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The Christology and Ethics of the Brothers of Jesus

By
Wm. Taylor Tollison

A Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Covenant Theological Seminary
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Theology

Saint Louis, Missouri

2022

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Graduation Date May 14, 2022

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Abstract

This project investigates the Christology and ethics of the epistles of James and Jude. While many scholars have recently focused on the presence and validity of an early, high Christology in the NT texts, little sustained attention has been given to the ethical context in which the appearances of these Christological assertions occur. For example, 1 Corinthians 8:5–6 and Philippians 2:6–11, two of the passages most commonly employed in demonstrating an early high Christology, occur in the midst of concrete ethical instructions. By exclusively emphasizing the theology of passages such as these, scholars risk abstracting the Christological claims from their ethical contexts. This procedural move appears to be a slippery slope that may result in a further separation between the already isolated fields of theology, ethics, and exegesis.

Furthermore, while most discussions of an early high Christology have focused on the Pauline literature, several of the "muted voices" of the Catholic Epistles (CE) have not been carefully analyzed for Christological purposes. This study addresses this apparent gap in scholarship by shedding light on two of the "muted voices" of the NT by highlighting their contributions to NT Christology and the correlative field of NT ethics. This thesis will seek to accomplish this task by resituating the Christological assertions of James and Jude within their original ethical contexts and investigating a field that, it appears, is still yet to be thoroughly explored. While these letters have not received much attention in the field of Christology in general, the relationship between their Christologies and their ethical appeals is even less explored. This void in scholarship is surprising given the apparent prevalence of both James and Jude in the early church. In addition, this analysis will also add to the wider conversation concerning theology, ethics, and exegesis.

This project will argue that James and Jude provide a unique, early, and Jewish-Christian perspective on the relationship between Christology and ethics. This thesis will contend that James and Jude built their ethical appeals on an assumed, apostolic theology generated by the resurrection, which included a high Christology and an expectant eschatology. As the watershed, foundational event in the early church, the resurrection prompted massive and widespread shifts in the apostles' Christological comprehension, ethical construction, and exegetical methods. Rather than leaving James and Jude in the unintelligible backwaters of the NT, this thesis will show that these brothers of Jesus were not only aligned with the apostolic theology behind all of the NT documents but were also influential in its formation and application.

To my brother, Jimmy L. Tollison

A strong version of high Christology would incorporate a significant element of spirituality and ethics. Here much work remains to be done.

— George Hunsinger
"Salvator Mundi: Three Types of Christology"
in *Christology Ancient and Modern:*
Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics

A text on Christology and ethics cannot afford to be exegetically thin, precisely because Christology is a description of the person who acts narratively depicted, and ethics an account of what the One who acts as Scripturally attested would have of us.

— Christopher R. J. Holmes
Ethics in the Presence of Christ

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Acknowledgments

The work behind this thesis would not have been possible without the help of many. My wife, Beth Ann, tirelessly picked up my slack in countless areas of life. She supported, enabled me, and (mostly) stayed awake through several rounds of my external processing on our couch. My kids (Avett, Hazel, and Jones) kept me entertained and helped me remember that they mattered more than this project. I hope you all grow up to love and trust Jesus like the siblings highlighted in this thesis.

I also want to thank Brian Lewis, Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis City Seminary, and the Second Presbyterian Church Foundation. Without your support, encouragement, and flexibility, this entire project would have never materialized. I am beyond grateful.

Lastly, I want to thank my parents and siblings. It has been fascinating to think about the family dynamics inside the home of Joseph and Mary throughout this project. As I've meditated on them, my own family has entered my mind on several occasions. Since this entire project is devoted to studying the brothers of Jesus, it only seemed appropriate to dedicate this project to my own brother. May we always share a high Christology like the two brothers featured in this thesis.

Abbreviations

General and Bibliographic

AT	Author's Translation
CE	Catholic Epistles
CSB	Christian Standard Bible
ESV	English Standard Version
LXX	Septuagint
NET	New English Translation
NIV	New International Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament

Old Testament

Gen.	Genesis	Isa.	Isaiah
Exod.	Exodus	Jer.	Jeremiah
Lev.	Leviticus	Lam.	Lamentations
Num.	Numbers	Ezek.	Ezekiel
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Dan.	Daniel
Josh.	Joshua	Hos.	Hosea
Judg.	Judges	Joel	Joel
Ruth	Ruth	Amos	Amos
1–2 Sam.	1–2 Samuel	Obad.	Obadiah
1–2 Kgs.	1–2 Kings	Jonah	Jonah
1–2 Chr.	1–2 Chronicles	Mic.	Micah
Ezra	Ezra	Nah.	Nahum
Neh.	Nehemiah	Hab.	Habakkuk
Esth.	Esther	Zeph.	Zephaniah
Job	Job	Hag.	Haggai
Ps.	Psalm/Psalms	Zech.	Zechariah
Prov.	Proverbs	Mal.	Malachi
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes		
Song.	Song of Songs/Solomon		

New Testament

Matt.	Matthew
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	Acts
Rom.	Romans
1–2 Cor.	Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1–2 Thess.	1–2 Thessalonians
1–2 Tim.	1–2 Timothy
Titus	Titus
Phlm.	Philemon
Heb.	Hebrews
Jas.	James
1–2 Pet.	1–2 Peter
1–2–3 John	1–2–3 John
Jude	Jude
Rev.	Revelation

Other

1 En.	1 Enoch
Sir.	Sirach

Chapter 1:

Introduction

This project investigates the Christology and ethics of the epistles of James and Jude. While many scholars have recently focused on the presence and validity of an early, high Christology in the NT texts,[1] little sustained attention has been given to the ethical context in which the appearances of these Christological assertions occur.[2] For example, 1 Corinthians 8:5–6 and Philippians 2:6–11, two of the passages most commonly employed in demonstrating an early high Christology, occur in the midst of concrete ethical instructions. By exclusively emphasizing the theology of passages such as these, scholars risk abstracting the Christological claims from their ethical contexts.[3] This procedural move appears to be a slippery slope that may result in a further separation between the already isolated fields of theology, ethics, and exegesis.[4]

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[1] Several scholars have contributed to this field. The following chapter will conduct a review of the relevant literature.

[2] One possible exception to the general neglect of ethical contexts may be found in Andrew J. Byers, "The One Body of the Shema in 1 Corinthians: An Ecclesiology of Christological Monotheism," *New Testament Studies* 62, no. 4 (2016): 517–532.

[3] William R. Baker reinforces this point by reminding his readers that the authors of Scripture never communicated theology in a vacuum for its own sake but expressed theology for ethical purposes. See his discussion in William R. Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James," *Evangelical Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (2002): 47–57.

[4] For a survey of the issues involved in the relationship between systematic theology and exegesis, see Michael Williams, "Systematic Theology as a Biblical Discipline," in *All for Jesus: A Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Covenant Theological Seminary*, ed. Robert A. Peterson and Sean M. Lucas (Ross-shire, GB: Christian Focus Publications, 2006), 167–96. Also see the discussion in Grant R. Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Theological Interpretation," in *Understanding the Times: New Testament Studies in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of D. A. Carson on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 62–103.

Furthermore, while most discussions of an early high Christology have focused on the Pauline literature, several of the "muted voices"[5] of the Catholic Epistles (CE) have not been carefully analyzed for Christological purposes. This study addresses this apparent gap in scholarship by shedding light on two of the "muted voices" of the NT by highlighting their contributions to NT Christology and the correlative field of NT ethics. This thesis will seek to accomplish this task by resituating the Christological assertions of James and Jude within their original ethical contexts and investigating a field that, it appears, is still yet to be thoroughly explored. While these letters have not received much attention in the field of Christology in general, the relationship between their Christologies and their ethical appeals is even less explored. This void in scholarship is surprising given the apparent prevalence of both James and Jude in the early church. In addition, this analysis will also add to the wider conversation concerning theology, ethics, and exegesis.

This project will argue that James and Jude provide a unique, early, and Jewish-Christian perspective on the relationship between Christology and ethics. This thesis will contend that James and Jude built their ethical appeals on an assumed, apostolic theology generated by the resurrection, which included a high Christology and an expectant eschatology. As the watershed, foundational event in the early church, the resurrection prompted massive and widespread shifts in the apostles' Christological comprehension, ethical construction, and exegetical methods. Rather than leaving James and Jude in the unintelligible backwaters of the NT, this thesis will show that these brothers of Jesus were

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[5] The language of "muted voices" comes from the title of a recent work on the CE: Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce, and Francis Watson, eds., *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017). By acknowledging that most NT research is centered around Pauline and Gospel studies, this work foregrounds the insights from the CE and attempts to "unmute" their voices.

not only aligned with the apostolic theology behind all of the NT documents but were also influential in its formation and application.

Research Questions

While the exegesis of key texts in James and Jude will serve as the project's foundation, an orientation to the field and a discussion of the interpretive approach must precede the exegetical work. This thesis will, therefore, unfold by first conducting a literature review of relevant material in the fields of NT Christology and ethics (chapter 2). This chapter will define critical terms and discuss the approach to Christology and ethics adopted in this project. After the project is situated in these respective domains of inquiry, the methodological approach to the letters of James and Jude will be discussed (chapter 3). This method will assist the current project in its attempt to resituate the Christological assertions of these letters within their original ethical contexts. Next, two chapters will be devoted to the exegesis of key texts in James (chapter 4) and Jude (chapter 5), where insights will be implemented from the interpretive methods surveyed. Once the exegesis is complete, a synthesis of Christological and ethical conclusions will be offered (chapter 6). Throughout the project, evidence in James and Jude for an early high Christology will be sought, and if found, the research will ask for what ethical purpose(s) the authors wielded this Christology. Or in other words, how did the brothers of Jesus intertwine their Christology with their ethical directives? The central questions, therefore, to be explored throughout the thesis can be summarized under three headings: (1) Early High Christology, (2) Exegesis, and (3) Ethics.

Early High Christology

What is meant by an early high Christology? The literature review in the following chapter will situate the present investigation inside the recent field of NT Christology and distinguish it from alternative approaches. One of the dominant questions in this thesis is this: is there evidence in the letters of James and Jude for an *early Jewish origin* of Christology that operates within *monotheism*?[6] This initial question is related to subsequent Christological and historical questions. For example, to demonstrate the Jewish origins of high Christology, this thesis will support the inclusion of "Judge" as a role ascribed to Jesus typically reserved exclusively for YHWH. This title will be shown as a standard feature of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition in which James and Jude are embedded. Second, to establish that the letters of James and Jude are, in fact, *early* and *Jewish,* significant attention will be given to issues of authorship and dating. As Brosend II points out, if traditional authorship is granted, then "the really interesting question is what happens when one reads the letters based on this position."[7] In agreement with Brosend II, if it is accepted that the brothers of Jesus wrote these letters, then readers would do well to pay close attention to the unique insights offered by these authors regarding their understanding of Christology. Interestingly, the broad consensus in NT studies is that the brothers of Jesus were unbelievers during the early stages of Jesus's ministry (Jn. 7:5). If this is so, then what precipitated the radical shift in James and Jude's understanding of their brother?

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[6] The meaning of each term in this question will expanded on in the following chapter.

[7] William F. Brosend II, *James and Jude*, ed. Ben Witherington III, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5.

Exegesis

The previous question is closely related to the present one. How did the NT authors arrive at such Christological conclusions? What factors played a role in their interpretation of their Scriptures and their experiences with Jesus? As with the previous question, this research question will be further explored in the next chapter. It will be asked: what *exegetical* practices are utilized by James and Jude? How do their *experiences* with Jesus affect both their exegesis and their Christology? Do their exegetical methods and experiential encounters operate in some form of a reciprocal relationship? Of particular interest will be the role of the resurrection appearances to the brothers of Jesus. What impact did the resurrection have on James's and Jude's Christology, exegesis, and ethics? Likely following their post-resurrection experiences with the risen Christ (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 1:14), these half-brothers of Jesus had their opinion regarding their brother radically changed. This Christological shift then provided the impetus for reinterpreting their experiences and texts.

Ethics

Lastly, a set of research concerns revolves around the ethical contexts in which the brothers of Jesus reveal their Christology. How do these brothers not only assume their early Jewish audiences share their Christological convictions but also build ethical frameworks around them? This ethical angle, often overlooked by exegetes, may reveal that these Christological convictions were widely accepted in early Jewish-Christian circles. If the brothers of Jesus (without qualification, defense, or explanation) can simply present their Christological beliefs as ethical grounds, what might this reveal concerning the early

understanding of the relationship between Christology and ethics? By way of example, consider how James frames his ethical appeal in James 2:1–7 to his diasporic audience. He presents an assumed and shared high Christology: "My fellow believers, do not in prejudice hold your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory" (AT).[8] After this brief statement in 2:1 (which will be more fully explored), James then calls his readers to remove favoritism from their gatherings before bookending his appeal with another hint of high Christology in 2:7.

Similarly, Jude 4 explains that "ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality" have at the root of their behavior a denial of "our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (ESV). If James is making an appeal based on the presence of a high Christology, then Jude is demonstrating the effects of a denial of a high Christology. Each of these passages will be further explored throughout the thesis to show that this shared high Christology was rhetorically wielded to motivate concrete ethics. To answer this series of questions, this project will draw on the work of prominent scholars and will utilize key insights from various interpretive theories.

Potential Outcomes

This thesis reveals the relationship between the Christology and ethics of two of the "muted" voices of the NT, James and Jude. In addition to this initial contribution, this thesis may shed light on the possibility of a broader reciprocal relationship occurring at the interface between one's Christology and ethics. In other words, through this research, readers may discover the inescapable Christological shape of ethics and the inevitable ethical revelation of one's Christology. Additionally, by foregrounding exegesis as the

[8] This is one possible translation of this passage.

epistemological starting point[9] in the formation of Christology and ethics, this thesis may contribute to the ongoing conversations related to the splintered fields of exegesis, theology, and ethics.[10] Lastly, it is likely that the methodological approach implemented in this project will not only shed light on the Catholic Epistle (CE) collection as a whole but may also offer interpretive insights into the theology and ethics of the early church seen through the perspectives of the brothers of Jesus.

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[9] See discussion in John Webster, "Principles of Systematic Theology," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11, no. 1 (2009): 56–71.

[10] Recent interpreters have bemoaned the "iron curtain" that has so long separated biblical studies and theology. Joel B. Green, "Scripture and Theology: Uniting the Two So Long Divided," in *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 23. For the original discussion, see Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), xvi. Though in agreement with this sentiment, this project also seeks to go beyond it and reveal an additional disjunction between biblical studies, theology, and ethics. Similarly, Fowl wants to "blur any substantive distinction" between theology and ethics. Stephen E. Fowl, "The New Testament, Theology, and Ethics," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 397–413. Relatedly, Brock, who says that theology and ethics are currently "estranged" from one another, explains that this separation has resulted in a reorientation of theology "toward a primary concern with ideas and ethical problems" and it has abstracted "ethics" from the "daily life of Christians in all contexts." Brian Brock, "Christian Ethics," in *Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 293–317. This project aims to surface important insights for the interpretation of the CE that will serve to unite these long-divided fields of inquiry.

Chapter 2:

Review of Literature on NT Christology and Ethics

NT Christology

Over the last 150 years, the field of NT Christology has been burgeoning. In order to succinctly review, categorize, and clarify the various approaches and claims made in this active century and a half, this project offers a survey and analysis that will organize the scholars into broad and contrasting camps.[11] Where appropriate, this project will expand on the various perspectives in order to treat each scholar fairly and avoid forcing their representative views into the categories of the project.[12] This literature review will situate the following discussion of James and Jude into the broader field of NT Christology and will also highlight the aspects of an early high Christology observed in the exegetical portions below.

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[11] In what follows, I am depending not only on my reading of the material but am also relying on the helpful reviews found in the following: Andrew Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," *Early Christianity* 2, no. 1 (2011): 22–50; David B. Capes, "New Testament Christology," in *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 161–181; Brandon D. Smith, "What Christ Does, God Does: Surveying Recent Scholarship on Christological Monotheism," *Currents in Biblical Research* 17, no. 2 (2019): 184–208.

[12] A significant portion of the research was given to two prominent figureheads who have "breathed new life into the study of NT Christology": Larry Hurtado and Richard Bauckham. See Robert A. Peterson, "Toward a Systematic Theology of the Deity of Christ," in *The Deity of Christ*, ed. Gerald Bray and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2018), 194. Fletcher-Louis says that these two have "changed the field forever." Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism: Christological Origins; The Emerging Consensus and Beyond* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 1:xv.

