



The Letter of James
Bible Study Session 10
James 3:13-18
“Truly Wise”

Study By
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Greek NT

13 Τίς σοφός καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν; δεῖξάτω ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἐν πραΰτητι σοφίας. 14 εἰ δὲ ζῆλον πικρὸν ἔχετε καὶ ἐριθείαν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν, μὴ κατακαυχᾶσθε καὶ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας. 15 οὐκ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ σοφία ἄνωθεν κατερχομένη ἀλλὰ ἐπίγειος, ψυχικὴ, δαιμονιώδης. 16 ὅπου γὰρ ζῆλος καὶ ἐριθεία, ἐκεῖ ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα. 17 ἡ δὲ ἄνωθεν σοφία πρῶτον μὲν ἀγνή ἐστίν, ἔπειτα εἰρηνικὴ, ἐπιεικὴς, εὐπειθής, μεστὴ ἐλέους καὶ καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἀδιάκριτος, ἀνυπόκριτος. 18 καρπὸς δὲ δικαιοσύνης ἐν εἰρήνῃ σπείρεται τοῖς ποιοῦσιν εἰρήνην.



La Biblia

de las Américas

13 ¿Quién es sabio y entendido entre vosotros? Que muestre por su buena conducta sus obras en sabia mansedumbre. 14 Pero si tenéis celos amargos y ambición personal en vuestro corazón, no seáis arrogantes y así mintáis contra la verdad. 15 Esta sabiduría no es la que viene de lo alto, sino que es terrenal, natural, diabólica. 16 Porque donde hay celos y ambición personal, allí hay confusión y toda cosa mala. 17 Pero la sabiduría de lo alto es primeramente pura, después pacífica, amable, concendiente, llena de misericordia y de buenos frutos, sin vacilación, sin hipocresía. 18 Y la semilla cuyo fruto es la justicia se siembra en paz por aquellos que hacen la paz.

NRSV

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. 15 Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. 16 For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

NLT

13 If you are wise and understand God’s ways, live a life of steady goodness so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don’t brag about the good you do, then you will be truly wise! 14 But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your hearts, don’t brag about being wise. That is the worst kind of lie. 15 For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and motivated by the Devil. 16 For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and every kind of evil. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no partiality and is always sincere. 18 And those who are peace-makers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.

The Study of the Text:¹

Human knowledge is divided up into several different categories in the modern western world. The fields of education and philosophy have been attempting to classify different categories of knowledge for the past few centuries. This kind of study itself falls under the very broad label of *the taxonomy² of human*

¹With each study we will ask two basic questions. First, what was the most likely meaning that the first readers of this text understood? This is called the ‘historical meaning’ of the text. That must be determined, because it becomes the foundation for the second question, “What does the text mean to us today?” For any applicational meaning of the text for modern life to be valid it must grow out of the historical meaning of the text. Otherwise, the perceived meaning becomes false and easily leads to wrong belief.

²The exact definition of taxonomy varies slightly from source to source, but the core of the discipline remains: the conception, naming, and classification of organism groups. As points of reference, three recent textbook definitions are presented below:

1. What did the text mean to the first readers?

Background:

Historical Setting.

External History.

In the hand copying of the Greek text of 3:13-18 over the first thousand years of Christian history, several variations in wording surface in comparing those manuscripts with one another, that continue to exist today. But in the opinion of the editorial committee responsible for *The Greek New Testament* (4th rev. ed.) published by the United Bible Societies no existing variations are significant enough to impact how these verses would be translated into another language. Consequently no variant readings of the text are listing in the text apparatus of this printed Greek New Testament.



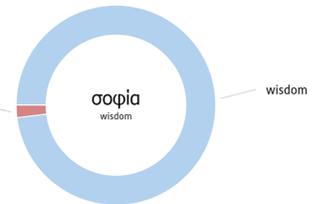
However, in the text apparatus of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th rev. ed.), which contains a full listing of existing variations, some dozen places are listed where variations in wording surface in the different manuscript copies.⁵ Again, as careful examination of each of these readings signals, not one alters the meaning of the text and the vast majority are efforts to update and improve the style of the writing of the Greek.



Consequently, the adopted text reading can be exegeted confidently that it represents the original wording of this text.

Internal History.

One very important background issue here is the understanding of diverse meanings of σοφία, *wisdom*, in the ancient world. Without this understanding it is impossible to grasp clearly what James is discussing in the passage. Plus, one needs to see wisdom against the backdrop of other perspectives on knowledge and knowing in the ancient world. This will throw much light on the effort to grasp the idea of wisdom that James put on the table in this passage.



Inside the New Testament a variety of words are built off the single root stem σοφ- with some refer-

if we are to avoid conflict and frustration as we seek to worship and serve God together as a congregation. On the other side, this challenge is one of the great attractions of an international church. When communication occurs clearly, we are immeasurably enriched by the great diversity of viewpoints reflected in the many different cultures represented in the group.

⁵Jakobus 3,13

* ει τις 489. 2298 *al*; Nil (The pronoun Τίς, *who*, is replaced by ει τις, *if someone*)
| – K 049*. 1 *al*

Jakobus 3,14

* αρα A P Ψ 33. 81. 945. 1241. 1739. 2298 *pc* (The interrogative particle ἄρα, *then*, is inserted after ει δε, *but if*)
* ταις –δαις κ 323. 945. 1241. 1739. 2298 *al latt bo* (The singular τη καρδια is replaced by the plural ταις καρδιαις)
* καυχ– A 69. 630 *al* (κατακαυχᾶσθε is replaced by καυχᾶσθε)
* 4 5 1 2 κ⁽²⁾ *syp*; *Prosp* (The sequence of και ψευδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας is shifted)

Jakobus 3,15

* 2 3 1 C 614. 630. 945. 1241. 1505. 1739 *al*; *Cyr* (The sequence of αὕτη ἡ σοφία is shifted)

Jakobus 3,16

* ερεις C *pc* (the spelling of ἐριθία is altered)
| ερις P 945. 1241. 1243. 1739. 2298 *pc*
* και κ A 33. 81 *pc syp* (και is inserted before ἀκαταστασία)

Jakobus 3,17

* μεστη P74 (και is replaced with μεστή)
* εργων C 322. 323. 945. 1241. 1243. 1739 *pc* (before ἀγαθῶν the word ἐργῶν is inserted)
* και P100 K L 049. 69. 322. 323 *m* (και is inserted before ἀνυπόκριτος)

Jakobus 3,18

* της M (either τῆς or ὁ is inserted before δικαιοσύνης)
| ὁ κ* Ψ
| txt P⁷⁴ κ^c A B C L P 33. 81. 323. 614. 630. 945. 1241. 1505. 1739 *al sa*

[Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 593-94.]

ence to wisdom: σοφία, **wisdom** (noun; 51x); σοφίζομαι, **know how to contrive cleverly** (verb); σοφίζω, **make wise** (verb); σοφός, ή, όν, **wise** (adjective; 20x); σοφός, **wise man** (noun).⁶ Most of the terms are used positively, but a few are sometimes used with negative implications. Usually in these instances negative adverbs or adjective modifiers are attached to the word, clearly signaling a negative implication to the word. In the background of James' discussion in 3:13-18, along with the earlier one in 1:5-8, lies two dominant streams of thinking about σοφία: the Greek tradition⁷ and the Jewish tradition.

Across the centuries the idea of σοφία underwent change. In the very early period prior to the classical era (sixth to the third centuries BCE), σοφία referred to most every kind of practical skill where the individual possessed unusual ability:⁸

In the early period a man was wise who was fully and pre-eminently experienced and adept in a specific skill, mostly manual. The earliest example is in Hom. Il., 15, 411 f.,⁴ which refers to the σοφία of a τέκτων who pursued his craft acc. to the directions of Athene.⁵ After Hom. we read in the same sense of the wisdom, i.e., mastery of, e.g., the builder, general, statesman, physician, wagoner, wrestler, goldsmith etc.⁶ σοφία here is always combined with τέχνη, έπιστήμη, έργον etc.⁷ Yet the ref. is not just to specific manual skill; it is also to mastery and superiority in a matter.⁸ Acc. to Pind. Nem., 7 and 17, e.g., a wise man can predict the weather; acc. to Eur. Ion, 1139 he can calculate the surface of a tent. Always the pt. is: ό χρήσιμ' ειδώς, ούχ ό πόλλ' ειδώς σοφός.⁹ Hence wisdom is often distinguished from sheer physical force.¹⁰ One is not wise by nature; wisdom comes only by learning.¹¹ Wisdom has nothing in common with μανία, Gorg. Pal., 25 (Diels, II, 300, 20 ff.). In particular it is distinguished from τύχη, Democr. Fr., 197 (186, 3 ff.). It always stands out; the wise man is different from others.¹² σοφία is a gift of divine grace, Soph. & Fr., 226 (TGF, 184), cf. Gorg. Hel., 6 (Diels, II, 290, 3 f.). Various legends tell how it once came down from the gods to men.¹³ Originally it was a possession of the gods alone: Athene (Plat. Prot., 231d), Hephaistos and esp. Apollo¹⁴ were the gods of wisdom. The Muses mediate it to the poets.¹⁵ Hence these are reputed to be wise κατ' έξοχήν.¹⁶ Pind. realises that he is a σοφός ποιητής in whom musical inspiration and the artistic art of constructing verse are combined.¹⁷

But with the classical period a major shift in meaning with σοφία took place. σοφία becomes limited to theoretical and intellectual knowledge while loosing its designation of practical skills:⁹

Yet under Ionic leadership a new type of sage was developed from the 6th cent.; *the wisdom of this new sage is a resolute application to theoretical inquiry*. Here σοφία is fully understood as established knowledge which can be learned (→ n. 11) and the mastery of which is τέχνη, this being treasured as the art of comprehending general laws. We may refer esp. to the gt. Ionic natural philosophers, who investigated the φύσις, γένεσις or άρχή of all things.²⁷ Thus σοφία is very common in the Ionic of the period,²⁸ whereas it is hardly found at all in Attic prose.²⁹ The Sophists are the first to use it. Basically contesting the knowability and expressibility of being they resolutely and consistently make thought and language an instrument for mastering practical living. For them there is no wisdom in the sense of the older philosophers.³⁰ Wisdom as the power of clever speech subjects the world to the sophist.³¹ Wisdom may thus be taught, and the Sophists worked out a varied programme of instruction. Publicly rejected,³² they finally went down under the devastating criticism of Socrates, Plat.³³ and Aristot.³⁴ Only from this time on does σοφιστής, previously used positively as a synonym of σοφός,³⁵ take on a negative ring and come to be sharply differentiated from σοφός.

For Plato, σοφία stood as the most important of the four cardinal virtues: σοφία (**wisdom**), άνδρεία (**manliness**), σωφροσύνη (**self-control**) and δικαιοσύνη (**justice**). Central to wisdom for Plato was knowledge of the good and the beautiful, completely abstract concepts.¹⁰ For Aristotle, however, σοφία (**wisdom**) equals φιλοσοφία

⁶In the earlier classical Greek quite a number of additional words emerged from the σοφ- stem, e.g., σοφιστής, σοφία.

⁷"An important point is that in contrast to specific epistemological terms like γνώμη (→ I, 717, 10 ff.), γνώσις (→ I, 689, 13 ff.), σύνεσις, μάθημα, έπιστήμη and others, in which we have verbal abstracts, σοφία is derived from an adjective and always denotes a quality, never an activity. This is the reason for the great shift which took place in its meaning.² In general σοφία denotes a materially complete and hence unusual knowledge and ability. In the early Greek period any practical skill of this kind counted as wisdom, then during the classical period the range of meaning was strongly restricted to theoretical and intellectual knowledge, and finally in the usage of the philosophical schools of Hellenism and later antiquity the practical element was united again with the theoretical in the ideal picture of the wise man." [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:467.]

⁸Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:468-69.

⁹Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:469-70.

¹⁰Σοφία έπιστήμη άνυπόθετος: έπιστήμη τών άει όντων: έπιστήμη θεωρητική τής τών όντων αίτίας. Φιλοσοφία τής τών όντων άει έπιστήμης όρεξις: έξις θεωρητική τοϋ άληθοϋς, πώς άληθές: έπιμέλεια ψυχής μετά λόγου όρθοϋ. [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 471.]

(philosophy). Thus wisdom is the supreme knowledge:¹¹

Yet wisdom in the strict sense is the knowledge which perceives and knows πρώται αἰτίαι καὶ ἀρχαί.⁴ Thus σοφία is the πρώτη φιλοσοφία,⁴⁵ “the most complete form of knowledge,”⁴⁶ for he who knows first causes knows all things, since the ἀρχαί underlie all that exists, *Metaph.*, 1, 2, p. 982a, 21 ff. Hence the wise are distinguished from all other men by this knowledge,⁴⁷ especially from the Sophists, against whom Aristot. fights just as strongly as Plato: the σοφοί know the τιμώτατα.⁴⁸

With the beginning of the Hellenistic era in the 300s BCE, the Greek idea of wisdom underwent another major shift in meaning.¹² The dominant philosophical school of this period extending well beyond the first century of Christianity was Stoicism, which combined elements of the past but with a new set of assumptions.¹³

The Stoic ideal of wisdom exerted a strong influence for centuries. The Stoic school founded by Zeno, developed by Chrysippus and then persisting basically unchanged into the Christian era, is a fundamentally dogmatic system which finds its comprehensive goal in the prototype of the σοφός or σπουδαῖος. The leading concern is to impart to individuals knowledge of the system, which is thought to be in essential harmony with the ontic system of the cosmos, and thus to give them the final shelter which rejection of the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle had called in question for the Stoics.⁵⁸ Hence σοφία is defined as ἐπιστήμη θείων τε καὶ ἀνθρωπείων πραγμάτων,⁵⁹ which in the Stoic sense means controlling knowledge of the universe as ἐκ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων ... σύστημα.⁶⁰ Now knowledge is for the Stoic a διάθεσις, i.e., an immutable basic attitude. Hence σοφία as knowledge is the διάθεσις [arrangement] which corresponds to the λόγος that constitutes the unity of the cosmos,⁶¹ so that essentially it is an ethical attitude too. Thus σοφία is regarded as the only basic virtue which essentially combines practice and theory.⁶² Wisdom is actualised knowledge,⁶³ and philosophy is its practical execution.⁶⁴ Stoicism, then, can basically explain σοφία only with reference to the conduct of the wise man. The σοφός is the true and necessary subject of Stoic philosophy. The rigour of the image is typical. Only the sage can have ἐπιστήμη [acquiring of knowledge],⁶⁵ to him alone are all things accessible.⁶⁶ Error is ruled out for the sage.⁶⁷ He is divine by nature.⁶⁸ He does all things well.⁶⁹ He alone possesses all virtues and hence he alone is happy:⁷⁰ πάσαις μὲν ταῖς κινήσει, πάσαις δεῦ ταῖς σχέσεσιν ὁ σπουδαῖος ἐπαινετός, ἔνδον τε καὶ ἔξω κτλ.⁷¹

It was this perspective about σοφία that James labels false wisdom in his discussion. His strategy is not to attack it philosophically, which would have meant little or nothing to his readers. Instead, he attacks it ethically due to its inherent tendency to promote arrogance and elitist superiority by the one claiming to be a σοφός, sage.

He opted, instead, for a Jewish based definition of σοφία, which was developed out of the religious traditions of the Jewish people.¹⁴ It held someone in common with Hellenistic definitions the idea of a thorough

¹¹*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:471-72.

¹²“The beginning of the Hell. period is characterised essentially by the political decline of the small city states, the rise of Alexander’s empire, the resultant kingdoms, and the process of religious and cultural syncretism which suddenly became so widespread in consequence. This new situation on the larger canvas meant a wholly new basic experience for the individual. He was largely detached from the old, developed, native sphere of the polis and thus left defenceless in the broader sphere of the cosmos. He was now basically alone.⁵³ This experience leads to a new approach to life which takes shape in the ideal of the wise man that almost all philosophical schools sought to set up — the image of the whole man who can find his way in the relations of the day and preserve the ancient ideal of εὐδαιμονία in changed surroundings.⁵⁴ Thus the philosopher is often the tutor who prepares the sons of the wealthy for life in the broadest sense.⁵⁵ We find this ideal picture of the sage first of all in the Megarics,⁵⁶ then in the Cynics, and finally esp. in the Stoics and Epicureans.⁵⁷” [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:472-73.]

¹³*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:473-74.

¹⁴“ Since the LXX normally uses σοφία/σοφός for the Hbr. stem חכ [be wise; hkm], in essentials this alone need be considered. The verb חכם occurs 26 times (q 18, pi 3, pu 2, hi 1, hitp 2), חכם as adj. or noun occurs 135 times, the noun חכמה 147 times and in the plur. חכמות 485 times. 73 instances are in the historical books (חכ 3, חכם 31, חכמה 39), 41 in the prophets (חכ 1, חכם 24, חכמה 16), 13 in the Psalms (חכ 4, חכם 2, חכמה 7),⁸⁶ 180 in the Wisdom lit. proper (חכ 18, חכם 76, חכמה 86),⁸⁷ and 5 in the other books. Thus about three-fifths of the total may be found in the Wisdom books. It is worth noting that in the historical books the words mostly denote technical or artistic ability (→ 484, 1 ff.) or cleverness and knowledge such as the wisdom of Solomon (→ 484, 24 ff.), more rarely magical craft, practical wisdom, and ethical or religious conduct (→ 486, 14 ff.). In the prophets they denote human ability of various kinds, the wisdom and the magicians of other nations; they are also found in criticism of wisdom and very rarely, and only in prophecy, in the context of eschatology, → 488, 30 ff. In the Wisdom lit. (→ 476, n. 87) the terms may sometimes be used for cleverness and prudence, but as in the Psalms they are employed in the main for rules of behaviour, for ethical or religious conduct. Qoh. stands apart, since it uses the words for the doctrinally clearly etched wisdom of the schools. In the few other instances the ref. is to magic or knowledge.

grasp of reality and the functioning of life. But in contrast to the Greek view, the origin of such understanding lay in the God of Israel.¹⁵ The ethical implications of Jewish wisdom flowed out of the moral being of God. This wisdom had abstract qualities but these were profoundly different from the Greek understanding, and in particular from the contemporary Stoic understanding. The divine source of wisdom was the key difference, and it displayed itself in practical ways, primarily in ethical behavior. It was not particularly concerned with labeling a highly skilled farmer or craftsman as wise simply because he possessed superior skills in his particular trade.

Also important to note is the core idea of חכם, *be wise* (*hkm*). It defines the state of being wise.¹⁶ How does one come into such an existence? With the shift to the imperfect form of the Hebrew verb the idea shifts to becoming wise.¹⁷ This can be accomplished through a variety of ways, such as experience, careful listening to other, following the wise counsel of others, instruction et als. At the heart of this is learning the ways of God with the ability to correctly apply them to the living of one's daily life.

Another important note is the tendency in some parts of the Hebrew Old Testament to use *nābōn*, *insightful*, from בִּין, *bîn*, as a synonym of חכם.¹⁸ This Hebrew adjective lies behind ἐπιστήμων in James 3:13 via the LXX. This gives us an important clue to James' phrase σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων in v. 13.

What James does is work off his Jewish heritage and interpret it to his readers as the only legitimate wisdom that exists.

In the background of this additionally lies the use of Greek terminology for knowing and understanding in connection to wisdom. In the NT the key verbs referring to 'know' and 'knowledge' are γινώσκω; οἶδα; γνῶριζω; γνῶσις.¹⁹ Out of these five core words come many derivatives along with additional words and

"In the Aram. portions of the OT we also find the noun חֲכָמָא 'wise man,' which is used 14 times for men to whom one goes for the interpretation of dreams, and the noun חֲכָמָא, which is used in Ezr. 7:25 for the Torah and elsewhere for the gift of interpreting dreams granted to Daniel."

[*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:476.]

^{15c}"In post-exilic Israel with its profound intellectual developments the concept of wisdom was to a great degree thought out and used theologically among the so-called teachers of wisdom. Wisdom was regarded as a divine summons to man, as a means of revelation, as the great teacher of Israel and the Gentiles, and even as the divine principle set in the world at creation. All theological thinking thus became more or less wisdom thinking; at any rate, to a hitherto unknown degree, theology was unified and concentrated in the master concept of wisdom." [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:482.]

^{16c}"The verb in the basic stem refers, first of all, to the state of 'being wise,' indeed, as something objectively determinable, whose effectual (even if only imagined; cf. Deut 32:29; Prov 9:12[bis]) presence makes other activities possible, and whose absence prohibits other actions (cf. HP 27ff.): in addition to the passages already mentioned, Zech 9:2 (ironic-concessive); Prov 23:15; Eccl 2:15, 19 (all in the pf.), as well as 1 Kgs 5:11 (impf. cons., resumptive); cf. Job 32:9 (with an impf. in the so-called compounded nom. clause)." [Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 419.]

^{17c}"By contrast, the remaining 9 Prov passages (see HAL 301a, where all Prov passages are incorrectly listed in one category) use an impf. (9:9; 13:20 Q; 19:20; 20:1; 21:11) or an impv. (6:6; 8:33; 23:19; 27:11) as the predicate (cf. also Eccl 7:23 with a cohortative), and the verb acquires an ingressive meaning: 'to become wise,' a reference to 'being wise' as a future, resultant event, often as the result of another phenomenon; this 'other phenomenon' refers to the various means of becoming wise, through either experience (Prov 6:6; 13:20) or instruction (cf. 9:9; 21:11), but esp. through an obedient 'listening' that leads to behavior (8:33; 23:19; esp. 19:20: 'give heed to counsel [‘ēṣā] and receive instruction [mûsār, → ys̄r] '). 'Becoming wise' means training; the impvs. are pleading warning cries to that end." [Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 419.]

