A Syntactical Analysis of Christian Teaching
According to James 1:16-27

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ABSTRACT

The book of James reveals three purposes of Christian’s tribulation. First, it comes from the present argument: let his endurance have a perfect result which is you become mature and complete, and lack of nothing (1:4). The second purpose derives from the future argument: blessed the one who endures in the tribulation. Because, after these things, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him (1:12). The last purpose uses the past argument: He gave us birth with his true word so that we might become the first fruit amongst his all creations. This article analyses the second and the last purpose through a syntactical analysis.

Keywords: Syntactical Analysis, James, Christian Teaching, Purposes.

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one of the book of James has two kinds of outlines. First, James gives an exhortation. There are five exhortations throughout chapter one (1:2, 5-6, 9-10, 13, 16). The last two exhortations are presented in negative way with the word ‘don’t’. Each exhortation speaks of a different topic: mind, prayer, feeling, words, and belief. The second outline is a reason or purpose of each exhortation. James repeats the same words to denote his thesis and to move from one topic to another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1:2-8</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Imperative:</strong></td>
<td>Πᾶσαν χαράν ἠγάπασαθε, ἀδελφοί μου, ὅταν πειρασμὸς παρείσθε ποικίλως (2).</td>
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<td><strong>Reason/Result:</strong></td>
<td>γινώσκοντες διότι τὸ δοκίμον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως καταργάζεται ὑπομονὴν. (3).</td>
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<td><strong>Imperative:</strong></td>
<td>Εἰ δὲ τις ὑμῶν λείπεται σοφίας, αἰτεῖτω παρὰ τοῦ διδάσκοντος θεοῦ πᾶσαν ἀπάθειαν καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος, καὶ διδοθήσεται αὐτῷ. (5).</td>
<td><strong>Imperative:</strong> αἰτεῖτω δὲ ἐν πίστει μιθήν διακρινόμενος; οὖ γὰρ διακρινόμενος ἔσοικεν</td>
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Subject or predicate nominate. Nominative itself is a form and it needs to be exegeted its function.

This article uses syntactical analysis as its research method. A syntactical analysis is a method that seeks out the relationship between a word with the other words. In other words, this article analyzes the function of nominative such as either a nominative subject or predicate nominate. Nominative itself is a form and it needs to be exegeted its function.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Verse 16

Text
Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, ἀδέλφοι μου ἀγαπητοί.

Analysis
Μὴ πλανᾶσθε] ‘do not be deceived’. Imperfective aspect.
ἀδέλφοι μου ἀγαπητοί] ‘my beloved brothers’. Simple address of vocative.

Verse 17

Text
πᾶσα δόσις ἁγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δόρημα τέλειον ἄνωθεν ἐστὶν καταβαίνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, παρ᾽ ὦ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγή ἢ τροπὴ ἀποσκίασμα.

Analysis
πᾶσα δόσις ἁγαθὴ] ‘every good gift’. Nominative subject of ἐστίν.
kai πᾶν δόρημα τέλειον] ‘and every perfect present’. Nominative subject of ἐστίν.
ἄνωθεν] ‘from above’.
ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς] ‘from the Father’. This preposition with a genitive case indicates the source.
tῶν φώτων] ‘of lights’. Genitive of product.
oὐκ ἔνι] ‘there is no’. State.
pαραλλαγή] ‘change (variation)’. Nominative subject of οὐκ ἔνι. Appears only in here. It seems James wants to contrast to verse 6.
ἡ τροπὴ ἀποσκίασμα] ‘or shadow of turning’. Nominative subject of οὐκ ἔνι.

Verse 18

Text
βουληθεὶς ἀπεκάθισεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἐλπιδίας εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχῆς τῶν οὗτος κτισμάτων.

Analysis

ἡμᾶς] ‘us’. Accusative of direct object of ἀπεκόνθησεν.

λόγοι] ‘with the word’. Dative of means.


eἰς τὸ ἔδιναι] ‘so that might’. This construction indicates a purpose.

ἡμᾶς] ‘we’. Accusative of subject infinitive.

ἀπαρχὴν τινα] ‘certain first fruit’. Predicate accusative.

τῶν αὐτῶν κτισμάτων] ‘among his creatures’. Partitive genitive.

**Verse 19**

Text

Ἰστε, ἄδελφοι μου ἄγαπητοι· ἐστώ δε πάς ἄνθρωπος ταχύς εἰς τὸ ἁκούσαι, βραδύς εἰς τὸ λαλῆσαι, βραδύς εἰς ὀργήν.