Late Hellenistic Origins

One group of scholars in this field proposes that a high Christology (in which Jesus is portrayed as fully divine) was not reached until *late* in the first century in *Hellenistic* contexts. As representatives of this position, two proponents of *Late Hellenistic Origins* for high Christology will be discussed: Wilhelm Bousset and James Dunn.[13]

Representatives

Bousset, in his groundbreaking *Kyrios Christos,*[14] proposed that the most appropriate (if not the only) way to explain Christianity in historical terms was through the "polytheistic, pagan influences that crept inside the church from the outside culture."[15] According to this view, in the Hellenistic context, there were "gods-a-plenty," and Jesus could simply be identified as one alongside the many. Since the variety of divine figures in the Greco-Roman world was detestable to monotheistic Jews, the influence leading to the ascription of divinity to Jesus supposedly could have occurred only at a later date, when a significant number of Gentiles had been converted and when culturally (and geographically), the

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[13] Chester disagrees with this assessment and claims that Dunn, though he favored a late reception of high Christology, still held that it developed in Jewish terms. Chester explains, "Dunn sees the blossoming of a Christology... as part of a more general evolution of religious thought towards the end of the first century and at the start of the second... Nevertheless, although it belongs within this wider context, it is a development that takes place fully within Jewish terms." Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," 24. While the observation related to Jewish terminology is certainly accurate, Chester downplays Dunn's emphasis on the supposed lateness of this Christological development. Capes discusses Dunn's "late" view in David B. Capes, *The Divine Christ: Paul, the Lord Jesus, and the Scriptures of Israel*, Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 161–162. See Dunn's discussion in James D. G. Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1991), 204–206.

[14] Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. J.E. Steely, rev. ed., Library of Early Christology (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013).

[15] Capes, "New Testament Christology," 164.

Christian movement was further away from Palestinian Judaism. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 8:5–6, an undeniably key text in NT Christology, Bousset summarizes his controversial claim by stating:

> It becomes clear that it was no accident that we did not encounter the title *Kyrios* on Palestinian soil in the gospel tradition. Such a development would not have been possible here. This placing of Jesus in the center of the cultus of a believing community, this peculiar doubling of the object of veneration in worship, is conceivable only in an environment in which Old Testament monotheism no longer ruled unconditionally and with absolute security.[16]

A significant portion of Bousset's position is contingent upon his belief that the title *kyrios* was not used by Palestinian, Aramaic-speaking Christians but was strictly a Hellenistic term.[17] As the exegetical chapters will show, this position rests on a weak foundation.

Similarly, James Dunn, the second prominent scholar who advocates for a *Late Hellenistic Origin* of high Christology, has alleged that only the later NT authors[18] stand at the climax of the slow developing evolution of Christology and that "only with the fourth gospel can we speak of a full-blown conception of Christ's personal pre-existence and a clear doctrine of incarnation."[19] Dunn claims that this viewpoint offers the best explanation

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[16] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 147. On this point, see the analysis by Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 3.

[17] See discussion in Douglas F. Kelly, *Systematic Theology: Grounded in Holy Scripture and Understood in the Light of the Church* (Ross-shire, GB: Christian Focus Publications, 2014), 77.

[18] See Köstenberger's discussion in Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Deity of Christ in John's Gospel," in *The Deity of Christ*, ed. Gerald Bray and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2018), 94.

[19] James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 258. Chester points out that while *Christology in the Making* (first published in 1980) is Dunn's "major statement" of his thesis, he has supplemented this and developed his ideas further in a series of essays over the following twenty years, brought together in *The Christ and the Spirit* (2 vols; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998). See Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," 24.

for the emergence of the high Christology present later.[20] He says, "what had not previously been envisaged emerged as a plausible way of thinking and understanding. What had not previously been thought became *thinkable.*"[21] While Dunn is favorable to the possibility of Jewish influences on the development of Christology, he nevertheless believes that a "diversity of Christological formulation(s)" in the first century Christian writings created a "kaleidoscope of imagery" wherein the early church was searching for "the most suitable way of understanding and describing Christ, ransacking the available categories and concepts to find language which would do justice to the reality of Christ."[22]

In one sense, there is validity to Dunn's arguments. The environment around Jesus's early followers certainly seems characterized by a search for the appropriate category to place him in. In a relatively short amount of time, these followers undergo significant paradigm shifts, adjust major expectations, and reinterpret their most prized theological categories. The following sections will discuss what precipitated this seismic shift yet also brought surprising coherence to the church's early theological development. Contrary to Dunn's position, this project will argue for a much earlier apostolic agreement that precipitated widespread acceptance in Palestinian and diasporic contexts.

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[20] N. T. Wright points out that Dunn accepts it as "axiomatic that a high Christology meant a late, Hellenized Christology." N. T. Wright, "Jesus and the Identity of God," *Ex Auditu* 14 (1998): 42–56. In addition, Dunn advocates for an "Adam Christology" that highlights Jesus's humanity. This view is similar to J. R. Daniel Kirk's approach. See Bauckham's response to this approach in Richard Bauckham, "Is 'High Human Christology' Sufficient? A Critical Response to J. R. Daniel Kirk's," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 27.4 (2017): 503–525.

[21] Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 261.

[22] Ibid., 265.

Review

Larry Hurtado, Bousset's most consistent critic, has led the charge in dismantling many of these *Late Hellenistic* arguments. First, as will be further explored below, Hurtado and others have dismantled Bousset's claim concerning a later Hellenization of Christianity. Second, Hurtado and others have argued that the usage of the term *kyrios* derived not from pagan cults but originated as a translation for YHWH in the LXX. This term was applied to Jesus frequently by almost all the NT authors.[23] Though the scholars behind this *Late Hellenistic* position can undoubtedly be credited with stoking the fires of NT Christological interest, in the final analysis, their views must be set aside.[24] As it will be shown, the passages to be exegeted will not support this *Late Hellenistic* position. Instead, this project will demonstrate that James and Jude, both *early* epistles written by the *Jewish* brothers of the Lord (1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19), made use of *kyrios* language to describe their brother well before the later and broader expansion of the church into the Gentile world. To solidify this

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[23] See Larry W. Hurtado, Ancient Jewish Monotheism and Early Christian Jesus-Devotion: The Context and Character of Christological Faith (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 11–37. See also Larry W. Hurtado, "Lord," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 563. Also significant and often repeated is the presence of the Aramaic term in 1 Cor. 16:22. What is of interest is that the authors who come from this early Palestinian context where this term (μαράνα) originated do not more frequently use this term in their literature. Louw-Nida says, "The expression μαρανα θα in 1 Cor 16:22 is an Aramaic formula evidently associated with early Christian liturgy. It must have been widely used, since it occurs in 1 Cor 16:22 without explanation." Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1996), 138–139.

[24] As Dunn has evidenced in his conclusions, accepting a late high Christology may be a slippery slope into an "adoptionist" Christology. Dunn's arguments about the role of the resurrection are different than what will be made below. He claims that the resurrection introduced Jesus into a "relationship with God decisively new, eschatologically distinct, perhaps we should even say qualitatively different from what he had enjoyed before." Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 33–36. This project merely says that the resurrection made Jesus's person and status evident to others. See discussion in Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 20.

point, the recent theologians who have advocated for an *Early Jewish Origin* of high Christology will now be discussed.

Early Jewish Origins

Two scholars who serve as representatives of the *Early Jewish Origins* position will now be examined. While others hold these views (many of whom will appear in the following categories below), these theologians have focused a significant portion of their research to investigating the *Early Jewish Origins* of high Christology.

Representatives

Martin Hengel and N. T. Wright, each in unique ways, have contributed significantly to the idea that a high Christology was present *early* and developed within a thoroughly *Jewish* context. First, in contrast to Bousset, Martin Hengel,[25] who "catalyzed a good deal of Christological discussion in the last few decades," asserted that Judaism had been Hellenized for centuries before the birth of Jesus and that it was, therefore, Hellenized Jewish soil that provided the context in which Christology took shape.[26] Like Hurtado, Hengel cracked the foundation of Bousset's argument by revealing the false dichotomy

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[25] Hengel deals broadly with the issue in Martin Hengel, *Jews, Greeks, and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1980); Martin Hengel, *The "Hellenization" of Judea in the First Century after Christ*, trans. John Bowden (London, UK: SCM Press, 1989); Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. John Bowden, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974). Hengel also applies the findings from his research to issues related to Christology in Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013); Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007).

[26] Capes, "New Testament Christology," 164. The idea of an "early Hellenization" will also be discussed below, along with the sections on authorship and dating for both epistles. See Capes' elaboration on this discussion in Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 31–33.

between the influences of Judaism and Hellenism on Christology. Hengel believed that Bousset falsely "compartmentalized what was actually a complex melding of Jewish and Hellenistic influence in early Christianity."[27] Hengel argued that there was, in fact, an "amazingly rapid move in the earliest Christian movement" that occurred "completely within Judaism (in Palestine and around), to a position where already at that stage they held the very highest Christology."[28]

Following Hengel's lead, N. T. Wright has devoted significant attention to understanding early Christianity within its Jewish context.[29] In several of his works, Wright argues that it was very *early* and in very *Jewish* contexts that Jesus was both worshipped and understood as embodying the personal return of YHWH to Zion.[30] Significantly, however, "the difference between Jesus and the other Jews of his day was that he believed that the Jewish beliefs and hopes...were coming true in and through himself." In other words, he "believed and understood himself to be fulfilling the vocation of the Messiah,"

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[27] Brandon D Smith, "What Christ Does, God Does: Surveying Recent Scholarship on Christological Monotheism," *Currents in Biblical Research* 17, no. 2 (2019): 185.

[28] Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," 25. Famously, Hengel claimed that more happened Christologically in less than two decades at the very start of the Christian movement than in the whole of the next seven centuries. Hengel, *The Son of God*, 11; Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*, 39–40.

[29] Wright credits Hengel "for the dawning scholarly awareness that the Jewish world of the first century was itself Hellenistic through and through, so that to do what some earlier generations had done and go looking for a pre-Hellenistic, and indeed *non*-Hellenistic, strand of primitive 'Jewish Christianity' was to search blindly in a dark room for a black cat that wasn't there in the first place." N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 647. Hurtado agrees that the background of ancient Judaism should be seen as the most immediately relevant for the early stages of the Christian phenomenon. See Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 5–6.

[30] See especially his arguments in Wright, "Jesus and the Identity of God"; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992). See also Hurtado's interaction with Wright in Hurtado, *Ancient Jewish Monotheism and Early Christian Jesus-Devotion*, 75–95.

who was closely related to most of the symbols for YHWH's activities in the world.[31] Though this project will not explore each of Wright's conclusions drawn from this line of inquiry, his basic emphasis on an *early* and *Jewish* origin of a high Christology is illuminating.

Review

In the arguments that follow, a few features of the discussion so far will figure prominently. First, contrary to the *Late Hellenistic* position, the *early* and *Jewish* context will be shown to possess the resources and categories sufficient for a high Christology. Second, contrary to the claims concerning an overly strict monotheism (see more below), Jesus is not only worthy to be the object of faith and worship but is also closely associated with, if not the *embodiment* of, YHWH. He is "the revelation of the unique identity of God to the world."[32] This last point will be further explored in the discussion of monotheism below.

Monotheistic Categories

Closely related to the *Jewish Origins* of Christology is a series of questions concerning the nature of Jewish *monotheism*. It is widely known that Jewish monotheism was such an integral aspect of the Jewish identity that "the slightest departure from it would have been

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[31] For the quotations in this and the preceding sentences, see Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 623. Wright places significant weight on this point. Basing his view on several OT passages and Second Temple literature (1 Enoch 1:3–4; 62:1–5; Ezekiel 1; Daniel 7; Psalm 2; 110; Isaiah 11; 40–55), he believes that most Second Temple Jews were anticipating the return of YHWH to Zion in a way that was much more robust than the recent Israelite return from exile. Smith, "What Christ Does, God Does: Surveying Recent Scholarship on Christological Monotheism," 189–190.

[32] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*: *God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 40.

regarded as apostasy and entailed ostracism."[33] In light of this reality, NT scholars have often assumed that if first-century Jews were monotheistic, they could not in any way have developed or even anticipated Trinitarian thinking or worshipped Jesus as God.[34]

Representatives

While granting that the Jewish context certainly included a strict view of monotheism, Richard Bauckham, N. T. Wright, and many others offer a unique take on the "divine identity."[35] Their position maintains a distinction between God and everything that is not God but includes Jesus on the divine side of the line, within the "divine identity." Clarifying the point, Bauckham says:

> early Christians included Jesus, precisely and unambiguously, within the unique identity of the one God of Israel. They did so by including Jesus in the unique, defining characteristics by which Jewish monotheism identified God as unique. They did not have to break with Jewish monotheism in order to do this, since monotheism, as Second Temple Judaism understood it, was structurally open to the development of the Christological monotheism that we find in the New Testament texts.[36]

Bauckham builds his approach on the argument that Jewish monotheism "drew the line of distinction between the one God and all other reality clearly" and that they did this "by

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[33] Gerald Bray, "The Deity of Christ in Church History," in *The Deity of Christ*, ed. Gerald Bray and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2018), 173. MacDonald says that monotheism was a "non-negotiable characteristic of Jewish religion" that was "presupposed" by early Christians. Nathan MacDonald, "Monotheism," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 78.

[34] See the excellent discussion in Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 2–13.

[35] Wright points out that systematic theologians would remind us that the point of trinitarian theology is precisely that it *is* monotheistic, not tri-theistic. Wright, "Jesus and the Identity of God," 47. See the discussion of the "rising consensus" in Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 3–29.

[36] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, ix–x.

means of certain clearly articulated criteria."[37] Bauckham then advances the thesis that a high Christology was possible within this monotheistic context not by applying a "semi-divine" or mediatorial status to Jesus but by including him within the unique identity of the one God of Israel. This inclusion is evidenced by the way the early church *ascribed* to Jesus the roles of creator and ruler and *worshiped* Jesus as divine. These actions, the ascription of divine roles (typically reserved only for YHWH), and the worship of Jesus (also reserved only for YHWH) are the very "characteristics of the divine identity on which Jewish monotheism focused in characterizing God as unique."[38]

Additionally, Bauckham, Wright, Hurtado, and others make much of 1 Cor. 8:6 in their defense of this innovation of Jewish monotheism. Wright calls this verse "possibly the single most revolutionary Christological formulation in the whole of early Christianity, staking out a high Christology founded within the very citadel of Jewish monotheism."[39] Bauckham adds that this "reformulation of the Shema" is unprecedented in that the "unique identity of the one God" is now seen to *consist of* "the one God, the Father, *and* the Lord, his Messiah."[40] Though this "Christological monotheism" was indeed an innovation, Bauckham and Wright hold that it remained entirely consistent with Jewish monotheism.[41]

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[37] Ibid., 3. See discussion in Smith, "What Christ Does, God Does: Surveying Recent Scholarship on Christological Monotheism," 196ff. For pushback on Bauckham's approach, see Dale Tuggy, "On Bauckham's Bargain," *Theology Today* 70, no. 2 (July 2013): 128–143. Also, for a critique of Bauckham's use of "identity," see Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 24ff.; Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 305ff.

[38] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 8–13, 18–19.

[39] Wright, "Jesus and the Identity of God," 50. The Shema will also surface in the letter of James. As typical of the Jesus tradition, it will be closely associated with Lev. 19:18.

[40] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 101. See also Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," 30–31.

[41] Hurtado calls this a "mutation" of monotheism. This term appears misleading and may imply more of a change in the divine identity than Hurtado intends. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 2.

Review

The category of Jewish monotheism and the idea that Jesus is included within the one divine identity will soon reappear in the upcoming discussion of James and Jude. However, in addition to the roles of creator and ruler, the exegesis of the passages below will demonstrate that the role of eschatological judge should also be added to the list of roles typically reserved for YHWH that the early church ascribed to Jesus. This role of judge will be shown as a critical feature of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition of which James and Jude are a part. To properly appreciate the massive step taken by this claim of "divine identity Christology," it is important to contrast the category of monotheism with the concept of intermediary figures.

Mediatorial Categories

A consistent and challenging question in the field of NT Christology is this: what category did Jesus's contemporaries have for him as he arrived on the scene? Or stated another way, what precedent or antecedent tradition did the early followers of Jesus have available to them through which they might understand or comprehend Jesus? In line with the impulse to search for a category of understanding, a few scholars propose various quasi-divine, intermediary figures as the primary categories within which Jesus's contemporaries understood him.[42] The following section will draw selections from a representative sample.

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[42] Some scholars offer various versions of Messianism, while others put forth "angelomorphic" traditions. Others suggest personifications of aspects or characteristics of God himself (Spirit, Word, Wisdom). See Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," 26–28; Capes, "New Testament Christology," 165; Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 13–17, 221–232. Bates says this "mediatorial" approach is "far and away the most popular explanation for how Jesus was elevated to divine status." Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 20.

Representatives

Though Andrew Chester acknowledges that *mediatorial categories* could never alone fully explain the phenomenon of early Christology, he nevertheless represents those favorable to their use when he says:

> the early Christians, struggling to make full sense of the extraordinary nature of Christ, as this had been revealed to them, may well, within their Jewish context, have found knowledge of such traditions helpful in enabling them to articulate the significance of Christ in terms of the similarities, but above all the decisive differences, vis-a-vis these figures.[43]

As is evident from the above, Chester is undoubtedly open to the possible influence of mediatorial figures. Notably, Crispin Fletcher-Louis has recently advocated for, as a helpful starting place, a version of Adam-Christology as supported by the worship of humans in the pseudepigraphical *Life of Adam and Eve*. While Fletcher-Louis is careful to clarify that "these Jewish texts *do not in themselves satisfactorily* explain either the origin or the shape of distinctive 'Christological monotheism,'" he maintains that "they may have opened the door for concepts that would have allowed for early Christians to worship Jesus."[44] These mediatorial figures would have provided hooks, as it were, "on which Jesus-followers could reasonably hang their way of thinking of Jesus as a new Adam."[45] Similarly, Hurtado proposes that the "Second Temple idea of 'chief divine agents' with heavenly origins provided conceptual resources for early Christians to accommodate Jesus

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[43] Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," 41–42. Chester essentially follows the caution of Hengel here. See Hengel, *The Son of God*, 58–59, 89–90.