^{18c}"The main synonyms are *bîn*, *bînâ*, and *tēbûnâ*. The verb *bîn* is used more widely to mean 'consider,' 'discern' 'perceive,' but the nouns are close synonyms to *hokmâ* and are used especially in Prov and Job. In the well-known verse Prov 4:7, 'understanding' is not a higher stage than 'wisdom,' but a poetic synonym used for emphasis. The root *śākal* is also widely used for ordinary intelligence and skill. It is often used for that wisdom which brings success—even prosperity. This wisdom was possessed by David (I Sam 18:14) and will characterize the Messiah (Jer 23:5; Isa 52:13). But the Hiphil participle is used particularly in Prov as another synonym of *hokmâ*. This word, *maškil*, is also used extensively to designate a type of psalm. *tûšiyâ*, like *śākal*, has the double meaning of wisdom and the success which is the effect of wisdom." [Louis Goldberg, "647 חָכָם" In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 282.]

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- B** *Known (the content of knowledge) (28.17–28.27)*
C *Well Known, Clearly Shown, Revealed (28.28–28.56)*
D *Able To Be Known (28.57–28.67)*
E *Not Able To Be Known, Secret (28.68–28.83)*

A Know¹ (28.1–28.16)

28.1 γινώσκω^a; οἶδα^a; γνωρίζω^a; γνώσις^a, εως f: to possess information about—‘to know, to know about, to have knowledge of, to be acquainted with, acquaintance.’

γινώσκω^a: διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐκ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ‘since, although they knew about God, they did not honor him as God’ or ‘... they did not give him the honor that belongs to him’ Ro 1:21; ὑμεῖς ἐστε οἱ δικαιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὁ δὲ θεὸς

γινώσκει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ‘you are the ones who make yourselves look right in people’s sight, but God knows your hearts’ Lk 16:15.2

οἶδα^a: γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἶδατε τὴν ἡμέραν οὐδὲ τὴν ὥραν ‘watch out, then, because you do not know the day or hour’ Mt 25:13; τὰς ἐντολὰς οἶδας ‘you know the commandments’ Mk 10:19.

γνωρίζω^a: τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω ‘which I shall choose, I do not know’ Php 1:22.

γνώσις^a: τοῦ δοῦναι γνῶσιν σωτηρίας τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ ‘to let his people know that they will be saved’ Lk 1:77.

28.2 ἐπιγινώσκω^a; ἐπίγνωσις^a, εως f: to possess more or less definite information about, possibly with a degree of thoroughness or competence—‘to know about, to know definitely about, knowledge about.’

ἐπιγινώσκω^a: οὐδεὶς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν υἱὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ, οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις ἐπιγινώσκει εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱός ‘no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son’ Mt 11:27; ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν εἰς μετάλημνιν μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπεγνωκόσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν ‘which things God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth’ 1 Tm 4:3.

ἐπίγνωσις^a: αἰτούμενοι ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ‘we are asking (God) to fill you by letting you know what he wants’ Col 1:9; ἐν ἐπιγνώσει παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν εἰς Χριστόν ‘so that you will know every blessing that we receive in Christ’ Phm 6; καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει ‘and because they refused to keep in mind knowledge about God’ or ‘... to think about God’ Ro 1:28. It is also possible to render ἐπίγνωσις in Ro 1:28 as ‘true knowledge.’ For another interpretation of ἐπίγνωσις as part of an idiom in Ro 1:28, see 31.28.

28.3 ἐπίσταμαι^a: to possess information about, with the implication of an understanding of the significance of such information—‘to know.’ τὸν Παῦλον ἐπίσταμαι ‘I know about Paul’ Ac 19:15; ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὅτι ἅφ’ ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός ‘you know that a long time ago God chose (me) from among you’ Ac 15:7.

28.4 σύννοια^a; συνειδήσις^a, εως f: to be aware of information about something—‘to know, to be conscious of, to be aware of.’

σύννοια^a: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ σύννοια ‘I am aware of nothing against myself’ 1 Cor 4:4.

συνειδήσις^a: εἰ διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ ὑποφέρετε τὴν λύπασ πάσχων ἀδίκως ‘if you endure the pain of undeserved suffering because you are conscious of God’s will’ 1 Pe 2:19.

28.5 σύννοια^b: to share information or knowledge with—‘to know something together with someone else.’ ἐνοσφίσατο ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς, συνειδυίης καὶ τῆς γυναικός ‘he kept part of the money for himself, his wife sharing in knowledge of that too’ Ac 5:2. The sharing of information may be expressed in Ac 5:2 as ‘his wife also knew about it.’

28.6 προγινώσκω^a; πρόγνωσις^a, εως f; προοράω^b: to know about something prior to some temporal reference point, for example, to know about an event before it happens—‘to know beforehand, to know already, to have foreknowledge.’

προγινώσκω^a: προγινώσκοντές με ἄνωθεν, ἐὰν θέλωσι μαρτυρεῖν ‘they have already known me beforehand, if they are willing to testify’ Ac 26:5; προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου ‘known already before the world was made’ 1 Pe 1:20. It is also possible to understand προγινώσκω in 1 Pe 1:20 as meaning ‘chosen beforehand’ (see 30.100).

πρόγνωσις^a: τοῦτον τῇ ὠρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκδοτον ‘God, in his own will and foreknowledge, had already decided that this one would be handed over to (you)’ Ac 2:23.

προοράω^b: προϊδὼν ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ ‘knowing ahead of time, he spoke about the resurrection of the Christ’ Ac 2:31.4

28.7 οἶδα^b: to have the knowledge as to how to perform a particular activity or to accomplish some goal—‘to know how to.’ εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὄντες οἶδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν ‘if you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children’ Mt 7:11.

28.8 σοφία^a, ας f: knowledge which makes possible skillful activity or performance—‘specialized knowledge, skill.’ ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστός ... εὐαγγελίσεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφία λόγου ‘Christ sent me ... to preach the good news not with skillful speech’ 1 Cor 1:17. It is also possible to interpret σοφία in 1 Cor 1:17 as wisdom which makes possible correct understanding (see 32.32).

28.9 σοφός^a, ἦ, ὄν: pertaining to specialized knowledge resulting in the skill for accomplishing some purpose—‘skillful, expert.’ ὡς σοφός ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκα ‘I did the work like an expert builder and laid the foundation’ 1 Cor 3:10. In some languages one may render the phrase ‘expert builder’ as ‘one who knew just how to build best.’

28.10 σοφίζομαι: (derivative of σοφία^a ‘specialized knowledge, skill,’ 28.8) to have specialized knowledge involving the capacity to produce what is cleverly or skillfully made—‘to know how to create skillfully, to know how to contrive cleverly.’ οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν ‘it was not any cleverly contrived myth that we were repeating when we brought you knowledge’ 2 Pe 1:16.

28.11 γνώστης, ου m: (derivative of γινώσκω^a ‘to know,’ 28.1) one who knows, with the usual implication of to know well—‘one who knows, expert.’ μάλιστα γνώστην ὄντα σε πάντων τῶν κατὰ Ἰουδαίους ἔθῶν ‘especially because you are an expert in all the Jewish customs’ or ‘... because you know so well all the Jewish customs’ Ac 26:3.

28.12 καρδιογνώστης, ου m: one who knows what someone else thinks (literally ‘to know what is in the heart’)—‘one who knows the hearts of, one who knows what people think.’ σὺ κύριε, καρδιογνώστα πάντων ‘Lord, you know the hearts of all’ Ac 1:24. In a number of languages one may render this phrase in Ac 1:24 as ‘Lord, you know what all people are thinking.’

28.13 ἀγνοέω^a; ἄγνοια, ας f: to not have information about—‘to not know, to be unaware of, to be ignorant of, ignorance.’

ἀγνοέωα: οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί ‘I do not wish for you to be unaware, fellow believers’ 1 Th 4:13; οὐ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν ‘for we are not ignorant of what his plans are’ 2 Cor 2:11.

ἄγνοια: οἶδα ὅτι κατὰ ἄγνοιαν ἐπράξατε ‘I know that what you did was because of your ignorance’ Ac 3:17; τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ θεός ‘God has overlooked the times when people did not know’ Ac 17:30.

28.14 λανθάνω^f: to not have knowledge about or to be unaware of something, with the implication that something can readily escape notice or be hidden—‘to be unaware of, to not know.’ διὰ ταύτης γὰρ ἔλαθόν τινες ξενίσαντες ἀγγέλους ‘there are some who did it and welcomed angels without knowing it’ (literally ‘for by this some welcomed ...’) He 13:2.

28.15 ἄπειρος, ον: pertaining to the lack of knowledge or capacity to do something—‘inexperienced in, unacquainted with.’ ἄπειρος λόγου δικαιοσύνης ‘without any experience in the matter of what is right’ He 5:13.

28.16 ἀγνωσία^a, ας f: the state of lacking knowledge—‘to lack knowledge, to have no knowledge, ignorance.’ ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν ‘some have no knowledge about God’ 1 Cor 15:34 (for another interpretation of ἀγνωσία in 1 Cor 15:34, see 32.7); ἀγαθοποιούντας φημοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν ‘to silence the talk of foolish people who have no knowledge of the good things you do’ 1 Pe 2:15. In 1 Pe 2:15, ἀγνωσία may involve lack of understanding (see 32.8).

B Known (the content of knowledge) (28.17–28.27)

Subdomain B Known implies in many contexts a process of communication, since there is an implication of the acquisition or lack of acquisition of information. In a sense, this subdomain also touches closely the domain of Learn (27), since to make something become known is indirectly a process of causing someone to learn.

28.17 γνῶσις^b, εως f: the content of what is known—‘knowledge, what is known.’ ἔχοντα τὴν μὲν μορφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ‘because you have in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and truth’ Ro 2:20; οἶδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γνῶσιν ἔχομεν ‘we know that we all have knowledge’ 1 Cor 8:1.

28.18 ἐπίγνωσις^b, εως f: the content of what is definitely known—‘what is known, definite knowledge, full knowledge, knowledge.’ μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ὅτι ζῆλον θεοῦ ἔχουσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐ κατ’ ἐπίγνωσιν ‘for I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but (their zeal is) not based on knowledge’ Ro 10:2.

28.19 γνῶσις^c, εως f: esoteric knowledge (primarily philosophical and religious), with the implication of its being heretical and contrary to the gospel—‘esoteric knowledge.’ ἐκτρεπόμενος τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως ‘avoid the godless talk and foolish arguments of “Knowledge,” as some people wrongly call it’ 1 Tm 6:20. In 1 Tm 6:20, ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως may be rendered as ‘that which is falsely called knowledge’ or ‘knowledge which people think is true but is really false.’

28.20 πρόγνωσις^b, εως f: (derivative of προγνώσκω ‘to know beforehand,’ 28.6) that which is known ahead of time or before a particular temporal reference—‘foreknowledge, what is known beforehand.’ ἐκλεκτοῖς ... κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός ‘to those who have been chosen ... according to what God the Father had known beforehand’ 1 Pe 1:1–2.5

28.21 γνωστός^a, ἦ, ὄν: pertaining to that which is known—‘what is known, information.’ περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης γνωστὸν ἡμῖν ἔστιν ὅτι πανταχοῦ ἀντιλέγεται ‘it is known to us that everywhere people speak against this party’ Ac 28:22; λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα γνωστὰ ἅπ’ αἰῶνος ‘so says the Lord, who made this known long ago’ Ac 15:17–18.

28.22 ὀνομάζομαι: (a figurative extension of meaning of ὀνομάζωb ‘to call a name,’ 33.133) to be caused to be made known—‘to be known.’ οὕτως δὲ φιλοτιμούμενον εὐαγγελίζεσθαι οὐχ ὅπου ὀνομάσθη Χριστός ‘my ambition has always been to proclaim the good news in places where Christ is not known’ Ro 15:20. It would be possible, however, to interpret ὀνομάζομαι in Ro 15:20 in a more literal sense, so that one could translate the final part of the verse as ‘where the name of Christ had not been used’ or ‘where no one had spoken the name of Christ.’

28.23 ἀφικνέομαι: (a figurative extension of meaning of ἀφικνέομαι ‘to move up to a point,’ not occurring in the NT) to become known as the result of information reaching its destination—‘to become known.’ ἡ γὰρ ὑμῶν ὑπακοὴ εἰς πάντας ἀφίκετο ‘for (the report of) your obedience has become known to everyone’ Ro 16:19.6

28.24 διανέμομαι: (a figurative extension of meaning of διανέμομαι ‘to spread out,’ not occurring in the NT) to become known as the result of information spreading abroad—‘to become known, to spread.’ ἵνα μὴ ἐπι πλείον διανεῦῃ εἰς τὸν λαόν ‘to keep (this matter) from spreading any further among the people’ Ac 4:17.

28.25 λόγος τρέχει: (an idiom, literally ‘word runs’) a message which becomes widely and rapidly known—‘for a message to spread rapidly, to be known quickly.’ ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχῃ ‘so that the Lord’s message may spread rapidly’ or ‘... come to be known quickly’ 2 Th 3:1.

28.26 γνωρίζω^b: to cause information to be known by someone—‘to make known.’ πάντα ἃ ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐγνώρισα ὑμῖν ‘I have made known to you everything I heard from my Father’ Jn 15:15.7

28.27 ἄγνωστος, ον: pertaining to not being known—‘not known, unknown.’ εὑρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγράπτο, Ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ ‘I found also an altar on which is written, To An Unknown God’ Ac 17:23. In Ac 17:23 the phrase ‘Unknown God’ may be simply rendered as ‘the god whom no one knows about,’ but in a number of languages the closest equivalent is ‘the god who has no name.’

C Well Known, Clearly Shown, Revealed (28.28–28.56)

The Subdomain Well Known, Clearly Shown, Revealed overlaps considerably with the domain of Communication (33), for there is always the implication of some kind of prior activity by which information is made known. But since in a majority of contexts the focus of attention seems to be upon the resulting knowledge, this subdomain is included in Domain 28 Know.

28.28 φανερός^a, ἄ, ὄν: pertaining to being widely and well known—‘well known, widely known.’ φανερὸν γὰρ ἐγένετο τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ‘his reputation became widely known’ Mk 6:14. In some languages it may be necessary in translating Mk 6:14 to reverse certain roles, for example, ‘people everywhere came to know about Jesus.’

28.29 ἐν παρρησίᾳ: (an idiom, literally ‘in boldness’) in an evident or publicly known manner—‘publicly, in an evident manner, well known.’ οὐδεὶς γὰρ τι ἐν κρυπτῷ ποιεῖ καὶ ζητεῖ αὐτὸς ἐν παρρησίᾳ εἶναι ‘no one does anything in secret but seeks to be well known’ Jn 7:4.

28.30 γνωστός^b, ή, όν: pertaining to being well known or well acquainted with—‘acquaintance, well known.’ ανεζήτουν αυτόν εν τοις συγγενευσιν και τοις γνωστοις ‘then they started looking for him among relatives and acquaintances’ Lk 2:44. It may also be possible to understand γνωστός in Lk 2:44 as meaning ‘friend’ (see 34.17).

28.31 επίσημος, ον: pertaining to being well known or outstanding, either because of positive or negative characteristics—‘outstanding, famous, notorious, infamous.’ εισιν επίσημοι εν τοις αποστόλοις ‘they are outstanding among the apostles’ Ro 16:7; είχαν δε τότε δέσμιον επίσημον λεγόμενον Ίησούν Βαραββάν ‘at that time there was a notorious prisoner named Jesus Barabbas’ Mt 27:16.

In Ro 16:7 the meaning of ‘outstanding’ may be rendered in some instances as ‘well known for being important,’ while ‘notorious’ in Mt 27:16 may be rendered in some languages as ‘well known for being bad.’

28.32 γνωστός^d, ή, όν: pertaining to being well known or famous because of some outstanding quality—‘well known, remarkable.’ ότι μὲν γάρ γνωστόν σημειον γέγονεν δι αυτόν πᾶσιν τοις κατοικοῦσιν Ίερουσαλημ φανερόν ‘it is clear to everyone living in Jerusalem that this remarkable miracle has been performed by them’ Ac 4:16. For another interpretation of γνωστός in Ac 4:16, see 58.55.

28.33 καιός^c, ή, όν: pertaining to not being well known previously but being significant—‘previously unknown, previously unheard of, new.’ τι έστιν τουτο; διδαχῆ καιη κατ’ έξουσιαν ‘what is this? Some kind of new teaching with authority!’ Mk 1:27.8

28.34 ξένος, η, ον: pertaining to not being previously known and hence unheard of and unfamiliar—‘unknown, unheard of, unfamiliar, surprising.’ ώς ξένου ύμιν συμβαίνοντος ‘as though something unknown before were happening to you’ 1 Pe 4:12.

28.35 έμφανής^b, ές: pertaining to not having been known before but having become evident—‘well known, evident.’ έμφανής έγενόμην τοις έμέ μη έπερωτῶσιν ‘I became well known to those who were not asking for me’ Ro 10:20.

28.36 φανερόω^b; έμφανίζω^b; φαίνομαι^b; φωτίζω^b; φανέρωσις, εως f; φωτισμός^b, οδ m: to cause something to be fully known by revealing clearly and in some detail—‘to make known, to make plain, to reveal, to bring to the light, to disclose, revelation.’⁹

φανερόω^b: θεῶ δε πεφανέρωμεθα ‘we are fully known by God’ 2 Cor 5:11; την όσμην τῆς γνώσεως αυτού φανεροῦντι δι ήμῶν εν παντι τόπω ‘making known the knowledge about him in every place like a sweet aroma’ 2 Cor 2:14; νυνι δε χωρις νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεου πεφανέρωται ‘but now, God’s way of putting people right with himself has been made known apart from the Law’ Ro 3:21; ει ταῦτα ποιεις, φανέρωσον σεαυτον τῶ κόσμῳ ‘since you are doing these things, make yourself known to the world’ Jn 7:4.

έμφανίζω^b: κάγω άγαπήσω αυτόν και έμφανίσω αυτόν ‘I, too, will love him and reveal myself to him’ Jn 14:21; 10 μηδενι εκλαλήσας ότι ταῦτα ενεφάνισας προς με ‘do not tell anyone that you have disclosed this to me’ Ac 23:22. For another interpretation of έμφανίζω in Ac 23:22, see 33.208.

φαίνομαι^b (and φαν-): ίνα φανῆ άμαρτία ‘so that its true nature as sin can be made fully and clearly known’ Ro 7:13.

φωτίζω^b: φωτίσαι πάντας τις ή οικονομία του μυστηρίου ‘to make known to everyone what is the secret plan to be put into effect’ Eph 3:9.

φανέρωσις: έκάστῳ δε διδοται ή φανέρωσις του πνεύματος προς το συμφέρον ‘the Spirit’s presence is made clearly known in each one of us, for the good of all’ 1 Cor 12:7.

φωτισμός^b: προς φωτισμόν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης του θεου εν προσώπῳ Ίησου Χριστου ‘in order to make known the knowledge of God’s glory, shining in the face of Jesus Christ’ 2 Cor 4:6.

28.37 αυγάζω: to cause something to be clearly evident—‘to cause to be seen, to cause to be clear to.’ εις το μη αυγάσαι τον φωτισμόν του ευαγγελίου τῆς δόξης του Χριστου ‘so that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ would not be evident (to them)’ or ‘so that they would not see the light of the good news about the glory of Christ’ 2 Cor 4:4.

28.38 αποκαλύπτω; αποκάλυψις, εως f: (figurative extensions of meaning of αποκαλύπτω and αποκάλυψις ‘to uncover, to take out of hiding,’ not occurring in the NT) to cause something to be fully known—‘to reveal, to disclose, to make fully known, revelation.’

αποκαλύπτω: όπως αν αποκαλυφῶσιν εκ πολλῶν καρδιῶν διαλογισμοί ‘and so the thoughts of many will be fully known’ Lk 2:35; τότε αποκαλυφθήσεται ο άνομος ‘then the Wicked One will be revealed’ 2 Th 2:8.

αποκάλυψις: κατά αποκάλυψιν μυστηρίου χρόνις αιωνίσις σεσηγημένον ‘according to the disclosure of the secret truth which was hidden for long ages in the past’ Ro 16:25; ή γάρ αποκαραδοκία τῆς κτίσεως την αποκάλυψιν των υιῶν του θεου απεκδέχεται ‘all of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his sons’ Ro 8:19.

28.39 χρηματίζω^a: to make known a divine revelation—‘to make known God’s message, to reveal a message from God.’ ει γάρ εκείνοι ούκ έξεφυγον επι γῆς παραιτησάμενοι τον χρηματίζοντα ‘for if those who refused to hear the one who made the divine message known on earth did not escape’ He 12:25; ήν αυτόν κεχρηματισμένον υπό του πνεύματος του άγιου μη ιδειν θάνατον ‘it had been made known to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die ...’ Lk 2:26.

28.40 χρηματισμός, οδ m: (derivative of χρηματίζωα ‘to make known a divine revelation,’ 28.39) the content of a divine revelation or utterance¹¹—‘divine revelation, revelation from God.’ αλλά τι λέγει αυτόν ο χρηματισμός; ‘but what did the divine revelation say to him?’ Ro 11:4.

