

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON JAMES

Why Have We Been So Unjust to James the Just?

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A New Perspective on James the Leader

or

**Why Have We Been So Unjust to
James the Just?**

Slide # 1

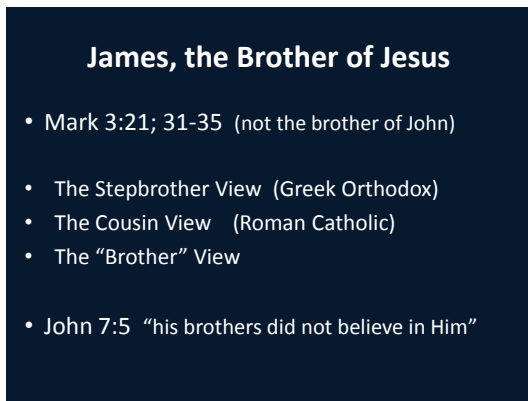
After four hundred years of languishing in a backwater of neglect largely due to the opinions of two German Martins, James has finally emerging into the light of serious scholarly attention. The remarks on James by Martin Luther are well known in lay circles (see slide # 8). The magisterial commentary on James by Martin Dibelius has been the work to be consulted in academic circles. Whether it be Luther's "strawy epistle" or Dibelius' disjointed "ethical paranesis," the opinions of these German giants have influenced negatively generations of commentators. The last twenty five years, however, have witnessed both James and the writing attributed to him emerging into the brightness of a new day in Jacobean scholarship. Serious works on the epistle that are bold enough to attribute the work to James, the brother of Jesus and to date it before his death in 62 A.D., continue to appear.¹ Furthermore, monographs on James the man, while not rivaling the plethora of works on Paul, exhibit almost as many perspectives as authors.² A new appreciation of James has been emerging, although no consensus on questions relating to the man and his letter has yet emerged. My own research on James as part of writing a linguistic commentary on the letter has caused me to re-think and re-read both the letter and the sparse references to the man in Acts, Galatians and 1 Corinthians. The result of that research has caused me to have a new perspective on James the leader and also on James the letter. I firmly believe that there is still a need to do a fresh reading of the James materials, and to that end I offer the results of my own fresh reading.

¹ Good commentaries are those by LT Johnson, Peter Davids, Douglas Moo, and Craig Blomberg.

² Good treatments of James the man are done by Adamson, Painter, and Witherington. The eccentric treatment by Eisenman is quite radical in its conclusions.

A New Perspective on James the Leader

I offer no new proposals on the role that James played in the immediate family of Jesus prior to the cross and resurrection. The only debate in this regard is whether James shared in the apparent unbelief or disbelief attributed to Jesus' brothers in John 7:5, and hinted at in Mark (see slide #2). I also have no wish to engage again the oft-repeated discussion about the meaning of the word "brother." I accept the accuracy of John 7:5 and I am comfortable with the view that James along with his sisters and brothers were the uterine siblings of Jesus. It is important to note that the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic views about James being either a child of a previous marriage or a cousin are driven by a desire to maintain the perpetual virginity of Mary.



James, the Brother of Jesus

- Mark 3:21; 31-35 (not the brother of John)
- The Stepbrother View (Greek Orthodox)
- The Cousin View (Roman Catholic)
- The "Brother" View

- John 7:5 "his brothers did not believe in Him"

Slide #2

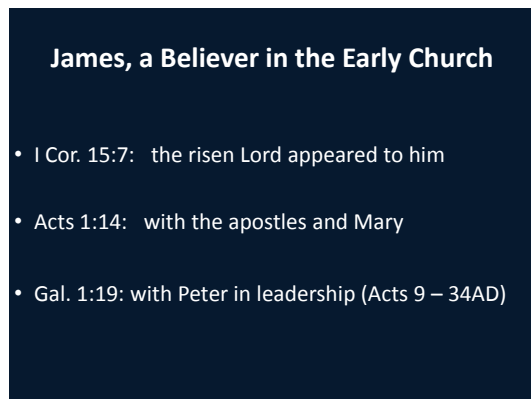
What I do want to address is the role that James performed in the early church. My proposal is simple. I believe that a careful reading of Luke's account in Acts and Paul's comments in Galatians fully support the idea that James was not just a significant leader in the early church, nor was he just the leader of the Jerusalem church, but that he was the leader of the church. The implications of this fact are significant not only for the Roman Catholic attitude toward Peter, but also for the Protestant Evangelical attitude toward Paul.