[44] Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 250–292; Smith, "What Christ Does, God Does," 191.

[45] Capes, "New Testament Christology," 170. For an application of Adamic Christology in the epistle of Jude, see Simon J. Joseph, "'Seventh from Adam' (Jude 1:14—15): Re-Examining Enochic Traditions and the Christology of Jude," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 64, no. 2 (2013): 463–481.

as the center of God's activity without representing 'a fundamental modification of Jewish monotheism.'"[46]

Review

In contrast, Bauckham concludes that these "Jewish precedents" for early Christological formulations are "minimal," and he strongly denies "divine *agency*" in favor of his "divine *identity*" approach.[47] N. T. Wright agrees with Bauckham and holds that Christology did not develop out of a modification of a Jewish category such as divine agency, contesting that those scholars who appeal to "mediation traditions" have started in the wrong place. Instead, Wright proposes that Christological discussion ought to begin with Jewish expectations concerning YHWH, the "hidden clue to the origin of Christology."[48] The discussion of passages from James and Jude below will build upon this presentation of the *early Jewish* origins of Christology from inside Jewish *monotheism,* as opposed to the Jewish categories of *intermediary* figures.

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[46] Smith, "What Christ Does, God Does," 189. See discussion in Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 12–52, 98. Hurtado says that mediatorial figures provide "a crucial conceptual category for accommodating the exaltation of Jesus to God's 'right hand,' through the traditions" he labels as "divine agency." Hurtado's approach is clarified by the way he distinguishes himself from Bauckham's "divine identity" category. Though he attributes the impetus of his research to an early Bauckham article, Hurtado clearly distinguishes between his "agency" category and Bauckham's "identity" category. Hurtado, *Ancient Jewish Monotheism and Early Christian Jesus-Devotion*, 97–111; Richard Bauckham, "The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity," *New Testament Studies* 27, no. 3 (1981): 322–341.

[47] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 232. In one sense, these two sections, Monotheistic Categories and Mediatorial Categories, could be renamed Divine Identity and Divine Agency, respectively.

[48] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 654. See also Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 22–24.

Exegetical Approaches

The last division of categories for the field of NT Christology is the separation between *Exegetical* and *Experiential* approaches.[49] Fletcher-Louis offers a helpful distinction between two leading advocates for each of these views, Hurtado and Bauckham. He says, "Hurtado argues the new Christian form of monotheism was a response to powerful revelatory experiences." On the other hand, Bauckham stresses "the importance of early Christian interpretation of (Israel's) Scriptures."[50] This project will offer and adopt a synthesis of these two approaches.

Representatives

Representative of the *exegetical* camp, Bauckham asserts that "for the early Jewish Christians, the primary medium of theological development was exegesis, meticulous and disciplined exegesis of scriptural texts deployed with the sophisticated exegetical techniques of contemporary Jewish scholarship."[51] Along the same lines as Bauckham, Bates advocates for an approach that foregrounds exegesis. He proposes that the NT authors and the early church fathers employed a technique he labels "prosopological exegesis," in which the readers of the NT are said to, as it were, "overhear" the persons of

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[49] As mentioned, several scholars appear in multiple categories. This review's goal is not to restrict any scholar to one particular division but to merely arrange the scholars based on their most significant contributions.

[50] For this quotation and the previous, see Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 5.

[51] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 235. See also his discussion in Ibid., 21–31, 173, 194–196. For Bauckham, the "key text" utilized by the early church for their Christological conclusions was Psalm 110. This passage is mentioned no less than 23 times in Bauckham's work and is discussed in great detail on numerous occasions. In the exegesis of James below, the Christological exegesis of Psalm 24 will also be a key passage for Bauckham's understanding of James 2:1. Richard Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, ed. John Court, New Testament Readings (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), 139. See further discussion in Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 138–139.

the Trinity speaking to one another.[52] This "person-centered reading strategy" is meant to unveil the intratrinitarian life of God, help make sense of several passages in the OT and NT, and contribute to the development of Christology and the doctrine of the Trinity.[53]

Review

As will be seen in the letters of James and Jude below, the evidence for the presence of a newly formed Christological exegetical method is widespread in the NT. A brief sampling of apostolic sermons in the book of Acts will reveal fresh approaches to sacred texts. However, what incited such an exegetical watershed if not the revelatory experiences of the apostles? Though he leads with exegesis, Bates does not set aside the importance of experiences in the development of early Christology. He proposes, along with Hurtado, Chester, and others, that the early Christians' powerful, post-resurrection, revelatory experiences provided a catalyst for their newly informed exegesis.[54] This emphasis on the role of the past resurrection experiences will figure prominently in the understanding of James and Jude's exegesis, Christology, and ethics.[55]

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[52] Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 1–40. For a review of this approach, see Peter J Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," *SBJT* 23, no. 2 (2019): 105–122.

[53] For example, Bates points out how Psalm 2:7, spoken by the Father to the Son at his baptism and transfiguration, informs Jesus' understanding of his identity and shapes the early Christ-followers' expectations concerning him. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 65–66.

[54] Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," 46–47; Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 21.

[55] This description of the role of the resurrection is not meant in any way to divorce the historical event of the resurrection from its significance. On the contrary, this thesis holds that the resurrection was such a realistic and historical event, that it demanded a reappraisal of the disciples' Christology, ethics, and exegesis. The point of this emphasis on the resurrection is not to claim that Jesus *became* something he was *not* before, but to show that his followers now understood him rightly. In other words, the line of reasoning here should not lead to an adoptionist Christology. For further exploration of the role of the resurrection in the scheme adopted here, see the discussion of O'Donovan's work below.

Experiential Approaches

Representatives

One of the leading advocates for experiential approaches is Hurtado. He holds that early believers had powerful, post-resurrection experiences that informed their understanding of Jesus and ignited their worship of him. Hurtado backs into this claim by looking first at the early worship of Jesus and asking the question, "How did this begin and how did it occur so quickly?" He claims that the post-resurrection experiences prompted the worship of Jesus and were followed by what he calls "charismatic exegesis."[56] This newly informed exegesis is defined as the search of the biblical texts "on the basis of a guiding conviction that arose... from revelatory experiences."[57] In sum, the disciples revisited OT passages and reinterpreted them in light of Jesus's teaching and their encounters with the risen Lord.

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[56] Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 122–129. Hurtado draws on Aune's language here. See David E. Aune, "Charismatic Exegesis in Early Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 280–299. See also David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 339–346. Similarly, Wright says, "What I am suggesting is that the resurrection, demonstrating the truth of Jesus's pre-crucifixion messianic claim, joined up with the expectation of YHWH's return on the one hand and the presence of the spirit of Jesus on the other to generate a fresh reading of 'messianic' texts which enabled a full Christological awareness to dawn on the disciples." Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 692.

[57] Hurtado, *Ancient Jewish Monotheism and Early Christian Jesus-Devotion*, 107. See also the discussion in Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 170–173. Appreciating Hurtado, yet sensing he is coming up short, Chester insightfully nuances and extends this claim by stating that, in addition to the "disciples' certainty that God had raised the crucified Jesus from the dead," the "extraordinary phenomenon of early Christology" *must* presuppose an earlier claim made by Jesus concerning his "messianic authority." Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?," 25–26. Chester does not accept the resurrection experience alone as sufficient for such a thorough and rapid Christological development. Similarly, Fletcher-Louis agrees that religious experiences alone are insufficient to explain such rapid Christological developments. Like Bates, Fletcher-Louis joins Bauckham in proposing a step further back in time in which the causative factor of Christological belief must have begun with Jesus's sense of his own divine identity, his "incarnational self-consciousness," expressed in his words and actions. This prior teaching of Jesus was then remembered by, coupled with, and reinterpreted alongside the revelatory experiences of the early Christians. In light of Hurtado's strict emphasis on the post-resurrection Jesus, Fletcher-Louis actually claims that Hurtado's Christology may be inching toward adoptionism. For the fascinating discussion, see Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 27–30, 65–86.

Review

Richard Hays encapsulates the approach advocated for here when he says, "We interpret Scripture rightly only when we read it in light of the resurrection, and we begin to comprehend the resurrection only when we see it as the climax of the scriptural story."[58] This summary captures the reciprocal relationship between revelatory experiences and exegetical endeavors. While the disciples may have gathered and recorded all the facts from their experiences and remembered Jesus's claims and teaching, Scripture "forms the hermeneutical matrix" within which "the resurrection becomes intelligible."[59] Accordingly, this project prefers something akin to the "charismatic exegesis" proposed by Aune and Hurtado but is perhaps better labeled "reciprocal exegesis." This exegetical practice is brought about by revelatory experiences that provide a fresh reading of texts.[60] Conversely, these revelatory experiences are interpreted through the lenses of Scriptural texts using newly informed exegetical categories.

This reciprocal relationship between experiences and texts repeatedly appears in the apostle's preaching in the book of Acts. Their preaching, growing from previous theological and exegetical work, created the beginning threads of what will later become a

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[58] Richard B. Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 216. Elsewhere, Hays (writing with Green) attests that the "first followers of Jesus, as Jews looking for the appearing of God's kingdom, sought to understand the meaning of the remarkable events that had been accomplished among them by meditating on Israel scriptures, which the church came later to call the Old Testament." Joel B. Green and Richard B. Hays, "The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 122–123.

[59] Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," 230.

[60] The qualifier "revelatory" is important. This project is not merely advocating for any type of experience but a "revelatory" experience in which God extends the act of revelation through His Spirit. Additionally, this project is not limiting this only to post-resurrection experiences, but also, following Chester and Fletcher-Louis, this project is advocating for the value of Jesus's earthly ministry and teaching.

full-blown tapestry of apostolic theology in the church's early years. Later in this project, this apostolic theology will be further explored. Here, it is valuable to point out that the resurrection becomes an assumed "given" of apostolic preaching and theology determinative for Christological understanding, ethical construction, and the formation of exegetical approaches.[61]

For the current project, it is significant to note that the revelatory experiences of Jesus's brothers, such as the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to James (1 Cor. 15:7; cf. Acts 1:14), appear to prompt their re-reading of key OT events through the lens of their experiences (e.g., James 5:7–11; Jude 5).[62] It seems that James's revelatory experience, if not the moment of his conversion, may have driven him back to the Scriptures to understand them in light of his brother's resurrection.[63] However, more than merely gaining a fresh understanding of the texts, James also received a fresh understanding of his brother (see James 2:1). In fact, Wall and Niebuhr explain that James' perspective toward all "Christian existence" is indeed entirely "framed and freighted by his Easter

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[61] Similarly, Bavinck says, "From the beginning, the resurrection of Christ was an enormously important constituent of the faith of the church: without that faith it would never have started. All the disciples had been offended by the cross; when Jesus was taken prisoner and killed, they fled (Mark 14:50) and went into hiding. But their faith revived when they learned that Jesus had risen; they were now able to reconsider his whole life in the light of the resurrection… The appearances of Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection were the crucial foundation for this faith." Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Abridged in One Volume*, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 455.

[62] See Hurtado's discussion of this in Hurtado, *Ancient Jewish Monotheism and Early Christian Jesus-Devotion*, 251–252. James's Christological epiphany, provided by his resurrection appearance, appears to be in accord with the Christological development that occurs in other authors of the NT as well (e.g., Acts 2:32–36; Rom. 1:3–4). In what follows, an argument will be made for the plausibility of a similar sort of resurrection experience in the life of Jude.

[63] Interestingly, in Acts 15:15–21, it seems that James is also influenced by his recent experiences surrounding the pivotal moment discussed in this chapter. He seems to re-read OT texts reciprocally, or in light of the recent conversion of the Gentiles, and then understand their conversion through the lenses of the Scriptures. For a discussion of this chapter and its historical context, see F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York, NY: Doubleday Galilee, 1969), 279–290.

experience."[64] Interestingly, James and Jude's half-brother, the definitive exegete *par excellence*, appears to all but model this exact interpretive framework in Luke 24.[65] This "resurrection hermeneutic" requires interpreters like James and Jude to reconsider the recent events of Jesus' life and the major events of the OT through "Easter lenses."

Summary

In the end, drawing this literature review on NT Christology to a close, this project prefers the insights from the scholars above, who argue for an *early* and *Jewish origin* to NT Christology that operates within *monotheistic categories* and is based on a type of reciprocal exegesis that synthesizes *exegetical* and *experiential* approaches. When each of these components are compiled, what emerges is not only a *description* of how this project understands the concept of an early, high Christology but also a *demonstration* of how the NT authors arrived at their Christological conclusions. In other words, if the *early*, *Jewish*, and *monotheistic* components describe *what* early Christians believed about Jesus, then the *exegetical* and *experiential* components describe *how* these believers arrived at their beliefs. As it will become clear, the current project is interested in the Christology and the exegesis of Jesus's brothers. However, as was noted above, since the Christological beliefs of Jesus's brothers emerge in ethical contexts, a review of the recent literature on NT ethics must also be conducted.

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[64] Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall, eds., "The SNTS Seminar on the Catholic Epistles (2001–2006)," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 2–3. They contrast this with the typical reading of James through a Pauline lens.

[65] Ryken says, "the Word of God incarnate explains the Word of God written." Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, Reformed Expository Commentaries (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009), 2:649.

NT Ethics

This survey of NT ethics will proceed quite differently than the survey of NT Christology. Rather than reviewing leading thinkers and approaches, this survey will paint with much broader strokes. Once an overview of the recent field is complete, a proposal will be set forth and implemented in the exegetical portions below.

Constructive Christian Ethics

Early in his excellent work *The Ethics of Mark's Gospel,* Dan Via makes a distinction in approaches to ethics that will be adopted here. Labeling one approach "constructive Christian ethics," Via describes it as focusing on a "systematic statement of the nature of the Christian ethical life for the contemporary situation, and its use of the NT texts will be adjusted to that intention."[66] The second approach, Via labels "New Testament ethics." This perspective focuses on the "NT texts themselves in the light of their formal literary features and historical setting, with a view to saying what the texts meant in their original context."[67] This review will first discuss the approach known as "constructive Christian ethics" and then cover "NT ethics."

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[66] Unfortunately, Via explains, this approach often has made "relatively little use of biblical material." Dan O. Via, *The Ethics of Mark's Gospel: In the Middle of Time* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 3, 5. Critical of the constructive approach, O'Donovan says, "We will read the Bible seriously only when we use it to guide our thought towards a *comprehensive* moral viewpoint, and not merely to articulate disconnected moral claims. We must look within it not only for moral bricks, but for indications of the order in which the bricks belong together." Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 200.

[67] Via, *The Ethics of Mark's Gospel*, 3. Hays lays out four operations that must be engaged in order to study NT ethics: the descriptive task, the synthetic task, the hermeneutical task, and the pragmatic task. Though the work of Hays does not figure prominently in this thesis, his methodology seems sounder than most approaches. Unfortunately, he does not treat any of the Catholic Epistles at all. See Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1996). Also, see his incredibly helpful checklist for using the NT in ethics, as well as his proposed guidelines for NT ethics. Ibid., 212–213, 310.

Constructive Christian Ethics and Philosophy

Constructive Christian ethicists often rely on philosophical approaches to ethics. When distinguishing between descriptive and prescriptive approaches to ethics, philosophers often explain descriptive ethics as the empirical division of ethics that focuses on what *is*. Prescriptive ethics, on the other hand, is the normative branch of ethics that focuses on how one *ought* to act. Descriptive ethics regularly receives less attention in constructive Christian ethics since it often leads to a form of ethical relativism. Philosophers and theologians often discuss prescriptive ethics under three headings: the deontological approach, the consequentialist approach, and the virtue-based approach. Deontology is duty-focused, consequentialism is outcome-focused, and the virtue approach is character-focused. Immanuel Kant is the most famous advocate of the deontological approach,[68] John Stuart Mill[69] is the most famous consequentialist, and Aristotle is the progenitor of virtue-based ethics.[70] Descriptive and prescriptive ethics are also distinct from applied ethics. Those in applied ethics typically adopt a deontological, consequentialist, or virtue-based approach and then apply the chosen ethical scheme to specific situations or questions. Finally, the realm of meta-ethics only rarely receives attention from constructive Christian ethicists. Meta-ethics explores the foundations and assumptions behind moral theories.[71]

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[68] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. C. Korsgaard, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[69] John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. George Sher, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Hackett Publishing, 2001). Utilitarianism is essentially community-focused consequentialism. It attempts to find ethical solutions that result in the greatest good for the greatest number.