28.41 εξηγήομαι^b: to make something fully known by careful explanation or by clear revelation—‘to make fully and clearly known.’ μονογενής θεός ... εκείνος εξηγήσατο ‘the only One who is the same as God ... has made him fully and clearly known’ Jn 1:18. For another interpretation of εξηγήομαι in Jn 1:18, see 33.201.

28.42 δηλώω^a: to make something known by making evident what was either unknown before or what may have been difficult to understand—‘to make known, to make plain, to reveal.’ ή γάρ ήμέρα δηλώσει ‘the day will make it clearly known’ 1 Cor 3:13; ο και δηλώσας ήμιν την άγάπην εν πνεύματι ‘the one who made known to us the love which the Spirit has given you’ Col 1:8; έδηλώθη γάρ μοι περι ύμῶν ‘it was made plain to me about you’ 1 Cor 1:11.

28.43 βέβαιος^c, α, ον: pertaining to that which is known with certainty—‘known to be true, certain, verified.’¹² ει γάρ ο δι άγγελων λαληθείς λόγος έγινετο βέβαιος ‘for if the message given by angels was known to be true’ or ‘... shown to be true’ He 2:2. For another interpretation of βέβαιος in He 2:2, see 31.90.

28.44 βεβαιώω^b; βεβαίωσις, εως f: to cause something to be known as certain—‘to confirm, to verify, to prove to be true and certain, confirmation, verification.’¹²

βεβαιώω^b: του κυριου συνεργῶντος και τον λόγον βεβαιῶντος ‘the Lord worked with them and verified that their preaching was true’ Mk 16:20. For another interpretation of βεβαιώω in Mk 16:20, see 31.91. βεβαίωσις: πάσης αυτοις άντιλογίας πέρας εις βεβαίωσιν ο όρκος ‘an oath, by making known that something is true and certain, brings an end to all disputes among them’ He 6:16; εν τῆ απολογία και βεβαίώσει του ευαγγελίου

‘for a defense and confirmation of the gospel’ Php 1:7. In Php 1:7 βεβαίωσις may denote either the process of making known something in such a way as to confirm its truth or the process of causing people to think about something and to accept it as trustworthy, in which case βεβαίωσις might also be classified in Domain 31, Subdomain G.

28.45 τεκμήριον, ου n: that which causes something to be known as verified or confirmed—‘evidence, proof, convincing proof.’ παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις ‘by many convincing proofs he showed himself alive after his death’ Ac 1:3. In a number of languages ‘convincing proof’ is rendered as ‘that which causes one to know for sure’ or ‘... with certainty.’

28.46 συμβιβάζω^c: to cause something to be known as certain and therefore dependable—‘to show for certain, to prove.’ συμβιβάζων ὅτι οὕτως ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός ‘he showed for certain that this one is the Christ’ Ac 9:22. In a number of languages one may express certainty by a negative phrase, for example, ‘so that no one could ever doubt.’ In other instances, an idiomatic expression may be used, for example, ‘with heavy words’ or ‘with words that speak to the heart’ or ‘with words that are like rocks.’

28.47 δείκνυμι^a or δεικνύω; ὑποδείκνυμαι: to make known the character or significance of something by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means—‘to make known, to demonstrate, to show.’¹³

δεικνυμι^a: δειξάτω ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ‘let him demonstrate his deeds by his good life’ Jas 3:13; ἔτι καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι ‘I will make known to you a more excellent way’ 1 Cor 12:31. For another interpretation of δείκνυμι in 1 Cor 12:31, see 33.150.

ὑποδείκνυμι^a: πάντα ὑπέδειξα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὕτως κοπιῶντας ‘in everything I did, I showed you that by working hard in this way ...’ Ac 20:35. In some languages it may be useful to translate ὑποδείκνυμι in Ac 20:35 as ‘I showed you by example’ or ‘I demonstrated by example’ or ‘I showed you by what I did.’

28.48 δείγμα, τος n: (derivative of δείκνυμαι ‘to make known,’ 28.47) the means by which the nature of something is made known, particularly as an example of what is to be avoided—‘example (such as to warn), means by which something is known.’ πρόκεινται δείγμα πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην ὑπέχουσαι ‘they exist as an example of undergoing the punishment of eternal fire’ or ‘they suffer the punishment of eternal fire, as an example (to us all)’ Jd 7.

28.49 συνίστημι^b or συνιστάνω: to cause something to be known by action—‘to make known by action, to demonstrate, to show.’ συνίστησιν δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός ‘but God has shown us how much he loves us’ Ro 5:8; ἐν παντὶ συνισταντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι ‘in everything showing ourselves to be servants of God’ 2 Cor 6:4. In a number of languages the expression ‘to show oneself to be’ may best be rendered as ‘to cause people to know that one is,’ and therefore this expression in 2 Cor 6:4 may be rendered as ‘in everything causing people to know by what we do that we are servants of God.’

28.50 ἀποδείκνυμι^a: to cause something to be known as genuine, with possible focus upon the source of such knowledge—‘to demonstrate, to show, to make clearly known.’ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, ἄνδρα ἀποδεδειγμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς δυνάμει ‘Jesus of Nazareth was a man whose divine mission was clearly shown to you by miracles’ Ac 2:22.

28.51 ἐνδείκνυμαι^a: to cause to be made known, with possible emphasis upon the means—‘to cause to be known, to show, to demonstrate.’ εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν ‘if God wanted to demonstrate his wrath’ Ro 9:22.

28.52 ἐνδείξις, εως f; ἐνδειγμα, τος n(derivatives of ἐνδείκνυμαι^a ‘to show, to demonstrate,’ 28.51); **ἀπόδειξις, εως f** (derivative of ἀποδείκνυμαι^a ‘to demonstrate, to show,’ 28.50): the means by which one knows that something is a fact—‘proof, evidence, verification, indication.’^{14,15}

ἐνδείξις: ἥτις ἔστιν αὐτοῖς ἐνδείξις ἀπωλείας ‘this is a clear indication of their destruction’ Php 1:28.

ἐνδειγμα: ἐνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ‘this is the evidence of God’s righteous judgment’ 2 Tm 1:5.

ἀπόδειξις: ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως ‘but with evidence of the Spirit and of power’ or ‘but with evidence of the power of the Spirit’ 1 Cor 2:4.

28.53 σφραγίζω^c: (derivative of σφραγίς^c ‘validation,’ 73.9) to demonstrate by authentic proof the truth or validity of something—‘to make known, to confirm, to show clearly.’ ὁ λαβὼν αὐτοῦ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐσφράγισεν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής ἔστιν ‘and he who accepts his message makes known the fact that God is truthful’ or ‘... shows clearly ...’ Jn 3:33.

28.54 ἀναδείκνυμι^a; ἀνάδειξις εως f: to make known that which has presumably been hidden or unknown previously—‘to make known, to show, to reveal, to make clear, revelation.’

ἀναδείκνυμι^a: ἀνάδειξον ὃν ἐξελέξω ἐκ τούτων τῶν δύο ἕνα ‘show us which one of these two you have chosen’ Ac 1:24.

ἀνάδειξις: ἦν ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις ἕως ἡμέρας ἀναδειξεως αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ‘he lived in the desert until the day he made himself known to the people of Israel’ Lk 1:80.

28.55 φαίνομαι^a: to make known only the superficial and not the real character of something—‘to appear to be (something), to give an impression of.’ ὑμεῖς ἐξῶθεν μὲν φαίνεσθε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δίκαιοι ‘on the outside you appear to everybody as good’ Mt 23:28. In order to do justice to φαίνομαι in Mt 23:28, it may be necessary in some languages to translate as follows: ‘on the outside you appear to people to be good, but you really are not’ or ‘... you only appear to people to be good’ or ‘... you make people think you are good, but you are not.’

28.56 ἐπικάλυμμα, τος n: that which causes something to be known as or to appear to be other than it really is, thus causing its true nature to be unknown—‘means of hiding, pretext, means of covering up the true nature of something.’ μὴ ὡς ἐπικάλυμμα ἔχοντες τῆς κακίας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ‘never using your freedom as a means of covering up your evil deeds’ 1 Pe 2:16.

D Able To Be Known (28.57–28.67)

28.57 γνωστός^c, ἦ, ὄν: pertaining to being able to be known—‘what can be known, what is evident, what can be clearly seen.’ διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς ‘because what can be known about God is plain to them’ Ro 1:19. In a number of languages the phrase ‘can be known,’ expressing a capacity relating to a passive state, must be restructured in an active form. This may often be done by rendering Ro 1:19 as ‘because what people can know about God is clearly evident to these persons’ or ‘they can clearly comprehend what they can know about God’ or ‘because they can clearly see what people can know about God.’

28.58 δῆλος, η, ον; φανερός^b, ἄ, ὄν: pertaining to being clearly and easily able to be known—‘clearly known, easily known, evident, plain, clear.’

δῆλος: δῆλον ὅτι ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὑποτάξαντος αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ‘it is clear that the one who subjected all things to him is excluded’ 1 Cor 15:27; ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον ‘now it is evident that no one is put right with God by means of the Law’ Ga 3:11.

φανερὸς^b: διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς ‘because what can be known about God is plain to them’ Ro 1:19. For some of the problems involved in the rendering of Ro 1:19, see the discussion under γνωστός (28.57).

28.59 ἔκδηλος, ον: pertaining to being very easily known—‘easily known, very evident, quite obvious.’ 16 ἡ γὰρ ἄνοια αὐτῶν ἔκδηλος ἔσται πᾶσιν ‘their folly will be very obvious to everyone’ 2 Tm 3:9.

28.60 πρόδηλος, ον: pertaining to being easily seen and known by the public—‘very easily known, very clear, very obvious.’ τινῶν ἀνθρώπων αἱ ἁμαρτίαι πρόδηλοί εἰσιν ‘the sins of some people are very obvious’ 1 Tm 5:24.

28.61 τραχηλίζομαι: (a figurative extension of meaning of τραχηλίζω ‘to have the neck of a sacrificial victim twisted and thus exposed for slaughter,’ not occurring in the NT) that which can readily be known as the result of being exposed—‘to be easily known, to be exposed.’ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνά καὶ τετραχηλισμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ ‘there is no creature hidden from him, but all are naked and exposed to his eyes’ He 4:13.

28.62 γυμνός^b, ἦ, ὄν: (a figurative extension of meaning of γυμνόσα ‘naked,’ 49.22) easily able to be known in view of the fact that nothing is hidden—‘not hidden, easily known, naked.’ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνά καὶ τετραχηλισμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ ‘there is no creature hidden from him, but all are naked and exposed to his eyes’ He 4:13. It is rare that one can employ in translating γυμνός^b a term which literally means ‘naked,’ but it is possible to retain something of the metaphorical value by using a phrase such as ‘with nothing to cover’ or ‘with nothing which can be used to hide.’

28.63 φανερός^a: pertaining to the manner by which something can easily be known by the public, with the implication that the related events take place in the open—‘publicly, openly.’ τότε καὶ αὐτὸς ἀνέβη, οὐ φανερῶς ἀλλὰ ὡς ἐν κρυπτῷ ‘he also went; however, he did not go openly, but secretly’ Jn 7:10. The expression ‘he did not go openly’ may often be rendered as ‘he did not go about where people could see him’ or ‘people did not see where he was.’

28.64 ἐν τῷ φωτί; ἐπὶ τῶν δωματίων: (idioms, literally ‘in the light’ and ‘on the housetops’) pertaining to being widely known in view of the events in question having taken place in public—‘in public, publicly.’¹⁷

ἐν τῷ φωτί: ὃ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, εἶπατε ἐν τῷ φωτί ‘what I tell you secretly, you must tell publicly’ Mt 10:27.

ἐπὶ τῶν δωματίων: ὃ εἰς τὸ οὐδὲ ἀκούετε, κηρύξατε ἐπὶ τῶν δωματίων ‘what you hear in private, proclaim publicly’ Mt 10:27.

28.65 ἀποδείκνυμι^b: to cause something to be known publicly—‘to show publicly, to demonstrate publicly.’ δοκῶ γάρ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἐσχάτους ἀπέδειξεν ὡς ἐπιθανάτιους ‘for it seems to me that God has shown publicly that we apostles are last, like persons condemned to die’ 1 Cor 4:9.

28.66 δημόσιος, α, ον: pertaining to being able to be known by the public—‘public, open.’ εὐτόνωσ γὰρ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις διακατηλέγγετο δημοσίᾳ ‘he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate’ Ac 18:28. The rendering of διακατηλέγγετο in Ac 18:28 provides the verbal correspondences ‘he ... refuted ... in ... debate.’ The term δημοσίᾳ indicates that the debates took place in public so that everyone could know or did know what was said and proven. It is, of course, possible to stand δημοσίᾳ only in the sense of ‘public setting,’ but in Ac 18:28 something more than mere setting seems to be implied.

28.67 κατ’ ἰδίαν: (an idiom, literally ‘according to that which is private’) pertaining to what occurs in a private context or setting, in the sense of not being made known publicly—‘privately.’¹⁸ κατ’ ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν ‘and in private with the leaders’ Ga 2:2.

E Not Able To Be Known, Secret (28.68–28.83)

28.68 ἀφανής, ἐς: pertaining to not being able to be seen or known, and thus to be hidden—‘hidden, unknown.’ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ‘there is nothing that can be hidden from him’ He 4:13. It is possible to render ‘that can be hidden from him’ as ‘that people can keep God from seeing’ or ‘that people can prevent God from knowing about.’

28.69 κρυπτός, ἦ, ὄν: pertaining to not being able to be known, in view of the fact that it has been kept secret—‘secret, hidden, not able to be made known.’ οὐδὲν ... κρυπτόν ὃ οὐ γνωσθήσεται ‘there is nothing ... secret which will not be made known’ Mt 10:26. In a number of languages there may be complications involved in what could be regarded as a triple negation in the sense that ‘nothing,’ ‘secret’ (in the sense of ‘not known’), and ‘not be made known’ are all semantic negations. It may therefore be better to render Mt 10:26 as ‘everything that is now not known will be made known.’ In a number of languages ‘secret’ is regularly expressed as ‘not known’ or ‘what is kept from being known.’

28.70 ἀπόκρυφος, ον: pertaining to not being able to be known and thus secret, possibly in view of something being separate—‘secret, not able to be known.’ ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι ‘in whom are all the secret treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ Col 2:3; οὐδὲ ἀπόκρυφον ὃ οὐ μὴ γνωσθῆ ‘there is nothing secret which shall not be known’ Lk 8:17. The triple negation in Lk 8:17 may lead to some shift in a number of languages, for example, ‘everything which is secret now will be known.’

28.71 κρυφῆ; λάθρα; ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ (an idiom, literally ‘in the darkness’); **ἐν (τῷ) κρυπτῷ** (an idiom, literally ‘in the hidden’): pertaining to not being able to be known by the public but known by some in-group or by those immediately involved—‘in secret, in private, secretly, privately.’

κρυφῆ: τὰ γὰρ κρυφῆ γινόμενα ὑπ’ αὐτῶν αἰσχρόν ἐστιν καὶ λέγειν ‘it is really too shameful even to talk about the things they do in secret’ Eph 5:12.

λάθρα: καὶ νῦν λάθρα ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλλουσιν ‘and now they want to send us away secretly’ Ac 16:37.

ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ: ὃ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, εἶπατε ἐν τῷ φωτί ‘what I am telling you secretly, you must report openly’ Mt 10:27.

ἐν (τῷ) κρυπτῷ: ὅπως ἢ σου ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ‘so that your giving will be done secretly’ Mt 6:4; οὐ φανερῶς ἀλλὰ ὡς ἐν κρυπτῷ ‘not openly, but secretly’ Jn 7:10.

28.72 κρυφαῖος, α, ον: pertaining to being secret as a result of people not knowing—‘in secret, privately.’ καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυφαίῳ ἀποδώσει σοι ‘and your Father who sees in secret will reward you’ Mt 6:18.

28.73 εἰς τὸ οὐδὲ; πρὸς τὸ οὐδὲ: (idioms, literally ‘into the ear’ and ‘to the ear’) pertaining to what is known only by those who hear a particular message in private—‘in secret, in private, privately.’

εἰς τὸ οὐδὲ: ὃ εἰς τὸ οὐδὲ ἀκούετε, κηρύξατε ἐπὶ τῶν δωματίων ‘whatever you hear in secret, proclaim publicly’ Mt 10:27. A phrase such as

idioms that communicate some aspect of knowing with distinctive perspective or else through the use of figurative language rather than literal expression. Because of the religious nature of scripture not all kinds of knowing will be treated, simply because they do not touch on any religious topic.

In addition to the idea of ‘knowing’ is the somewhat related concept of ‘understanding.’ Although overlapping of meaning will occur between these two concepts, knowing focuses on being aware of information while understanding stresses grasping the significance of that information. For example, “I know a rubber ball bounces when it hits the floor.” But “I understand that a rubber ball will bounce when it hits the floor because....” The New Testament employs a wide variety of terms in expressing the idea of ‘understanding.’²⁰

‘whatever you hear in secret’ may be rendered as ‘whatever you hear when no one else is listening.’

πρὸς τὸ οὐς: ὁ πρὸς τὸ οὐς ἐλαλήσατε ἐν τοῖς ταμείοις κηρυχθήσεται ἐπὶ τῶν δωμάτων ‘whatever you say privately in the inner room will be proclaimed publicly’ Lk 12:3. For another treatment of the phrase πρὸς τὸ οὐς λαλέω, see 33.91.

28.74 μὴ γνώτω ἡ ἀριστερά σου τί ποιεῖ ἡ δεξιὰ σου: (an idiom, probably an adage or traditional saying, literally ‘do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing’) an admonition to do something without letting people know about it—‘to do something secretly, to do something without letting the public know.’ σοῦ δὲ ποιῶντος ἐλεημοσύνην μὴ γνώτω ἡ ἀριστερά σου τί ποιεῖ ἡ δεξιὰ σου ‘but when you help a needy person, do it in such a way that others will not know about it’ Mt 6:3. It is rare that one can preserve this idiom, since in its literal form it may seem absurd. For many English-speaking people the meaning has already been twisted by common usage to mean ‘be sure to not let anyone know if you are performing something that is shady or illegal.’ Today’s English Version attempts to represent something of the impact of this idiom by translating “do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it.”

28.75 τὰ κρυπτά: the content of what is not able to be known—‘secret information, secret knowledge, secrets.’ τὰ κρυπτά τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερά γίνεται ‘the secrets of his heart will be brought out in the open’ 1 Cor 14:25.

28.76 τὰ βαθέα; τὰ βάθη: (figurative extensions of meaning of βαθύς ‘deep,’ 81.10, and βάθος ‘depth,’ 81.8) the content of knowledge which is very difficult to know—‘deep secrets, secrets difficult to find out about.’

τὰ βαθέα: οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βαθέα τοῦ Σατανᾶ, ὡς λέγουσιν ‘(you) who have not learned what others call the deep secrets of Satan’ Re 2:24.

τὰ βάθη: τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα πάντα ἐραυνᾷ, καὶ τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ ‘the Spirit searches everything, even the deep secrets of God’ 1 Cor 2:10.

Only rarely can one use a literal rendering of τὰ βαθέα or τὰ βάθη in referring to secrets. In some instances it may be possible to use an expression such as ‘far away’ or ‘distant,’ and in other cases one can use expressions meaning ‘hard’ or ‘difficult.’ More often than not, however, the closest equivalent of τὰ βαθέα and τὰ βάθη in this type of context is either an expression of degree using a term such as ‘very’ (for example, ‘that which is very secret’) or an expression implying ‘that which is hidden’ or ‘that which is difficult to discover.’

28.77 μυστήριον, ου n: the content of that which has not been known before but which has been revealed to an in-group or restricted constituency—‘secret, mystery.’ ὑμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν ‘the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you’ Mt 13:11. There is a serious problem involved in translating μυστήριον by a word which is equivalent to the English expression ‘mystery,’ for this term in English refers to a secret which people have tried to uncover but which they have failed to understand. In many instances μυστήριον is translated by a phrase meaning ‘that which was not known before,’ with the implication of its being revealed at least to some persons.

28.78 κρύπτη, ης f: (locative derivative of κρυπτός ‘secret, hidden,’ 28.69) a place which is secret or hidden and thus not generally known, possibly referring to a structure built underground for hiding or storing objects—‘secret place, hidden place, cellar.’¹⁹ οὐδεὶς λύχνον ἄψας εἰς κρύπτην τίθησιν ‘no one lights a lamp and then puts it in a secret place’ Lk 11:33.

28.79 κρύπτω^d; καλύπτω^b; περικρύβω: to cause something not to be known—‘to hide, to keep secret, to conceal.’²⁰

κρύπτω^d: ὅτι ἔκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ

συνετῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις ‘because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and have revealed them to the unlearned’ Mt 11:25. In a number of languages, the causative relationships involved in Mt 11:25 must be made somewhat more explicit, for example, ‘because you have kept the wise and learned people from knowing and have caused the unlearned to know.’ In Mt 11:25 νήπιος is used figuratively in reference to unlearned people.

καλύπτω^b: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον ὃ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ‘there is nothing which is hidden which shall not be made known’ or ‘what has been kept secret shall be made known’ Mt 10:26.

