This verse is the introduction of the letter.

Ἰάκωβος] ‘James’. A nominative absolute.

θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ] ‘of God and the Lord Jesus Christ’. Possessive genitive.

δοῦλος] ‘servant’. A nominative of apposition of James.

ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς] ‘to twelve tribes’. Dative of recipient.

ταῖς] ‘which’. This article has a function as a relative pronoun.

ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ] ‘in dispersion’. This preposition with dative case communicates a location.

χαίρειν] ‘greetings’. Infinitive absolute.

Verse 2

Text

Πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἠγάπησατε, ἀδελφοί μου, ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις

Analysis

James usually starts a new topic with **ἀδελφός**.

Πᾶσαν χαρὰν] ‘full (total) joy’. Accusative of direct object of ἠγάπησατε. BDAG translates it as an experience of gladness. This word appears twice in the book of James: 1:2 and 4:9. Here, James urges the reader to consider joy out of their trials. James 4:9, on the other hand, speaks of joy turns to gloom as repentance.

ἡγήσαθε] ‘consider’. Imperative aorist denotes perspective aspect or understand the verb as a whole or in summary fashion. BDAG understands this verb as an intellectual process.

ἀδελφοί μου] ‘my brothers’. A simple address of vocative.

ὅταν . . . περιπέσητε] ‘whenever you encounter’. This construction ὅταν plus subjunctive denotes time. Aorist subjunctive signifies denotes perspective aspect or understand the verb as a whole or in summary fashion. The Greek word **περιπίπτω** means to be involved in or encounter.

πειρασμοῖς . . . ποικίλοις] ‘various trials’. The word **πειρασμός** here means trials that will improve somebody by learning something. ποικίλοις means various kinds or modes.

Verse 3

Text

γινώσκοντες ὅτι τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως κατεργάζεται ὑπομονήν.

Analysis

γινώσκοντες] ‘because knowing’. Causal participle.

ὅτι] ‘that’. A content conjugation.

τὸ δοκίμιον] ‘testing’. BDAG says that this is a process or means of determining the genuineness of something.

ὑμῶν] ‘of your’. Subjective genitive of τῆς πίστεως or you believe.

τῆς πίστεως] ‘faith’. Objective genitive of τὸ δοκίμιον.

κατεργάζεται] ‘produces’. Imperfective aspect that emphasizes on progressiveness of the verb. Type of *aktionsart* is accomplishment. Probably a general present is being used here.

ὑπομονήν] ‘endurance’. Accusative of direct object of κατεργάζεται. BDAG understands this word as the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty.

Verse 4

Text

ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω, ἵνα ᾗτε τέλειοι καὶ ὁλόκληροι, ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι.

Analysis

James uses ὑπομονή in the verse 3 and verse 4 to smoothen the transition.

ἡ . . . ὑπομονή] ‘endurance’. Nominative subject of ἐχέτω.

δέ] ‘then’. This postpositive conjunction has a function of transitional.

ἔργον τέλειον] ‘a perfect result’. Accusative of direct object of ἐχέτω.

ἐχέτω] ‘let . . . have’. Imperfective aspect that emphasizes on progressiveness of the verb.

ἵνα ᾗτε] ‘so that you will be’. ἵνα has a function of result. In other words, the result of perfect result is you will be mature, complete, and lacking in nothing. However, the function of conjunction ἵνα could be content. What is the perfect result? You will be mature, complete, and lacking in nothing.

τέλειοι] ‘mature’. Predicate nominative of ᾗτε.

καὶ ὀλόκληροι] ‘and complete’. This word is derived from **ὄλος** and **κληρος**. Predicate nominative of ἦτε.

ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι] ‘lacking in nothing’. Predicate nominative of ἦτε. The question is whether this part is a third predicate nominative of ἦτε. Leedy Greek NT Diagrams places this part in opposite of mature and complete.

Verse 5

Text

Εἰ δέ τις ὑμῶν λείπεται σοφίας, αἰτείτω παρὰ τοῦ δίδοντος θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς, καὶ οὐκ¹ ὀνειδίζοντος, καὶ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ.

Analysis

James uses **λείπω** in the verse 4 and verse 5 to smoothen the transition.