[70] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[71] Meta-ethics involves "an attempt to step back from particular substantive debates within morality to ask about the views, assumptions, and commitments that are shared by those who engage in the debate." Geoff Sayre-McCord, "Metaethics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2014 ed. (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2014).

With these philosophical pieces in place, the theological aspects of constructive Christian ethics may now be explored.

Constructive Christian Ethics and Theology

The philosophical foundations above are the starting place for most constructive Christian ethicists.[72] While most do not outright adopt Kant's categorical principles or Mill's consequentialist calculus, often these ethical systems linger in the background. Most commonly, constructive Christian ethicists manufacture a baptized version of Kantian deontology or an Aristotelian virtue-based approach.[73] In fact, the most common approaches to Christian ethics can easily be mapped onto these popular prescriptive approaches. First, what most label a "rule-based" approach to ethics can easily be classified as deontological in that it contains the equivalent of Kant's "categorical imperative" in the form of God's law.[74] Utilizing the framework of what is known as the "Divine Command Theory," these scholars often swiftly move to applied ethics and give less attention to

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[72] See the excellent surveys in Arthur F. Holmes, *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions*, 2nd ed., Contours of Christian Philosophy (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1984); Steve Wilkens, ed., *Christian Ethics: Four Views*, Spectrum Multiview Books (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017).

[73] While it is not evident how successful he is, Cosgrove attempts to find these modern philosophical approaches in the NT. Consequentialist ethics are supposedly found in 1 Cor. 7:1–16; deontological ethics may appear in Mark 10:2–9; virtue–based ethics are scattered throughout the NT in the calls to follow exemplars. Charles H. Cosgrove, "New Testament Ethics," in *The New Testament and Ethics: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 38.

[74] Patrick J. Hartin, "New Testament Ethics: Some Trends in More Recent Research," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 59 (1987): 36. Even Hartin's description of a "principle-based" approach can also be categorized along with a Kantian scheme. Ibid., 36–37. Grenz, in fact, treats both the "law/rule" approach and the "principle" approach underneath the heading of "Heteronomy: revelation focused on the Word." See discussion in Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 242–247. Due to the high number of imperatives in the epistle of James, it would seem that investigations into the ethics of his letter may easily lend themselves toward a "rule-based" model for ethics. However, it will be shown that James's ethics are different than they may initially appear.

broader meta-ethical questions.[75] Second, others take up the Aristotelian or virtue-based perspective and presumably find this approach scattered throughout the NT. This approach is less focused on obedience to given rules or answers to specific questions and is more concerned with the character of the individuals involved.[76]

In contrast to these approaches, scholars have also identified another approach known as "responsibility ethics." Hartin defines this approach as that which "wishes to situate ethics within the context of the Christian faith as a response which is given to God who has worked the faith of the believer."[77] This approach, according to Hartin, "upholds above all the primacy of the person of Jesus" and "places morality in the true context of the Christian faith as a way of life which is lived out in response to the gift of faith which

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[75] Feinberg and Feinberg explain that their "modified deontology" view is close to the way "divine command theory" is often discussed. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg, *Ethics for a Brave New World*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 37. Others fit into this camp in one way or another: David W. Jones, *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics*, ed. Daniel R. Heimbach, B & H Studies in Biblical Ethics (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013); John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957). For examples of those who tend to rush to applied ethics, see, for example, Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2018); Wayne Grudem, *Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018). Feinberg and Feinberg explicitly explain in their introduction that they "handle primarily normative questions" as they "delineate actions that are morally right and wrong." Feinberg and Feinberg, *Ethics for a Brave New World*, 22. While the issues discussed are obviously important, these approaches at times appear to be "exegetically thin." Christopher R. J. Holmes, *Ethics in the Presence of Christ* (New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2012), 18–19.

[76] MacIntyre, who bemoaned the ascendancy of emotivism, is largely seen as responsible for revitalizing this approach to ethics. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). For an example of this approach to NT ethics, see Daniel J. Harrington and James F. Keenan, *Jesus and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges Between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

[77] Hartin, "New Testament Ethics: Some Trends in More Recent Research," 37.

the believer has received."[78] This approach, more than others, appears to create more space for the exploration of meta-ethics, and not merely the discussion of applied ethics.[79] Because of its ability to house meta-ethical questions, this "response" approach will factor into the angle taken here.[80] In short, this project aims to investigate the "response" to the

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[78] Hartin continues by saying that the Christian is "called upon to respond to this by a life led in accordance with the new relationship which he" has entered. Ibid., 41. Of the more philosophical approaches, Lovin may be the closest to this position explained by Hartin. As it will be shown, this is not far from the position taken in this project. Lovin says, "The Christian stance is an approach to moral problems that begins from a set of beliefs that are generally shared among Christians, including beliefs about God and about how God's presence in Jesus of Nazareth reshapes human lives and indicates the direction of human history... Our concern is with the way these beliefs shape the perspective of Christians as they approach moral choices." Robin W. Lovin, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), viii.

[79] This approach also seems similar to that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Philip Ziegler points out that "there is remarkably little ethics in Bonhoeffer's *Ethics*" because Bonhoeffer is not primarily concerned with specific ethical questions but with "meta-ethical" contexts. Philip G. Ziegler, "'Completely within God's Doing': Soteriology as Meta-Ethics in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer," in *Christ, Church and World: New Studies in Bonhoeffer's Theology and Ethics*, ed. Michael Mawson and Philip G. Ziegler (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 101–117. He is concerned with defining the "moral field within which human persons as ethical agents are located." In this way, he offers a "dogmatic description of the reality of the world" within which humans live and move and have their being." Ibid., 101. According to Bonhoeffer's first chapter in *Ethics*, the meta-reality of Christ is the primary shaping reality, the fundamentally determinative factor that governs the "moral field" within which we find ourselves. Early in his *Ethics,* Bonhoeffer sets his approach over-against Kant's categorical principles and Mill's consequentialist calculus because he concludes, following the logic of Colossians 1:17, that "all concepts of reality that ignore Jesus Christ are abstractions." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works (Reader's Edition) (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 5–7. Interestingly, because of his view of the person of Christ, Bonhoeffer can move from the meta to the concrete with ease. He is able to do this by holding that Christ did not become a principle but a person, a person in whom the meta meets the concrete. In his *Ethics,* he says that "Christ is not the preacher of a system," he "does not teach an abstract ethic," he "was not essentially a teacher or a legislator, but a man, a real man like us." Therefore, Christ wants us to be "real human beings before God." Jesus, according to Bonhoeffer, is interested in that which "serves real concrete human beings." This is built on the premise that "God did not become an idea, a principle, a program, a generality, or a law, but God became a man." Since Jesus himself cannot be understood in the abstract, neither can the ethical Christian life. Bonhoeffer concludes that "we are turned away from any abstract ethic and toward a concrete ethic. We can and should speak not about what the good is, can be, or should be for each and every time, but about how Christ may take form among us today and here." Ibid., 45. See discussion in John W. De Gruchy, "A Concrete Ethic of the Cross: Interpreting Bonhoeffer's Ethics in North America's Backyard," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 58, no. 1 (2004): 33–45. What may be lacking in these authors, however, is Jesus's relationship with Scripture. Jesus modeled a dependence on the written Word of God.

[80] These models are understood by Hays to be "Modes of Appeal to Scripture." His categories are very similar to what has been outlined above. It seems his "symbolic world" category likely has the most in common with the approach advocated here. He describes this category as one that "creates the perceptual categories through which we interpret reality." Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 209.

resurrection that motivated the formation of the ethics of the brothers of Jesus.[81] This investigation must include an exegetical excavation of the underlying and presupposed meta-ethical and theological substructures that provide ethical coherence. As the methodological and exegetical sections will demonstrate, James and Jude assumed that their audiences were familiar with and shared their theological and macro-ethical context. The position advocated for here is that the resurrection, just as it impacted their Christology and exegesis, also provided the macro-ethical and theological framework inside of which their audiences were expected to respond.

New Testament Ethics

As was described above, Via's second category of ethics, in contrast to the constructive Christian position, involves a more explicit and intentional use of the NT. He says that "New Testament ethics" are described as focusing on the "NT texts themselves in the light of their formal literary features and historical setting, with a view to saying what the texts meant in their original context."[82] The approach taken in this project can be described as a combination of the "response" approach above and Via's "New Testament ethics." The meta-ethical and theological components of the "response" approach are coupled with the exegesis of NT texts in light of their literary and historical setting. The next chapter will

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[81] As before, it must be noted that Scripture is what "forms the hermeneutical matrix" within which "the resurrection becomes intelligible." Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," 230.

[82] Via, *The Ethics of Mark's Gospel*, 3. Some have attempted to understand NT ethics through the "indicative and imperative" lens. However, scholars have explained that this understanding is too simple to describe the "complex form of ethical structure within NT discourse." Ruben Zimmermann, "The 'Implicit Ethics' of New Testament Writings: A Draft on a New Methodology for Analysing New Testament Ethics," *Neotestamentica* 43, no. 2 (2009): 410. Additionally, see J. de Waal Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom: Recovering the Formative Agency of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 45, 191.

outline the methods implemented in pursuing this material. For now, a literature survey from those representing Via's second category must be set forth.

New Testament Ethics and Texts

Though there has certainly been a recent revitalization of the field of NT ethics,[83] there is also the unavoidable reality of the "long and twisted story of the use and abuse of the NT writings for moral and ethical guidance."[84] A considerable portion of this "twisted" history can be understood through reflection on the effects of form criticism. Scholars such as Martin Dibelius have often proposed that the ethical portions that characteristically appear at the end of Paul's letters, for example, were haphazardly added by later followers of Paul to fill the ethical vacuum created as a result of the delayed *parousia*. Claiming that Paul's eschatological consciousness was overbearingly forceful, Dibelius insists that he did not bother to offer any ethical framework at all and instead encouraged an ethics of waiting. This line of reasoning leads Dibelius and others to see absolutely no connection between the theology and ethics of Paul, but, instead, they understand "Pauline" ethics to be merely

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[83] Unfortunately, the study of the Bible and Christian ethics have tended to be separated and treated as two distinct disciplines. See "Introduction" in Joel B. Green, *The New Testament and Ethics: A Book-by-Book Survey* (Baker Academic, 2013). Also, see Stephen Charles Mott, "The Use of the New Testament for Social Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 15, no. 2 (1987): 225–260. However, Gupta explains that the publication of the *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* was one indicator that the subject of "New Testament Ethics" was officially a new field. Joel B. Green et al., eds., *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011); Nijay K. Gupta, "New Testament Ethics," in *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 264.

[84] O. Lamar Cope, "Ethics and the New Testament: A Survey of Perspectives (1970–1980)," *Word & World* 2, no. 2 (1982): 178.

recycled Hellenistic moral wisdom at best.[85] In contrast, as will be demonstrated below, the delayed *parousia* was actually substantially generative of what many want to label the "eschatological ethics" of the NT. As a result of this misreading of the NT's ethical content, this project sides with Keck, who proposes that the "subfield of 'New Testament Ethics'" needs re-thinking.[86]

Implicit Ethics

The portion of NT ethics that will be "re-thought" here is the theological process by which the NT authors arrived at their ethics.[87] In other words, what prior and implicit macro-ethical or theological commitments dwell underneath the surface of the texts that prompt and situate the ethical expressions we find?[88] As a starting place, Keck suggests that "the

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[85] For the classic treatment on the negative view of NT ethics, see Dibelius, *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (London, UK: Nicholson & Watson, 1936), 217–237. See the discussion in Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 17; James W. Thompson, *Moral Formation According to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 10ff., 87–109; Gupta, "New Testament Ethics," 255.

[86] Keck says that "much that passes for NT ethics makes into ethics what is not really ethics at all but a heterogeneous mass of imperatives, counsels, parables, narratives, and theological statements that pertain to the moral life without actually being ethics." Leander E. Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 1 (1996): 3–4. Keck draws on Wrede's description of NT theology. See William Wrede, "The Task and Methods of 'New Testament Theology,'" in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: The Contribution of William Wrede and Adolf Schlatter*, ed. Robert Morgan, Studies in Biblical Theology 25 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1973), 2:75.

[87] Since in the NT, as was mentioned before, theological content often surfaces in an ethical context (see, e.g., 1 Cor. 8:5–6 and Phil. 2:6–11), one must consider the relationship between the author's theology and ethics. Regarding Paul's letters, Thompson says that Paul's theology does not fit into the categories created by Western theologians. Instead, Paul writes "occasional letters, responding to a variety of questions. His thoughts on Christology... are scattered among his letters in responses to various issues." It is in this practical and ethical context that Paul's theology arises. Later, Thompson says, "Paul's task is not only to inform or to educate but also to affect readers and to shape their behavior." James W. Thompson, *Apostle of Persuasion: Theology and Rhetoric in the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), 2–3, 8.

[88] Zimmerman explains that the NT contains ethics that, "while not explicitly or systematically contemplated, are certainly indirectly assumed, or represented when actions are explained, evaluated, and required. Therefore, it is appropriate to speak of the 'implicit ethics' of NT writings." Zimmermann, "The 'Implicit Ethics' of New Testament Writings," 399.

student of NT ethics must bring to the surface, make explicit, the rationale or 'moral reasoning' built into the exhortation." Keck says that this is "the 'real stuff' of ethics even if grammatically it is neither the subject nor the main verb of the sentence."[89] Similarly, rooting the excavation process in historical and cultural investigation, Zimmerman explains that in order to "understand and analyze" the ethical implications of the NT texts, one needs "to explore the situation and context in which they were written. Therefore, investigating the morality of the NT means looking at the *ethos* behind the NT writings."[90] Therefore, in order to understand the ethics of James and Jude, we must look behind their letters and grasp the implicit macro-ethical context that is driving the explicit description of their ethics. The methods that will be utilized to discover this context, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Inherited Ethics

As it will become apparent throughout the exegetical portions below, the implicit *ethos* behind the letters of James and Jude is primarily shaped by their understanding of their place within the OT redemption story. More than that, as was brought out in the literature review above, James and Jude construct their Christology and ethics through a process of charismatic or reciprocal exegesis wherein they interpret their recent experiences through

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[89] For this quote and the previous, see Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" 7. Gupta asserts that "one cannot really isolate the 'theology' of the NT writers from the socially and ethically formative purposes of their discourses." For further insight, see Gupta's excellent discussion of Victor Furnish's work in Gupta, "New Testament Ethics," 258–259, 272. Gupta explains that Furnish understood Paul's ethics to primarily be shaped and influenced by the Christ event and other eschatological and Christological convictions. This is similar to what will be developed below.

[90] Zimmermann, "The 'Implicit Ethics' of New Testament Writings," 400.

the "hermeneutical matrix" of the OT.[91] Hays and Green instruct interpreters to remember that James and Jude, along with the rest of the early church, were "Jews looking for the appearing of God's kingdom," who "sought to understand the meaning of the remarkable events that had been accomplished among them by meditating on Israel scriptures, which the church came later to call the Old Testament." The "fundamental conviction" of these early followers of Christ was that "God had acted in an unexpected way to fulfill the promises made to Israel, to bring to completion the whole history of God's dealings with his people." Now, with "transformed eyes," these followers of Jesus "read and reread scripture, discovering there prefigurations of the grace of God they had come to experience." The OT texts, in turn, "provided a storehouse of images and categories out of which the gospel proclamation took shape." Hays and Green conclude that "from the earliest stages of the Christian movement —indeed, even during Jesus's own lifetime — Scripture was integral to the formation of the identity and teaching of the community of Jesus's followers."[92] In fact, James and Jude were so sure that their audiences shared their cognitive world that they regularly took for granted their knowledge of OT stories and characters (James 2:21, 25; 3:9; 4:6; 5:10–11, 17; Jude 5–16). Building on the expectation of shared OT categories, the brothers of Jesus liberally quoted from, alluded to, and built on the OT in order to situate and substantiate their Christological claims and ethical directives. Indeed, it would be appropriate to assume that James and Jude would understand their Christology and ethics to be entirely inherited from the OT. The hermeneutical matrix

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[91] Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," 230.

[92] The preceding sentences are from Joel B. Green and Richard B. Hays, "The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 122–123.

of the OT, therefore, seems to inescapably control the macro-ethical and theological context of James, Jude, and their audiences.

Linguistic Ethics

Additionally, in the endeavor to discover the theological rationale and ethical superstructure that underlies the NT writings, Zimmerman suggests that one must be sensitive to the "linguisticality of ethics" and ask, "which syntactical forms, stylistic features, and structural logic are used in presenting ethical statements."[93] To discover these aspects of NT ethics, further attention will be given to the linguistic and rhetorical setting of the text in the next chapter underneath the headings of rhetorical theory and speech act theory. These interpretive theories will assist in unearthing the moral reasoning and the undergirding theological rationale behind the texts of James and Jude. This process will reveal a surprising correlation between the ethics of the brothers of Jesus and the event of the resurrection. This correlation will now be explored in the next section.