Ironically it was a chapter written by still another German Martin (Martin Hengel) that first alerted me to this new perspective on James. That chapter, published in German, has been largely neglected by British and American scholars.³ With my discovery of an even more neglected article by Richard Bauckham in an obscure European journal which reviews much of the same evidence, I undertook my own renewed investigation and came to similar conclusions.⁴ I mentioned these scholars, not to enlist their support of my particular views, but to inform skeptics that I have not lost my senses when I make the

³ Hengel's chapter in German was published in 1985.

⁴ See slide # 5 for information on Bauckham's article.

following claims. After the Pentecostal effusion, James rose quickly to a parity of leadership with the traditional apostles and by the early forties was *the* leader, although as a *primus inter pares*, not only of the Jerusalem church (a point usually recognized) but over the church as a whole. My argument is that if a stranger arrived in Jerusalem or in Antioch or even in Rome itself between the years of 40-62 and asked the question, “Who is in charge of this movement?”, any knowledgeable Christian, even Peter or John or Paul, would have answered without any hesitation, “James.” And he would not have needed to add “the brother of Jesus” because everyone would have known that there was only one person who would be instantly recognized by that single name without any additional description or qualifier. “James” was the one known in his lifetime as “the brother of Jesus” and by later generations by the title “James the Just.” Again I believe that such is the clear implication of canonical statements and that it is also supported by a large number of writers from the second through the fifth centuries.



James, a Believer in the Early Church

- I Cor. 15:7: the risen Lord appeared to him
- Acts 1:14: with the apostles and Mary
- Gal. 1:19: with Peter in leadership (Acts 9 – 34AD)

Slide # 3

The evidence for James’ rise to leadership in the church is found not only in Acts but also in Galatians and 1 Corinthians (see slide #3). Paul mentions that James received a special appearance of the risen Lord, which would have led to a radical reassessment of his brother’s person and role. Some even believe that he had already come to recognize Jesus and that this was an appearance to commission James as a leader, but the evidence is too scant to be dogmatic about that. James is simply mentioned as being with the apostles and Mary in Acts 1, where he is probably processing the new information that the one whom he thought was beside himself was actually the Son of God and Lord of creation! Paul mentions that during his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion he saw only two of the “apostles” – Peter and James! From his statement about James in 1 Cor. 15 and Gal. 1:19, it appears that Paul classed James with the apostles. This is an important fact to note about James’ rise to leadership.

James, the Leader of the Jerusalem Church

- Galatians 2:9 the first of the pillars (Acts 11 – 42AD)
- Acts 12:17: Peter: “tell James and the brothers” 44AD
- Acts 15:13-21: the leader at the Jerusalem Council
διότι κρινώ - dio ego krino (15:19) 49AD
- Acts 21:18-26 tells Paul what to do; he obeys (57AD)

Slide # 4

The information in slide #4 is crucial for the argument that James became the leader of the entire church. When Paul and Barnabas visited Jerusalem as described in Galatians 2:1-10 (most probably the famine relief visit of Acts 11-12), they met privately with the Big Three – James, Peter, and John (Gal. 2:9). The order of these “pillars” should not be overlooked. James was first in order and his “primacy” is illustrated in Peter’s attitude toward James from at least this point onward. After the pillars affirm Paul’s Gentile ministry they remind him only to remember the poor. Paul was eager to add that he had done that and would continue to do so. **Paul did what James told him to do.** In that dramatic episode in Acts 12 when Peter was released miraculously from prison, he made a special effort to ask the people in John Marks’ mother’s prayer meeting to inform James and the brothers about his release. Peter here acknowledges the leadership role of James which he also displays in his own role later at the Jerusalem Council.