Analysis

Ἰστε] ‘you know (this)’. Perfective present.

ἄδελφοι μου ἄγαπητοι] ‘my beloved brothers’. Simple address of vocative.

ἐστώ] ‘let (human being) be. Command.

δὲ] ‘now’.


eἰς τὸ ἁκούσαι] ‘to hear’. This construction indicates a purpose or reference.


eἰς τὸ λαλῆσαι] ‘to speak’. This construction indicates a purpose or reference.


eἰς ὀργήν] ‘to anger’. Purpose or reference.

**Verse 20**

Text

ὀργὴ γάρ ἄνδρός δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ οὐ κατεργάζεται.

Analysis

James repeats the word ὀργή.

ὀργή] ‘anger’. Nominative subject of κατεργάζεται. This verb appears first at 1:3.


δικαιοσύνην] ‘the righteousness’. Accusative of direct object of κατεργάζεται.
θεοῦ] 'of God'. Attributed genitive.
oὐ καταργάζεται] '(the anger of man) does not achieve. Gnomic present. Imperfective aspect.

Verse 21

Text
dιὸ ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν καὶ περισσείαν κακίας ἐν πραΰτητι δέξασθε τὸν ἐμφυτὸν λόγον τὸν δυνάμενον σώσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν.

Analysis
dιὸ] 'therefore'. Inferential Conjunctions.
ἀποθέμενοι] 'getting rid'. Attendant circumstance participle.
πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν] 'every moral uncleanness'. Accusative of direct object of ἀποθέμενοι.
περισσείαν] 'abundance'. Accusative of direct object of ἀποθέμενοι.
κακίας] 'of evil'. Attributed genitive.
ἐν πραΰτητι] 'with humility'. Manner.
δέξασθε] 'receive'. Perfective aspect.
τὸν ἐμφυτὸν λόγον] 'implanted word'. Accusative of direct object of δέξασθε.
τὸν δυνάμενον] 'which able'. This article has a function as a relative pronoun.
σώσαι] 'to save'. Complementary infinitive.
tὰς ψυχὰς] 'souls. Accusative of direct object of σώσαι.
ὑμῶν] 'your'. Possessive genitive.

Verse 22

Text
Γίνεσθε δὲ ποιηταὶ λόγου καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκροαταὶ παραλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτοὺς.

Analysis
Γίνεσθε] 'be'. Imperfective aspect.
δὲ] 'and'. Connective.
pοιηταὶ λόγου] 'doers of the word'. Nominative subject of Γίνεσθε. Descriptive genitive.
καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκροαταὶ] 'and not only forgetful hearers. Nominative subject of Γίνεσθε.
pαραλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτοὺς] 'who deludes'. BDAG interprets it as deceive as well. Accusative of direct object of ἑαυτοὺς.
Verse 23

Text

ὅτι εἰ τις ἄκροατής λόγου ἔστιν καὶ οὐ ποιητής, οὕτος ἑοικεν ἀνδρὶ κατανοοῦντι τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ.

Analysis

James repeats the word ἄκροατής λόγου and ποιητής. James also provides the reason. James likes to present an imperative with its reason, and illustration.

eἰ . . . ἔστιν] ‘if . . . is’. This construction indicates the first-class condition: the assumption of truth for the sake of argument (Wallace 690).
ἀκροατής λόγου] ‘a hearer of the word’. Predicate nominative of ἔστιν.
καὶ οὐ ποιητής] ‘and not a doer’. Predicate nominative of ἔστιν.
ἀνδρὶ] ‘a man’. Dative direct object of ἑοικεν.
tὸ πρόσωπον] ‘face’. Accusative of direct object of κατανοοῦντι.
ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ] ‘in the mirror’. Spatial.

Verse 24

Text

κατενόησεν γὰρ ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀπελήλυθεν καὶ εὐθέως ἐπελάθετο ὁποῖος ἦν.

Analysis

James repeats κατανοεῖν.
καὶ ἀπελήλυθεν] ‘then he has departed’. Transitional conjunction and gnomic perfect. Perfective aspect and semelfactive.
καὶ εὐθέως] ‘and immediately’. James uses immediately only in this verse.
Verse 25

Text

ὁ δὲ παρακύψας εἰς νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ παραμείνας οὐκ ἀκροατής ἐπιλήμονης γενόμενος ἀλλὰ ποιητὴς ἐργου, οὗτος μακάριος ἐν τῇ ποιήσει αὐτοῦ ἄσται.