New Testament Ethics and Events

Upon a close reading of James and Jude, attentive interpreters are often struck by the exalted language used to describe their brother, Jesus. Additionally, as the exegesis below will demonstrate, James and Jude's understanding of the roles of Jesus as Lord and Judge surface as controlling features of their ethical appeals. But where did this exalted language come from, and how did it arise as a controlling component of their ethical framework? Keck explains that the "defining feature" of NT ethics is its "orientation to an event,

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[93] Ibid., 403–405. Keck also discusses the relationship between ethics and rhetoric/persuasion. Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" 10.

namely, the event of Jesus."[94] Similarly, in answering the question concerning a structuring feature that undergirds the NT moral exhortations, Blount says, "It is not ethics formed around a philosophical construct." It is, instead, "event ethics." That is, "ethics oriented toward and structured around the event of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection."[95] Specifically, this project holds that it is the historical and massively theological event of the resurrection that unites the ethics and Christology of the NT.[96] The resurrection generated a new reality that caused both Christological and eschatological shifts in understanding.[97] It is these new vistas that create the macro-ethical matrix in which Christology and ethics are formed.[98]

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[94] Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" 10. Keck later says that the "Christian life is a response to something decisive and redemptive that has happened." Ibid., 16. As is obvious, this approach is very similar to the "response" approach discussed above. Keck elaborates, the "event of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection" gives the NT a clear "ethical coherence." This event, then, is the "foundation of New Testament ethics." Brian K. Blount, *Then the Whisper Put on Flesh: New Testament Ethics in an African American Context* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 19.

[95] For this quote and the previous, see Blount, *Then the Whisper Put on Flesh*, 17.

[96] Grenz says, "The report of the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus lies at the center of the Bible. In the same way this report forms the heart of biblical ethics." Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*, 106. O'Donovan says, "The foundations of Christian ethics must be evangelical foundations; or, to put it more simply, Christian ethics must arise from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, it could not be *Christian* ethics." O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 11.

[97] The emphasis on the resurrection in this project is in no way meant to diminish the massively important work of Christ on the cross, the ascension, or the day of Pentecost. However, the resurrection is that which validated Christ's work on the cross and transformed his followers. Witherington says, "If we ask why and how a crucified and totally shamed man subsequently became the object of prayer, praise, devotion, and proclamation by the very first Christians, the answer surely must be that the disciples had encountered him alive beyond the grave." Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 2:77.

[98] O'Donovan says, "From the resurrection we look not only back to the created order which is vindicated, but forwards to our eschatological participation in that order." O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 22. Similarly, Keck explains that the Christ event provides both the warrant (which stands behind the behavior advocated) and the telos (which stands ahead of the behavior, or that toward which the deed inherently points.) This dynamic brings into view both the past events and the eschatological future. Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" 11.

Resurrection Ethics

O'Donovan argues for the "theological proposition that Christian ethics depends upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."[99] Throughout his book, O'Donovan argues that the resurrection is the pivot point for assessing ethics from a Christian perspective. He explains that all sorts of events "can have consequences which endure," but the "redemptive moment, or moments, of Christ's passion and triumph act upon our present in quite another way."[100] In fact, Witherington claims that the NT communities possessed a shared "framework in which they did their theologizing and ethicizing" because of the shockingly powerful event of the resurrection.[101] Witherington continues by explaining that there was much that the NT "communities had in common and indeed took largely for granted" because the "impact crater of the Christ-event" was so significantly felt by them all.[102] Further, because of the early date of composition of the letters of James and Jude, this project understands the resurrection as still fresh in the social memory of their audiences, allowing James and Jude to take their audience's knowledge for granted and

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[99] O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 13.

[100] Ibid., 103. Similarly, Newbigin says that "the resurrection cannot be accommodated in any way of understanding the world except one of which it is the starting point. Some happenings, which come to our notice, may be simply noted without requiring us to undertake any radical revision of our ideas. The story of the resurrection of the crucified is obviously not of this kind... If it is true, it has to be the starting point of a wholly new way of understanding the cosmos and the human situation in the cosmos." Lesslie Newbigin, *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Event* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 11. See also Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005), 19.

[101] Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 2:425. Witherington III explains, "What is too seldom noted about the shared moral vision of the NT writers... is that it is grounded in... the story of Christ himself and the experience of Christ." Therefore, a NT Christian ethic "is not an abstract intellectual exercise; rather, it is a response to the work of God in the midst of God's people. And what they are most responding to is Christ and his story as it has impacted them." Ibid., 2:424.

[102] For this and the previous quotations, see Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 2:425. This "assumed theology" that can be taken for granted will be discussed in the next chapter.

assume them as the basis for their Christology and ethics. The primary ways in which the resurrection changed the perspective of the brothers of Jesus is in the way they understood their *Christology* and *eschatology* to relate to their ethics.[103]

Christological Ethics

The most significant theological turning point brought about by the resurrection was the reformulation of the Christology of the apostles.[104] The resurrection validated Jesus's prior claims, showed him worthy to receive the ascription of divine titles, and was the impetus for his reception of reverence and worship. This Christological reformation also included a meta-ethical shift in which the apostles' entire understanding of basic reality and redemptive history underwent massive adjustment.[105] This macro-ethical overhaul justifies the claim that ethics is "not a matter of conformity to so-called moral principles" but is instead a life response "oriented toward revelation."[106] Christopher Holmes claims that the

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[103] In this way, the resurrection figures prominently in each major component of the thesis. The resurrection radically altered the Christology of the brothers of Jesus, it forever changed their exegesis, and served now as the foundation for ethics. The reality of the resurrection was fixed firmly in the social memory of James and Jude's audiences. They could assume it as a historical and theological given.

[104] This seems very similar to Schrage's understanding as well. Gupta says, "Schrage's ethics of the NT was thoroughly Christological, centered on 'God's saving act in Jesus Christ.'" Similar to the current project, Schrage understood the ethics of the NT to be focused on the reality of the divine Lordship of Christ. See discussion in Gupta, "New Testament Ethics," 261.

[105] O'Donovan says, "Christian moral thought must respond to objective morality—the reality, that is, of a world-order restored in Christ, the reality which the gospel declares." O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 101.

[106] Holmes, *Ethics in the Presence of Christ*, 4.

"context or field in which we find ourselves" requires "Christology for its intelligibility."[107] In addition to Christological adjustments, the resurrection also opened up an entire storehouse of eschatological realities previously unobserved by the apostles.[108]

Eschatological Ethics

NT ethicists are often in agreement regarding the ethical relevance of the eschatological judgment in the mind of the NT authors (cf. 2 Peter 3:11–13). For example, Keck concludes his excellent article, *Rethinking New Testament Ethics*, by explaining that "the ultimate moral sanction" in the NT is "God's coming judgment."[109] According to Keck, when the NT informs Christian ethics, this eschatological theme of judgment will be restored "to its rightful place" and the reality of "our accountability" to God will be remembered. When this occurs, not only are macro-ethical contexts affected, but also the primary ethical question would not be, "what must/ought/should/may I *do*?" or "what is the right moral calculus for deciding it?" but rather, "to whom am I accountable, and for what?"[110] The

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[107] Ibid., 15. Holmes describes his book as "an intervention invoked by a problem: the lack of Christology... in contemporary works in Christian and/or theological ethics." Ibid., 5. Holmes says that "ethics is behavior that recognizes 'the pioneer and perfecter' of our faith." Ibid., 1. See also O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 143. See further fn. 80 above for Bonhoeffer's discussion of this new Christological understanding of reality.

[108] Witherington III, drawing several of this project's emphases together, explains, "it is the Christological vision of the NT writers that caused a Christological revisioning of monotheism, of ethics, of salvation, of hermeneutics, of OT prophecy, and a host of other subjects." Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 1:53.

[109] Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" 16. See also Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*, 267–269. Specifically, as it relates to the later NT writings, Verhey says, "the later NT writings see the moral life in the light of the end." A. Verhey, "Ethics," ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 348. For a look at how "punishment and reward" are used to reinforce demands for righteous living, see discussion in Larry J. Kreitzer, "Parousia," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments,* 856–873.

[110] For this and previous quotations, see Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" 16.

theme of eschatological judgment, coupled with the accountability to a person, captures the essence of James and Jude's ethics.[111] These leaders of the early church present their ethical content in relation to their brother, the Lord and Judge.[112]

Summary

Over against constructive approaches to Christian ethics, this project favors a "NT ethics" approach based on a "response" to the Christ event. Among the other significant events that occur inside of the broader "Christ event," this project foregrounds the resurrection. When the resurrection is used as a primary lens, Christological and eschatological implications also surface. To uncover these theological and macro-ethical substructures that underlie the ethics of the NT, interpreters must venture beneath the surface of the texts and investigate the assumed theology that drives the rhetorical strategies. The following chapter will explore various interpretive methods to assist exegetes in exploring the Christology and ethics of the Catholic Epistles.

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[111] Reflective of their brother's eschatological emphasis, James and Jude utilize judgment as the "overriding sanction and motivation for righteous living." Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 104.

[112] For James, McCartney says that the motivation for the ethical life comes from two directions: "from the past, the commitment to Christ" and also from "the future, the certainty of coming judgment." Dan G. McCartney, *James*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 72. Laws says that the epistle of James is the "most consistently ethical document in the NT." Sophie Laws, *The Epistle of James*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1980), 27. James, widely seen as strictly practical in nature with over 50 imperatives, is wisdom literature in an eschatological key. See chapter 4.

Chapter 3:

The Methodological Approach to James and Jude

By strictly utilizing traditional, historical-critical approaches for the last 300 years, interpreters have often treated the Catholic Epistles (CE) in complete isolation from one another.[113] This historical-critical treatment shapes the questions asked and dictates the scope of research available for modern interpreters to explore. Thus, significant features of the text (i.e., the rhetorical or ethical intent of the author) have been neglected. Schneiders' observations are especially penetrating.

> Method, understood as a pre-established set of procedures for investigating some phenomenon, in fact not only attains its object but creates its object. In other words, it determines *a priori* what kind of data can be obtained and will be considered relevant... Method not only assures a systematic coverage of certain areas of investigation; it also rules out of court any data not discoverable by that method.[114]

Following the lead of Schneiders, this project is advocating for fresh methods[115] of approaching the CE in general and James and Jude specifically to unearth the often-overlooked theological and ethical vantage point not easily discoverable by traditional,

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[113] Darian R. Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 5.

[114] She illustrates this by saying, "If, for example, my method of investigation is a ruler, the only scientifically reliable datum that can emerge is linear dimension. If no other methods are employed, over a long period of time I might eventually conclude that the only significant datum about reality is linear dimension, and that the essential scientific definition of reality is in terms of physical extension." Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 23–24.

[115] For a discussion of the eclipse of historical-critical approaches, as well as a history of emerging methods in exegesis, see Dennis Edwards, "Hermeneutics and Exegesis," in *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 63–82. Additionally, for a discussion of the "new perspectives" in research methods in both James and Jude studies, see the respective chapters in Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*.

historical-critical methods.[116] In other words, this project claims that to mine the rich theological and ethical resources James and Jude offer, interpreters must not approach these letters using ill-fitting methodological approaches.[117] To observe what may surface as a result of possible new approaches, this project will make use of the methodological frameworks and interpretive insights of two modern theologians: Darian R. Lockett and J. de Waal Dryden. The insights from these two scholars will be explored below under two headings: *The Collection of the Catholic Epistles* and *The Theology and Ethics of the Catholic Epistles*. These insights will then be applied in the exegetical sections that follow to account for the theological and ethical dynamics in play.

The Collection of the Catholic Epistles

The CE have been overshadowed in academic and ecclesial circles for centuries. Practically every commentary, monograph, essay, and article written about this letter collection or the individual letters inside begin with a statement concerning their general neglect. As a representative example, Lockett says, despite the "theological and practical riches"

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[116] Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 1. Several recent interpreters are acknowledging the need for fresh (or sometimes a retrieval of old) methods. For example, see Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2021); Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*. Matthew Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis: A Theology of Biblical Interpretation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008); Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2018); Craig G. Bartholomew and Heath A. Thomas, eds., *A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016); Craig G. Bartholomew, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

[117] This same point is made by Zimmermann as it relates to unearthing the "implicit ethics" of the NT. Zimmermann, "The 'Implicit Ethics' of New Testament Writings." Sloan says that "[t]he "so-called problems of the theology and/or Christology of the book of James are, it seems to me, more matters of the paradigms and methods with which it is examined than its supposed sub-Christian qualities." Sloan, "The Christology of James," 3.

contained therein, "the Catholic Epistles have not traditionally received the attention they deserve."[118] The editors of a recent volume on the CE explain that when theologians mute the voices of this rich collection, "we open ourselves up to the problem of forming a distorted, or at least limited picture" of the theology and ethics of early Christianity.[119] This distortion is caused in large measure by modern interpreters' preference for the Pauline literature. In effect, some interpreters border on being pseudo-Marcionites who, at worst, exclude the other non-Pauline NT material or, at best, interpret all other NT literature through Pauline lenses.[120] Instead, according to Robert Wall, exegetes should bring the various canonical voices together to hear the "vibrant sound produced by a complement of different and sometimes dissonant voices," intoned in this case by the Pauline and the CE collections.[121] In this way, the CE from the "pillar apostles" (Gal. 2:9) are seen as voices of co-equals and colleagues of Paul and his literature, not as inferior subordinates or adversaries. One of the aims of the current project, therefore, is to foreground two of the often "muted" voices from the CE so that their distinctive contributions to NT Christology

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[118] Darian R. Lockett, *Letters for the Church: Reading James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, and Jude as Canon* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 2. Also, Newman says, "the CE have become marginalized prophets, forever marooned in their own canonical hometown." Carey C. Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 41, no. 4 (2014): 368.

[119] Hockey, Pierce, and Watson, *Muted Voices of the New Testament*, 4. This letter collection is often overlooked in NT Theology texts. For example, Ladd says that the CE "add little to the main theological thought of the New Testament." He also adds that James "hardly demands the attention of the theologian" and then sadly gives only a few paragraphs to Jude. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 634, 639, 655–656.

[120] See discussion in N. T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 873. The negative effects of this Pauline lens are illustrated most vividly in the interpretation of James.

[121] Robert W. Wall, "Canonical Context and Canonical Conversations," in *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 181.

and ethics can be appropriately appreciated. To accomplish this, a sort of "apologetic" for the broader CE collection is in order. The following subsections will discuss issues related to the *canonicity* of James and Jude, the theological payoffs available to those who read these letters as a distinct *collection*, and will conclude with a proposal related to the *coherence* of this letter collection.

The Canonicity of the Catholic Epistles

Prior to the Reformation, the CE did not always receive a warm canonical welcome, yet Martin Luther's continued negative influence on the reception of the letters of James and Jude cannot be overstated.[122] Luther foreshadowed the modern neglect of James and Jude by claiming that since these letters "did not speak of Christ" in the same way that the Pauline epistles did, their authenticity and, therefore, canonicity should be disputed.[123] Today it appears these letters have "never recovered from their less-than-enthusiastic early reception," and as a result, their voices have "remained muted"[124] for far too long. J. Daryl Charles explains that since Luther, several books in the CE have "languished in the backwater of biblical interpretation" for many reasons, "not the least of which is the belief that neither of these letters, in bold contrast, say, to the Pauline epistles, is sufficiently

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[122] For an example of pre-Luther neglect, Irenaeus and Origen do not mention either James or Jude; Clement of Alexandria and the Muratorian canon only mention Jude; though Eusebius lists both books in his "disputed" category, he nevertheless understands both James and Jude to be a part of the CE collection; Athanasius includes both letters in his list. See discussion in Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 305–307; Wright and Bird, *The New Testament in Its World*, 870–871.

[123] Herman N. Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures*, 2nd rev. ed., Biblical & Theological Studies (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1988), 3. See also discussion in Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), 134.

[124] Hockey, Pierce, and Watson, *Muted Voices of the New Testament*, 3.

Christocentric or theologically robust."[125] In contrast to Luther, the following section will discuss a unique canonical convention that may have signaled the canonicity of these letters and gestured toward an early, high Christology. This suggestion is merely one implicit example among many that could be put forth to refute Luther's claims. The additional material surveyed later will more explicitly reveal the shortcomings in Luther's position.

The *Nomina Sacra* and Canonicity

A unique feature found in the early NT manuscripts is the writing convention known as *nomina sacra* (singular: *nomen sacrum*; from Latin, meaning "sacred name"). This Christian scribal practice, acting as a sort of "textual code," was rather distinct from other, more typical, scribal phenomena, and thus Christian texts containing this convention were set apart from the imitations.[126] Lockett explains that the *nomina sacra* was a "collection of up to fifteen words that were written in a special abbreviated form," either contracting or suspending the name to shorten it out of reverence or due to its frequency of use.[127] Interestingly, this writing convention became so prominent that Hurtado suggests that the mere presence of the *nomina sacra* in a manuscript were typically "itself a good indication

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[125] J. Daryl Charles, "Polemic and Persuasion: Typological Rhetorical Perspectives on the Letter of Jude," in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. Robert L. Webb and Peter H. Davids, Library of New Testament Studies 383 (London, UK: T & T Clark International, 2008), 81.

[126] Darian R Lockett, "What Do James, Peter, John, and Jude Have in Common? Arguing for the Canonical Collection of the Catholic Epistles," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 24, no. 3 (2020): 130.