The events in Acts 15 surrounding the sometimes called Apostolic Council make it obvious that James has by then risen to be THE leader of the church. The crucial decision about whether or not believing Gentiles would have to convert to Judaism was clearly made. NO, circumcision would not be required of them, even if there was a vocal group (not including James) that pushed for it. The text is clear that James rendered the final decision as the head of the church, to which the apostles and brethren agreed as being the guidance of the Holy Spirit! Peter related his experience with Cornelius accompanied by the Spirit and Paul and Barnabas relate their experience with Gentile conversions accompanied by signs (15:7-12). James, however, does not base his argument on experience but on how the prophets affirm this Gentile conversion with an analysis of Amos 9:11, 12 and Isa. 45:21. These prophets agree with the experiences of Paul and Peter in that when Gentiles come into the kingdom, they will come in as Gentiles, not as converts to Judaism. Note the crucial language of James introducing his concluding decision in 15:19a: διότι κρινώ - dio ego krino. Many translations blunt the force of these words which to any Greek reader would mean, “**Therefore, I**

decide... The transitional conjunction διὲν introduces the conclusion to the argument. This is followed by the pronoun οὗτος which is not needed in Greek so it must be added for particular prominence and emphasis (Therefore, I...). Then the verb κρινῶ describes James' action in rendering the verdict. Any good Greek lexicon informs that this verb carries the sense of a judicial verdict or decision and should not be blunted by an idea like, "Well, let me sum up our discussion." James makes the final decision and everyone agrees with it! He is not a pope. He is the first among equals (*primus inter pares*). Peter and Paul acknowledge that authority and do what he says! When James added that certain practices particularly offensive to Jews be observed by the Gentile believers and composes a letter (a diaspora encyclical?) requesting such, Paul delivered the letter as he was instructed to do so (see Acts 16:4). For the second time, **Paul did what James told him to do.**

In Acts 21:18-26 Paul exemplified what he calls elsewhere "becoming all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:22), by doing what James asks him to do in regard to ending the Nazarite vows of four young men. Paul probably would have thought that such an action is not necessary, but out of deference to James, he does it. He perhaps even used some of the offerings from the Gentile believers that he had brought with him to pay for this action in the Temple (see 2 Cor. 8, 9; Rom. 15:25-29). For at least the third time, **Paul did what James told him to do.**

James – the Leader of the Church

"In Jerusalem 49 AD James appears to have been the world head of Christianity."

Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity* (IVP, 1999) 314.

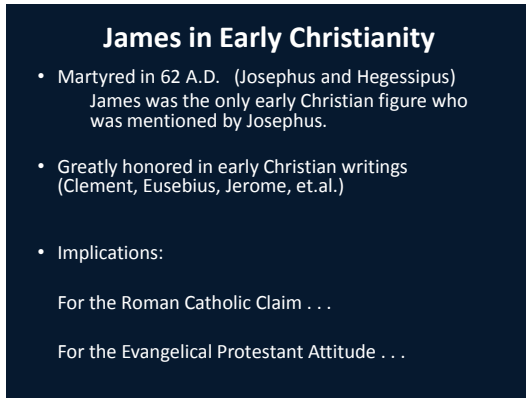
See also: Richard Bauckham, "James at the Centre" *EPTA Bulletin* (1995) 23-33.

Slide #5

I call your attention to the statement by Paul Barnett in slide #5. This is not an overstatement, but is in accord with the facts as they emerge from Acts and Galatians. Bauckham's article in an obscure European journal also rehearses some of the same material.

