

DO YOU THINK THE SCRIPTURE SPEAKS IN VAIN?

Once again James opens our lesson text with a question (Jas.4:5) “Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?”

This question became a cause of unnecessary confusion of interpretation. It is not making a lot out of nothing. It is more like making a mountain out of a mole hill.

One way to correct textual confusion is to study the theological history of the Book and the Greek text, applying hermeneutic principles to it.

The next six points will do briefly these things.
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1. We will begin by making three points on the history of the Book of James.

It was very early written and circulated among Jewish believers “dispersed abroad.” It was written before the Jerusalem Church Conference of 50AD.

30-100AD was a period of great transition (list of 4 of 10)

- Dispensations (from Jewish Age to Church Age)
- Covenants (from Old to New)
- Divine Agencies (from priest nation to church) and (from partial canon to completed).

30-70AD was a period of great theological apostasy within Jewish religion.

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ both viewed by the populace as prophets warned them (Matt.3:7-12 and (Matt.12:22-45) and (Matt.23:1-39) hypocrites and blind guides. Both referred to them as a “Brood of Vipers” (Matt.3:7 and 12:34).

2. Canonicity of the Book of James was questioned by Christian scholars for lack of New Covenant basic doctrinal teachings.

It seems they finally settled on James being the half-brother of Jesus and pastor and spoke-person of first mega church (Jerusalem).

But their bigger concern was that the Book of James presents problems without New Covenant doctrinal solutions. This is important when you study and teach from it because you must present New Covenant doctrinal solutions for application to the Christian Way of Life

Out of 108 verses, there are 22 allusions to Books of the Old Testament and 15 allusions to Jesus’ Jewish teaching such as Sermon on Mount.

3. Keeping the text in context is an important hermeneutic principle.

This principle is very important for correct application in the Christian Way of Life (2 Cor.5:7).

The context is (Jas.4:1-10). It can be divided into two parts:

- (Jas.4:1-5) The problem, hedonistic reversionism.
- (Jas.4:6-10) The solution to it.

We always pay attention to James' use of questions to present problems that need addressing (Jas.4:1-5) All **four questions** deal with the problem. (Jas.4:1, 2, 4, 5).

4. Another hermeneutic tool is identifying all the Greek sentences in context.

In (Jas.4:1-10), there are **seven** (4:1-2, 3, 4, 5-6, 7-8, 9, 10).

This is important to our lesson text because (Jas.4:5-6) is one Greek sentence (one complete thought). This is important because the Scripture mentioned in (Jas.4:5) is quoted in (Jas.4:6) (LXX).

(Jas.4:5) is part of the problem of hedonistic reversionism. But (Jas.4:6) is part of the solution.

5. Another interesting Greek grammar James' used was the disjunctive (or) in (Jas.4:5).

It is used like a trailer hitch connecting (Jas.4:5) to (Jas.4:1-4).

The disjunctive (or) connects 4:5 specifically to 4:4 (sentence). (Jas.4:4) gave the first doctrinal conclusion of the status of hedonistic reversionism.

6. Comparisons between (Jas.4:4) (do you not know?) [therefore, and conclusion] and (jas.4:5) (do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose/ in vain?) [therefore, and conclusion] (Jas.4:6) is important.

In (Jas.4:5), James is using debater sarcasm with a rhetorical question to make a point. – “Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose (semi-colon or colon). The question mark is at the end of (Jas.4:5).

In (Jas.4:6), James began addressing the spiritual solution (Jas.4:6-10) - “But (adversative conjunction) [in contrast to] He gives greater grace; Because of that (dio) it (the Scripture) says (semi or colon): God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (Jas.4:6) Quotation of (Prov.3:34) (LXX)

The **proud** are described in (Jas.4:1-5). The proud is contrasted to the **humble**; who are described in (Jas.4:6-10).