περικρύβω: περιέκρυβεν ἑαυτὴν μῆνας πέντε ‘she hid herself for five months’ Lk 1:24.

28.80 ἀποκρύπτω: to cause something to remain unknown, with the implication of concealment and inaccessibility—‘to keep secret, to conceal.’²¹ λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ, τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην ‘we speak of God’s secret wisdom which has been concealed’ 1 Cor 2:7. The passive expression ‘concealed’ may be rendered in an active form as ‘God has kept people from knowing about this wisdom.’

28.81 συγκαλύπτω: to cause something to remain unknown by means of purposeful concealment—‘to keep secret, to hide, to conceal.’²¹ οὐδὲν δὲ συγκαλυμμένον ἔστιν ὃ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ‘there is nothing which is hidden which shall not be made known’ Lk 12:2.

28.82 παρακαλύπτω: to cause something to be unknown or to be known only with great difficulty—‘to cause to not be known, to hide, to conceal, to make secret.’ οἱ δὲ ἠγνόουν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο, καὶ ἦν παρακεκαλυμμένον ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ‘they did not know what this meant; it was a secret’ or ‘... it was hidden from them’ Lk 9:45.

28.83 λανθάνω^a: to cause oneself to not be known, with the implication of concealment and secrecy—‘to escape notice, to remain.’ καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθη λαθεῖν ‘and he was not able to escape notice’ or ‘... to remain unnoticed’ Mk 7:24. In some languages this expression in Mk 7:24 may be rendered as ‘he was not able to keep people from knowing where he was’ or ‘he was not able to keep secret where he was.’

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 333-45.]

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Outline of Subdomains

A Understand (32.1–32.10)

B Come To Understand (32.11–32.18)

C Ease or Difficulty in Understanding (32.19–32.23)

D Capacity for Understanding (32.24–32.41)

E Lack of Capacity for Understanding (32.42–32.61)

A Understand² (32.1–32.10)

32.1 ἀκούω^f: to hear and understand a message—‘to understand, to comprehend.’³ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον, καθὼς ἠδύναντο ἀκούειν ‘he spoke the word to them to the extent they could understand’ Mk 4:33; ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλώσσει οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ, οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει ‘the one who speaks in strange tongues does not speak to people but to God, because no one understands him’ 1 Cor 14:2.

32.2 νοέω^a: to comprehend something on the basis of careful thought and consideration—‘to perceive, to gain insight into, to understand, to comprehend.’ θέλοντες εἶναι νομοδιδάσκαλοι, μὴ νοοῦντες μήτε ἂ λέγουσιν ‘they want to be teachers of the law, but they do not understand what they are talking about’ 1 Tm 1:7; πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ ‘by faith we understand that the universe was formed by the word of God’ He 11:3.

32.3 ἐπίσταμαι^b: to have or gain insight, with focus upon the process—‘to understand, to be aware of, to really know.’ τετόφωτα, μηδὲν ἐπιστάμενος ‘he is conceited and understands nothing’ 1 Tm 6:4.

32.4 οἶδα^c: to comprehend the meaning of something, with focus upon the resulting knowledge—‘to understand, to comprehend.’ οὐκ οἶδαμεν τί λαλεῖ ‘we don’t understand what he is saying’ Jn 16:18; ἐλάβομεν ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν ‘but we received the Spirit from God so that we might understand those things graciously given to us by God’ 1 Cor 2:12; πῶς ἐρεῖ τὸ Ἀμήν ... ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν; ‘how can he say “Amen” ... if he doesn’t understand what you are saying?’ 1 Cor 14:16.

32.5 συνίημι^d or συνίω: to employ one’s capacity for understanding and thus to arrive at insight—‘to understand, to comprehend, to perceive, to have insight into.’ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνιδῶσιν ‘they may listen and listen, yet not understand’ Mk 4:12; ἐνόμιζεν δὲ συνιέναι τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ὁ θεὸς διὰ χειρὸς αὐτοῦ δίδωσιν σωτηρίαν αὐτοῖς ‘he thought his own people would understand that God was using him to rescue them’ Ac 7:25.

32.6 σύνεσις^e, εως f: (derivative of συνίημι ‘to understand,’ 32.5) that which is understood or comprehended—‘understanding, what is understood.’ δύνασθε ... νοῆσαι τὴν σύνεσίν μου ἐν τῷ μυστηρίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ‘you can ... perceive what I understand about the secret of Christ’ Eph 3:4.

32.7 ἀγνοέω^c; ἀγνοῦσία^b, ας f: to not understand, with the implication of a lack of capacity or ability—‘not to understand, to fail to understand.’

ἀγνοέω^c: οἱ δὲ ἠγνόουν τὸ ῥῆμα ‘but they did not understand what he said’ Mk 9:32; ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν βλασφημοῦντες ‘but they speak against God in matters they do not understand’ 2 Pe 2:12.

ἀγνοῦσία^b: ἀγνοῦσιν γὰρ θεοῦ τινες ἔχουσιν ‘some (of you) do not understand anything about God’ 1 Cor 15:34. It is also possible to interpret ἀγνοῦσία in 1 Cor 15:34 as meaning ‘to not know about’ (see 28.16).

32.8 ἀγνοῦσία^c, ας f: that which is not understood or comprehended, implying a lack of capacity—‘what is not understood.’ φιμοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνοῦσιν ‘silence the talk of foolish people who do not understand those things’ 1 Pe 2:15.4 For another interpretation of ἀγνοῦσία in 1 Pe 2:15, see 28.16.

32.9 ἀπορέω; ἀπορία, ας f: to be in perplexity, with the implication of serious anxiety—‘to be at a loss, to be uncertain, to be anxious, to be in doubt, consternation.’

ἀπορέω: οἱ μαθηταὶ ἀπορούμενοι περὶ τίνος λέγει ‘the disciples were at a loss to understand what he meant’ Jn 13:22.

ἀπορία: καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς συνοχὴ ἐθνῶν ἐν ἀπορίᾳ ‘and upon the earth despair among nations, with consternation’ or ‘... and great anxiety’ Lk 21:25.

32.10 διαπορέω: to be thoroughly perplexed—‘to be very perplexed, to not know what to do, to be very confused.’ διηπόρει διὰ τὸ λέγεσθαι ὑπὸ τινῶν ὅτι Ἰωάννης ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν ‘he was thoroughly perplexed because some people were saying that John had risen from the dead’ Lk 9:7.

B Come To Understand⁵ (32.11–32.18)

32.11 θεωρέω^b; βλέπω^c; ὁράω^c: to come to understand as the result of perception—‘to understand, to perceive, to see, to recognize.’

θεωρέω^b: κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ ‘I perceive that in every way you are very religious’ Ac 17:22; θεωρεῖτε δὲ πηλίκος οὗτος ‘you understand, then, how great this man was’ He 7:4.

βλέπω^c: βλέπω δὲ ἕτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου ‘I perceive another law at work in my members’ Ro 7:23.

ὁράω^c: ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ‘you can understand then that a person is justified by what he does’ Jas 2:24.

32.12 κατανοέω^c: to come to a clear and definite understanding of something—‘to understand completely, to perceive clearly.’ κατανοήσας δὲ αὐτῶν τὴν πανουργίαν ‘he clearly perceived their tricks’ Lk 20:23; κατενόησεν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα ἤδη νεκρωμένον ‘he was thoroughly aware that his body was as good as dead’ Ro 4:19. For another interpretation of κατανοέω in Ro 4:19, see 30.4.

32.13 συνοράω^b: to come to understand clearly on the basis of perceived information—‘to understand clearly, to realize fully, to become fully aware of.’ συνιδῶν τε ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν τῆς Μαρίας ‘when he fully realized this, he went to Mary’s house’ Ac 12:12.

32.14 μανθάνω^c: to come to understand as the result of a process of learning—‘to understand.’ ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε τὸ Μὴ ὑπὲρ ἂ γέγραπται ‘so that you may understand from our example what the saying means, Don’t go beyond what has been written’ 1 Cor 4:6. It is possible to understand μανθάνω in 1 Cor 4:6 as meaning simply ‘to learn’ (see 27.12).

32.15 ψηφίζω^b: to come to understand the meaning of something by figuring it out—‘to come to understand, to interpret, to figure out.’ ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου ‘whoever is intelligent, let him understand the meaning of the number of the beast’ Re 13:18. The third person imperative form ψηφισάτω in Re 13:18 is extremely difficult to render in some languages, and even in English the expression ‘let him understand’ is quite misleading, since it might imply permission rather than polite command. In some languages the equivalent of this third person imperative is an expression such as ‘should understand’ or ‘ought to be able to understand.’ For another interpretation of ψηφίζω in Re 13:18, see 60.4.

32.16 γινώσκω^d; γνώσις^d, εως f; ἐπιγινώσκω^b: to come to an understanding as the result of ability to experience and learn—‘to come to understand, to perceive, to comprehend.’⁶

γινώσκω^d: σὺ εἶ ὁ διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ταῦτα οὐ γινώσκεις; ‘are you a teacher in Israel and don’t understand these things?’ Jn 3:10; τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου ‘I wouldn’t have understood sin without the help of the Law’ Ro 7:7; ὑμῖν δέδοται γνώαι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας ‘(God) will enable you to understand the secrets of the kingdom’ Mt 13:11. It is also possible to interpret γινώσκω in Mt 13:11 as meaning ‘to know about’ (see 28.1).

γνώσις^d: ἤρατε τὴν κλεῖδα τῆς γνώσεως ‘you have taken away the means by which people are able to understand’ Lk 11:52.

ἐπιγινώσκω^b: οὐ γὰρ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν ἄλλ’ ἢ ἃ ἀναγινώσκετε ἢ καὶ ἐπιγινώσκετε ‘we write to you only what you can read and understand’ 2 Cor 1:13.

32.17 εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἔρχομαι^b: (an idiom, literally ‘to come into knowledge’) to come to understand the meaning of something, with special emphasis upon the process—‘to come to understand, to come to know.’ πάντοτε μανθάνοντα καὶ μηδέποτε εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν δυνάμενα ‘they are always learning but never able to (really) come to understand the truth’ 2 Tm 3:7. One may also interpret εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἔρχομαι as meaning ‘to come to have knowledge of, to come to know’ (see 27.4).

32.18 καταλαμβάνω^c: (a figurative extension of meaning of καταλαμβάνω^d ‘to overcome,’ 37.19) to come to understand something which was not understood or perceived previously—‘to understand, to realize, to grasp, to comprehend.’ ἐπ’ ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνομαι ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολήμπτης ὁ θεός ‘I (now) understand how true it is that God does not show favoritism’ Ac 10:34; καὶ καταλαβόμενοι ὅτι ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοι εἰσιν ‘and realized that they were uneducated men’ Ac 4:13; καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν ‘and the darkness did not comprehend it’ Jn 1:5. It is also possible to understand καταλαμβάνω in Jn 1:5 in the sense of ‘to overcome’ (see 37.19). In Jn 1:5 a word play involving both meanings may be intended, something which is typical of Johannine style.

C Ease or Difficulty in Understanding (32.19–32.23)

32.19 εὐσημος, ον: pertaining to being easily understood—‘intelligible, easily understandable.’ διὰ τῆς γλώσσης εἰς μὴ εὐσημον λόγον δῶτε, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ λαλούμενον; ‘unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying?’ 1 Cor 14:9.

32.20 κατάδηλος, ον: pertaining to being clearly evident and hence easily understood—‘easily understood, very evident, very clear.’ περισσότερον ἔτι κατάδηλόν ἐστιν ‘the matter becomes very easy to understand’ He 7:15.

32.21 αἰνίγμα, τος n: that which is difficult or impossible to understand—‘that which is puzzling, that which is difficult to understand, puzzle, riddle.’ βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι’ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι ‘now we see only puzzling reflections in a mirror’ 1 Cor 13:12. In 1 Cor 13:12 the term αἰνίγμα may be interpreted as lack of clarity in perception, so that the meaning would be ‘that which is difficult to see clearly,’ but the general usage of αἰνίγμα would seem to point to the meaning of difficulty in understanding and comprehension rather than in visual perception. For another interpretation of αἰνίγμα in 1 Cor 13:12, see 24.37.

32.22 δυσνόητος, ον: pertaining to being understandable, but only with great effort—‘difficult to understand, not easily understood.’ ἐν αἷς ἐστιν δυσνόητά τινα ‘in which there are some things difficult to understand’ 2 Pe 3:16.

32.23 ἀνεξεραύνητος, ον; ἀνεξιχνίαστος, ον: pertaining to being impossible to understand on the basis of careful examination or investigation—‘impossible to understand, unfathomable, impossible to comprehend.’ ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ ‘how impossible it is to understand his decisions and to comprehend his ways’ Ro 11:33.8

D Capacity for Understanding (32.24–32.41)

32.24 ὀφθαλμός^c, οἱ m: (a figurative extension of meaning of ὀφθαλμός^a ‘eye,’ 8.23) capacity to understand as the result of perception—‘to be able to understand, to come to perceive, understanding.’ νῦν δὲ ἐκρύβη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου ‘but now it is hidden from your understanding’ (literally ‘... from your eyes’) Lk 19:42; πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εἶδέναι ὑμᾶς τίς ἐστιν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς κλήσεως αὐτοῦ ‘the understanding of your mind has been enlightened so that you can know what is the hope of your calling’ Eph 1:18. In both Lk 19:42 and Eph 1:18 ὀφθαλμός designates a faculty of understanding and is not a reference merely to perception. In Eph 1:18 καρδιά denotes the mind (see 26.3), so that the phrase ‘the eyes of the mind’ really means ‘the capacity for understanding which the mind has.’

32.25 τυφλῶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς: (an idiom, literally ‘to blind the eyes’) to cause someone to no longer have the capacity for understanding—‘to cause to not understand, to make unable to comprehend.’ τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ‘he has made it impossible for them to understand’ (literally ‘he has blinded their eyes’) Jn 12:40; ἡ σκοτία ἐτύφλωσεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ‘the darkness has made it impossible for him to understand’ (literally ‘the darkness has blinded his eyes’) 1 Jn 2:11. Though in some languages there is a close relationship between the eyes and comprehension, in many languages it is simply impossible to use the idiom ‘to blind the eyes’ in speaking of ‘causing someone not to understand.’ The problem becomes particularly difficult in speaking of ‘darkness blinding the eyes’ as in 1 Jn 2:11. People can understand how ‘bright light would blind the eyes,’ but it would be strange indeed to think of ‘darkness’ having such an effect. In the context of 1 Jn 2:11, the darkness is, of course, not literal darkness but a state of sinfulness. Therefore, in some languages it may be necessary to translate ‘their sinfulness has made it impossible for them to understand’ or ‘because they sin, they cannot understand.’

32.26 συνήμι^b or συνίω; σύνεσις^b, εως f: to be able to understand and evaluate—‘to be able to comprehend, to understand, to be intelligent, insight, intelligence.’

συνήμι^b: οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίω ‘there is no one who is able to understand’ Ro 3:11.

σύνεσις^b: δώσει γὰρ σοὶ ὁ κύριος σύνεσιν ἐν πᾶσιν ‘because the Lord will give you the ability to understand all things’ 2 Tm 2:7.

32.27 συνετός, ἢ, ὄν; ἐπιστήμων, ον (derivative of ἐπίσταμαι^b ‘to understand,’ 32.3): pertaining to being able to understand and evaluate—‘intelligent, insightful, understanding.’

συνετός: Σεργίῳ Παύλῳ, ἀνδρὶ συνετῷ ‘Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man’ Ac 13:7; τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω ‘I will frustrate the intelligence of those who are intelligent’ 1 Cor 1:19.

ἐπιστήμων: τίς σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν; ‘who is wise and understanding among you?’ Jas 3:13.

32.28 αἰσθάνομαι; αἰσθησις, εως f; αἰσθητήριον, ον n: to have the capacity to perceive clearly and hence to understand the real nature of

something—‘to be able to perceive, to have the capacity to understand, understanding.’

αἰσθάνομαι: ἦν παρακεκαλυμμένον ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἵνα μὴ αἰσθῶνται αὐτό ‘it had been hidden from them so that they could not understand it’ Lk 9:45.

αἰσθησις: ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἐτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύη ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει ‘your love will keep on growing more and more together with your knowledge and complete capacity for understanding’ Php 1:9.

αἰσθητήριον: τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα ἐχόντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ ‘those whose capacity to understand has been disciplined by exercise to distinguish between good and bad’ He 5:14.

32.29 νουεχῶς: pertaining to ability to reason and hence understand—‘with understanding, wisely.’ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ὅτι νουεχῶς ἀπεχρίθη ‘recognizing that he had answered wisely’ or ‘... with understanding’ Mk 12:34.

32.30 φρόνησις^b, εὖς f: the ability to understand, as the result of insight and wisdom—‘capacity to understand, wisdom, being wise.’ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει ‘using all wisdom and ability to understand’ Eph 1:8.

32.31 φρόνιμος, ον; φρονίμως: pertaining to understanding resulting from insight and wisdom—‘wise, wisely, with understanding, with insight.’ φρόνιμος: ὅστις ἀκούει μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτοὺς ὁμοιωθήσεται ἀνδρὶ φρονίμῳ ‘everyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them is like one who has understanding’ Mt 7:24.

φρονίμως: ἐπῆνεσεν ὁ κύριος τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας ὅτι φρονίμως ἐποίησεν ‘the master praised the unjust steward because he had acted wisely’ Lk 16:8.

32.32 σοφία, ας f: the capacity to understand and, as a result, to act wisely—‘to be prudent, wisdom.’ ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω ‘act with wisdom toward those who are not believers’ Col 4:5.

32.33 σοφός^b, ἡ, ὄν: pertaining to understanding resulting in wisdom—‘prudent, wise, understanding.’ περιπατεῖτε, μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι ἀλλ’ ὡς σοφοί ‘don’t live like ignorant people, but like people who are wise’ Eph 5:15.

32.34 σωφρονέω^b; σωφρονισμός^a, οὔ m; σωφροσύνη^a, ης f: to have understanding about practical matters and thus be able to act sensibly—‘to have sound judgment, to be sensible, to use good sense, sound judgment.’

σωφρονέω^b: τοὺς νεωτέρους ὡσαύτως παρακάλει σωφρονεῖν ‘in the same way urge the young men to be wise and sensible’ Tt 2:6; φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν ‘be sensible in your thinking’ Ro 12:3.

σωφρονισμός^a: ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ ‘instead (his Spirit fills us) with power, love, and the ability to understand how to make wise decisions’ 2 Tm 1:7. It is also possible to understand σωφρονισμός in 2 Tm 1:7 as moderation and sensible behavior (see 88.93).

σωφροσύνη^a: οὐ μαίνομαι, φησίν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλὰ ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι ‘he said, I am not mad, most excellent Festus! The words I speak are true and sensible’ Ac 26:25.

32.35 σοφός, οὔ m: a person of professional or semi-professional status who is regarded as particularly capable in understanding the philosophical aspects of knowledge and experience—‘one who is wise, wise man.’ ποῦ σοφός; ποῦ γραμματεὺς; ‘where is the man who is wise? where is the scholar?’ 1 Cor 1:20.9

32.36 σοφίζω: to cause a person to have wisdom and understanding—‘to cause to understand, to cause to be wise, to make wise.’ τὰ δυνάμενά σε σοφίσαι εἰς σωτηρίαν ‘which is able to make you wise unto salvation,’ that is, ‘... cause you to have the wisdom that leads to salvation’ 2 Tm 3:15.

32.37 σοφία^b, ας f: the content of what is known by those regarded as wise—‘wisdom, insight, understanding.’ ἐπαιδεύθη Μωϋσῆς ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ Αἰγυπτίων ‘Moses learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians’ Ac 7:22; σοφίαν δὲ λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις ‘yet, we have wisdom to tell those who are spiritually mature’ 1 Cor 2:6.

32.38 φιλοσοφία, ας f: human understanding or wisdom and, by implication, in contrast with divinely revealed knowledge—‘human understanding, human wisdom, philosophy.’ μὴ τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης ‘lest anyone make you captive by means of human understanding and worthless deceit’ or ‘... by means of the worthless deceit of human wisdom’ Col 2:8. In Col 2:8 φιλοσοφία may be rendered in some languages as ‘the way in which people are wise’ or ‘the way in which people understand things’ or ‘the manner in which people reason.’

32.39 φιλόσοφος, ου m: a person of professional or semi-professional status regarded as having particular capacity or competence in understanding the meaning or significance of human experience—‘philosopher, scholar.’ τινὲς δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἐπικουρείων καὶ Στοϊκῶν φιλοσόφων συνέβαλλον αὐτῷ ‘certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also debated with him’ Ac 17:18. In some instances φιλόσοφος in Ac 17:18 may be translated simply as ‘teacher,’ since such a word would normally designate a professional or semi-professional person involved in scholarly activities.