An important question also arises. If this leadership role of James was the case reflected in the NT writings, did the early church recognize James' primacy? The answer is "yes" and it is witnessed by writers, Jewish and Christian, from the second through the early fifth centuries.

Consider a very brief summary of that evidence in slide # 6 below.



James in Early Christianity

- Martyred in 62 A.D. (Josephus and Hegessipus)
James was the only early Christian figure who was mentioned by Josephus.
- Greatly honored in early Christian writings (Clement, Eusebius, Jerome, et.al.)
- Implications:
For the Roman Catholic Claim . . .
For the Evangelical Protestant Attitude . . .

Slide # 6

The death of James took place in 62 AD and is described by the Jewish historian Josephus. I have never heard anyone comment on the significance of the fact that Josephus never mentions Peter, John or Paul. Apart from a statement about “the tribe of Christians” in the controversial passage about Jesus, the only early Christian that Josephus mentions is James! Could it be because of his leading role? Clement of Alexandria reproduced a tradition that the risen Jesus had actually appointed James to the leader of the apostles, something affirmed by Eusebius’ citation of the Jewish-Christian historian, Hegessipus, and even attested by Jerome. Statements by such orthodox leaders as these are also echoed in a number of pseudepigraphal “gospels” such as *The Gospel of Thomas*, Saying 12: “The disciples said to Jesus, ‘We know that you will depart from us. Who is to be our leader?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Wherever you are, you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being’.” I mention this, not because I have any confidence that Jesus actually said that, but because these and many other sayings about James’ role reflect an attitude that actually prevailed in the early church, despite the growing authority of Peter’s so-called successors in Rome! How did this recognition of James develop if it did not reflect the actual state of events? No one claimed a continuing primacy for the bishop in Jerusalem in succeeding centuries, but everyone acknowledged this original role for James!

Hesychius of Jerusalem in the fifth century preached in the church founded by James on Mt Zion, where the episcopal seat supposedly used by James was still displayed. In a sermon on Acts 15, he said the following about his predecessor: “How shall I praise the servant and brother of Christ, the commander in chief of the new Jerusalem, the prince of the presbyters, the leader of the apostles, among the heads the highest, among the shining lights the one who shines brightest, among the stars the most illustrious? Peter speaks, but James makes the law. (here he cites Acts 15:19). ‘I judge, whose judgment neither the law of custom nor the

decree of an assembly can challenge. For in me speaks the one who is judge of all, the living and the dead’.”

Even after acknowledging some measure of rhetorical hyperbole, this description must indicate something about the position that James held, at least in the minds of Christians four centuries after his death.

If James was THE leader of the early church, there are some serious implications of this fact both for Roman Catholicism and also for Protestant Evangelicalism. In other words, Peter was not the primate of the church. He was behind James and himself yielded to his leadership. I will leave to my reader to conclude why James the brother of our Lord has been marginalized by Rome and written out of the history of the early church. It is interesting that among the so-called “saints” in Romanism, “St. James” refers to the “James the Less” among the apostles, not the James we have been studying! This is a clear indication of his marginalization and is probably intentional so as to blunt the role of James the brother of Jesus in favor of the imagined role of Peter.

It is easy to find fault with Rome, but there are also some implications for those in our circles, where we have often exalted Paul above the role that he actually played in the early church. Although none of us will acknowledge it, we have an untitled “pope” and he is Paul. While we have a canon of 27 books, the 13 epistles of Paul are our unspoken “canon within a canon.” I affirm very strongly that I am not trying “put down” or criticize Paul or reconstruct the description about him in the NT. I only desire to portray him and his role as is indicated in the NT and also by his own words. We should be reminded that Paul himself told us something about the level of his role when he called himself “the least of the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:9). Bauckham reminds us: “If for once we displace Paul from the central position he occupies not only in the New Testament contents page but also in the perceptions of early Christian history, and instead place James at the centre, the exercise will not diminish Paul’s stature but will expand or horizons.” To understand what he means we must now look at the proper place of James the Letter in our New Testaments.