[127] The contracted form uses only the first and last letters of a word, while the suspended form uses only the first two letters. For example, using the more common contracted form, the nominative of κύριος would be written in the manuscripts as ΚΣ, while the nominative of Ιησούς would be written as ΙΣ. The widespread use of this convention, even in the earliest of manuscripts, is made evident by observing that all the extant Greek and Latin manuscripts utilize this convention. Darian R. Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles: The Formation of the Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Collection* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 115.

of its Christian provenance."[128] This observation alone does not of course solve all the issues related to the canonicity of these texts, but it should at least inform an understanding of the early reception of these letters by Christian scribes who utilized this writing convention.[129] It is significant to note that the *nomina sacra* are utilized in each Christological passage exegeted below.

The *Nomina Sacra* and Christology

Secondly, Bokedal has given specific attention to the use of the *nomina sacra* and the divine name given to Jesus.[130] He suggests that the very use of the *nomina sacra* may, in fact, "give some graphical support to a high-Christological reading" of Scripture.[131] In other words, since the *nomina sacra* are "used again and again in the formulation of early Christological confessions and articulations of the rule of faith,"[132] it may be that this simple "code" signaled an early Christian confession of Christ as Lord. In fact, following the suggestion of Newman that will be discussed below, it may mean that the use of the *nomina sacra* is a sort of creed in and of itself that is capable of housing a Christological

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[128] L. W. Hurtado, "The Origin of the Nomina Sacra: A Proposal," *Journal of Biblical literature* 117, no. 4 (1998): 655–673.

[129] See this discussion in ibid. For a simplified discussion, see Dirk Jongkind, *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 24–25, 42.

[130] On this point, Jobes and Silva say, "Perhaps the most striking case of the adoption and adaptation of theological language from the Greek Jewish Scriptures in the NT is the use of ὁ κύριος with reference to Jesus Christ. It is difficult to find a better starting point for Christology than the realization that the NT writers, who for the most part were monotheistic Jewish men, freely apply to Jesus, without apology or explanation, the term previously used in the Scriptures to translate the divine name of God." Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 220.

[131] Tomas Bokedal, The Formation and Significance of the Christian Biblical Canon: A Study in Text, Ritual and Interpretation (London, UK: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014), 100.

[132] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 117.

confession and even the entire gospel narrative.[133] Therefore, the use of such a writing convention may signal that embedded within the copying techniques of these early scribes was an early reception of these letters as well as a hint toward the presence of what they interpreted as a high Christology.

As the investigation of the texts below will further demonstrate, James and Jude indeed "spoke of Christ" in exalted language that would rival the high Christology of the apostle Paul. So, while Luther is certainly right to point out that these letters speak of Christ *differently* than Paul, it is wrong to conclude that they do not have a high Christology or do not deserve to be considered canonical. The early reception of, and apparent high Christology present within, these letters by these early scribes (demonstrated by their use of the *nomina sacra*) leads this project to conclude that Luther's comments are misguided.

The Compilation of the Catholic Epistles

The final product of the NT canon can be understood, in one sense, as a "compilation of collections" rather than a compilation of individual books.[134] Though the individual letters within the CE collection were written much earlier, Lockett explains that it is historically plausible to imagine the collection of these letters likely taking shape in the early third

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[133] Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," 370.

[134] The history of canonization shows that individual books were rarely recognized as canonical apart from existing within a previous collection. For clarity, it must be noted that the CE do not include the book of Hebrews (which typically traveled with the Pauline collection), nor do they include the book of Revelation (which was perhaps the only book that traveled alone). See the discussion in Larry W. Hurtado, "The New Testament in the Second Century: Text, Collections and Canon," in *Transmission and Reception: New Testament Text-Critical and Exegetical Studies*, ed. Jeff W. Childers and D. C. Parker, vol. 4, Text and Studies Third Series (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 3–27. See also, Harry Y. Gamble, "Canonical Formation of the New Testament," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

century, perhaps AD 225 at the latest.[135] In much the same way that the four gospels or the thirteen letters of Paul are treated as a collection, a rising tide of scholars is proposing that readers of the CE collection interpret these letters as a distinct unit rather than exclusively as individual letters.[136] When this framework is applied, at least two interpretive payoffs surface. First, the CE should be read within the narrative framework of the book of Acts. Additionally, though many scholars take this observation too far, the canonical order of the CE may be intentional and, therefore, may surface new interpretive insights.

The Narrative of the Catholic Epistles

A survey of early manuscript collections will show that "many of the early codices specifically witness to the combination of Acts and the Catholic Epistles."[137] In fact, according to Parker, in the Byzantine world, manuscript collections known as *Praxapostoloi* were common. Parker explains that "such a book would contain the Catholic epistles directly after Acts."[138] That the CE were both canonical traveling companions with the book of Acts and were, at least in the Eastern tradition, arranged to follow Acts in the

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[135] Lockett, "What Do James, Peter, John, and Jude Have in Common? Arguing for the Canonical Collection of the Catholic Epistles," 124.

[136] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 2. Wall says that the CE should be read as a collection "whose seven books are integral parts of a coherent theological whole." Robert W. Wall, "A Unifying Theology of the Catholic Epistles: A Canonical Approach," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 13.

[137] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 61. This ordering predominates in the eastern traditions. See, especially, the following lists where all of the CE are listed and placed immediately after Acts and before the Pauline letters: The Council of Laodicea (AD 363), Athanasius's Festal Letter of (AD 367), the Codex Vaticanus (fourth century), Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 350), Codex Alexandrinus (5th century).

[138] D. C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 283. Interestingly, Lockett, following Trobisch, points out that the NA^{27} describes the contents of most manuscripts using only four letters (*e* – gospels, *a* = Praxapostolos, *p* = Letters of Paul, *r* = Revelation). This type of code would not work if there were several manuscripts that did not have Acts and CE together. Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 124.

canonical ordering has led many scholars to propose that the CE be interpreted alongside and within the narrative flow of Acts.[139] Others have even advocated for adopting the Eastern ordering of the NT books in modern translations, placing the CE immediately after Acts.[140] This reordering would, no doubt, remove the CE from the "backwater" of the NT, foregrounding and resituating them according to the narrative ordering of the ministry of the apostles in the book of Acts with James, Peter, and John's ministry coming before Paul's.[141] This approach could yield insights that clarify supposed tensions and reveal that the "pillar apostles" and the apostle Paul were not adversarial but were collaborative ministry partners (see, e.g., Acts 15). This "apostolic harmony" supports Newman's hypothesis concerning the existence of a broader apostolic theology which will soon be explored. As for the letters at hand, the interpretation of James and Jude, alongside of and within the narrative of Acts, will be a prominent feature throughout the exegetical sections below.

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[139] Newman explains the canonical function of Acts as that which provides "narrative and theological underwriting for the two letter collections." Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," 368.

[140] This is the ordering adopted by Dirk Jongkind et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament: Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017). In the introduction to this new edition of the Greek NT, the editors explain that "the order with Acts and the Catholic Epistles preceding the Pauline corpus predominates" in the manuscript evidence.

[141] Wright and Bird point out that one advantage to this order is that it "ensures that the New Testament is not regarded as consisting of Jesus, Paul, and a few other friends." Wright and Bird, *The New Testament in Its World*, 730. See also John Painter, "The Johannine Epistles as Catholic Epistles," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 247. For a discussion of the ordering of the Latin Manuscripts, see H. A. G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 194–196.

The Bookends of the Catholic Epistles

Scholars today also make much of the arrangement of the letters within the CE collection. According to Lockett and others, the canonical order of the CE is possibly reflective of Paul's ordering of the "pillar apostles" in Gal. 2:9 and may be an intentional mirroring of the narrative flow of Acts.[142] This ordering, beginning with James and ending with Jude, has led some scholars to conclude that interpreters should understand the CE collection to be "delivered in the 'embrace' of letters from Jesus's brothers."[143] This supposed literary bracketing, or *inclusio,* has led many scholars to search for possible parallels between the letters of James and Jude.[144] While it appears that many of the conclusions of these scholars are far-fetched, [145] a new interpretive dynamic has surfaced that has drawn the brothers of Jesus into conversation with one another (much like one might imagine they may have

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[142] Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 102. The order of James, Peter, John, and Jude was consistent across most of the early church fathers, with only a few exceptions. For an example of the traditional canonical ordering, see the canon list of Cyril of Jerusalem in AD 363.

[143] David R. Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon* (Waco, TX: Baylor Univ. Press, 2007), 7.

[144] Painter, "The Johannine Epistles as Catholic Epistles," 248; Wright and Bird, *The New Testament in Its World*, 730. Wall calls these books "literary brackets" around the CE collection. Wall is representative of a number of scholars who propose that James not only serves as a "frontispiece" to the entire collection but also that Jude's doxology is to be understood as concluding the entire CE collection. Wall, "A Unifying Theology of the Catholic Epistles: A Canonical Approach," 18.

[145] Many scholars in this camp, Lockett included, make too much of the possible parallels between the introductions and conclusions of these letters. Most implausible is Newman's attempt to demonstrate an *inclusio* using the linking word διακρινομένους. He explains, "It has often been noted that the participle διακρινομένους at Jude 22 echoes the διακρινόμενος of Jude 9. What has not been noticed is that διακρινομένους equally forms an inclusio with the διακρινόμενος of Jas 1:6, thereby explicitly linking at the literary level the beginning and ending of the collection of the CE." Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," 377. Lockett says this suggestion is "unlikely on exegetical grounds." Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 191. Rather than signaling an inclusio, this rare word may simply signal the common vocabulary of two brothers who grew up in the same household, in the same religious and cultural milieu, hearing the same stories from the same texts. Perhaps it was a common word used by Joseph, Mary, or Jesus? This shared vocabulary and other possible parallels in their letters may offer a picture of the type of writer Jesus may have been if he had ever written. His preaching, for instance, on the Sermon on the Mount, certainly carries unique parallels with these letters.

enjoyed around the table of Mary and Joseph). This new field of research is significant since, in the history of intertextuality, typically, James is only brought into conversation with Paul, and Jude is only discussed in light of the possibility of a literary relationship with 2 Peter.[146] By harvesting insights from the discussion of the brothers of Jesus as the "bookends of the CE," the current project will explore the additional payoffs of discussing James and Jude's letters together.[147] Once the exegetical portions are complete, the conclusion of the thesis will offer a synthesis of findings and a discussion of theological payoffs.

The Brothers of the Catholic Epistles

The previous section is built on the presupposition of traditional authorship by James and Jude. Additionally, the claims made above and throughout this thesis are contingent upon a particular view of the "half-brothers" of Jesus. While the long history surrounding the

[146] Only a few of the scholars I consulted treat the letters of James and Jude together. For example, Craig L. Blomberg, *A New Testament Theology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018); John Painter and David A. deSilva, *James and Jude*, ed. Mikeal Parsons and Charles Talbert, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012); Karen H. Jobes, *Letters to the Church: A Survey of Hebrews and the General Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011); Wright and Bird, *The New Testament in Its World*; Brosend II, *James and Jude*.

[147] While Jesus himself did not write, Jobes holds that since the letters of James and Jude came from Jesus's brothers, they should hold special interest to Christians in that they provide a "glimpse into how a brother of Jesus came to understand the significance of Jesus's life." Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 148. It is also interesting to speculate if Jesus would have possibly written in the same style as his brothers. Interestingly, Charles explains that each of the 25 verses in Jude averages approximately 4 words also found somewhere throughout the letter of James. The only documents that have a higher level of verbal correspondence are Ephesians and Colossians, and Jude and 2 Peter. Perhaps due to their upbringing, both authors have drunk deeply "from the same Jewish well" and now share a rich vocabulary. Both use colorful illustrations, are saturated in the OT, insist on morality, and repeatedly use the word "beloved." J. Daryl Charles, *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1993), 75–79.

possible interpretations of the ἀδελφοί of Jesus cannot now be fully discussed,[148] a summary of the three possible views will orient the perspective taken here.

The Helvidian Position

The first and most common position regarding the siblings of Jesus is known as the Helvidian view. This perspective understands Jesus as the oldest of his half-brothers and sisters born to Mary and Joseph after Jesus. This would mean that Jesus's siblings should be considered "half" siblings because of the traditional understanding of the virgin conception of Christ. This reading appears, at least to most scholars, to be the most natural inference from the NT texts.[149]

The Hieronymian Position

The second position is the Hieronymian view. This view, put forth by Jerome, understands the siblings to be the cousins of Jesus. Arising initially to argue for the perpetual virginity of Mary and Joseph, this understanding of ἀδελφοί as "cousins" remains the generally held position among Roman Catholics.[150] However, the text does not seem to support this reading.

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[148] For a discussion of relevant issues, see John Painter, "Who Was James? Footprints as a Means of Identification," in *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 12–24. See also Richard Bauckham, "Relatives of Jesus," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, 1004–1006. For an extended treatment, see Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 1–133.

[149] See the excellent discussion in John P. Meier, "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus in Ecumenical Perspective," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1992): 1–28.

[150] Patrick J. Hartin, *James*, Sacra Pagina Series 14 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 16–17.

The Epiphanian Position

The last view, understanding Jesus's siblings as "step-siblings," was also initially born out of a commitment to the perpetual virginity of Mary and found supposed support in the pseudepigraphical *Protoevangelium of James*. This position understands Jesus as the youngest of his brothers and sisters, with Jesus being the only child of Mary. It is thought that Joseph, much older than Mary, likely had children with a former wife, who was most likely deceased when he married Mary. While this possibility is undoubtedly attractive,[151] the Helvidian view still makes the most sense of the data in the NT and will therefore be the view taken here.[152]

These observations related to the brothers of Jesus unveil an intriguing component of this thesis. While many focus their Christological research on the Gospels or the Pauline literature, not many have valued the insights that arise from the "proximity in relationship to the historical Jesus" that comes with studying the letters of James and Jude.[153] This thesis hopes to shed light on the valuable Christological and ethical perspectives provided by these half-brothers of Jesus.

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[151] This position is certainly viable and does not necessitate particular views related to perpetual virginity. If this view is taken, several fascinating possibilities surface. For instance, consider the breathtaking possibilities related to Jesus's typological fulfillment of the Joseph narrative, the quintessential display of the biblical-theological theme of the "older serving the younger." Since early in his ministry, Jesus's siblings certainly appear to treat him similarly to Joseph's, this view would make the eventual transformation of the brothers all the more radical (Acts 1:14).

[152] See the discussion in Richard Bauckham, "The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus: An Epiphanian Response to John P. Meier.," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (1994): 686–700. Of the three positions, Bauckham sides with the Epiphanian and is open to the Hieronymian. This project sides with Meier and takes the Helvidian position. For the effect that the different views of Jesus's family had on the epistles of James and Jude, see John Painter, "James 'the Brother of the Lord' and the Epistle of James," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, ed. Eric F. Mason and Darian R. Lockett (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2019), 231–233.

[153] Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:277–278.

The Coherence of the Catholic Epistles

Highly related to the discussions above concerning the *canonicity* and the *compilation* of the CE, this last section concludes the interpretive insights inspired by Lockett and offers a proposal for the theological *coherence* of the CE. In principle, reading the CE as a coherent whole is neither novel nor problematic since most conservative interpreters would attest that the entire NT should be read this way. However, difficulties arise when scholars such as Nienhuis and Wall take additional steps that begin to stretch the evidence.[154] In short, this section will ask questions about the presence of an assumed theological context used to ground the theology and ethics of James, Jude, and the other CE authors. How is the presence of this shared context best explained? What factors contribute to this context, and when did they arise? Two positions will be surveyed.

The Approach of Nienhuis and Wall

Over against the narrative depicted so far, Nienhuis and Wall represent a movement of scholars that argues for a particular understanding of the coherence of the CE. While this project and other traditional interpreters would hold that the Christ event prompted a shared theological context, this new movement of scholars proposes a fundamental shift in interpretive priorities. Chief among the shifts proposed by Nienhuis and Wall is the understanding of the "point of canonization" as "hermeneutically more important" than the

[154] As representative of their approach, see David R. Nienhuis and Robert W. Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013). Additionally, see Niebuhr and Wall, "The SNTS Seminar on the Catholic Epistles (2001–2006)."

"moment of historical composition."[155] This, in effect, means that Nienhuis and Wall have "moved the historical-critical moment of interest from the composition of the text to the church's canonization" of the text.[156] This foregrounding of *canonization* and backgrounding of *composition* means that, in their view, the *canonical* intent is hermeneutically more important than the *authorial* intent.[157] While seemingly budding with interesting possibilities, this approach appears to open the door to all sorts of superficially plausible theories concerning historical reconstruction, late compositional dating motivated by canonical completion, and creative yet unconvincing arguments for pseudonymous authorship.[158] Though it seems Lockett may also push the evidence too far at points, he nevertheless more plausibly suggests a sort of middle ground that underscores *both* points of *canonization* and *composition*. The theories of Nienhuis and Wall, though motivated by demonstrating coherence amongst the CE, result in further separating these letters from one another across centuries. Therefore, this way of explaining the assumed theological coherence and context amongst the CE must be set aside.

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[155] Lockett, Letters from the Pillar Apostles, 11.