32.40 μάγος^a, ου m: a person noted for unusual capacity of understanding based upon astrology (such persons were regarded as combining both secular and religious aspects of knowledge and understanding)—‘a wise man and priest, a magus.’ ἰδοὺ μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ‘soon afterward, some magi came from the East to Jerusalem’ Mt 2:1. In Mt 2:1 μάγοι may be translated as ‘men of wisdom who studied the stars.’¹⁰

32.41 σοφία^d, ας f: a document or book containing wise sayings (as in the phrase ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ ‘the Wisdom of God,’ Lk 11:49, a possible reference to the OT or to apocryphal wisdom literature, possibly even a book which has been lost)—‘Wisdom.’ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ εἶπεν ‘for this reason the Wisdom of God said’ Lk 11:49. If one understands ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ as being a reference to a book, one could translate the statement in Lk 11:49 as ‘for this reason, the book entitled The Wisdom of God has the words: ...’ On the other hand, the phrase ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ in Lk 11:49 may mean merely ‘God’s wisdom’ (32.32), and therefore this expression in Lk 11:49 could be rendered as ‘God in his wisdom said’ or ‘God, who is wise, said.’

E Lack of Capacity for Understanding (32.42–32.61)

32.42 τυφλός^b, ἡ, ὄν: (a figurative extension of meaning of τυφλόσα ‘unable to see, blind,’ 24.38) pertaining to not being able to understand—‘unable to understand, incapable of comprehending, blind.’ τυφλοὶ εἰσιν ὁδηγοί ‘they are guides who themselves do not understand’ Mt 15:14; σὺ εἶ ... τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός ‘you are ... blind and naked’ Re 3:17. In a number of languages it is possible to preserve the figurative meaning of ‘blind’; in certain instances, however, part of the figurative meaning may be retained by translating ‘not able to see how to live’ or ‘not able to

see the truth.’

32.43 τυφλόω: (a causative derivative of τυφλόσ^b ‘unable to understand,’ 32.42) to cause someone not to be able to understand—‘to make someone not understand, to remove someone’s understanding.’ ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων ‘he made unbelievers unable to understand’ or ‘he made unbelievers’ minds unable to comprehend’ 2 Cor 4:4.

32.44 σκοτίζομαι^b; σκοτόομαι^b: (figurative extensions of meaning of σκοτίζομαι^a and σκοτόομαι^a ‘to become dark,’ 14.55) to become unable to perceive and thus unable to understand—‘to be incapable of perceiving, to not be able to understand.’

σκοτίζομαι^b: ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνητος αὐτῶν καρδία ‘their foolish minds became unable to perceive the truth’ or ‘... were darkened’ Ro 1:21; σκοτισθήτωσαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ‘may they become unable to perceive’ (literally ‘may their understanding become unable to understand’) Ro 11:10.

σκοτόομαι^b: ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες ‘their minds were darkened’ Eph 4:18.

It is rare that one can combine the concept of ‘becoming dark’ with incapacity to understand or comprehend. Sometimes a parallel figure of speech may be employed by using an expression such as ‘to not be able to see.’ For example, in Ro 1:21 it is sometimes possible to translate ‘their foolish minds became unable to see the truth,’ and in Eph 4:18 it is sometimes possible to translate ‘they were not able to see with their minds.’

32.45 παχύνομαι: (a figurative extension of meaning of παχύνομαι ‘to become thick,’ not occurring in the NT) to become unable to understand or comprehend as the result of being mentally dull or spiritually insensitive—‘to be unable to understand, to be mentally dull.’ ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου ‘for the heart of this people has become unable to understand’ or ‘... incapable of understanding’ Mt 13:15.

32.46 τοῖς ὡσὶν βαρέως ἀκούω: (an idiom, literally ‘to hear heavily with the ears’) to be mentally slow or dull in comprehending—‘to be slow to understand, to be mentally dull.’ καὶ τοῖς ὡσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν ‘and they were slow to understand’ Ac 28:27.

32.47 νωθρὸς ταῖς ἀκοαῖς: (an idiom, literally ‘lazy as to one’s ears’) to be slow to understand, with an implication of laziness—‘slow to understand.’ ἐπεὶ νωθοὶ γέγονατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς ‘because you have been slow to understand’ He 5:11.

32.48 μωπάζω: (a figurative extension of meaning of μωπάζω ‘to be shortsighted,’ not occurring in the NT) to be extremely limited in one’s understanding—‘to fail to understand, to be restricted in understanding, to be shortsighted.’ τυφλὸς ἐστὶν μωπάζων ‘being so limited in understanding as to not realize’ or ‘... as to not comprehend’ 2 Pe 1:9.

32.49 ἀσύνητος, ον: pertaining to a lack of capacity for insight and understanding—‘without understanding, senseless, foolish.’ ἀκμὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀσύνητοὶ ἐστε; ‘are you still without understanding?’ Mt 15:16; ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνητος αὐτῶν καρδία ‘their foolish hearts are filled with darkness’ Ro 1:21. Care must be exercised in the rendering of ἀσύνητος in Mt 15:16 and Ro 1:21, since a lack of capacity for understanding may result from mental deficiencies or from a lack of the proper use of mental capacity. It is, of course, this latter meaning which is involved in the use of ἀσύνητος in these contexts.

32.50 ἀνόητος, ον: pertaining to unwillingness to use one’s mental faculties in order to understand—‘foolish, stupid, without understanding.’ σοφοὶς τε καὶ ἀνόητοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί ‘I am obligated to both wise and foolish men’ Ro 1:14; ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται ‘oh, foolish Galatians’ Ga 3:1. As in the case of ἀσύνητος (32.49), the meaning of ἀνόητος is that people presumably would not use their capacity for understanding and as a result, thought and behaved foolishly. ἀνόητος does not imply the mental state of being an idiot or imbecile.

32.51 ἄνοια^a, ας f: the state of being devoid of understanding—‘to lack understanding, absence of understanding.’ ἡ γὰρ ἄνοια αὐτῶν ἔκδηλος ἔσται πᾶσιν ‘their lack of understanding will be evident to everyone’ 2 Tm 3:9. ἄνοια does not imply in 2 Tm 3:9 that people are incapable of understanding, but that they evidently are unwilling to understand.

32.52 ἄφρων, ον: pertaining to not employing one’s understanding, particularly in practical matters—‘foolish, senseless, unwise.’ μὴ γίνεσθε ἄφρονες, ἀλλὰ συνίετε τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου ‘do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is’ Eph 5:17; ἀγαθοποιούντας φημοῦν τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν ‘by the good things you do, silence the ignorant talk of foolish men’ 1 Pe 2:15.

It is possible that ἄφρων in Ro 2:20 (παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων ‘instructor of the foolish’) refers to people who are simply uninstructed or ignorant, since ἀφρόνων could be parallel with νηπίων, occurring in the same verse. On the other hand, there appears to be a contrast in the meanings of ἀφρόνων and νηπίων because of the distinctiveness in meanings of παιδευτὴν and διδάσκαλον. Therefore, ἄφρων in Ro 2:20 is better understood as referring to those who act foolishly because they do not use their potential for understanding.

32.53 ἀφροσύνη, ης f: the state of not using one’s capacity for understanding—‘to be a fool, foolishness.’ ὁ λαλῶ οὐ κατὰ κύριον λαλῶ, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ ‘what I am saying is not what the Lord would have me say, but is a matter of foolishness on my part’ or ‘... but is, as it were, foolishness’ or ‘... but is, as it were, being like a fool’ 2 Cor 11:17; ἀσέλγεια, ὀφθαλμὸς πονηρὸς, βλασφημία, ὑπερηφανία, ἀφροσύνη ‘lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness’ Mk 7:22.

32.54 ἄσοφος, ον: pertaining to not being wise—‘foolish, unwise.’ περιπατεῖτε, μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι ἀλλ’ ὡς σοφοὶ ‘do not live like unwise people, but like wise people’ Eph 5:15.

32.55 μωρόσα, ἄ, ὄν: pertaining to being extremely unwise and foolish—‘unwise, foolish, fool.’ πᾶς ὁ ἀκούων μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ μὴ ποιῶν αὐτοὺς ὁμοιωθήσεται ἀνδρὶ μωρῷ, ὅστις ὠκοδόμησεν αὐτοῦ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον ‘everyone who hears these words of mine and does not obey them is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand’ Mt 7:26; ἡμεῖς μωροὶ διὰ Χριστόν, ὑμεῖς δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ ‘we are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ’ 1 Cor 4:10. In rendering μωρός in 1 Cor 4:10 it is essential to recognize the rhetorical exaggeration. Paul is not stating that he and his colleagues actually act unwisely or foolishly, and so it may be necessary in some languages to translate ‘we are fools for Christ’s sake’ as ‘we are regarded as fools for Christ’s sake’ or ‘it might seem that we are fools in order to serve Christ.’

32.56 μωραίνομαι^a: (derivative of μωρόσα ‘unwise, foolish,’ 32.55) to become one who does not employ a capacity to understand and thus acts very foolishly—‘to become foolish, to act more foolishly.’ φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν ‘saying they are wise, they became fools’ or ‘(the more) they claim they are wise men, (the more) foolish they became’ Ro 1:22.

32.57 μωρία, ας f: the content of foolish thought—‘foolishness, nonsense, what is thought to be foolish.’ ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστὶν ‘for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are being destroyed’ 1 Cor 1:18. In rendering 1 Cor 1:18 it is important to recognize that ‘foolishness’ must be defined in terms of the relationship that it has to those who ‘are being destroyed.’ Therefore, it may be important to translate 1 Cor 1:18 as ‘those who are being destroyed think that the message concerning the cross is nonsense’ or ‘... makes no sense’ or ‘... simply cannot be understood.’

32.58 μωρός^b, ἄ, ὄν: (derivative of μωρία ‘foolishness,’ 32.57) pertaining to thoughts devoid of understanding and therefore foolish—

Interestingly, the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon²¹ based on semantic domains lists words related to wisdom under topics 32:30-32 (φρόνησις; σοφία), 32:37-41 (σοφία; φιλοσοφία; φιλόσοφος; μάγος), and adjective / adverbs wise/wisely under topics 32:29-40 (φρόνιμος, ον; φρονίμως; σοφός, ή, όν). φρόνησις is defined as “the ability to understand, as the result of insight and wisdom.” The adjective φρόνιμος, ον and the adverb φρονίμως then mean “pertaining to understanding resulting from insight and wisdom.” σοφία is defined as “the capacity to understand and, as a result, to act wisely.” σοφία can also designate “the content of what is known by those regarded as wise.” The adjective σοφός, ή, όν then becomes “pertaining to understanding resulting in wisdom.” The noun σοφός thus means “a person of professional or semi-professional status who is regarded as particularly capable in understanding the philosophical aspects of knowledge and experience.” The verb σοφίζω (topic 32:36) specifies “to cause a person to have wisdom and understanding.”

Words with a rather negative tone defining wisdom in purely human terms include φιλοσοφία (“human understanding or wisdom and, by implication, in contrast with divinely revealed knowledge”); φιλόσοφος (“a person of professional or semi-professional status regarded as having particular capacity or competence in understanding the meaning or significance of human experience”); μάγος (“a person noted for unusual capacity of understanding based upon astrology (such persons were regarded as combining both secular and religious aspects of knowledge and understanding)”). The complex σωφρονέω; σωφρονισμός; σωφροσύνη moves in a slightly different meaning category in specifying “to have understanding about practical matters and thus be able to act sensibly.”

Thus in the New Testament the concept of wisdom is closely connected to the idea of understanding and a clear grasping of reality. Positively, as James will argue, genuine wisdom is religious in nature and is grounded in God’s perception of reality. False wisdom, on the other hand, is limited to purely human perception about life. It cannot be trusted because its origin is in the thinking of sinful humanity, and is based on extremely limited human observation. This was the essence of the Stoic advocacy of wisdom in the first century world and James saw its end product both in the individual and in society as signaling its worthlessness.

Literary:

Genre: Fundamentally these verbs reflect general paraenesis that is frequent in the book of James. Some slight possibility of poetic structure reflecting a version of the common Two Ways teaching found in the Jewish and early Christian writings exists, but this is far from certain.²² But it is clear that a rhythmic pattern

‘foolish, nonsensical, to be nonsense.’ ἀλλά τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός ἵνα κατασχῶν τοὺς σοφοὺς ‘God (purposely) chose what the world considered to be nonsense in order to put wise men to shame’ 1 Cor 1:27. Some translators have endeavored to render μωρός in the sense of ‘nonsense’ as ‘that which cannot be understood,’ but this could refer to some type of deep mystery. Accordingly, the expression ‘what the world considered to be nonsense’ can often be better rendered as ‘what the world thinks makes no sense’ or ‘what so many people think is foolishness.’

32.59 μωραίνω: (causative derivative of μωρία ‘foolishness,’ 32.57) to cause the content of certain thoughts to become devoid of meaning—‘to cause to become nonsense.’ οὐχὶ ἐμώρηνεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου; ‘did not God cause the world’s wisdom to become nonsense?’ 1 Cor 1:20. In 1 Cor 1:20 the focus is upon the content of wisdom and nonsense, and it may be necessary to make this explicit, for example, ‘the people of the world thought that what they understood was wise, but God showed that their thoughts were foolish’ or ‘... their way of thinking was foolish.’

32.60 κενός^b, ή, όν: (a figurative extension of meaning of κενός^a ‘empty,’ 57.42) pertaining to a complete lack of understanding and insight—‘foolish, stupid.’ θέλεις δὲ γινῶναι, ὃ ἄνθρωπε κενέ, ὅτι ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων ἀργή ἐστιν; ‘you fool! Do you want to be shown that faith without works is useless?’ Jas 2:20.

32.61 ρακά (a borrowing from Aramaic): one who is totally lacking in understanding—‘numskull, fool.’ ὅς δ’ ἂν εἴπῃ τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ, Ρακά, ἔνοχος ἔσται τῷ συνεδρίῳ ‘whoever says to his brother, You fool, will be brought before the Council’ Mt 5:22.

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 379-87.]

²¹Louw, Johannes P. and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996. See related topic number for specific reference.

²²“The section offers a finely drawn set of contrasts between two kinds of wisdom. Form-critically the verse may be arranged in two panels, corresponding to the ‘double catalogues’ of what is earthly-demonic and what is heavenly-spiritual and traced to the concept of Two Spirit-kingdoms at Qumran (1QS). See Kamlah, Form, 39–50, 181. The contrasts are clearly arranged in order, suggesting to some interpreters that the style is poetic or hymnic, comparable with that of 1 Cor 13 (Reicke, 108 n.10). Examples of a carefully crafted style are seen in the following: (i) There is an *inclusio* formed by setting the theme of σοφία // σοφός at the beginning (v 13) and ending (v 17). Alternatively, on a smaller scale, Plummer (213) sees the master theme of vv 17, 18 to be peace: “the whole process begins [with εἰρηνική], progresses, and ends in peace [εἰρήνην].” (ii) The first panel of (negative) vices is devoted to deploring the baneful influence of ζήλος ... ἐπιθειά (envy ... selfish ambition)—twin terms that are repeated (vv 14, 16). The signs of the two vices are found in their origin and their consequences. (a) They do not proceed ‘from above,’ i.e., from God, but they are ‘earthbound, sensual, demonic.’ These three adjectives are placed in ascending order of moral reprobation, commencing with a less

is built into the passage creating a distinct thought flow.

James does make effective use of a vice list (vv. 14-16) in depicting false wisdom, and then of a virtue list (v. 17) in depicting true wisdom. This results in some distinctive grammar structures contained in the passage.

Context: The literary setting for 3:13-18 is reflected in the outline below. It stands pretty much as an independent pericope. There is the thematic link to the earlier passage of 1:5-8 where asking God for σοφία is addressed. The passage does possess a closer connection to 3:1-12 with controlling the tongue in the sense of the need for genuine wisdom to guide our speech. Indirectly it further serves to lay a conceptual foundation for 4:1-10 which deals with solving conflict inside the community of believers. Coming near the center of the document, it perhaps plays an additional conceptual role as being at the heart of James' message to his readers.²³

STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF TEXT

Of James²⁴

PRAESCRIPTIO		1.1
BODY	1-194	1.2-5.20
Facing Trials	1-15	1.2-12
God and Temptation	16-24	1.13-18
The Word and Piety	25-37	1.19-27
Faith and Partiality	38-55	2.1-13
Faith and Works	56-72	2.14-26
Controlling the Tongue	73-93	3.1-12
True and False Wisdom	94-102	3.13-18

blameworthy (ἐπίγειος, which can mean little more than ‘inferior,’ ‘human,’ as implied in 2 Cor 5:1 with its counterpart in ‘spiritual,’ πνευματικός) and climaxing in διαμονιώδης, a term conveying a clear indictment of the demonic origin of social malaise. That source will be identified by the writer in 4:7 (‘resist the devil’). Not speaking the truth (v 14) is the hallmark of this kind of wisdom. Cf. John 8:46; and see 1 Enoch 16.3 for one example of this kind of ‘demonic’ teaching, called ‘rejected mysteries,’ known by the fallen angels in Enoch’s vision. (b) The consequence is seen in v 16: disorder (ἀκαταστασία, a much stronger term than ‘confusion,’ RSV; it connotes a breakdown of order bordering on unruliness, anarchy [Vouga, 106]; cf. Luke 21:9, where the word means insurrection; 1 Cor 14:33 refers to a collapse of harmony and good order in worship and the presence of other forms of social evil). In James the term looks back to 3:8 and on to 4:1.

“(iii) The other side of the diptych is in praise of wisdom that is ‘from above,’ i.e., it comes from God. The phrase ἡ σοφία ἄνωθεν is repeated in the anaphoric style. Stylistically it is set in the form of an aretology, that is, a tribute in celebration of the divinity or an attribute claimed to be divine. Here it is wisdom that is lauded as superior by being given a set of descriptions that virtually hypostasize her as in Wisd Sol 7:22–30. Her purity heads the list of seven attributes.

“The first cluster of four epithets is marked by epiphora, each word beginning with ε-: εἰρηνηκὴ, ἐπιεικὴς, εὐπειθὴς ... ἐλέους; then the next group switches to the initial α-: ἀγαθὸν, ἀδιάκριτος, ἀνυπόκριτος, the last two containing examples of α- negative and homoioteleuton.

“(iv) The climax comes in v 18 with a well-measured, hieratic, i.e., solemn sounding, and rhythmical style using a correct syllabic length to be appreciated when the sentence is read aloud: ἐν εἰρήνῃ σπείρεται τοῖς ποιούσιν εἰρήνην (Mussner, 175). It also contains the element of paradox seen in that its subject, fruit (καρπός), is normally thought of as grown, not sown!

“The concluding verse serves also to round off the entire chapter as well as the shorter section of vv 13–17. It is not an isolated saying (as Dibelius supposes). After a recital of the evil powers associated with the uncontrolled tongue and the demonically inspired wisdom the disquisition ends on a positive note: ‘for those who make peace’ (a dative of advantage: BDF §191.4) the fruit of righteousness (i.e., peaceable conduct as one of the ‘good fruits’ in v 17 and as the gift of ‘heavenly wisdom’: so Reumann, Righteousness, 150) is sown (by God: a divine passive construction, with God as the real agent) in peace.”

[Ralph P. Martin, vol. 48, *James*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 125-26.]

²³The book contains 108 verses, and 3:13-18 stand as verses 67-72 in the document. 3:1 is verse 54 and stands at the dead center of the book.

²⁴Taken from Lorin L. Cranford, *A Study Manual of James: Greek Text* (Fort Worth: Scripta Publications, Inc., 1988), 285. **Statements** indicate core thought expressions in the text as a basis for schematizing the rhetorical structure of the text. These are found in the Study Manual and also at the James Study internet site.

Solving Divisions	103-133	4.1-10
Criticism	134-140	4.11-12
Leaving God Out	141-146	4.13-17
Danger in Wealth	147-161	5.1-6
Persevering under Trial	162-171	5.7-11
Swearing	172-174	5.12
Reaching Out to God	175-193	5.13-18
Reclaiming the Wayward	194	5.19-20

Structure:

The block diagram of the scripture text below in English represents a very literalistic English expression of the original language Greek text in order to preserve as far a possible the grammar structure of the Greek expression, rather than the grammar of the English translation which will always differ from the Greek at certain points.

94 ^{3.13} **Who is wise**
and
learned
among you?

95 **Let him show his deeds**
done in the humility wisdom produces
out of his good conduct

^{3.14} But
if you possess bitter jealousy
and
selfish ambition
in your hearts,

96 **stop glorying**
in it
and

97 **---- lying**
against the Truth.

98 ^{3.15} **This wisdom is not coming down from above**
but

99 **---- ----- is earthy,**
sensual,
demonic;

^{3.16} For
where jealousy
and
selfish ambition exist,

100 **there is disorder**
and
every foul deed.

was not καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας, *according to lofty words or wisdom* (v. 1), nor were ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις, *my speech and my preaching were not by persuasive words of wisdom* (v. 4). By the beginning of the Christian era the remnants of Sophism were seen in itinerant philosophers who traveled the countryside teaching oratory and their individual philosophies. They had a notorious reputation for being scam artists who charged high fees to teach people how to become rich and successful. To the average person in the first century world when the Christian missionaries came into town to preach the Gospel in the marketplace they seemed to be just another variety of these Sophist philosophers. Thus Paul sought to distance himself greatly from these scam artists when he preached Christ in the Gentile atmosphere of the market places etc. in his travels. Paul will also condemn the Greek wisdom as being σοφία ἀνθρώπων, *wisdom of men* (v. 5), and σοφίαν τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, *wisdom of this age nor of the rulers of this age* (v. 6). This false wisdom stands in contrast to the wisdom of God, θεοῦ σοφίαν (v. 6), which is hidden from the unspiritual person (v. 6).²⁵

The test question: Τίς σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν; This beginning rhetorical question raises the issue of the presence of wise people in the Christian congregations of James' readers. The interrogative pronoun τίς, *who*, seeks identification of such individuals in the congregation.²⁶ The prepositional phrase ἐν ὑμῖν, *among you*, clearly locates the issue inside the Christian congregations of his readers, rather than in society generally.