A New Perspective on James the Letter

or
Did James Really Just Throw His
Words on Paper?

Slide #7

A New Perspective on James the Letter

The (In)famous Attitude of Luther

In his Preface to the NT of 1522, Luther says of James that it is "really an epistle of straw," for "it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it." In his Preface to the Epistle itself: "James throws things together in such disorderly fashion that it seems to me he must have been some good, pious man, who took some sayings of the Apostles' disciples and threw them thus on paper."

An attitude not shared by his fellow Reformer in Geneva!!

Slide #8

The sub-title question in slide #7 refers to Luther's infamous statement about the epistle quoted in slide #8. Luther's frustration over James' lack of order (at least to him!) further demeaned the epistle in his eyes. I must add that Calvin did not share this pessimism about the James, but expounded the book at length and wrote a wonderful commentary on it. What can a new perspective on the letter offer us? First we must look at the place of James in our New Testaments, which is following the Pauline epistles and Hebrews, heading what is often called the "General Epistles."

The Position of the Letter in the NT

- After the Pauline Epistles, at the head of the “General” Epistles (our NT)
- The earliest copy of the entire NT, however, has James after the Book of Acts. The “pillar” epistles precede Paul’s!
- The Eastern Orthodox Church also maintains this order, as well as the earliest modern editions of the Greek New Testament (Tischendorf and Westcott/Hort)

Slide #9

In other words, pride of place has gone to Paul after the Book of Acts and heading the other writings of the apostles. This was not the case for over 1000 years of church history. The oldest complete copy of the NT that we possess (Codex Vaticanus) has James, the two Peters, the three Johns and Jude immediately after Acts. Then follows the Paulines. Codex Alexandrinus also has this order. Furthermore, the Eastern Orthodox Church still has maintained this order in their Bibles and the earliest editions of the Greek NT (Tischendorf and Westcott/Hort) also followed this ancient order. English versions in the west and the current critical Greek texts changed the ancient order to the one we see in our New Testaments. The ancient recognition of the three “pillars” (Gal. 2:9) can be seen in the order of the General Epistles: James followed by Peter and John. The ancient testimony in the manuscripts witnessed to James at the head with Paul always included, but in his proper place – after the pillars. Paul would have agreed with this order.

Why does this matter? Well, if we recognize that the letter of James was written to the whole church (like Peter and John did) while Paul wrote to individual churches and individuals, this does not diminish Paul’s significance. It enhances the role of the diaspora encyclical written by the number one man in Jerusalem. As James the Leader should not be marginalized, so James the Letter should not be marginalized either.

But how do we read this encyclical? It appears to be a loosely connected series of admonitions. Was Luther accurate in saying that the author took some ideas and just threw them on his paper?

The Two Biggest Questions in Studying and Preaching James

- What is the *Main Theme* of James?
- What is the *Structure* of James?
- The answers to those questions lie in determining the most **prominent** passage in James and the **cohesive tie** that “cements” the letter together.

Slide# 10

The two biggest issues that have engaged scholars studying the book are: 1) Discovering its main theme, and 2) Discovering its structure, if there is any. A new perspective on James the Letter must answer those challenges. I suggest that the way to answer those challenges is in studying how authors show prominence in their writings and how they provide cohesive ties that lead to the segmenting of their discourses.⁵

Authors will often indicate the most important section in their writing by means of what is called the “peak” of their discourse. It is the paragraph that stands out above the rest of the paragraphs due to its difference in structure and grammatical features. It will also sum up the macro-theme of the entire work. Space does not allow me to illustrate this in other writings. I can only offer some ideas on what I believe to be the thematic peak of James, found in 3:13-18.