[156] Ibid., 22.

[157] Nienhuis and Wall, Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture, 11.

[158] For example, Nienhuis claims: "Despite the fact that the composition and collection of NT writings are often understood to involve two historically discrete moments, studies have shown that certain biblical texts may have been composed with the shaping of canonical collections in view." Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*, 13. In short, it appears that, at times, Nienhuis, Wall, and others tend to read the evidence in order to prove their theories rather than letting their theories surface as a result of reading the evidence. For example, Lockett calls Nienhuis' suggestion a "novel historical reconstruction based largely upon silence." Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 130–132.

The Approach of Newman

Among the approaches surveyed by Lockett, Newman's appears to be discussed more favorably than most. Essentially, Newman explains the coherence and canonization of the CE as a result of a common apostolic theology present in the first-century church. This shared theology accounts for the assumed context that is drawn upon in the CE collection. Newman explains, "What is important to note" is that all of the "CE locate their theological enterprises in the orbit of an already established, known, and accepted apostolic teaching."[159] For example, Newman says that James roots his "moral exhortation in the apostolic 'word of truth' (1:18)" and Jude appeals to his readers to "contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3)."[160] These types of "coded references to an identifiable and accepted summary of apostolic theology" that could be "invoked without further commentary" demonstrate the likelihood that "this teaching had reached some sort of recognizable critical mass and obtained something of a common acceptance."[161] Drawing Acts alongside the CE, Newman reminds his readers that the "very first description of the post-Pentecost church is one of believers who were singularly devoted to the "apostles' teaching." This early signal in Acts, the canonical companion of the CE, should surely impact the way interpreters understand "references to a common core of

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[159] Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," 370.

[160] Additionally, see 2 John 5, 10; 2 Pet 1:1. Specifically concerning Jude 3, Newman says, "The objective use of 'faith' to denote "that which is believed" is common in early Christianity. Jude's emphatic claim that this apostolic tradition was "once delivered" derives from the singularity of the events narrated in the tradition itself." Ibid., 370. Additionally, Nienhuis and Wall explain that the "Greek verb translated 'entrusted' (παραδοθείσῃ) functions as a kind of *terminus technicus* for the handing down of apostolic traditions of belief and practice (Luke 1:2; Acts 16:4; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; 15:3; 2 Pet. 2:21). Jude calls his letter an 'appeal' for readers to 'contend' or 'struggle' for this entrusted faith." Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture*, 227.

[161] Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," 369–371.

theological convictions" mentioned throughout the CE.[162] Similar to the embedded theology within the *nomina sacra,* Newman attests that references to a shared apostolic theology are able to invoke "signal events" such as the cross and resurrection. These references can even be contained in short confessions such as "Jesus is the Christ" or "Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 4:15; 5:1). It is these types of references that repeatedly appear throughout James and Jude. Concerning these compact confessions, Newman is worth quoting at length.

> One way to understand these confessions is to limit their declarative range, simply, to the incarnation of Jesus... However, an alternative—and preferable—way to understand these confessions is as shorthand for the full story of Jesus (incarnation, life, death, exaltation). It is often assumed that the short confessions "Jesus is the Christ" and "Jesus Christ is Lord" over time grew longer and more elaborate. However, it might well be that just the opposite is the case: "Jesus is the Christ" is an intentional (and later) condensation of a longer narrative. However one decides this issue, these short confessions, when read in light of the sermons in Acts (and other confessions in the CE as well), do invoke the larger narrative of Jesus and, most importantly, the cross and resurrection.[163]

This issue raised by Newman resurfaces in the relevance and social memory theory discussion below. For now, it is important to note that Newman is claiming that the best explanation for the shared theological context and coherence of the CE is not due to later canonical editing (Nienhuis and Wall) but is a product of a coherent apostolic theology that existed prior to the composition of the letters. Newman explains that the CE are the "literary products" of thinking through the "implications of a set of (shared) convictions in light of

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[162] Newman says that "the CE were always joined to Acts' interpretive hip." For this and the previous quotations, see Ibid., 371.

[163] Ibid., 372.

immediate pastoral concerns."[164] Living behind the epistles, therefore, is a "theological competency, a grammar of sorts, a potentiality that yields a pastoral letter when an apostolic authority is faced with a pastoral crisis. Letters are specific performances of this theological potential."[165] This perspective shifts the focus not to the *canonical* moment (Nienhuis and Wall) or even to the *compositional* moment but to a *convictional* moment that existed only orally prior to the point of composition. All told, it seems that Newman's approach likely best explains the evidence for the coherence of the CE collection as well as the theological background for these letters. His approach rightly foregrounds the new reality created by the impact crater of the resurrection and properly acknowledges the apostolic harmony present in the church's early years. Alongside Lockett, Newman's insights will prove fruitful for the investigation of the letters of James and Jude. Now that the issues related to the *Collection* of the CE have been explored, the *Theology and Ethics* of the CE must be investigated.

The Theology and Ethics of the Catholic Epistles

Jeff Dryden has written one of the more important recent volumes on hermeneutics. By offering methodological tools to enable readers to see the Bible as a "hermeneutic of

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[164] Ibid., 374.

[165] Ibid., 374. One possible payoff of such an approach may surface in the question of the literary relationship between Jude and 2 Peter. Newman's approach enables the similarities between 2 Peter and Jude to be explained in a way similar to that of Anders Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*, Coniectanea Biblica, New Testament Series 36 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 323. Gerdmar seems to suggest that the parallels in the letters may be caused by their surfacing from a common milieu with shared beliefs and theology. In other words, could it not be that these authors had previously discussed these issues? Had the apostles together crafted their understanding of the events that had transpired and cowrote their explanation of them? Was there not an apostolic tradition to draw on that would explain shared language? Jude 17 seems to assume his audience will know of this tradition.

wisdom," Dryden recovers the formative agency of Scripture and reintegrates theology and ethics to reflect the first century's expectations.[166] Dryden asserts that the modern separation between knowing and doing would have been unintelligible to a NT audience. Instead, a "hermeneutic of wisdom" recognizes that theology and ethics work together in shaping the convictions, affections, and actions of the people of God. In order to grasp why Dryden's approach is critical to the current project, it will be helpful to quote a brief portion of his work.

> To read these 'theological' discourses independently of their ethical concerns is an examination under artificial conditions inconceivable to the original authors. This type of approach, in which theological understanding is a self-sustaining enterprise independent of its concrete expression in the life of the community, produces a deeply skewed picture of the convictions of early Christianity.[167]

In other words, for modern interpreters to avoid a "deeply skewed picture" of the early church, they must employ tactics that enable them to grasp the theological and ethical dimensions of NT texts. The tendency in the field of NT Christology is to focus exclusively on the theology of the text at the expense of the ethical contexts in which that theology

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[166] Dryden explains that we should not maintain a dichotomy between *kerygma* (gospel proclamation) and *didache* (ethical instruction) because "this presupposes that the ethical teachings of the NT can be easily detached from their theological contexts." According to Dryden, "reception is more than simply an act of understanding—it includes moral actions—it is impossible to have an adequate understanding of something without acting on it." He goes on to say that "this prejudice for theology over ethics has led to an often-explicit condemnation of the ethics of the NT as a sub-Christian appropriation of bourgeois Hellenistic ethics." Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 37.

[167] Ibid., 56.

initially emerged.[168] This tendency among exegetes overlooks the rhetorical and ethical intention of the text and forgets that NT letters were not written to provide a comprehensive Christology but to meet the needs of the audience that arise from various occasioning incidents. For Dryden and this project, the interest exegetically is in how NT authors intended to *use* their Christology to accomplish their ethical purposes amongst their readers, rather than simply focusing on the presence of a high or low Christology.

As for the application of this material to the epistles of James and Jude, Lockett claims that the CE collection is uniquely focused on the connection between "orthodox teaching and moral living."[169] For example, James's emphasis on "hearing and doing" (James 1:22–25) and Jude's focus on the relationship between false teaching and an immoral lifestyle (Jude 4) demonstrate the importance of this field of research for an investigation into the letters of the brothers of Jesus. Building on the work of Ellen Charry and Kevin Vanhoozer, Baker makes a case for the theology of the epistle of James as

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[168] Discussing the mishandling of Philippians 2, Dryden says, "The most obvious example of this is the number of interpreters who continue to deal with this passage as a piece of Christology (i.e., theologically) completely divorced from its paraenetic intentions, as though those intentions did not shape the content of Paul's discourse, focusing on what Paul *said*, not what he was *doing*." Ibid., 58–59. Dryden says, "Theology in NT epistles functions paraenetically—not simply to communicate Christology but to form the followers of Christ in his image." We must therefore pay careful attention to how theological and ethical discourses function together in an epistle to bring about formative goals. Ibid., 190. Hunsinger shows that this area of study is ripe when he says, "A strong version of high Christology would incorporate a significant element of spirituality and ethics. Here much work remains to be done." George Hunsinger, "Salvator Mundi: Three Types of Christology," in *Christology, Ancient and Modern: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2013), 42–59.

[169] Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 1–5.

"sapiential theology."[170] Relatedly, Ruth Anne Reese argues that the "epistle of Jude assumes that one's theology is reflected in one's life and that one's life reflects one's theology." Reese holds that this reintegration under the banner of "sapiential theology" is actually more reflective of a "first-century understanding in which acting, thinking, and being were more fluid and connected to each other than they often are in our twenty-first-century understanding." Indeed, she concludes, "life and theology cannot be separated."[171]

Modern interpreters, therefore, must equip themselves with a methodological approach that enables them to grasp the letters of James and Jude as "wisdom texts" aimed at theological and ethical formation. This project will draw methodological insights from Dryden (and others) and employ principles from four interpretive theories that will be discussed under two headings: *Lived Theology* and *Assumed Theology*.

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[170] Baker also asserts that of all the NT books, there is no text more oriented toward wisdom theology than the epistle of James. Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James," 48–51. Charry says, "Sapiential theology waned with modernity. Theology came to be thought of as the intellectual justification of the faith, apart from the practices of the Christian life." Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5. See also, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009). Similarly, Clark says that "the transformation of lives and communities—*sapientia*—is the ultimate function of theology." He then says, "If a theology does not transform a Christian's heart and her church, it fails calamitously. Theology misfires if it fills a believer's head with Christian knowledge without affecting his character and demeanor.... If theology only defines boundaries, it easily falls into dead orthodoxy." David K. Clark, *To Know and Love God: Method for Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 221, 232.

[171] Quotes in the preceding three sentences are from Ruth Anne Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 27. Dryden agrees, "In the NT, we never find theology for the sake of theology; it is always a theology pragmatically shaped to contextualize moral action by informing and shaping right reasons and right desires." Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 47. Relatedly, Gadamer sees application not as a secondary step in the interpretive process but as something determinative for understanding. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd rev. ed. (New York, NY: Continuum, 2004), 321–335.

Lived Theology

Reese introduces her commentary by explaining the theological value of Jude and 2 Peter. She says that some may "assume that theology is only abstract and/or academic," but she suggests that "it is more fundamentally practical." In fact, Jude and 2 Peter, "which offer advice for Christian living, are theologically oriented towards lived truth."[172] The following section will explore two interpretive theories that will equip exegetes with the proper methods for extracting this concept of lived or sapiential theology.[173]

Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory foregrounds the functional nature of language so that verbal utterances are understood to be *saying* something *and* attempting to *do* something in or amongst the readers.[174] In other words, the aim of an author goes beyond merely being *understood* by

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[172] For this and the previous quote, see Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 7. Though I cannot entirely agree with all the conclusions she comes to, I appreciate how she frames her project. She continues by saying, "Theology in the first century is located in the nitty-gritty details of living in the middle of difficult circumstances and problems." Ibid., *2 Peter and Jude*, 27. Her insights are similar to the values of Adolf Schlatter, who explained that the theologian's task is to "attach our concrete, historically-conditioned lives to God" since "abstractions cut loose from realities are just as useless in practice as they are vacuous in theory." Adolf Schlatter, "The Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics," in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: The Contribution of William Wrede and Adolf Schlatter*, ed. Robert Morgan (London, UK: SCM Press, 1973), 134–135. Discussing NT texts, Schlatter goes on to explain, "These facts do not come from ideal men, but from men like ourselves, and that means historically-localized men who lived their lives with God as their source and their goal. Dogmaticians do not need a general conception of faith and love. What they need is a definite perception of what is meant by good will and confidence in God in the concrete situations of a human life." The dogmatician, then, has to "tie up the completed realities of the New Testament with the equally concrete and definite reality of his own life." Similarly, Levering says, "It is precisely in their humanness that the biblical texts are participatory. The texts and their human authors are already historically caught up in a participatory relationship." Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis*, 5.

[173] See also the discussion in McCartney, *James*, 3, 67–71.

[174] Linguistic pragmatics involves how people use language to accomplish effects. Speech act theory is often represented by (1) locution (actual form of words); (2) illocution (intended effect of those words); (3) perlocution (actual effect of the words).

their readers. Authors also have ethical and persuasive *intentions* for their audience.[175] Dryden explains that linguists today do not view propositions as "encoding information" or as primarily a medium of knowledge but instead understand language as a medium for "encoding intentionality."[176] The language in the epistles of James and Jude, therefore, must be understood as the medium that embodies the authors' intentions to move their audiences to *do* something. This fundamental shift in the understanding of language signals to interpreters that they would be wise to listen for the embedded intentions of the author that may be below the surface of the more obvious historical or theological content. In short, this interpretive theory directs interpreters to ask, "What is the author *doing* with what he is *saying*?" This insight will impact the current project's reading of the letters of James and Jude, with the persuasive and ethical intentions of the authors considered throughout the exegetical portions below.

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[175] Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 105. Brown draws on the work of William P. Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000). Similarly, Vanhoozer explains that an author's words are "on a mission" to accomplish something amongst their readers. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 118. Dryden reveals the inherent shortcomings of the traditional approach when he says, "The functional linguistic assumption here is that language is chiefly a medium of propositions, a communicative repository for data. The author puts propositions in, and the reader takes them out." He continues, "What this exposes in the indicative/imperative model is that we cannot discern discourse function by simply labeling grammatical moods. We cannot assume that passages dominated by the indicative primarily serve to 'inform' us or 'teach us theology,' or that imperatives simply "tell us how to live practically. Sensitive readings of texts will attend to the diverse illocutionary forces encoded in texts." Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 45.

[176]Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 46. See also Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 35. Vanhoozer insightfully says, "Words do not simply label; sentences do not merely state. Rather, in using language, we do any number of things: question, command, warn, request, curse, bless, and so forth. A speech act has two aspects: propositional content and illocutionary force, the 'matter' and 'energy' of communicative action. The key notion is that of illocution, which has to do not simply with locuting or uttering words but with what we do in uttering words." Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 179.

Rhetorical Theory

The NT authors' rhetorical or persuasive aims have, until recent years, not received the attention they deserve. For various reasons, exegetes have tended to lose sight of what the author intends to accomplish amongst his readers.[177] In contrast, this project pays close attention to the relationship between theology, persuasive rhetoric, and ethics. Along these lines, Dryden suggests that interpreters must understand the ethical and persuasive intentions of the NT authors as being determinative in the choice of rhetorical strategies. It is only within these ethically motivated rhetorical forms that theological assertions are embedded.[178] In other words, the choice of genre or rhetorical structure is motivated by the occasioning incident and the ethical needs that have arisen in the intended audience. To properly situate the micro-ethical occasion, the author must draw upon theological realities that provide the macro-ethical context. Additionally, to grasp the theologically informed sapiential intentions of the author, interpreters must read texts as coherent wholes rather than as atomized parts in order to pay careful attention to how a given text is meant to

[177] Insightfully, deSilva says that a key question for determining the rhetorical genre of a text is to ask, "What does the author most want the communication to *achieve* among his or her readers?" David Arthur deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 95. As this relates to the ethical purposes of the Pauline literature, Thompson attests that the design and intention behind all of Paul's letters is not merely to inform or educate but to shape behavior. Similarly, and more broadly, Thompson claims, "All of Paul's letters call for future action and attempt to persuade and dissuade; thus, they have some functional similarity to deliberative rhetoric." Thompson, *Apostle of Persuasion*, 2–3, 8, 16.

[178] Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 187.

function in the formation of its target communities.[179] This is precisely where the field of rhetorical theory can assist interpreters.[180]

For the letters of James and Jude, a few key features related to rhetorical theory will be observed. First, the genre[181] of a letter itself communicates a set of deliberately formative intentions.[182] Interpreters must pay close attention to the author's theological and

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[179] Lockett explains that when interpreters assess the "rhetorical dimensions of a letter," it "significantly draws the communicative aims of the author into view." Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 98. Watson, a leading proponent of this approach says, as it specifically relates to the CE: "The rhetorical criticism of the General Epistles... is still in its infancy... Much is being discovered about the argumentation, arrangement, and style of these books. Our understanding of the interplay of their rhetorical and historical contexts, authors, audiences, and purposes is increasing. Although rhetorical criticism of the General Epistles... has begun, it will take time for synthesis of the rhetorical studies of each work to emerge." Duane F. Watson, "Rhetorical Criticism," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments,* 1041.

