



Introduction to the book of James

Why is the book of James so popular with Christians?

- Count it all joy when you encounter many kinds of trials.
- Faith without works is dead.
- Let not many of you become teachers because you know you will incur stricter judgment.
- You adulteresses! Don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?
- Come now, you rich, weep and wail for the miseries coming over you!
- The prayer of faith will heal the sick person.

Content

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- **Authorship and Audience**
 - **Date**
 - **Theology**
 - **Structure**

Who is James?

- **The New Testament contains three men by this name of some prominence**
 - James, the brother of John and son of Zebedee
 - James, the son of Alphaeus
 - James, the half-brother of Jesus and lead elder of the church in Jerusalem

To Whom was the letter written?

- James 1:1 identifies the recipients as “the twelve tribes in the Dispersion”
 - Dispersion (diaspora) commonly referred to Jews scattered throughout the Roman empire
- Some features in James suggest that he was writing only to the communities on the Eastern end of the Mediterranean
 - Jewish Christianity was strongest in and around Syria and Palestine

To Whom was the letter written?

- James frequently returns to the issue of wealth and poverty
 - Suggesting socioeconomic disparities within the churches were causing problems for the congregations
- First century Mediterranean demographics suggest that up to 10% of the population could have been poor and/or sick enough at any given time for their lives to be in actual jeopardy



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33 (or 30)	Jesus returns to Judea, is crucified, and resurrected. James the brother of Jesus becomes a believer after witnessing the resurrected Jesus.
33/34*	Paul witnesses the resurrected Lord on the way to Damascus and is commissioned as an apostle to the nations.
34–37	Paul ministers in Damascus and Arabia.
36/37*	Paul meets with Peter in Jerusalem.
37–45	Paul ministers in Syria, Tarsus, and Cilicia.
38*	Peter witnesses to Cornelius.
40–45*	James writes his letter to believers outside Palestine.
44–47*	Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem; time of famine.
46–47	Paul's First Missionary Journey (with Barnabas).
48*	Paul writes Galatians, perhaps from Antioch.
48–49*	Paul and Peter return to Jerusalem for the Apostolic Council, which, with the assistance of James, frees Gentile believers from the requirement of circumcision in opposition to Pharisaic believers.
48/49–51*	Paul's Second Missionary Journey (with Silas).
49–51*	Paul writes 1–2 Thessalonians from Corinth.
50–54*	Peter comes to Rome.
52–57*	Paul's Third Missionary Journey.

* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or

52–55	Paul ministers in Ephesus.
53–55*	Mark writes his Gospel, containing Peter's memories of Jesus; perhaps within a decade, Matthew publishes his Gospel. Paul writes 1 Corinthians.
55–56*	Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Macedonia.
57*	Paul winters in Corinth and writes Romans; travels to Jerusalem, visits with James the brother of Jesus, and is arrested.
57–59	Paul is imprisoned and transferred to Caesarea.
60	Paul begins voyage to Rome; he is shipwrecked for three months.
60–70*	Letter to the Hebrews is written.
62	James the brother of Jesus is executed by Sadducean high priest Ananus.
62–63*	Peter writes his first letter from Rome.
62*	Paul arrives in Rome and remains under house arrest; he writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon. Luke, Paul's physician and companion, writes Luke and Acts.
62–64	Paul is released, extends his mission (probably reaching Spain), writes 1 Timothy from Macedonia and Titus from Nicopolis; he is rearrested in Rome.
64–67*	Peter writes his second letter. Jude writes his letter. Paul writes 2 Timothy. Paul and Peter are martyred in Rome.

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Echoes of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in James

James	Teaching	Matthew	James	Teaching	Matthew
<u>1:2</u>	joy amid trials	<u>5:10–12</u>	<u>3:18</u>	blessings of peacemakers	<u>5:9</u>
<u>1:4</u>	exhortation to be perfect	<u>5:48</u>	<u>4:2–3</u>	ask and you will receive	<u>7:7–8</u>
<u>1:5</u>	asking God for good things	<u>7:7–11</u>	<u>4:4</u>	serving God vs. friendship with the world	<u>6:24</u>
<u>1:17</u>	God the giver of good	<u>7:11</u>	<u>4:9–10</u>	consolation for mourners	<u>5:4</u>
<u>1:20</u>	against anger	<u>5:22</u>	<u>4:11–12</u>	against judging others	<u>7:1–5</u>
<u>1:22</u>	hearers and doers of the word	<u>7:24–27</u>	<u>4:13–14</u>	living for today	<u>6:34</u>
<u>2:5</u>	poor inherit the kingdom	<u>5:3, 5</u>	<u>5:2–5</u>	moth and rust spoiling earthly treasures	<u>6:19</u>
<u>2:10</u>	keeping the whole law	<u>5:19</u>	<u>5:10</u>	prophets as examples and patterns	<u>5:12</u>
<u>2:13</u>	merciful receive mercy	<u>5:7</u>	<u>5:12</u>	against oaths	<u>5:33–37</u>