The combination of σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων, which defines the topic under consideration, is best understood as 'wise and understanding.' The pair of adjectives shows up in the LXX of the Old Testament at Dt. 1:13, 15; Dt. 4:6; Dan. 5:12. But the underlying Hebrew *hākām wenābōn* pair is very frequently found in the Hebrew Old Testament.²⁷ What this signals is James' dependency on his Jewish wisdom heritage for the core idea to put on the table.²⁸ The interpretive issue of whether James is continuing a discussion of teachers in the church, διδάσκαλοι, assumed to be the focus in 3:1-12 has already been concluded, with the preceding lesson 9, in favor of a generalized theme for vv. 1-12, and thus a generalized theme for vv. 13-18. Very likely, however, is the reality that those among the congregations of James' targeted readers who were claiming to be wise were also desiring to be teachers in the church. Thus their supposed spiritual 'revelations' lost all credibility because of the life-style being lived by these people. And the context points to this claim to wisdom being defined more in terms of Stoic definitions of wisdom. This would not be surprising since James is writing to Jewish Christians living in the Diaspora. The Greek culture permeating their daily lives would quite naturally lead them to Greek definitions of wisdom. But with James' use of a very Hebraistic pair of terms, σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων, he clearly signals at the outset that authentic wisdom is going to have a Jewish flavor rather than a Greek one. This also signals limits to potential applications in a modern setting.

The test answer: δεῖξάτω ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἐν πραΰτητι σοφίας. This interesting answer to the rhetorical question challenges the individual claiming wisdom to prove the claim: δεῖξάτω.²⁹

²⁵One of the damning implications of Paul's language is that his depiction of ancient Sophism accurately describes the phoney ministry of the majority of TV preachers in western society today.

²⁶One should not forget the difference only in spelling between the interrogative pronoun τίς, *who*, and the indefinite pronoun τις, *someone*. The indefinite pronoun has been used frequently by James to introduce topics (3:2; 2:18; 2:14; 1:26; 1:23; 1:5). Thus it was quite natural to use the interrogative form τίς in 3:13 to introduce his topic.

²⁷Deut. 4:6

LXX. καὶ φυλάξεσθε καὶ ποιήσετε, ὅτι αὕτη ἡ σοφία ὑμῶν καὶ ἡ σύνεσις ἐναντίον πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν, ὅσοι ἐὰν ἀκούσωσιν πάντα τὰ δικαιώματα ταῦτα καὶ ἐροῦσιν Ἰδοὺ λαὸς *σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων* τὸ ἔθνος τὸ μέγα τοῦτο.

וְשִׁמְרֵתֶם וְעָשִׂיתֶם כִּי הוּא הַקְּמָתְכֶם וּבִינְיָהֲכֶם לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת כָּל־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ רַק עַם־תְּהִיבֶם וְנִבְנוּ הַגְּדֹל הַזֶּה:

²⁸“First, true wisdom will show itself in the good deeds (i.e. works of charity) which flow from a proper (καλῆς) life-style (ἀναστροφῆς; cf. 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:2, 16; Gal. 1:13; so also Epict. 1.9.24; 1.22.13; 2 Macc. 6:23). Similar ideas were also well known in rabbinic Judaism (so Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah in m. Ab. 3:18). This teaching is certainly neither new nor surprising in James, and, as the parallels in 1 Peter and Heb. 13:7 show, it is characteristic of early Christian parenesis. If the life-style does not match the profession, the latter is to be discounted.” [Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 150.]

²⁹δεῖκνυμι (s. prec. two entries) fut. δείξω; 1 aor. ἔδειξα, impv. δείξον; pf. δέδειχα LXX; B 13:3. Pass.: fut. 3 sg. δειχθήσεται (Just., Tat., Ath.); 1 aor. 2 pl. ἐδείχθητε (Just., D. 93, 1), inf. δειχθῆναι LXX (Just., A I, 12, 10); ptc. δειχθείς Hb 8:5; Dg 11:2; pf. 3 sg. δέδεικται (Ath. 10:1), ptc. δεδειγμένον Ex 25:29; 26:30 (Hom.+). The alternate form δεικνύω, as old as Hdt., also Ps.-Aeschin.,

The use of the Aorist imperative form *δειξάτω* intensifies the challenge. The third person form of the imperative indicates the challenge is directed to the *Τίς* in the rhetorical question, i.e., the person claiming to be wise and understanding.

What the individual is to show as evidence of wisdom is *τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ*, *his actions*.³⁰ Thus, behavior is where proof of wisdom lies, not intellect or speech. James is fond of the concept of *ἔργον* with 15 uses of it in this book.³¹ The concept is fundamentally that of actions done in obedience to Christ.

But what kind of action becomes evidence of authentic wisdom? Although difficult to express clearly in English translation, the Greek is very clear and natural. The showing of wisdom in actions means these actions must have two fundamental qualities about them if they serve as credible evidence of wisdom. First they must originate in the noble way one lives his life: *ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς*. The preposition *ἐκ* denotes originating source. And this source is *τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς*, *the noble way of living*. The noun *ἀναστροφή* references a lifestyle with particular emphasis on behavior.³² Now an *ἀναστροφή* can be either good or bad, depending on the qualifying adjective used with the noun. Some of the negative qualifiers include *ματαιία*, *futile*, *ἀσελγεία*, *debauchery*, and others. On the positive side the qualifiers include *ἀγνή*, *pure*, *ἅγιοι*, *holy*, *ἀγαθῆ*, *good*. The New Testament is very clear that a positive *ἀναστροφή* grows exclusively out of religious commitment to Christ.³³ To qualify ἀναστροφή positively James uses the adjective καλῆς which specifies Ep. 12, 6; B-D-F §92; Rob. 311) gener. to exhibit or make someth. known, show.

1. to exhibit someth. that can be apprehended by one or more of the senses, point out, show, make known (τύπον ... τοῦ σταυροῦ Just., D. 111, 1) *τινί τι* or *τινα* someth. or someone to someone: kingdoms **Mt 4:8**; **Lk 4:5**. *δειξον* σεαυτὸν τῷ ἱερεῖ (cp. Lev 13:49) **Mt 8:4**; **Mk 1:44**; **Lk 5:14**; mountains 1 Cl 10:7; trees Hs 3:1; an upper room **Mk 14:15**; **Lk 22:12**; denarius **Lk 20:24**; hands and feet **Lk 24:40**; hands **J 20:20**; good works **10:32**; land **Ac 7:3** (Gen 12:1); a pattern **Hb 8:5** (Ex 25:40). *σημεῖον* (EpJer 66; Jos., Bell. 2, 259, Ant. 18, 211; Just., A I, 55, 6; cp. TestAbr A 6 p. 83, 26 [Stone p. 14] θαυμάσια) **J 2:18**. *ἂ δεῖ σε ἰδεῖν* Hv 3, 1, 2.—Of apocalyptic visions (Zech 3:1) **Rv 1:1**; **4:1**; **17:1**; **21:9f**; **22:1, 6, 8**. The Father **J 14:8f** (Nicol. Dam.: 90 Fgm. 3 p. 331, 13 Jac. ὁ Ἀρβάρκης ἐδεήθη αὐτοῦ δεῖξαι οἱ τὸν βασιλέα. σφόδρα γὰρ ἐπιθυμεῖν τὸν δεσπότην ὅστις εἶη θεάσασθαι=A. asked him (the eunuch) to show him the king, for he was eager to see what the ruler was like). Of divine revelation (Hermes Fgm. XXIII, 5 [Stob. I 386, 22 W.=458, 20 Sc.; PGM 3, 599]) **J 5:20**. Of the future manifestation of Jesus Christ **1 Ti 6:15**.—1 Cl 5:5; B 5:9.—By fig. ext., of direction to transcendent matters (1 Km 12:23; Mi 4:2) 1 Cor 12:31; the salvation of God 1 Cl 35:12 (Ps 49:23).

2. to prove or make clear by evidence or reasoning, explain, prove (Ps.-Callisth. 3, 22, 10 ἄρτι δέ σοι δεῖξω=I will soon prove [it] to you; cp. Just., A I, 57, 1 ὡς δεικνύται al.; Did., Gen. 71, 6) *τι* (cp. Just., A I, 68, 10) someth. **Js 2:18a**; B 5:6. *τινί τι* 1 Cl 26:1. W. ὅτι foll. B 7:5 (cp. Just., D. 23, 5); *τινί w. ὅτι* foll. (3 Macc 6:15) **Mt 16:21**; *τινί w. inf. foll.* **Ac 10:28**. *τι* ἐκ τινος (Alex. Aphr., Quaest. 3, 3 II 2 p. 83, 10) **Js 2:18b**; **3:13**. W. double acc. τὸν σωτήρα δεῖξας δυνατὸν he has revealed the Savior as powerful Dg 9:6; *ἑαυτὸν τύπον ἔδειξε* (Christ) displayed himself as exemplar (of the resurrection) AcPlCor 2:6 (cp. TestJob 26:6; Just., A I, 57, 3 ἑαυτοῦς ... φαύλους δεικνύουσιν).—JGonda, Δεικνύμι 1929. B. 1045. Schmidt, Syn. III 401–15. DELG. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 214-15.]

³⁰The NT is loaded with cognate words to *ἔργον* as is seen by the following listing:

ἔργον (ergon), a work. Cognate words: *ἀγαθοεργέω*, *ἀμπελουργός*, *ἀργέω*, *δημιουργός*, *ἐνέργεια*, *ἐνεργέω*, *ἐνέργημα*, *ἐνεργής*, *ἐργάζομαι*, *ἐργασία*, *ἐργάτης*, *εὐεργεσία*, *εὐεργετέω*, *εὐεργέτης*, *ἱεουργέω*, *κακοῦργος*, *κατεργάζομαι*, *οἰκουργός*, *πανουργία*, *πανοῦργος*, *περιεργάζομαι*, *περίεργος*, *προσεργάζομαι*, *ῥαδιοῦργημα*, *ῥαδιουργία*, *συνεργέω*, *συνεργός*, *συνπουργέω*

Logos Bible Software, *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Logos Bible Software, 2011).]

³¹James 1:4, 25; 2:14, 17, 18 (3x), 20, 21, 22 (2x), 24, 25, 26; 3:13.

³²**ἀναστροφή, ἡς, ἡ** (in var. mgs. since Aeschyl., Pre-Socr. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; Jos., Ant. 18, 359 al.; Just., A I, 10, 2) **conduct expressed according to certain principles way of life, conduct, behavior** (Polyb. 4, 82, 1 [FKälker, Quaest. de elocut. Polyb.=Leipz. Stud. III/2, 1880, 301]; Teles p. 41, 2; Diog. L.; Epict. 1, 9, 24; 1, 22, 13; ins: SIG index; IG XII/1, 1032, 6 [II B.C.]; IMagnMai 91b, 6; IPergamon 86; PTebt 703, 270 [IIIB.C.] Tob 4:14; 2 Macc 6:23; EpArist 130; 216) *ἡκούσατε τ. ἐμὴν ἂ. ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ* you have heard of my conduct when I was still in Judaism **Gal 1:13**. *κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἂ.* according to your former (i.e. pre-Christian) way of life **Eph 4:22** (GDI 4320, 5f *κατὰ τὰν ἄλλαν ἀναστροφάν* [Rhodes]). *ἡ ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνῆ ἂ.* **1 Pt 3:2**; cp. vs. 1. *ἡ ἀγαθῆ ἐν Χριστῷ ἂ.* vs. 16. *ἡ καλῆ ἂ.* **Js 3:13**; **1 Pt 2:12**. *ἡ ματαιία ἂ. πατροπαράδοτος* the futile (i.e. directed toward futile ends) way of life handed down by your fathers **1:18**. *ἡ ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἂ.* **2 Pt 2:7**. *ἡ ἔκβασις τῆς ἂ.* **Hb 13:7**. *ἅγιον ἐν πάσῃ ἂ. γίνεσθαι* be holy in all your conduct **1 Pt 1:15**. W. *λόγος, ἀγάπη* κτλ. **1 Ti 4:12**. Pl. *ἅγιοι ἂ. καὶ εὐσέβεια* holy conduct and piety (pl. to include all varieties; cp. EpArist 130) **2 Pt 3:11**.—DDaube, *Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis*: Festschr. HLewald '53, 27–44.—DELG s.v. *στρέφω*. M-M. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 73.]

³³³⁴In the NT Epistles the verb [*ἀναστρέφω*] and noun [*ἀναστροφή*.] are often used with reference to moral conduct. In 2 C. 1:12 Paul speaks of his conduct in the church. In Eph. 2:3 the life of the Jews (cf. Gl. 1:13) is characterised as a 'walking' with those

a good manner of living but the emphasis of καλός is a goodness that is outwardly visible, in contrast to ἀγαθός, which stresses intrinsic goodness inwardly. James' point clearly is that our actions should originate from a noble lifestyle that has genuine beauty and attractiveness. The syntax of the Greek sentence with the prepositional phrase functioning adverbially signals that we can only produce authentic evidence from such a noble way of living. If we don't live that way, then we have no ἔργα that can serve as proof that we are σοφός καὶ ἐπιστήμων.

A second prepositional phrase specifies another quality of our ἔργα that validates them as authentic evidence: ἐν πραΰτητι σοφίας, *in the meekness produced by wisdom*. Our actions must reflect πραΰτης³⁴ if they are valid evidence. At the heart of πραΰτης is submissiveness to the control of God over our lives. What produces this? James contends that it comes from σοφία.³⁵ The locative case of ἐν specifies that this wisdom produced meekness permeates our actions to give them their distinctive flavor. Then actions reflecting something other than humble submissiveness to God provide no evidence of our being σοφός καὶ ἐπιστήμων.

Clearly the guidelines for the test set up by James are narrow and specify very clearly that only actions falling within these limits constitute proof that we are wise and understanding legitimately. Actions outside these limits are not evidence of authentic wisdom guiding our lives. It is no accident that these limits are set up as boundary markers: **PP:** ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς; **Direct Object:** τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ; **PP:** ἐν πραΰτητι σοφίας. James highlights the limits of actions that can constitute valid evidence of the presence of wisdom.

Now he applies these guidelines to two types of wisdom present among early Christians; one from a purely human source, and another originating out of Heaven, i.e., the Greek and the Jewish versions of wisdom.

b) *Recognizing false wisdom, vv. 14-16.*

14 εἰ δὲ ζῆλον πικρὸν ἔχετε καὶ ἐριθειάν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν, μὴ κατακαυχᾶσθε καὶ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας. 15 οὐκ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ σοφία ἄνωθεν κατερχομένη ἀλλὰ ἐπίγειος, ψυχικὴ, δαιμονιώδης. 16 ὅπου γὰρ ζῆλος καὶ ἐριθεία, ἐκεῖ ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα.

14 *But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth.*
15 *Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish.* 16 *For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.*

The depiction of the phoney wisdom contains an admonition, a declaration, and a reason. Together

who will not obey. In Eph. 4:22 Paul admonishes his readers to put off the old man with his 'walk' in deceitful lusts.⁸ According to 1 Pt. 1:18 members of the community are redeemed from the vain 'walk' inherited from the fathers. 2 Pt. 2:7, 18 refers to the 'walk' in pagan lusts. 1 Tm. 3:15 is speaking of responsible office-bearers in the community, which as God's house and as the pillar (→ 736, 6 ff.) and ground of truth demands a special kind of conduct. Thus the 'walk' is a gift of Christians along with possession of the word, love, faith, and holiness, 1 Tm. 4:12. According to 1 Pt. 1:17; 3:29 the 'walk' of Christians is shaped by fear of God; according to 3:1 this can have an effect without words simply through good deeds, cf. 2:12; Jm. 3:13.10 According to 1 Pt. 1:15 the holiness demanded by God embraces the whole walk including the conflict of suffering which is essential for the Christian community according to Hb. 10:33; 13:7. As Hb. 13:18 says, both the author and those to whom he writes must prove themselves in such sufferings. In 2 Pt. 3:11 the demand for a holy walk is given an explicit eschatological orientation." [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 7:717.]

^{34c} **πραΰτης, ἡτος, ἡ** (πραΰς; Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 123 §518 διὰ πραΰτητα; Aesop, Fab. 168 P.=94b H.//247 Ch.//H-H. 178; CIG 2788; LXX [Thackeray p. 91; 181]; Sextus 545) and older Gk (since Thu., also Appian, Basil. 1 §5; PLond 1912, 101 [41 A.D.]; Philo; Jos., Bell. 6, 383, Ant. 19, 334; IPol 2:1; 6:2), **πραότης, ἡτος, ἡ** (so in Ign. and Hermas, while in the NT πραΰτης is the predom. form and πραότης appears as v.l.; for the lit. s. πραΰς) **the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness** in the older favorable sense (s. πραΰς) w. ἐπιεικεια (Plut., Caesar 734 [57], and, occasionally, other qualities, as Lucian, Somn. 10; s. also Plut., Pyrrh. 398[23, 3]) **2 Cor 10:1** (RLeivestad, NTS 12, '66, 156-64); 1 Cl 30:8; Dg 7:4; cp. **Tit 3:2**; 1 Cl 21:7. W. other virtues (Ps 44:5) **Gal 5:23**; **Col 3:12**; **Eph 4:2**; B 20:2; D 5:2; Hm 12, 3, 1. ἐν π. with or in gentleness (Sir 3:17; 4:8) 2 Ti 2:25; IPol 2:1; 6:2; with humility **Js 1:21**; **3:13** (ἐν πραΰτητι σοφίας in wise gentleness; cp. Appian, Bell. Civ. 3, 79 §323 ἐπὶ σοφία τε καὶ πραότητι); ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ π. 1 Cl 61:2. Also μετὰ π. (so in PLond above) **1 Pt 3:16**; Hm 5, 2, 6. As a characteristic of a bishop ITr 3:2 (as political virtue, s. LRobert, Hellenica 13, '65, 223). The devil is thwarted by humility 4:2. πνεῦμα πραΰτητος **1 Cor 4:21**; **Gal 6:1**.—AvHarnack, 'Sanftmut, Huld und Demut' in der alten Kirche: JKaftan Festschr. 1920, 113ff; JdeRomilly, La douceur dans la pensée grecque '79; RAC III 206-31.—DELG s.v. πρᾶος, M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 861.]

³⁵The genitive form σοφίας functions here as subjective genitive to the action oriented πραΰτητι, [submitting to God](#).

these reveal τὰ ἔργα that don't pass the test of genuineness.

Admonition: εἰ δὲ ζῆλον πικρὸν ἔχετε καὶ ἐριθειάν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν, μὴ κατακαυχᾶσθε καὶ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας. The admonition comes as the apodosis of a first class conditional sentence in the Greek that assumes the pictured scenario is taking place among James' readers. The protasis that sets up the what-if situation is first: εἰ δὲ ζῆλον πικρὸν ἔχετε καὶ ἐριθειάν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν, **and if you possess bitter jealously and self-ambition in your heart.** The central point of the scenario is possessing something ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν, **in your heart.** The καρδιά is a frequent reference in the New Testament with 156 uses of the word, but never refers to the human organ of the heart. It is uniformly used at the figurative level of meaning; the heart is a symbol of something else: the seat of physical, spiritual and mental life where physical life exists, where we make choices generally and morally, where we are aware of things, where we desire things.³⁶ James uses the word five times with several of these distinctive meanings.³⁷ The possession of these two vices in the heart reaches back to what James had earlier said in 1:14, ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας, **but each one is being tempted by his own passions.**

The two vices that James names existing in the desires of the person claiming to be wise are ζῆλον πικρὸν καὶ ἐριθειάν. The first vice, ζῆλον from ζῆλος, refers to “**intense negative feelings over another's achievements or success.**”³⁸ This negative tone is intensified with the adjective modifier πικρὸν from πικρός, -ά, -όν, refers to “**being bitter in feeling or attitude.**”³⁹ Within the thinking and attitude of such a ‘wise’ person are attitudes of intense jealousy and harsh dislike of others who may have achieved things this person craves. But in combination with the concept shifts toward ‘harsh zeal.’⁴⁰ The derived sense is that of ‘fanatical zeal.’⁴¹ Down inside the so-called ‘wise’ person is a determination to promote his ideas to the complete exclusion of those of anyone else. Built into this is no respect for others and an assumption that God only speaks to me. Whoever has a contrary idea doesn't listen to God.

The other vice is ἐριθειάν from ἐριθεία.⁴² This word is not often used in ancient literature, but where

³⁶Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. S.V., καρδιά, ας, ἡ.

³⁷Cf. Jas. 1:26; 3:14; 4:8; 5:5, 8.

³⁸William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 427.

³⁹William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 813.

⁴⁰“ζῆλον πικρὸν, ‘harsh zeal.’ Because of ἐριθειάν this meaning for ζῆλον is better than the meaning ‘jealousy’ (in the ordinary sense of personal jealousy), and corresponds well to the general thought. The idea is of a fierce desire to promote one’s own opinion to the exclusion of those of others.” [James Hardy Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1916), 245.]

⁴¹“ This sense of ‘fanatical zeal’ (as distinguished from ‘emulation’ and ‘jealousy’) is not wholly foreign to Greek usage, but has been made specially common by the influence of the LXX, where ζῆλος stands in all cases for πᾶσι, ‘jealous devotion to a cause,’ ‘fanatical ardour,’ as ζηλοῦν does in nearly all cases for the verb ἔριζ.”