Εἰ . . . λείπεται] ‘if . . . (one of you) lacks’. This construction indicates the first-class condition: the assumption of truth for the sake of argument (Wallace 690). The verb **λείπεται** occurs 3 times in the book of James (1:4, 5; 2:15). This verb always appears in passive voice. Why? It communicates a state. What is the meaning of **λείπεται**? BDAG interprets it as to be deficient in something. It does not mean that the reader does not have a wisdom, but the wisdom is deficient.

δέ] ‘but’. This conjunction has a function to contrast verse 4: lacking in nothing versus lacking in something (wisdom).

Why does this conjunction have acute accent? Because of contraction from the word **τις** (cf 2:16).

τις] ‘one’. Nominative subject of **λείπεται**.

ὑμῶν] ‘of you’. Partitive genitive.

σοφίας] ‘wisdom’. Genitive direct object of **λείπεται**. Why does James mention wisdom? James 3:13-18 offer an answer. James describes that wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy, good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy, righteousness, and peace. Wisdom, in the book of James, benefits individual and community (chapter 1 and 3).

αἰτείτω] ‘ask’. Imperfective aspect that emphasizes on progressiveness of the verb. Type of aktionsart is accomplishment. Why does James use the word **αἰτείτω**? It seems James echoes Matthew 7:7-11.

παρὰ . . . θεοῦ] ‘from God’. This preposition with genitive case here denotes a source.

τοῦ] ‘who’. This article has a function of relative pronoun to modify God.

δίδοντος] ‘gives’. The function of this participle is predicate participle.

πᾶσιν] ‘to all people’. Dative of indirect object. However, **πᾶσιν** could be in neuter (refers to things) or masculine (men). The usage of the word **ὀνειδίζοντος** and **δοθήσεται** signify men.

ἀπλῶς] ‘openly’. BDAG understands it as without reservation as well. Hapax legomenon.

καὶ] ‘and’. This conjunction connects both participles: **δίδοντος** and **ὀνειδίζοντος**.

μη ὀνειδίζοντος] ‘not shaming’. The function of this participle is predicate participle. BDAG explains that this word means to find fault in a way that demeans the other.

καὶ] ‘then’. This conjunction communicates result.

δοθήσεται] ‘(wisdom) will be given’. Predictive future: something will take place or come to pass (Wallace 568).
αὐτῷ] ‘to him’. Dative of indirect object.

Verse 6

Text

Αἰτέτω δὲ ἐν πίστει, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος· ὁ γὰρ διακρινόμενος ἔοικεν κλύδωνι θαλάσσης ἀνεμιζομένῳ καὶ ῥιπιζομένῳ.

Analysis

James uses **αἰτέω** in the verse 5 and verse 6 to smoothen the transition.

Αἰτέτω] ‘ask’. Imperfective aspect that emphasizes on progressiveness of the verb. Type of aktionsart is accomplishment. This verb appears five times in the book of James (1:5, 6; 4:2, 3[2x]). This verb always requires God as the source of prayer or request. Interestingly, 4 times refer to the negative one (without faith, and with wrong motives).

δέ] ‘but’. This conjunction has a function to contrast verse 5: asking God who is generous versus asking God without faith.

ἐν πίστει] ‘with faith’. The preposition with dative case here means manner. How to ask God? With faith. Faith in verse 3 is different than this verse: Christian virtue vs confidence (trust in God).

διακρινόμενος] ‘doubting’. Participle of manner. This participle explains how to ask God with faith.

μηδέν] ‘nothing’. Accusative of indirect object of participle doubting.

ὁ . . . διακρινόμενος] ‘he who doubts’. Substantival participle.

γάρ] ‘for’. Causal conjugation.

ἔοικεν] ‘is like’. Perfect with a present force. This verb appears only in Job (6:3, 25) and James (1:6, 23). Cf Genesis 1:26 (**εἰκόν**). Stative aspect.

κλύδωνι] ‘rough water’. Dative of direct object. It appears in Luke 8:24 as well.

θαλάσσης] ‘of the sea’. Partitive genitive.

ἀνεμιζομένῳ] ‘moved by the wind’. Attributive participle. Hapax legomenon.

καὶ ῥιπιζομένῳ] ‘and tossed’. Attributive participle. Hapax legomenon. Cf. Daniel 2:35.

Verse 7

Text

μη γὰρ οἰέσθω ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὅτι λήμψεται τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου

Analysis

μη . . . οἰέσθω] ‘do not expect’. Imperfective aspect.