James and Paul

- James' teaching on faith and works grows out of the reality of life in the eastern Mediterranean region
 - Rich and poor living together, with wrong behavior illustrated by extreme examples (or maybe not examples??)
 - James 2:1-4 – Showing partiality based on clothing
 - James 2:14-17 – Sentimentality without feeding a starving brother or sister

James and Paul

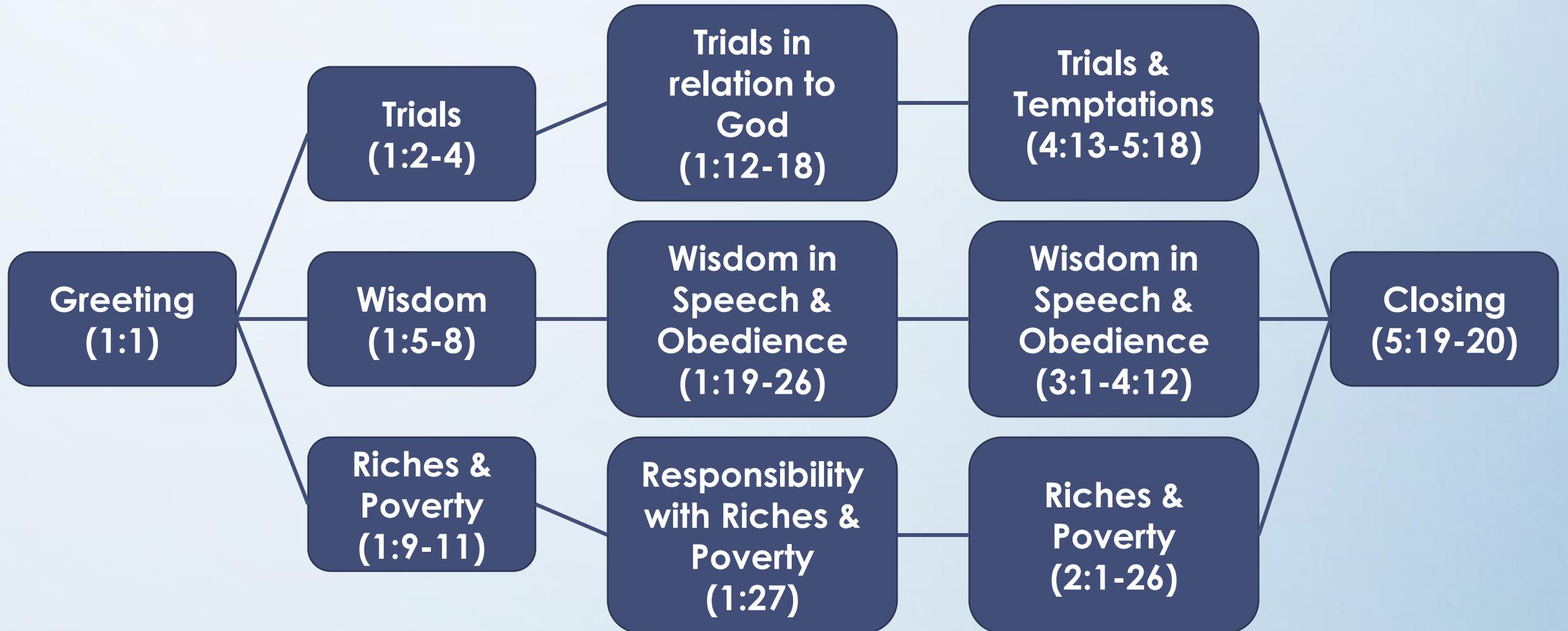
- James did not want the rich to ignore their responsibility to the poor within their own congregation
- With respect to “justification by works”, was James more likely to write this way because
 - He was independent of Paul (and possibly prior to),
 - He was rebutting Paul, or
 - He was correcting a misunderstanding of Paul