“It is the virtue of the religious ‘zealot,’ cf. 1 Kings 19:10, 14, Ecclus. 48:2 (Elijah), 1 Macc. 2:54, 58, 4 Macc. 18:12 (Phinehas), Phil. 3:6 (Paul), Gal. 1:14, Acts 21:20. But it also becomes the vice of the fanatic; and hence its special danger for the religious teacher.

“In secular use ζῆλος generally means ‘heat,’ as expressed in ‘emulation,’ ‘rivalry’—whether good or bad; see below, note on 4:2. The Biblical sense brings it near to the Hellenic σπουδή, which, starting from another side (‘haste,’ ‘exertion’), acquired a wide range of meanings including ‘zeal’ and ‘rivalry.’”

[James Hardy Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1916), 245.]

⁴²“**ἐριθεία, ας, ἡ** (W-H. ἐριθεία; s. Mlt-H. 339) found before NT times only in Aristot., Polit. 5, 3 p. 1302b, 4; 1303a, 14, where it denotes a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means. Its meaning in our lit. is a matter of conjecture. A derivation fr. ἔρις is not regarded w. favor by recent NT linguistic scholarship and some consider it also unlikely for the sources fr. which Paul possibly derived the lists of vices in **2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20**, since ἔρις and ἐριθεία are both found in these lists; yet for Paul and his followers, the mng. **strife, contentiousness** (so Ltzm., MDibelius, JSickenberger) cannot be excluded (cp. Phil 1:17 w. 15 and s. Anecd. Gr. p. 256, 17 ἔρ.= φιλον[ε]τικία). But **selfishness, selfish ambition** (Palhaus on Ro 2:8; M-M.) in all cases gives a sense that is just as prob. W. ζῆλος **Js 3:14, 16** κατὰ ἐριθειάν **Phil 2:3; IPHld 8:2; ἐξ ἐ. Phil 1:17; οἱ ἐξ ἐ. Ro 2:8** (s. Rdm.2 p. 26; 217 n. 4). Pl. disputes or outbreaks of selfishness (B-D-F §142) **2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20**. KFritzsche, Comm. in Ep. ad Rom. 1836 on 2:8 pp. 143–48; CBruston, RTP 41, 1909, 196–228.—DELG s.v. ἔριτος, M-M. EDNT. TW. Spicq.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago:

it does surface it refers to a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means.⁴³ Here the implication in James' use of the term is a self-seeking attitude to dominate and control the community of believers, so that only your teachings are in power. Here the worst side of contemporary Greek philosophy's definition of wisdom is being condemned because it was infecting the churches in the Diaspora. Given the exclusive and elitist attitudes of most Jewish people in that world, that such thinking could infect Jewish Christians living in the Diaspora is very easy to envision.

The core admonitions, μὴ κατακαυχᾶσθε καὶ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, [stop boasting and lying against the Truth](#), become the logical response to such phoney claims to wisdom. The present imperative Greek verbs demand a cessation of actions already underway. First is κατακαυχᾶσθαι, which refers to boasting at the expense of others.⁴⁴ Such an elitist mentality is strongly condemned by James. In this kind of wisdom πραΰτης, [humility](#), is a vice rather than a virtue. Thus the boasting that one possesses wisdom is false because this wisdom does not lead to submissiveness to God (πραΰτης) as the test in v. 13 requires.

Secondly, this phoney wise person should ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, [stop lying against the Truth](#). What is the Truth? James uses ἀλήθεια three times: 1:18; 3:14; and 5:19. In 1:18 we find the clear sense of his meaning: λόγῳ ἀληθείας, [Word of Truth](#). The term ἀλήθεια refers to the Gospel which James sees as the correct reflection of who God is. God has defined σοφία, [wisdom](#), in the Gospel and the version being claimed by the elitist individual does not reflect what God has defined as wisdom. Thus for him to claim to be wise is to claim a lie, and he must stop doing this.

If there ever was a statement made by James that is needed in the modern world, it is this one. Bitter rivalries and divisiveness inside congregations is rampant in our day, and reflects the secular, pagan world around the church rather than the Lord who died for the church. But James is going to pursue this topic in great detail in 4:1-10, so we will save the more detailed application until then.

Declaration: οὐκ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ σοφία ἄνωθεν κατερχομένη ἀλλὰ ἐπίγειος, ψυχικὴ, δαιμονιώδης. The axiomatic principle defining the origin of this false wisdom is laid out here. Such wisdom first does not come ἄνωθεν, [from above](#). Although the adverb contains a wide variety of meanings (from above, from the beginning of, for a long time, again⁴⁵), its being used with the participle κατερχομένη, [coming down](#), signals that the 'from above' meaning is the correct one and is a designation of Heaven.⁴⁶ James thus strongly denies that

University of Chicago Press, 2000), 392.

⁴³The second vice is ἐριθείαν, 'the personal ambition of rival leaderships' (Hort, 82–83), or party spirit. The word ἐριθεία appears in Aristotle (Pol. 5.3, etc.), where it means 'a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means' (BAG, 309), but its meaning in the NT is not limited to the means of seeking political office, for the term appears in several NT vice lists after terms like ἐρις, ζῆλος, and θυμοί (Gal. 5:20; 2 Cor. 12:20) and apparently particularizes them in 'party spirit' in which the jealous or angry leader forms a group which emotionally or physically withdraws from the rest of the church (cf. Phil. 1:17; 2:3; Ign. Phil. 8:2; F. Büchsel, TDNT II, 657ff.). Certainly the charge such a group would make is that the parent body has rejected wisdom and truth and thus those committed to the truth must withdraw. But the problem, says James, is not external, but 'in your hearts,' for the evil impulses within, not the Spirit, are the cause of all such sin (cf. 1:13ff.; Mk. 7:14–23 par.; Easton, "Lists," 11)." [Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 151.

⁴⁴**κατακαυχῶμαι** 2 sg. κατακαυχᾶσαι; fut. 3 pl. κατακαυχήσονται Zech 10:12 (Jer 27:11, 38; grave ins of Asia Minor: SB-BerlAk 732, p. 855 κατακαυχᾶσθαι κατὰ τινός of a gladiator over his defeated foe).

1. to boast at the expense of another, boast against, exult over τινός someone or someth. τῶν κλάδων the branches **Ro 11:18a**.—Abs. boast, brag **Ro 11:18b; Js 3:14; 4:16** v.l. (for καυχᾶσθε).

2. to have a cause for boasting because of advantage in power, triumph over τινός (Rhet. Gr. I 551, 13; 589, 23; Constan. Manasses 1, 59 Hercher; Psellus p. 183, 3 τῆς φύσεως κατεκαυχήσατο) κ. ἔλεος κρίσεως mercy triumphs over judgment **Js 2:13**.—DELG s.v. καυχῶμαι. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 517.]

⁴⁵Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. S.V., ἄνωθεν.

⁴⁶**ἄνωθεν** adv. of place (Trag., Hdt.+; ins, pap, LXX, En; TestSol 12:6 C; JosAs 21:4 [cod. A and Pal. 364]; AprcEzk [Epiph 70, 10]; Just., Ath.).

1. in extension fr. a source that is above, from above (SIG 969, 63; PHib 110, 66; 107; 109; Gen 49:25; Josh 3:16; EpJer 61; En 28:2; TestSol 12:6 C; Philo, Rer. Div. Her. 64; 184, Fug. 138, Somn., 2, 142; Jos., Ant. 3, 158) σχισθῆναι ἀπ' ἄ. ἔως κάτω be torn fr. top to bottom **Mk 15:38**. For this ἄ. ἔως κάτω **Mt 27:51** (where ἀπ' is added by many witnesses, foll. Mk). ἐκ τῶν ἄ. ὑφαντός δι' ὅλον woven from the top in one piece (i.e. altogether without seam) **J 19:23**. *Esp. from heaven* (cp. ἄνω 1 and schol. on Pla.

God has any connection to this phoney wisdom. This will stand in stark contrast to the true wisdom described in verse 17, which is described as ἡ ἄνωθεν σοφία, [the from above wisdom](#).

If it doesn't originate from God, then where does it come from? In strongly contrastive language, οὐκ ἔστιν... ἀλλὰ, [is not...but](#), James terms this wisdom with three progressively worse traits that imply origin: ἐπίγειος, ψυχική, δαιμονιώδης, [earthy, sensual, demonic](#). The first trait, ἐπίγειος, signals a strictly earth bound limitation to this wisdom. That is, you only find it in this depraved world, no where else.⁴⁷ This automatically puts such wisdom in conflict with God. Second, this wisdom is ψυχική, [sensual, unspiritual](#). The idea here is that of physical as opposed to spiritual.⁴⁸ Not only is this wisdom limited to this world only, even worse it has

856e of the seer: ἄνωθεν λαμβάνειν τὸ πνεῦμα; Philo, Mos. 2, 69) ἄ. ἐκ τ. οὐρανοῦ **J 3:27** v.l. ὁ ἄ. ἐρχόμενος he who comes from heaven (explained in the same vs. by ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος) **3:31**. Of the Holy Spirit πνεῦμα ἄ. ἐρχόμενον Hm 11:21; also simply τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄ. 11:8. ἡ δύναμις ἡ ἄ. ἐρχομένη 11:20. ἡ σοφία ἄ. κατερχομένη **Js 3:15**. Also ἡ ἄ. σοφία vs. **17**. ἄ. εἶναι come from above Hm 9:11; 11:5; **Js 1:17**. Some would place 2 Cl 14:2 here, but the temporal sense seems more prob., s. 2. ἄ. δεδομένον bestowed from above (i.e. by God; cp. Procop. Soph., Ep. 109 θεοῦ ἄ. ἐπινεύοντος) **J 19:11**. ἄ. γεννᾶσθαι be born from above **J 3:3, 7** (Epict. 1, 13, 3: all humans are begotten of their ancestor Zeus ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν σπερμάτων καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἄ. καταβολῆς; Just., D. 63, 3), but. s. 4 on the word play in these verses (Nicodemus thinks of physical rebirth [vs. 4], but the narrator shows Jesus with another dimension in mind).” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 92.]

⁴⁷ἐπίγειος, ον (Pla. et al.; TestSol; TestAbr A 4, 81, 18 [Stone p. 10]; Philo; Jos., Ant. 6, 186; 8, 44; Just., A II, 5, 2; Tat. 32, 1; Mel., P. 39; Ath.)

1. pert. to what is characteristic of the earth as opposed to heavenly, earthy

a. as adj. (Plut., Mor. 566d; M. Ant. 6, 30, 4 ἐ. ζώῃ; pap; TestJud 21:4; Ath. 31, 3 βίον) σῶμα **1 Cor 15:40** (opp. ἐπουράνιος; on this contrast s. below 1ba and MDahl, Resurrection of the Body '62, 113–16). Of the body οἰκία ἐ. earthly dwelling (cp. Philo, Cher. 101) **2 Cor 5:1** (EEllis, Paul and His Recent Interpreters '61, 40–43). W. the connotation of weakness (Lucian, Icarom. 2): σοφία earthly wisdom=human philosophy **Js 3:15** (cp. Ath. 24, 5 [mutilated context]) cp. εὕρημα ἐ. an earthy (i.e. purely human) discovery Dg 7:1. πνεῦμα ἐ. earthly spirit of the spirit in false prophets Hm 9:11; 11:6, 11f, 14, 17, 19 (cp. Tat. 32, 1 λόγου τοῦ ... ἐ.).

b. as subst.

α. τὰ ἐ. (M. Ant. 7, 48; Philo, Op. M. 101; 113; Just., A II, 5, 2; Ath. 27, 1 [both opp. τὰ ἐπουράνια].—Opp. τὰ ἐπουράνια as Herm. Wr. Fgm. 26 p. 544, 1 Sc. Cp. Philo, Op. M. 117; Mel., P. 39.) earthly things **J 3:12** (LBrun, SymbOsl 8, 1929, 57–77); cp. Pol 2:1; Dg 7:2.

β. οἱ ἐ.: in the expr. πᾶν γόνυ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων **Phil 2:10** the second of the three main concepts is not confined to human beings (cp. PGM 4, 225f; 3038ff, esp. 3042f πᾶν πνεῦμα δαιμόνιον ... ἐπουράνιον ἢ ἀέριον εἶτε ἐπίγειον εἶτε ὑπόγειον ἢ καταχθόνιον. 5, 166f πᾶς δαίμων οὐράνιος κ. αἰθέριος κ. ἐπίγειος κ. ὑπόγειος. 12, 67 θεοὶ οὐράνιοι κ. ἐπίγειοι κ. ἀέριοι κ. ἐπιχθόνιοι. 17a, 3 Ἄνουβι, θεὸς ἐπίγειος κ. ὑπόγειος κ. οὐράνιος. IDefixWünsch 4, 11; TestSol); cp. ITr 9:1.—IEph 13:2 it is impossible to say w. certainty from which nom. ἐπιγείων is derived, ἐπίγειοι or ἐπίγεια.

2. pert. to earthly things, with implication of personal gratification, subst. worldly things τὰ ἐ. φρονεῖν think only of worldly things **Phil 3:19**.—DELG s.v. γῆ. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 368-69.]

⁴⁸ψυχικός, ἡ, ὄν (ψυχή; in var. mngs. Diocles, Aristot. et al.; Ptolem., Apotel. 3, 14, 1 [opp. σωματικός]; SIG 656, 20 [166 B.C.]; 4 Macc 1:32; Philo; Jos., Bell. 1, 430; Just., D. 30, 1; Tat.; Ath. 23, 2 [Thales]) ‘of the soul/life’, **in our lit. pert. to the life of the natural world and whatever belongs to it, in contrast to the realm of experience whose central characteristic is πνεῦμα, natural, unspiritual, worldly** (cp. PGM 4, 524f and 510=Rtzst., Mysterienrel.3 175f lines 28 and 20, where the ἀνθρωπίνη ψυχική δύναμις is contrasted w. the ἱερὸν πνεῦμα. On this s. πνευματικός 2ag; also β and PGM 4, 725; Herm. Wr. 9, 9; Iambl., Myst. 6, 6 P.: the ἀνθρωπίνη ψυχή in contrast to the gods and to γνῶσις; Orig., C. Cels. 4, 57, 14).

a. adj. ψυχικός ἀνθρώπος (Hippol., Ref. 5, 27, 3) **an unspiritual pers.**, one who merely functions bodily, without being touched by the Spirit of God **1 Cor 2:14**. σῶμα ψυχ. a physical body **15:44ab**. The wisdom that does not come fr. above is called ἐπίγειος, ψυχική (unspiritual), δαιμονιώδης **Js 3:15**.

b. subst.

α. τὸ ψυχικόν the physical in contrast to τὸ πνευματικόν (cp. Iren. 1, 5, 1 [Harv. I 42, 1]) **1 Cor 15:46**.

β. Jd 19 calls the teachers of error ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες worldly (lit. ‘psychic’) people, who do not have the Spirit, thereby taking over the terminology of gnostic (on ‘psychic’ and ‘pneumatic’ people in gnostic thinking s. AHilgenfeld, Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums 1884, index) opponents, but applying to gnostics the epithets that they used of orthodox Christians.—DELG s.v. ψυχή. M-M. TW. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1100.]

no legitimate spiritual connection. Even though being claimed by professing Christians, what they actually possess has absolutely nothing to do with the Spirit of God. The worst trait is the third one: δαιμονιῶδης, **demonic**. This wisdom ultimately betrays its character as hellish, and coming straight out of the pits of γέεννα, Gehenna (cf. 3:6).⁴⁹ Thus with three damning traits, each one worse than the preceding, James blasts this phoney wisdom as completely illegitimate for believers.

Reason: ὅπου γὰρ ζῆλος καὶ ἐριθεία, ἐκεῖ ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα. The causal γὰρ introduces a reason for the characterization offered in the preceding statement. Again, his test guidelines from 3:13 are applied. Do you want to know why this wisdom has no connection to God and is utterly opposed to the things of God? Look at its τὰ ἔργα, actions!

Where one finds the disposition of ζῆλος καὶ ἐριθεία being expressed, what results **there**, ἐκεῖ? The answer: ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα, **unruliness and every kind of foul deed**.⁵⁰ ἀκαταστασία, the source of the English word anarchy, depicts societal disruption in the extreme.⁵¹ The chaos of extreme disorder sets into a congregation with elitist teachers claiming this false kind of wisdom. Paul's perspective on this in dealing with similar chaos caused by tongue speaking at Corinth was the declaration: οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ εἰρήνης, **for God is a God not of disorder but of peace** (1 Cor. 14:33). The opposite of ἀκαταστασία is εἰρήνη.⁵² Not only does chaos erupt in the community of believers, but also τὰ ἔργα, **the actions**, that surface are πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα, **every kind of foul deed**. This phoney wisdom finds justification for every imaginable sinful action.

James paints a disturbing picture of the potential of individuals in the church claiming to be σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων but miserably failing the test of genuine wisdom with their τὰ ἔργα, actions, reflecting false wisdom.⁵³ Once given opportunity to dominate the life of the community, the spiritual life of the group is turned

⁴⁹“This latter word (Gk. *daimoniōdēs*, lit. ‘pertaining to demons’) occurs only here in the Bible. It may mean that the wisdom is demonic either in nature or, more probably, in origin. For such a nuance would make a neat opposition with what James has said earlier in the verse. The false wisdom that some in the community are boasting about is not ‘from above’; it is ‘from the demons.’” [Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2000), 173.]

⁵⁰“The word seems to have something of the bad associations of our word ‘anarchy,’ and has to bear much weight in this sentence. Cf. Prov. 26:28, 1 Cor. 14:33, 2 Cor. 12:20 ζῆλος, ἐριθεία, καταστασία; and the similar list of evils, Gal. 5:20, which has ζῆλος, ἐριθεία, διχοστασία; Lk. 21:9, Clem. Rom. 1:3. See Hatch, Essays, p. 4: ‘The political circumstances of Greece and the East after the death of Alexander had developed the idea of political instability, and with it the word ἀκαταστασία, Polyb. 1. 70. 1.’” [James Hardy Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1916), 248-49.]

⁵¹ἀκαταστασία, **αζ, ή** (opp. κατάστασις q.v., cp. στάσις and DELG on the latter; Polyb. 7, 4, 8; 14, 9, 6; Diog. L. 7, 110; Epict. 3, 19, 3; Vett. Val. index; PGrenf I, 1, 4 [173 B.C.]; Astrol. Pap. I fr. Munich: APF 1, 1901, 494, 26; Tob 4:13; Pr 26:28; ApcMos 24).

1. unsettled state of affairs, disturbance, tumult (schol. on Apollon. Rhod. 1, 916, 18b) Hs 6, 3, 4. Pl. (Dionys. Hal. 6, 31) **2 Cor 6:5** prob. of mob action; 2 Cl 11:4 (quot. of unknown orig.).

2. opposition to established authority, disorder, unruliness (Nicol. Dam.: 90 Fgm. 130, 110 p. 413, 27 Jac. ἐν ἁ. πραγμάτων; Cat. Cod. Astr. VIII/3, 182, 8; 187, 2) 1 Cl 14:1 (w. ἀλάζονεία); cp. 3:2; 43:6; (w. φαῦλον πρᾶγμα) **Js 3:16**; (opp. εἰρήνη) **1 Cor 14:33** (EKäsemann, NTS 1, ’54/55, 248–60). Pl. (Cat. Cod. Astr. VII 126, 13; VIII/3, 175, 9) **2 Cor 12:20**; (w. πόλεμος) insurrections (PCairMasp 4, 6) **Lk 21:9**.—Boll 130f. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 35.]

⁵²“And Paul, pleading with the Corinthians to refrain from an unbridled, unorganized display of individual spiritual gifts in the assembly, reminds them that ‘God is not a God of disorder (*akatastasis*) but of peace’ (1 Cor. 14:33; cf. also 2 Cor. 6:5 and 12:20). The same ‘disorder’ is bound to break out in churches where people are pursuing their own selfish concerns and partisan causes rather than the good of the body as a whole. While what James says here applies to any Christian who prides himself or herself on being ‘wise and understanding,’ he may especially have in mind the leaders of the community.³² For envy and selfish ambition among the leaders have tremendous potential to damage the unity and order of the church as a whole. When those who are being looked to for direction and wise counsel act on the basis of a personal agenda or in a spirit of ‘one-upmanship’ toward one another, great damage to the church ensues.” [Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2000), 174.]

⁵³“One cannot be sure who the disturbers were. Obviously they were self-appointed teachers, although unlike those in Paul and Jude doctrinal error is not involved. Perhaps Mussner, 173, is correct in identifying them with the Judaizing type of disturbance, but in any case he is right in pointing out how well this verse agrees with the presentation of James the Just in Acts 15 and 21 as

completely upside down in chaos. James sees the outcome not so much in false beliefs being advocated as in ethical behavior of the most bizarre kind finding justification. With his clear attack of secular wisdom from Greek traditions here, James stresses that adopting the thinking of the unchristian world around the congregation will prove to be deadly to the spiritual life of the church. The temptation to adopt the mind-set of our world rather than that of God is great. But the danger in doing so will prove to be disastrous.

c) Recognizing true wisdom, vv. 17-18.