Analysis

This verse repeats some words in 1:22-23.

ὁ . . . παρακύψας] 'he who looks intently'. Substantival participle and pendent nominative.

δὲ] 'but'. Adversative.

εἰς νόμον τέλειον] 'into the perfect law'. The word ‘perfect’ appears five times in the book of James (1:4 [2x], 17, 25; 3:2). Preposition εἰς plus accusative case indicates location. NASB gives bible references to law: Joh 8:32; Rom 8:2; Gal 2:4; Gal 6:2; Jam 2:12; 1Pe 2:16.

τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας] 'which of liberty'. The article here functions as a relative pronoun. Attributive participle.

καὶ] 'and'. Connects two participles.

παραμείνας] 'continues'. Substantival participle.

οὐκ . . . γενόμενος] 'not … becoming'. The function of this participle is difficult to determined. It could be a substantial participle, or manner, or complementary participle.

ἀκροατής ἐπιλήμονης] 'a hearer of forgetfulness'. A predicate nominative and attributive genitive. The word forgetfulness only appears in the book of James.

ἀλλὰ] 'but'. Adversative.

ποιητῆς ἐργου] 'a doer of work'. A predicate nominative and descriptive genitive.

οὗτος] 'this man'. Nominative subject of ἄσται.

μακάριος] 'blessed'. Predicate nominative of ἄσται.

ἐν τῇ ποιήσει] 'in the work'. This preposition with dative case indicates a location.

αὐτοῦ] 'of him'. Subjective genitive.

ἄσται] '(this man) shall be’. Impersonal verb and it denotes a state.

Verse 26

Text

Εἰ τις δοκεῖ θρησκός εἶναι μὴ χαλιναγωγῶν γλῶσσαν αὐτοῦ ἄλλ᾽ ἀπατῶν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ, τούτου μάταιος ἢ θρησκεία.

Analysis

Εἰ . . . δοκεῖ] ‘if . . . (anyone) thinks. This construction indicates the first-class condition: the assumption of truth for the sake of argument (Wallace 690).

τις] 'anyone'. Nominative subject of δοκεῖ.


εἶναι] ‘to be (he is)’. Subject of infinitive.


γλῶσσαν] ‘tongue’. Accusative of direct object of χαλιναγωγῶν.

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αὐτοῦ] 'of him'. Possessive genitive.

ἀλλὰ] 'exclamatory force'. Exclamatory force.

ἀπατῶν] 'deceive'. Manner. What is the meaning of this participle? Mislead or deceive.

καρδίαν] 'heart'. Accusative of direct object of ἀπατῶν.

αὐτοῦ] 'of him'. Possessive genitive.

tοῦτοῦ] 'of him'. Possessive genitive.


Verse 27

Text

θρησκεία καθαρά καὶ ἁμαρτίων παρὰ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐπισκέπτεσθαι ὀρφανοὺς καὶ χήρας ἐν ἔν τῇ θλίψει ἄνωτῶν, ἀσπίλουν ἐντὸς τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου.

Analysis

James repeats θρησκεία.

θρησκεία καθαρά καὶ ἁμαρτίων] 'pure and undefiled religion'. Predicate nominative of ἐστίν.

παρὰ τῷ θεῷ] 'before God'. Sphere.

καὶ πατρὶ] 'and Father'. Connective.

αὕτη] 'this'. Nominative subject of ἐστίν.

ἐστίν] '(this) is'. Impersonal verb.

ἐπισκέπτεσθαι] 'to visit (care)’. BDAG says to visit with a helpful intent. Appositional infinitive.

ὀρφανοὺς καὶ χήρας] 'orphans and widows. Accusative of direct object of ἐπισκέπτεσθαι.

ἐν τῇ θλίψει] 'in (their) affliction’. Temporal.

αὐτῶν] 'of them'. Subjective genitive.

ἀσπίλουν] 'unstained'. Double accusative object-complement.

ἐν τῷ ἐν τηρεῖν] 'to keep'. Appositional infinitive.

ἄνωτῶν] 'away from the world'. Separation.

CONCLUSION

This syntactical analysis demonstrates that there are two enemies of human beings: external and internal.

James reveals, however, that the external enemy is not really the believers’ problem. It just provokes the problem of the heart. In other words, the main problem is not the external one, but it is the heart problem. Thus, James encourages the believers to use an external problem as a mirror to the internal problem. Then, the believers should fix their heart problems instead of the external problem.
REFERENCES