γάρ] ‘for’. Causal conjugation.

ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος] ‘that human being’. Nominative subject. Cf 1:9; 2:20, 24; 3:8-9; 5:17.

ὅτι] ‘that’. To denote the content.

λήμψεται] ‘he will receive’. Middle voice indicates reflexive function.

τι] ‘anything’. Accusative of direct object.

παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου] ‘from the Lord’. This preposition with a genitive case indicates source.

Verse 8

Text

ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ.

Analysis

This verse seems to be an apposition to that man in the previous verse.

ἀνὴρ δίψυχος] ‘double-minded man’. Double-minded appears also in James 4:8. Nominative subject.

ἀκατάστατος] ‘restless (unstable man)’. This word appears in James 3:8. Genesis 4:12 uses this word to describe wanderer. Predicate nominative.

ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ] ‘in all his ways’. This preposition plus dative case communicates a location.

Verse 9

Text

Καυχάσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ,

Analysis

The question is whether verse 9-12 are related to the previous verses. The language of verse 13 indicates that verse 2-8 is related to verse 13-15. If not, then James seems to get sidetrack in verse 9-12. If yes, then verse 2-4 speak of the purpose (goal) of the trials. Verse 5-11 talks about the ways of facing the trials. Verse 12 refers to the purpose (goal) of the trials. Verse 13-18 talks about the ways of facing the trials again.

Καυχάσθω] ‘Boast’. Imperfective aspect. Before this imperative, James has used four imperatives (1:2 (+), 5 (+), 6 (+), 7(-), 9(+), 13(-), 16(-)). This verb means to take pride or glory or brag.

δέ] ‘Now’. This conjunction indicates a transition.

ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινός] ‘a humble brother’. Nominative subject of Καυχάσθω.

ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ] ‘in his high position (exaltation)’. This preposition plus dative case communicates a location.

Verse 10

Text

ὁ δὲ πλούσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται.

Analysis

ὁ . . . πλούσιος] ‘the rich’. Nominative subject of implied *Καυχάσθω*.

δέ] ‘but’. Adversative function.

ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ] ‘in his humiliation’. This preposition plus dative case communicates a location.

ὅτι] ‘because’. Causal function.

ὡς] ‘just as’. A comparative function.

ἄνθος] ‘the flower’. This word appears in James 1:10-11 and 1 Peter 1:24. Nominative subject of *παρελεύσεται*.

χόρτου] ‘of grass’. Descriptive genitive.

παρελεύσεται] ‘pass away’. It means come to an end and no longer exists. Predictive future. Perfective aspect and semelfactive.

Verse 11

Text

ἀνέτειλεν γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσωνι καὶ ἐξήρανεν τὸν χόρτον, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσεν, καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἀπώλετο· οὕτως καὶ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαρανθήσεται.

Analysis

This verse provides a reason for verse 10. This verse is like the book of Ecclesiastes.

ἀνέτειλεν] ‘(sun) rises’. Gnostic aorist. Perfective aspect. semelfactive (aktionsart).

ὁ ἥλιος] ‘the sun’. Nominative subject of ἀνέτειλεν.

σὺν τῷ καύσωνι] ‘with its burning heat’.

καὶ] ‘and’. This conjunction connects two indicative verbs.

ἐξήρανεν] ‘(sun) dries up’. Gnostic aorist. Perfective aspect. semelfactive (aktionsart).

τὸν χόρτον] ‘the grass’. Accusative of direct object of τὸν χόρτον.

καὶ] ‘so’. Inferential.

τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ] ‘its flower’. Nominative subject of ἐξέπεσεν.

ἐξέπεσεν] ‘(its flower) falls’. Gnostic aorist. Perfective aspect. semelfactive (aktionsart).

καὶ] ‘and’. This conjunction connects two nominative subjects.

ἡ εὐπρέπεια] ‘the fine appearance’. Nominative subject of ἀπώλετο.

τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ] ‘of its appearance’. A partitive genitive.

ἀπώλετο] ‘(the fine appearance) destroyed’. Gnostic aorist. Perfective aspect. semelfactive (aktionsart).

οὕτως] ‘so’. It refers to what is preceded.

καὶ] ‘also’. A connective conjunction.

ὁ πλούσιος] ‘the rich’. Nominative subject of μαρανθήσεται.

ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ] ‘in his journeys’. This preposition with a dative case indicates a location. Journeys refer to business trips (Danker).