17 ἡ δὲ ἄνωθεν σοφία πρῶτον μὲν ἀγνή ἐστίν, ἔπειτα εἰρηνική, ἐπιεικής, εὐπειθής, μεστή ἐλέους καὶ καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἀδιάκριτος, ἀνυπόκριτος. 18 καρπὸς δὲ δικαιοσύνης ἐν εἰρήνῃ σπείρεται τοῖς ποιοῦσιν εἰρήνην.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

What is the opposite to false wisdom? In verse 17 particularly James defines genuine wisdom. Then in verse 18 he brings the entire discussion to a climatic close, along with setting up the next section in 4:1-10.

The positive expression of wisdom first of all is genuinely spiritual in nature: ἡ ἄνωθεν σοφία. It is wisdom ἄνωθεν, from above, in stark contrast to the phoney wisdom just depicted, οὐκ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ σοφία ἄνωθεν κατερχομένη, this wisdom is not coming down from above. True wisdom is spiritual in its nature. That is, the only wisdom that is authentic is what is given to us by God. Wisdom conjured up in our heads is not authentic.⁵⁴

Once James makes this initial identification point about the origin of authentic wisdom, he proceeds to lay out a series of characterizing traits that it possesses in a virtue list pattern.⁵⁵ But he does so in a specific manner that is not always clearly preserved in modern translations. He uses a Greek construction to establish the first quality as foundational, and thus the source of the remaining qualities: πρῶτον μὲν...ἔπειτα, first of all...then.

The chief and foundational quality of the wisdom-from-above is ἀγνή, pure.⁵⁶ Spiritual purity before God translates into holy living in this world. True wisdom directs us this way. James has already alluded to this in 1:27, θρησκεία καθαρὰ καὶ ἀμίαντος παρὰ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὕτη ἐστίν, ... ἄσπιλον ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου, religion pure and undefiled before God even the Father is this: to keep oneself unstained from the world. It is

a mediator and peacemaker in church disputes.” [Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 153.]

⁵⁴“That divine wisdom comes from heaven, i.e. from God, was a commonplace of Jewish wisdom teaching (Pr. 2:6; 8:22–31; Sir. 1:1–4; 24:1–12; Wis. 7:24–27; 9:4, 6, 9–18), and James has already referred to the concept in 1:5, 17. It is also clear that because of the identification of wisdom with God’s Spirit (Gn. 41:38–39; Ex. 31:3–4; Dt. 34:9; Is. 11:2; Jb. 32:7–10; cf. Rylaarsdam, 100; Wis. 7:7, 22–23; 1:5–7; Kirk, 32–54; 1QH 12:11–13; 1QS 4:2–6, 24; 11QPsa 154) the claims to be wise, to have God’s wisdom, and to be filled with the Spirit of God were virtually identical (Lk. 2:40; Acts 6:3, 10; 1 Cor. 1–3; 12:8; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9), at least as far as both the church and Qumran were concerned.” [Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 152.]

⁵⁵“Two observations may be made at this point about the seven adjectives. First, although they all describe what true wisdom is, the focus appears to be on the effects that wisdom should produce. And so we may say that these adjectives describe what true wisdom does rather than what it is. Secondly, these adjectives are not meant to refer to intellectual qualities and attitudes that each believer should have, but rather they refer to the qualities the Christian community that claims to have true wisdom should have. In other words these adjectives all refer in this context, not to private attitudes, but to qualities of group life. This understanding will affect how we translate these terms. In a number of languages translators may have to say, for example, ‘But the wisdom that God gives causes us [inclusive] [or, us Christians] to be pure ...’” [I-Jin Loh and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on the Letter from James*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 127.]

⁵⁶“The adjective *hagnos* (‘pure’) is used especially of things or persons dedicated to the gods (see Od. 21:259; Euripides, Ion 243; Pss 11:7; 18:10), but is also used of moral innocence (Plato, Laws 759C; Prov 21:8; 4 Macc 18:7; 2 Cor 7:11; Phil 4:8; 1 Tim 5:22; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 1:22). Note particularly 1 Pet 3:2, ‘your pure manner of life’ (*hagnen anastrophēn hymōn*). James places this term first because of the thematic importance of being ‘unstained from the world’ for what he calls ‘pure (*katharos*) religion before God’ (1:27). Living according to the wisdom that comes from God demands a separation from the evil qualities just listed (Hort, 86). This will be made explicit in 4:8, when James exhorts them to ‘purify your hearts’ (*hagnisate kardias*).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, vol. 37A, *The Letter of James: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 273-74.]

the possessing of true wisdom that guides us into the right decisions that thrust us into paths of holy living.

Growing out of that purity then true wisdom takes on a series of traits that are relational by nature: ἔπειτα εἰρηνική, ἐπιεικής, εὐπειθής, μεστή ἐλέους καὶ καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἀδιάκριτος, ἀνυπόκριτος. These fall into three natural groupings based on rhythmic spelling patterns:⁵⁷ a) εἰρηνική, ἐπιεικής, εὐπειθής; b) μεστή ἐλέους καὶ καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν; and c) ἀδιάκριτος, ἀνυπόκριτος.⁵⁸

εἰρηνική, **peaceable**.⁵⁹ In stark contrast to the false wisdom that promotes ἀκαταστασία, **chaos** (v.16), true wisdom promotes peaceful relationships with others. One should also remember that the idea of εἰρηνικός from the noun εἰρήνη is primarily that of a state of well being rather than just the absence of conflict. True wisdom then promotes positive, spiritually healthy relationships.

ἐπιεικής, **gentle**.⁶⁰ The challenge to Bible translators here is finding a receptor language word that begins to capture a significant portion of the meaning in the Greek word.⁶¹ The heart of the idea is an attitude that puts people above rules, and seeks what is best for others.

εὐπειθής, **willing to yield**.⁶² Even more difficult to translate, this word stresses a quality of respect for others and their ideas.⁶³ True wisdom approaches others with the disposition, Your ideas have worth and I

57 “Moral purity is expanded by means of a list of adjectives arranged to take advantage of assonance (first initial ε, then initial α).” [Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 154.]

⁵⁸What James says about true wisdom is similar to what Paul said about the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life. Note Gal. 5:22-23, 22 ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἀγάπη χαρὰ εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία χρηστότης ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις 23 πραύτης ἐγκράτεια· κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος. **22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.**

⁵⁹**εἰρηνικός, ἡ, ὄν** (X., Pla. et al.; POxy 1033, 5; LXX; EpArist 273; Philo, Spec. Leg. 1, 224 al.; TestGad 6:2; Just. D. 131, 5; Ath. 1, 2) pert. to being conducive to a harmonious relationship, peaceable, peaceful ἄνθρωπος εἰ. 1 Cl 14:5 (Ps 36:37). Of Christian σοφία **Js 3:17**. καρπὸν εἰ. ἀποδιδόναι yield peaceful fruit **Hb 12:11**.—DELG s.v. εἰρήνη. M-M. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 288.]

⁶⁰**ἐπιεικής, ἔς** (s. prec. entry; Hom.+; ins, pap [Mayer 92, 6]; LXX; PsSol 5:12; TestSol 1:1 VW; JosAs1:5; cod. A 15:8 al.; EpArist, Philo; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 211; Ar. 15, 5; Ath.; s. Mlt-H. 89; 314; 348) **not insisting on every right of law or custom, yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant** (so Thu. et al.; s. esp. Aristot., EN 5, 10 [1137b] on relation of ἐ. to δίκαιος) w. ἄμαχος **1 Ti 3:3; Tit 3:2**. W. ἀγαθός prob.=right-minded (as Diod S 16, 30, 2, since in 16, 32, 2 ἀσεβής is in contrast to ἐπιεικής) **1 Pt 2:18**. W. εἰρηνικός **Js 3:17**. W. σόφρων (Hyperid. 6, 5) 1 Cl 1:2. W. εὐσπλαγχνος 29:1 (of God, as EpArist 211).—τὸ ἐπιεικέες=ἡ ἐπιείκεια (Thu., Pla. et al.; POxy 1218, 5; EpArist 188; Philo, Somn. 2 95 τὸ τῶν δεσποτῶν ἐ.) τὸ ἐ. ὑμῶν your forbearing spirit **Phil 4:5**. τὸ ἐ. τῆς γλώσσης αὐτῶν the gentleness of their tongue 1 Cl 21:7.—Neut. of the comp. as adv. (PTebt 484 [c. 14 A.D.]; Esth 3:13b; Jos., Ant. 15, 14) ἐπιεικέστερον λαλεῖν speak more gently Hm 12, 4, 2.—M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 371.]

⁶¹“The true wisdom is also gentle. Besides the RSV gentle, this adjective is rendered in a variety of ways; for example, ‘courteous’ (Knox), ‘considerate’ (Gspd, NEB/REB), ‘forbearing’ (Mft, JCV, JFT). Following more or less its use in classical Greek in the sense of ‘strict justice,’ Barclay paraphrases the meaning of this adjective as an attitude that ‘never stands on the letter of the law.’ In the New Testament the word is placed side by side with ‘meekness’ (2 Cor 10:1) and ‘not quarrelsome’ (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 3:2). This indicates that the meanings of these expressions are related and parallel. The adjective may therefore be describing the kind of attitude that is tolerant and accepting of other people’s different ways, not easily aroused and annoyed at what other people do and say. In some languages the idea of being ‘tolerant’ will be a good way to express gentle.” [I-Jin Loh and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on the Letter from James*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 128.]

⁶²**εὐπειθής, ἔς** gen. οὐς (s. πείθω; Aeschyl., X., Pla.+; Musonius 83, 19; Epict. 3, 12, 13; Plut., Mor. 26d; SEG XXIX, 116, 9 [III B.C.]; BGU 1104, 23; 1155, 17; POxy 268, 6; 4 Macc 12:6; Philo, Virt. 15) **compliant, obedient Js 3:17**.—DELG s.v. πείθομαι. New Docs 4, 152. M-M. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 410.]

⁶³“The next characteristic is open to reason. In Greek this is a single word and it is used only here in the New Testament. Its meaning is very close to gentle. This is seen in the fact that the word ‘considerate’ has been used to translate both gentle (so Gspd and REB) and open to reason (so NJB). That the word has a wide range of meaning is seen in the various translations: ‘easy to be entreated’ (KJV), ‘reasonable’ (NASB, TNT), ‘sensible’ (CEV), ‘never obstinate’ (Br), ‘willing to yield’ (Gspd, NRSV), ‘compliant’ (NAB), ‘open-minded’ (REB), ‘friendly’ (TEV), ‘conciliatory’ (Mft). No doubt every rendering brings out part of the total meaning of the word. In general it describes someone whose mind is not closed, who is not insistent but always willing to listen to other people’s views and ready to be persuaded.” [I-Jin Loh and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on the Letter from James*, UBS Handbook

would like to hear them.

μεστή ἐλέους και καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν, *full of mercy and good fruits*. A switch in listing patterns here signals a slight shift in idea expression.⁶⁴ The Jewish heritage of James defines ἔλεος as a ‘noun of action’ rather than merely as an attitude.⁶⁵ Thus to be full of mercy is to be generously helping others in need. Also James indicates that true wisdom will make us full of good fruits, that is, our lives will be loaded with deeds toward others that are intrinsically good and spiritual.

ἀδιάρκιστος, *impartial*. The final two traits of true wisdom play off words beginning with the Greek alpha.⁶⁶ The first adjective, ἀδιάρκιστος, again presents translation challenges.⁶⁷ James has already condemned its opposite in 2:4 with the verb form διεκρίθητε, and also in 1:6, ὁ διακρινόμενος. It should be noted that the 1:6 usage is in reference to requesting true wisdom from God. The ὁ διακρινόμενος person (*the doubting person*) will not get his request for wisdom answered by God. James further defines such a person as being δίψυχος (*double minded*), and ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ (*unstable in all his ways*; cf. 1:8). This inner trait then expresses itself (2:4) in prejudicial actions against the poor. Now in 3:17, James asserts emphatically that the possessor of true wisdom will be the exact opposite kind of person.

ἀνυπόκριτος, *unhypocritical*.⁶⁸ This final ‘double negative’ adjective is a fitting conclusion to a list that began with ἀγνή, *pure*. It reaffirms the beginning trait of purity with the declaration that true wisdom is not saturated with pretense and fakery.⁶⁹

Summary, v. 18. The final verse brings the entire discussion to a summarizing close by gathering up

Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 128.]

⁶⁴“True wisdom is also full of mercy and good fruits. The fact that the expression includes an and indicates that the two parts are to be taken together. Indeed it is possible to take this as a hendiadys, indicating that the whole statement should be understood as expressing one idea. If so it may be understood as ‘full of mercy that brings about good fruits.’ Mercy means showing compassion to those in trouble and in need. It is one of the distinct qualities of God himself. In Jesus’ teaching it is something God requires of people (Matt 9:13), and indeed something commanded by Jesus himself (Luke 10:37). James has his own definition of what mercy is: it is the love of your neighbor shown in practical deeds (2:8–13). For the meaning of mercy see the discussion in 2.13. To have true wisdom a person has to be compassionate and has to produce kind deeds to show it. To keep the image of good fruits, we may render it as ‘produces a good harvest of good deeds’ (TEV), or ‘produces a rich crop of kindly acts’ (Brc).” [I-Jin Loh and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on the Letter from James*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 128.]

⁶⁵“**kindness or concern expressed for someone in need, mercy, compassion, pity, clemency**” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 316.]

⁶⁶In ancient Greek to place the letter alpha, α, at the beginning of a word reversed its meaning. Thus the opposite of διάκριτος was ἀδιάρκιστος. Thus prejudicial became unprejudicial.

⁶⁷“The first one is *without uncertainty*. This word is used only here in the New Testament, and its exact meaning is very difficult to define. This is reflected in a number of different renderings: ‘without partiality’ (KJV), ‘free from prejudice’ (TEV), ‘whole hearted’ (Gspd), ‘unambiguous’ (Mft), ‘without inconstancy’ (NAB), ‘unwavering’ (NASB), ‘straightforward’ (REB), ‘genuine’ (CEV), ‘free from doubts and hesitations’ (Brc). Here again all of these components are interrelated and overlapping, and therefore context and general use in a given language will be deciding factors in determining the meaning. In this context ‘impartial’ or ‘without prejudice’ appears to be the best. This is in accord with James’ concern about impartiality expressed in 2:8–13. And we note that in that context he also mentions the importance of ‘mercy.’ This meaning is also closely related to the next adjective without insincerity. It reflects James’ tendency to pile up similar or related concepts, as seen also in the use of gentle and open to reason (‘friendly’ TEV) observed above.” [I-Jin Loh and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on the Letter from James*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 128-29.]

⁶⁸**ἀνυπόκριτος, ον** (s. ὑποκρίτης; schol. on Aristoph., Av. 798; Iambl., Vi. Pyth. §69, 188 αἰδώς; Ps.-Demetr., De Eloc. 194; Wsd 5:18; 18:15) **pert. to being without pretense, genuine, sincere**, lit. ‘without play-acting’ ἀγάπη (ApcSed 1:4) **Ro 12:9; 2 Cor 6:6. φιλαδελφία 1 Pt 1:22. πίστις 1 Ti 1:5; 2 Ti 1:5. σοφία Js 3:17.**—DELG s.v. κρίνω. M-M. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 91.]

⁶⁹“The last quality listed is without insincerity, literally ‘without hypocrisy’ (KJV, NASB). It describes something that is genuine, without pretense, being truthful to others. In the New Testament it is often used in the sense of ‘genuine’ or ‘sincere’ to modify some important qualities such as ‘love’ (Rom 12:9; 2 Cor 6:6; 1 Pet 1:22) and ‘faith’ (1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:5). The double negative without insincerity is best rendered in the positive form ‘sincerity’ (so CEV). Another possible rendering, equivalent to ‘sincere’ in this context, is ‘straightforward’ (Mft, Gspd, REB). As it has been observed, an ‘impartial’ person is “sincere”; impartiality and sincerity go hand in hand.” [I-Jin Loh and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on the Letter from James*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), 129.]

elements of the previous discussion and combining them into an axiomatic statement. And James does this with a statement containing interpretive challenges. We will take a look at them as we seek to understand precisely what he is saying.

The images used here pose a challenge. The verb σπείρεται, *is being sown*, sets up something being sown. But that something is a harvest since καρπός, *fruit*, is the unquestionable subject of the verse. This mixing of metaphors, although illogical to us, was not uncommon in the ancient world, and even among the writers of the New Testament. Paul does this quite often in his writings. What James is attempting to communicate is that consequences are being implemented in a continual manner.

What are those consequences? The complete verb subject phrase is καρπός δικαιοσύνης, *the fruit of righteousness*. James has used the term δικαιοσύνη three times: 1:20; 2:23; 3:18. The second use is from a quote of Gen. 15:6 regarding Abraham's faith. But the first use in 1:20 underscores that a person's anger does not lead to δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ, *what is righteous before God*. The seeming disjointedness of verse 18 to vv. 13-17 is most likely due to this short statement being taken from a common collection of proverbial sayings. But properly understood, the meaning of καρπός δικαιοσύνης is the implementing of the righteous traits defined as qualities of true wisdom. The wisdom validating guidelines set forth in v. 13 provide an important link, because authentic wisdom produces a submissive doing of God's will, πραῦτητι σοφίας.

Further, who is doing the sowing? The sentence perhaps sets it up with τοῖς ποιοῦσιν εἰρήνην, *those doing peace*. The uncertainty here is the grammatical function of the participle, τοῖς ποιοῦσιν. Two legitimate possibilities exist: a) Instrumental of agency, = *by those doing peace*; and b) Dative of advantage, = *for the benefit of those doing peace*. Although the agency understanding is quite popular among commentators and Bible translators, the advantage idea fits the context of 3:13-17 and 4:1-10 better. God is planting the consequences of doing what is right before God for the benefit of those who are 'doing peace' in their lives.

The field where the fruits of righteousness are being sown is ἐν εἰρήνῃ, *in peace*. Peaceableness, εἰρηνική, is the first derivative trait of true wisdom. It stands in direct opposition to the disunity and discord produced by the false wisdom, cf. v. 16 especially. What most commentators seem to miss is the Hebrew background of peace as not the absence of conflict but the presence of all that is wholesome and good. James is concerned with more than just peace making here, i.e., resolving conflict. This he will develop next in 4:1-10 in great detail, and without using peace-making terminology. The phrase τοῖς ποιοῦσιν εἰρήνην is not being a peace maker. Instead, it defines the believer who lives out his / her entire life in the positive wholesome environment of εἰρήνη, *peace*. The repeated emphasis on εἰρήνη underscores that true wisdom promotes a wholesome life style where positive relationships with others in the community of believers dominate. God continuously works to promote this environment among His people, and blesses those similarly committed with the spiritual riches of having their lives planted in that kind of 'field.' Those who walk this way truly are those whose wisdom is producing submissiveness to God and are reflecting it in their actions, τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἐν πραῦτητι σοφίας (v. 13).

2. What does the text mean to us today?

With each pericope the reaction continues to be "Wow! How relevant to modern church life!" And clearly that is true of this passage of scripture.

With the increasingly combative mentality of western culture infiltrating church life, we desperately need to hear James' words today. The violence of our society, most especially in the US, is having devastating impact on society in general, and also on churches. Church members can't get along with one another. Pastors and congregations are at odds with one another. Churches take critical pot shots at other churches over this or that issue. It's no wonder that Christianity in both North America and Europe is declining both in numbers and clearly in influence. One of the diseases that is infecting Christianity is the same issue that James dealt with both in Jerusalem and among the congregations in the Diaspora: a phoney claim to spiritual insight that represents worldly thinking rather than godly thinking. The modern church, far worse than those congregations among James' initial readers, have bought into the surrounding culture with its raw materialism and crass elitism with disastrous consequence. Consequently conniving to dominate and control in the name of possessing 'the Truth' or a 'special revelation' from God runs rampant today. Accompanying this elitism is the determination to label every alternative viewpoint as heresy, using the popular automatically condemning label of 'liberalism.' In a few congregations, the opposite perspective utilizes the label 'funda-

mentalist' for the same purpose. But inside each congregation disunity and discord frequently prevail in the life of the congregation.

Whose fault is this? To some degree it is the responsibility of the spiritual leaders. And James in targeting those claiming wisdom, σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων, falsely have brought about the deplorable decline of the congregation. Simply because their supposed wisdom utterly fails to meet James' guidelines of authentic wisdom: δειξάτω ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἐν πραΰτητι σοφίας (v. 13b). This destructive wisdom then surfaces in the life of the leaders as ζήλος καὶ ἐριθεία (vv. 14, 16) and produces disastrous consequences in the church: ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα (v. 16b). But there's plenty of blame to go around to everyone in the church. It's not just the fault of the leaders. Christianity in general has become so secularized and material oriented that the destructive impact of false wisdom permeates the entire congregation.

What James advocates is a turning to a level of spiritual insight that reflects true wisdom. That is, we genuinely look at life from God's perspective and then implement that perspective into our living and into the life of the church. The fruits of doing what is right in God's eyes are enormous and real with the emerging of biblical peace as the dominating atmosphere of church life. James has already reminded us in 1:5-8 that this kind of wisdom is readily available from God when we ask for it within the strict guidelines laid down by God (cf. 1:7-8).

May God help us to crave such wisdom as a desperately thirsty man craves a drink of water!

1. How do you calculate a wise person?
2. What are the validating guidelines of authentic wisdom laid down by James?
3. How do you tell when someone possesses phoney wisdom?
4. List the traits of true wisdom.
5. Are you a believer living in biblical peace?