The “Peak” of the Book

James 3:13-18: “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

Slide # 11

This paragraph is different than the others in that it is introduced by a rhetorical question that asks what a wise person looks like. A wise person is marked by a behavior

⁵ I have profited from insights in the discipline of discourse analysis in addressing these issues. My commentary handles these questions in depth. I can only offer my conclusions in this seminar format.

that accords with **wisdom**. That word appears four times in this paragraph, only occurring once elsewhere in 1:5. This paragraph justifies James being called “**the** wisdom writing of the NT” – an accolade that not many would dispute. The many other unique features of this paragraph (larger ratio of adjectives, the only virtue and vice lists, more ideas here that appear elsewhere) justify its prominent role. The paragraph also provides the main theme that permeates the entire writing – follow heavenly wisdom (from above) rather than earthly wisdom (from below). Thus the meta-theme is an exhortation to follow God’s wisdom in one’s behavior. This is the theme that is stamped on every other paragraph by means of the old “two ways” exhortation so prevalent in Old Testament and Jewish literature.

Polar Opposites

- In each paragraph of the book, James sets forth a choice between two types of wisdom – that from above and that from below. We are to choose which of the two ways to follow.
- We cannot have it both ways, for then we will be “double-minded” (1:8; 4:8), a word coined by James.
- To be “whole” or “complete” (the meaning of *teleios*) is to be lacking in nothing (1:4).

Slide # 12

The choice between the two wisdoms is conveyed by means of the use of “polar opposites” so consistent with the “two ways” approach. To those of his readers who think they can “have it both ways,” James issues the scathing denunciation of being “double-minded” or literally “double-souled” – an adjective that he may have coined (1:8; 4:8). In the paragraph following his thematic peak (4:1-10, which I argue is the hortatory peak of the book and also introduced by a rhetorical question), James calls for a change from being double-minded to purifying our hearts (4:8.) As Kierkegaard said, “To purify one’s heart is **to will one thing**.”⁶ This is consistent with another of James’ themes, that of **perfection**. Early in his letter he tells us that our goal in all of this is to be “perfect and entire, lacking nothing” (1:4). To be perfect (**te&leioj**) is not to be sinless but to be **whole**. In other words, we are not to be divided people marked by doubleness but rather to exhibit singleness. Maturity is another word that conveys this goal.

Now, how does James then organize his message? Does he just throw these words on paper, will-nilly, as Luther thought? No, he uses a cohesive device that cements his “sermon” together much like a good preacher organizes and presents his material in a

⁶ Bauckham’s work on James (1999) develops Kierkegaard’s ideas on the Dane’s favorite scriptural book.

progressive manner by a coherent outline, sometimes with a repetitive device like alliteration. That cohesive device is his use of the direct address word “brothers” accompanied by an imperative or a question.

Segmenting the Discourse

- The direct address “brothers” followed by an imperative command or question, marks off the beginning of each new paragraph - 1:2; 1:16; 1:19; 2:1; 2:14; 3:1; [3:13; 4:1]; 4:11; 4:13; 5:1; 5:7; 5:12; 5:19.
 (3:13-18 is the thematic peak;
 4:1-10 is the hortatory peak)
- Expound the two ways in each paragraph, calling the hearers to choose the right way, which will lead to wholeness, not doubleness.

Slide # 13

The above slide indicates where those paragraphs begin, each of which also introduces a new topic as well. The two introduced, not by “brothers” but by a question, serve as the two peaks (thematic and hortatory) that convey the main themes of the letter in the prominent way. The task of the preacher is to develop each paragraph along the lines of the behavior condemned (which follows earthly wisdom) and the behavior commended (which follows heavenly wisdom). Stress that wholeness, completeness, maturity and their consequent peace (see 3:18) will be the result of his hearers’ right choice of heavenly wisdom.

To better enable the reader to see this segmentation, I offer an analysis of the epistle copied directly from my commentary. It visually displays the divisions of the epistle based on the cohesive devices mentioned in slide # 13 above.