μαρανθήσεται] '(the rich) will wither away'. Predictive future. Perfective aspect and semelfactive. Cf Matthew 5:13 and Luke 14:34.

Verse 12

Text

Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν, ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς ὃν ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.

Analysis

Μακάριος] 'blessed'. Predicate nominative.

ἀνὴρ] 'a man'. Nominative subject.

ὃς] 'who'. Relative pronoun as a nominative subject of ὑπομένει.

ὑπομένει] '(who) endures'. This word has been stated in verse 3-4. Imperfective aspect and gnomic present.

πειρασμόν] 'trial'. Accusative of direct object of ὑπομένει. This word has been stated in verse 2.

ὅτι] 'because'. Causal function.

δόκιμοςγενόμενος] 'after being approved (the testing)'. Verse 3 has the word δόκιμος. The function of this participle is temporal. Pendent nominative.

λήμψεται] 'he will receive'. Predictive future. Perfective aspect and achievement.

τὸν στέφανον] 'the crown'. Accusative of direct object of λήμψεται.

τῆς ζωῆς] 'of life'. Descriptive genitive.

ὃν] 'which'. Accusative of direct object of ἐπηγγείλατο.

ἐπηγγείλατο] 'he promised'. Constativ aorist. Perfective aspect and achievement.

τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν] 'to those who love'. Dative of indirect object of ἐπηγγείλατο. This is the key to endure.

αὐτόν] 'him'. Accusative of direct object of ἀγαπῶσιν.

Verse 13

Text

μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι· ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἀπείραστός ἐστιν κακῶν, πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένα.

Analysis

μηδεὶς] 'no one'. Nominative subject of λεγέτω.

πειραζόμενος] 'when he is tempted'. A temporal participle. This word appears in verse 2, 12, 13, 14.

λεγέτω] 'let (no one) say'. Imperfective aspect.

ὅτι] 'for'. Direct discourse.

ἀπὸ θεοῦ] 'by God'. This preposition with genitive case indicates source.

πειράζομαι] 'I am tempted'. Descriptive present. Imperfective aspect and activity.

ὁ θεός] 'God'. Nominative subject of ἐστιν.

γάρ] ‘because’. Causal.

ἀπείραστος] ‘unable to be tempted’. Predicate nominative.

κακῶν] ‘by evil’. Genitive of means.

πειράζει] ‘he tempts’. Gnostic present. Imperfective aspect and semelfactive.

δέ] ‘and’. Connective conjunction.

αὐτός] ‘he’. Nominative subject of **πειράζει**.

οὐδένα] ‘no one’. Accusative of direct object of **πειράζει**.

Verse 14

Text

ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελλόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος.

Analysis

This verse is important because explaining the temptation.

ἕκαστος] ‘each one’. Nominative subject of **πειράζεται**.

δέ] ‘but’. Adversative conjunction.

πειράζεται] ‘(each one) tempts’. Gnostic present. Imperfective aspect and semelfactive.

ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας] ‘by his own lust’. Ultimate agency.

ἐξελλόμενος] ‘when being dragged away’. A temporal participle. This verb appears once in the whole NT.

καὶ δελεαζόμενος] ‘and being enticed’. A temporal participle. Cf 2 Peter 2:14, 18.

Verse 15

Text

εἴτα ἡ ἐπιθυμία συλλαβοῦσα τίττει ἁμαρτίαν, ἡ δὲ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον.

Analysis

εἴτα] ‘then’. BDAG says that this word is related to next discussion.

ἡ ἐπιθυμία] ‘lust’. Nominative subject of **τίττει**.

συλλαβοῦσα] ‘after conceives’. Aorist participle denotes time before the main verb: **τίττει**.

τίττει] ‘(lust) gives birth’. Gnostic present. Imperfective aspect.

ἁμαρτίαν] ‘sin’. Accusative of direct object of **τίττει**.

δέ] ‘then’. Transitional.

ἁμαρτία] ‘sin’. Nominative subject of **ἀποκύει**.

ἀποτελεσθεῖσα] ‘after being completed’. Aorist participle denotes time before the main verb: **ἀποκύει**.

ἀποκύει] ‘(sin) gives birth to’. Gnostic present. Imperfective aspect.

θάνατον] ‘death’. Accusative of direct object of **ἀποκύει**.

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