Content

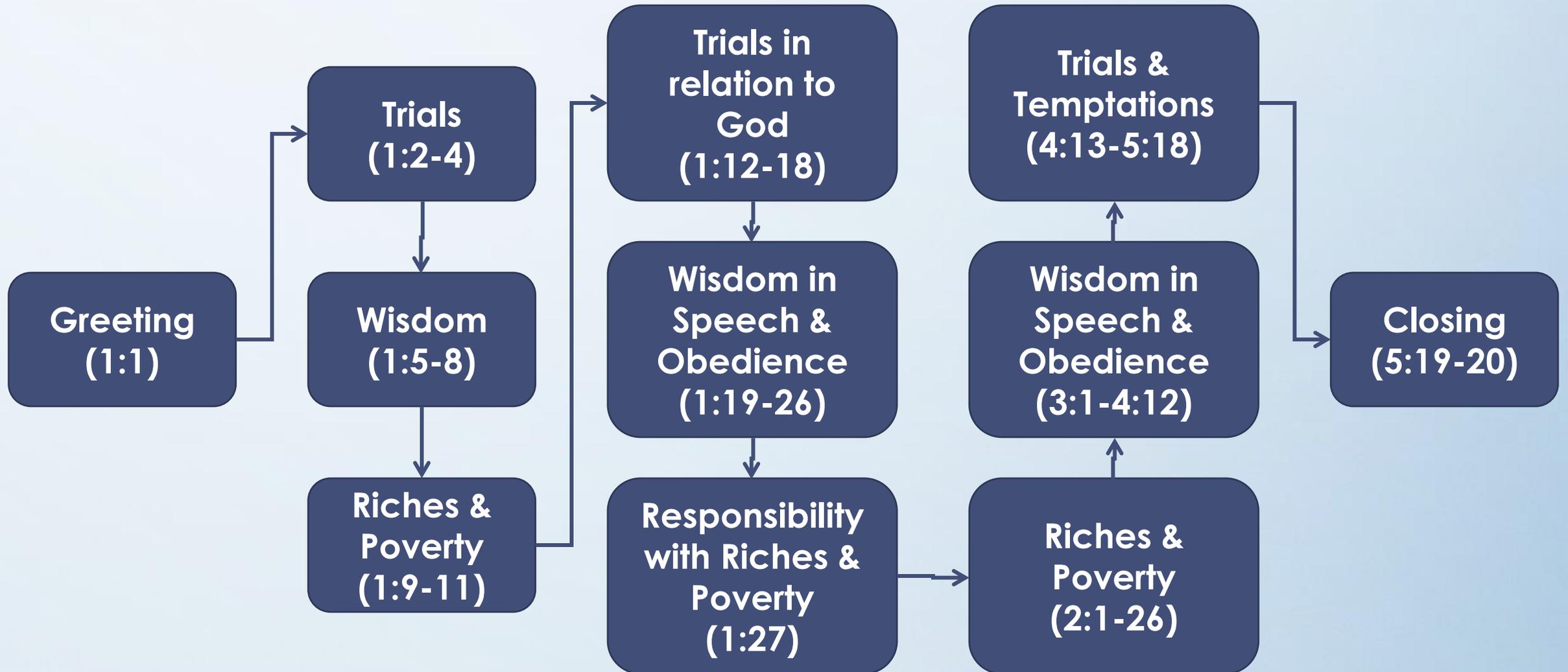
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Structure of James



Structure of James



Summary of James' Theology

- **Faith in Action, especially in social action**
 - No tension between correct belief and correct behavior

- **Spiritual “wholeness”**
 - Stop compromising yourself with worldly values and behavior, but give yourself wholly to the Lord

Summary of Discussion from Sunday School, Jan. 25th

- James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote the letter
- James was writing to the ethnic Jewish-Christian communities in Syria and Cilicia
- James wrote his letter in the early to mid-40s A.D.
 - One of the earliest NT texts we possess!
- James focuses his letter on the issues facing the communities
 - Trials and temptations
 - Wisdom in speech and obedience
 - Riches and poverty