Sections of James		
Section	Nominative of Address	Imperative Command/ Rhetorical Question
1:2-15	a)delfoi/ mou	pa=san xara\n h(gh/sasqe
1:16-18	a)delfoi/ mou a)gaphtoi/	mh\ plana=sqe

1:19-27	a)delfoi/ mou a)gapthoi/	i!ste
2:1-13	a)delfoi/ mou	mh\ e)n proswpolhmyi/aij e)/xete
2:14-26	a)delfoi/ mou	ti/ to\ o)/feloj
3:1-12	a)delfoi/ mou	mh\ polloì dida/skaloi gi/nesqe
3:13-18	e)n u(mi=n THEMATIC PEAK	ti/j sofoj kai\ e)pisth/mwn
4:1-10	e)n u(mi=n HORTATORY PEAK	po/qen po/lemoi kai\ po/qen ma/xai 10 imperatives in 2 :7-10
4:11-12	a)delfoi/	mh\ katalalei=te a)llh/lwn
4:13-17	oi(le/gontej	a!ge nu=n
5:1-6	oi(plou/sioi	a!ge nu=n . . . klau/sate
5:7-11	a)delfoi/	makroqumh/sate plus 4 imperatives
5:12-18	a)delfoi/ mou	mh\ o)mnu/ete
5:19-20	a)delfoi/ mou	ginwske/tw

For the reader who may not know Greek, here is a simplified outline:

Prescript	1:1
1. Be Joyful in Trials	1:2-15
2. Do Not Be Deceived about God's Goodness	1:16-18
3. Become a Good Hearer/Doer of the Word	1:19-27

4. Do Not Show Favoritism	2:1-13
5. Show Your Faith by Your Works	2:14-26
6. Be Consistent in Your Speech	3:1-12
7. Follow the Wisdom of God	3:13-18
8. Become a Friend of God	4:1-10
9. Do Not Speak Against One Another	4:11, 12
10. Do Not Plan Presumptuously	4:13-17
11. You Rich Should Treat the Poor Justly	5:1-6
12. Wait Patiently for the Lord's Coming	5:7-11
13. Do Not Swear but Pray	5:12-18
14. Convert the Erring Brother	5:19, 20

A Sample Message

I conclude with a skeleton outline of a message I delivered at Grace Church in June, 2007. It focuses on James 1:19-27 which deals with the wisdom of being quick to hear, slow to speech and slow to anger (1:19). I developed the issues of hearing and doing the word along the lines of how best to listen well to a sermon.

“How to Listen to a Sermon”
James 1:19-25

- I. Before the Sermon 1:19-21a (Prepare)
 - Put Off
 - Put On
- II. During the Sermon 1:21b (Persevere)
 - Receive the Word
 - Retain the Word
- III. After the Sermon 1:22-25 (Practice)
 - Be Hearers and Doers (see 1:26, 27)

Slide # 14

The connection of this paragraph with the peak (3:13-18) can be illustrated in many ways, the most prominent being the “meekness” characteristic of true wisdom shown by the mature hearer in receiving the word with a teachable attitude (cf. 1:21 with 3:13). Concrete examples of practicing the word are then mentioned in 1:26, 27. They are the control of the tongue, the care for disadvantaged poor, and non-conformity to the standards of the world. James never lacks for vivid parables (1:22-25) which he certainly learned from his brother. The use of Jesus’ teaching, particularly in the form found in Matthew’s gospel, is another exciting theme that permeates James. It has led me to conclude that if Mark is Peter’s Gospel and Luke is Paul’s gospel, then Matthew could be viewed as James’ gospel.

This summary of my seminar at Shepherds’ Conference certainly needs fleshing out, but the purpose of a seminar is to stimulate you with ideas that you can then develop and make your own. The intention is not to do the work for you, but to point you in a direction so that you can fill in the remaining blanks.

When, as a pastor, I attended pastors’ meetings, I always wanted to be stimulated with some fresh ideas that I could then incorporate into my own ministry, either in the pulpit or in counseling. I hope that this new perspective on James the Leader and the Letter will stimulate you to such good works—a result with which James would be pleased.