[180] Kennedy, Watson, and Witherington have been leading figures in this field for years. Their basic contention is that the biblical authors were immersed in the Greco-Roman world of rhetoric and, as such, were inescapably influenced by these compositional conventions. See George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 1984); Duane F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter*, SBL Dissertation Series 104 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986); Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009). Ferguson says, "We can hardly exaggerate the influence of rhetorical education on ancient culture and literature." Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 111. See also, James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 14–18, 216.

[181] While the constraints of the current project do not allow for thorough exploration of the recent advances in genre studies, Carolyn Miller's description captures the view of this project. She explains, "A rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish." Carolyn R Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984): 151. Suffice it to say, any genre definition and identification must include what the author intends to communicate and what the author intends for the recipient to do as a result of receiving the communication. Lewis's famous lines are instructive, "The first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know what it is – what it was intended to do and how it is meant to be used." C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1942), 1.

[182] The traditional definition of a letter as simply a document containing a greeting, a body, and a closing is as "useless as it is anemic, because it fails to speak substantively about either the literary characteristics or the communicative intentions associated with the genre." Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 166. See also the discussion in Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, vol. 5, Library of Early Christianity (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1986).

ethical intent to grasp the letter's meaning and significance.[183] Second, James and Jude not only write letters to achieve their communicative and ethical intentions, but their letters are also highly influenced by the Jewish literature of their day. James writes within the Jewish Wisdom tradition, while Jude writes within the Jewish Apocalyptic tradition.[184] The exegetical work below will proceed with an awareness of how each author used the common literary conventions of their chosen Jewish tradition to achieve their communicative purposes amongst their audiences. Lastly, the rhetorical structuring elements used by James and Jude to house and communicate their persuasive intent will also be considered. For instance, to accomplish particular effects in his audience, it will be observed that Jude's letter contains aspects resembling deliberative and epideictic rhetoric. The message and its intended effects, specifically as it relates to epideictic rhetoric, depend entirely on the assumption of previous, shared knowledge between the author and the audience.[185] Interestingly, this form of rhetoric did not seek to *change* beliefs, behaviors, opinions, or attitudes but sought to *reinforce* the existing ones already present in the target

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[183] Elaborating on his point, Dryden says, "When NT epistles are divided into dichotomies (theology/ethics, indicative/imperative) – the result is that the textual intentionality behind the epistolary genre is rendered ineffective and the content of the epistle is reduced to a set of ideas and moral proclamations with no particular connection between the two." Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 191.

[184] Drawing these Jewish genres into comparison with their brother's style, Witherington says, "Jude is more like the Jesus of Mark 13, the eschatological and apocalyptic prophet, whereas James is more like Jesus the sage, offering wisdom sayings, maxims, counterorder proverbs, and the like." Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:281.

[185] Aristotle describes epideictic as that form of rhetoric reserved for either praise or blame. In other words, this style of rhetoric is designed to display a set of virtues to be imitated or vices to be avoided. Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, ed. Harvey Yunis, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018). In this way, epideictic rhetoric has a "recognizable didactic role in communal life" that resembles deliberative rhetoric in the way it recommends or rejects certain behaviors. See the introduction by Harvey Yunis, in Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, xxix. See also, Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric*, 14. See further, Gerard A. Hauser, "Aristotle on Epideictic: The Formation of Public Morality," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (January 1999): 5–23.

audience.[186] This is related to the earlier discussion of the shared "apostolic theology" and sets the stage for the upcoming discussion on *assumed theology.*

Assumed Theology

An often-overlooked reality is that communication of all kinds "often proceeds on the basis of *assumed* common knowledge and experience."[187] This dynamic is perhaps best illustrated in the epistles of James and Jude when the mere mention of events or characters is all that is needed to enable the reader to recall the entire surrounding narrative. For example, when Jude strings the narratives of Cain, Balaam, and Korah together (Jude 11), his rhetorical intention is accomplished without having to rehearse the individual accounts.[188] For a Christological example, though Wright claims that James has "little to say about the resurrection,"[189] Guthrie attests that the phrase "the Lord of Glory" in James 2:1 is referring to the "risen and exalted Christ." As a result, he treats this one brief title as

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[186] This recalls Zimmermann's earlier discussion of NT ethics. If we are to adequately understand the ethical values or virtues present in the NT, then we must look for the "*ethos* behind the NT writings," not merely at the texts themselves. Zimmerman states, "Ethics is, in the end, the reflection of a lived *ethos* and thus reciprocally interwoven with it." Zimmermann, "The 'Implicit Ethics' of New Testament Writings," 400, 402, 414. This "behind the text" excavation is necessary to understand the intention and function of epideictic rhetoric properly. Without insight into the already existing shared cultural values, we will remain in the dark concerning what is being recommended or what is being rejected. Sullivan says, "Ethos is not primarily an attribute of the speaker, nor even an audience perception: It is, instead, the common dwelling place of both, the timeless, consubstantial space that enfolds participants in epideictic exchange. Things that are consubstantial share substance, and, if in some metaphysical sense, we can say that those who share a common mental or spiritual space also share a common substance, we begin to experience ethos as consubstantiality." Dale L. Sullivan, "The Ethos of Epideictic Encounter," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 26, no. 2 (Spring 1993), 127.

[187] Joel B. Green, "Discourse Analysis and New Testament Interpretation," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 225.

[188] For a discussion concerning the possibility of these three characters being grouped in other literature of the day, see Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 78.

[189] N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 461.

an "indirect testimony to the resurrection of Jesus."[190] These examples suggest, in line with Newman's suggestions above, that there must be a sort of assumed apostolic theology that exists behind the text in the minds of the author and the reader.[191] But how is one to access this assumed theology? Two interpretive theories may assist modern interpreters.

Relevance Theory

Jeannine Brown explains that relevance theory makes two central claims: first, "an utterance requires listeners to infer more than is provided in the linguistic features of the utterance itself." In other words, inevitably some aspects of communication are not made explicit but must be inferred by the reader. Second, Brown continues, "hearers will select from among a host of contextual inputs those that are most relevant for understanding a particular utterance (for inferring meaning)." According to relevance theory, authors assume these aspects of communication to be true and "rely on their hearers to supply the

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[190] For this and the previous quote, see Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1981), 300. As was seen above, Newman argues for an expansive function of these sorts of shorthand confessions. Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," 372–373.

[191] Reese says, "many important theological points are assumed by the author as points that the audience will already understand." Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 27. If some level of assumed theology is not present, how else could these authors merely mention names without explanation and hope to be understood by their audiences? How could they make claims about the divinity of Jesus and not defend their views or even define their terms? These authors must have had a seemingly firm notion that their readers shared their theological assumptions. Reese, again says, "Jude does not develop" a theological category like Christology. Instead, he "assumes a certain level of familiarity on the part of the readers of the text." She goes on to say, "The epistle does not demonstrate a need to explain these actions of attributes of Christ, rather they are assumed as aspects of Christ's character." Ibid., 106.

most relevant information to interpret their utterances."[192] Brown concludes that a verbal utterance is best understood as "consisting of both linguistic expression and assumed context."[193] For the present purposes in James and Jude, relevance theory reminds readers to "attend to what is implicit" (or assumed) in these letters and not only what is explicit. Brown reminds interpreters that letter writers can "assume quite a lot" in their writing since their letters typically "pick up their communication in relational midstream."[194] Because of this dynamic, it is all the more imperative that interpreters attend to the unspoken realities at play and carefully discern which "contextual inputs" should be chosen for understanding a particular utterance. In other words, modern interpreters need to attempt to access the "cultural encyclopedia"[195] of the shared knowledge and convictions of the author and the original audience so that they might be able to ascertain the communicative intent behind the text.

For James and Jude, it appears that the resurrection of their half-brother may have been one key element that constitutes a historical "given" of their theology. J. Daryl Charles explains that though James and Jude are strongly motivated by ethical concerns,

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[192] The quotation from this and the preceding sentences are from Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 24–27. Connected to the earlier discussion of speech act theory, the relevance theory framework understands an utterance to be a "speech act" with a context. As a result, the recovery of any and all "contextual information is essential for comprehension" of the communication taking place. Gene L. Green, "Relevance Theory and Biblical Interpretation," in *The Linguist as Pedagogue: Trends in the Teaching and Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Matthew B. O'Donnell (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 218.

[193] Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 24.

[194] Ibid., 148.

[195] Umberto Eco, "Two Problems in Textual Interpretation," in *Reading Eco: An Anthology*, ed. Rocco Capozzi (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 34–52.

"each assumes a doctrinal foundation already laid with the readers."[196] The next interpretive theory will further equip interpreters with the tools needed to excavate this assumed theological context.

Social Memory Theory

Memory approaches, long applied in other fields, have often been ignored in NT studies.[197] When approaching the CE, interpreters rarely utilize the important resources embedded in social memory studies.[198] In discussing various approaches to memory, Bauckham explains that the "informal sharing of memories" amongst the disciples during Jesus's ministry would have "preceded the more official formulation of a body of traditions by the Twelve

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[196] J. Daryl Charles, *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1993), 75–79.

[197] For discussion of this neglect, see Alan Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 1. The importance of memory for community formation is expressed theologically across the entire canon. Readers are consistently reminded of the foundational events of their past and the representative characters of the ongoing narrative of which they are a part. For example, see Deut. 6:20–24, 26:1–11, 29:1–9; Josh. 24:1–13; 1 Sam. 12:6–16; 1 Kings 8:12–21; 2 Kings 17:7–23; Psalm 78, 106, 106; Neh. 9:6–38; 1 Chr. 1–9; Matt. 1:1–17; Acts 3:11–26, 7; 13; Heb. 11. See the discussions in Jason B. Hood and Matthew Y. Emerson, "Summaries of Israel's Story: Reviewing a Compositional Category," *Currents in Biblical Research* 11, no. 3 (June 1, 2013): 328–348. See also Michael D. Williams, "Story Summaries: Key Points for Understanding the Bible's Big Story and Our Place Within It," *Presbyterion: Covenant Seminary Review* 45, no. 1 (2019): 41–58. If utilized at all, they are generally only employed when approaching narrative material. Though Baker does not restrict his observations to narrative material, his essay is representative nonetheless. Coleman A. Baker, "A Narrative-Identity Model for Biblical Interpretation: The Role of Memory and Narrative in Social Identity Formation," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Coleman A. Baker (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 105–118.

[198] This neglect is likely due, at least in some measure, to the lingering influence of form criticism and other traditional, historical-critical approaches. See discussion in Alan Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, ed. Tom Thatcher and Alan Kirk, Semeia Studies (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 1.

at some point in the early history of the Jerusalem church."[199] These shared, oral, and even preached (Jude 17) memories preceded the collection of memories into the written form of the text. In line with the findings of Newman,[200] this indicates that there was an "apostolic theology" in the air of early Christianity before a written tradition existed.[201]

While this project does not adopt all that social memory theorists propose, it does value the ways in which these theories may help account for the historical phenomenon surrounding the events of the resurrection (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:1–11). Social memory theory specifically contributes to this present study in two ways. First, social memory theory reminds readers of the CE that the communities to whom these letters were addressed were inescapably mnemonic communities created by shared memories. Stroup explains that *all* communities are groups of people who have "come to share a common past, who understand particular events in the past to be of decisive importance for interpreting the present, who anticipate the future by means of a shared hope, and who express their identity by means of a common narrative."[202] For the early Christian community under

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[199] This memory sharing would have, no doubt, included memories from the twelve, the women disciples, and others who followed Jesus This sort of memory sharing seems to be mentioned in Luke 1:1–4, 1 Cor. 15:3, and Jude 3, 17. See Bauckham's discussion also in Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 314. For his broader discussion, including hesitations and benefits of social memory theory, see 310–315.

[200] Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles." Additionally, Ridderbos discusses the epistle of Jude in the context of something akin to an "apostolic theology" that influences the formation of the canon. He mentions 1 Cor. 15 and the likelihood of an oral tradition preceding canonical formation. See the later discussion concerning Jude's dating and authorship for more details. Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures*, 16.

[201] Esler points out that beliefs are, for some reason, often neglected in social identity theory. Nevertheless, Esler attests that group beliefs, shared by members of the group, serve to define group boundaries and define group behavior. Philip F. Esler, "An Outline of Social Identity Theory," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 34–35.

[202] George W. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1997), 132–133. This is also similar to the discussion of ethics, memory, and community in the later portions of MacIntyre, *After Virtue*.

investigation in this project, the OT narrative is the primary shaping force behind their shared social memory. This narrative, however, takes a dramatic turn in the NT when Jesus, a new (and yet *not* new) character, enters the scene. As was described in the literature review, this new character is interpreted in light of the previous installments in this ongoing narrative (i.e., the OT texts) and in light of the revelatory experiences of his followers. This project claims, therefore, that the event of the resurrection, understood in light of the OT, created and sustained the identity of this new community. By crafting a shared interpretation of the recent events and situating their interpretation within the ongoing OT narrative, this new community developed a consistent retelling of the events that eventually produced a consistent apostolic theology.[203] In James and Jude, if these shared memories are not explicitly mentioned as they are in Jude 3, 5, 17, they are everywhere assumed behind the text.[204] What is significant about the retellings of OT events in Jude is that he offers a unique Christocentric interpretation of these events based on his revelatory experiences with the resurrected Christ. Similarly, in numerous instances, James attributes titles to his brother strictly reserved for Yahweh in the OT. This dynamic again reveals the principles of reciprocal exegesis discussed above.

Second, the upshot of social memory theory for the present purposes is ethical in nature. When a biblical author calls his audience to "remember" (Jude 3, 5, 17), he is not

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[203] These shared memories and narratives form distinct mnemonic communities. Coleman A. Baker, "Social Identity Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 42, no. 3 (2012): 130. For an OT example, consider how the elders in Ezra 5, in response to the simple question "what is your name?" answered with the story of Israel. This is true communal identity. For an example from Paul, see the discussion in Thompson, *Moral Formation According to Paul*, 43–62. Thompson frames his approach in a manner very similar to what is taken here. See also the discussion in N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, Christian Origins (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 77, 122–123.

[204] Consider this: if the authors did not feel inclined to expand on their theological claims, it must have been because they assumed their audience had clear memories of the events that had recently occurred.

doing so for merely intellectual or theological purposes. The rhetorical and persuasive intention is always aimed also at the ethical response of the readers. Generally, authors and communities tell and retell stories in fundamentally ethical terms for ethical purposes.[205] In concert with the other theories described above, social memory theory, with its "indelible ethical coloring,"[206] will enable readers of the CE to discover new ethical insights heretofore overshadowed by alternative interpretive lenses. Specifically, when the resurrection is understood as the primary shaping memory of the early church, significant theological and ethical coherence begins to surface.

Now that the literature review and interpretive approach has been discussed, the project will turn to the exegesis of select passages in the letters of James and Jude.

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[205] The communal history of our families, cultures, or even cities shape our expectations and gives us a sense of our obligations. These inherited values constitute the *given* of our lives and operate as our moral starting point. In fact, Alasdair MacIntyre says, "the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity." MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 221. Thus, our individual identity and self-understanding depend, at least in some measure, on our communal identity.

[206] Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," 18.

Chapter 4:

The Christology and Ethics of James

The history of scholarship involving the epistle of James can, in many ways, be seen as "a tale of two Martins." Virtually every commentary or journal article must give the obligatory tip of the hat to Martin Luther and Martin Dibelius. On the one hand, Luther's (in)famous claim that James is an "epistle of straw"[207] has been the "tin can tied to the tail of James" that has "echoed over the centuries."[208] Upon closer inspection, Luther's words may actually reveal more about Luther than they do about James. Behind Luther's claim stands his unique view of "two-tiered" [209] canonicity, wherein he essentially creates a NT canon within a canon, using as his measuring rod a distinctly Lutheran and Pauline doctrine of justification by faith.[210] As a result, James has been read almost exclusively against the backdrop of Pauline studies since the 16th century and has become more commonly known for its omissions than for its affirmations.[211]

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[207] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 35: Word and Sacrament I* (Fortress Press, 1999), 362. Luther had misgivings about the canonicity of James because, in his view, it did not contain enough of that which is specifically Christian. See discussion in Martin Dibelius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, trans. Michael A. Williams, rev. ed., Hermenia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1975), 54.

[208] John H. P. Reumann, "Christology of James," in *Who Do You Say That I Am?: Essays on Christology*, ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury, Mark Allan Powell, and David R. Bauer (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 129.

[209] Martin Foord, "The 'Epistle of Straw': Reflections on Luther and the Epistle of James," *Themelios* 45, no. 2 (2020): 291–298.

[210] Stephen J. Chester, "Salvation, the Church, and Social Teaching: The Epistle of James in Exegesis of the Reformation Era," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 273–278. See also the above discussion on the *nomina sacra*.

[211] Hartin, *James*, 1–2; Robert B. Sloan, "The Christology of James," *Criswell Theological Review* 1 (1986): 3.

As for the contribution of the *other* Martin, Dibelius is known for claiming that the epistle of James "has no theology."[212] Based on his form-critical assumptions, Dibelius was convinced that paraenetic literature was not designed to carry theological freight. This claim has had wide influence and has led to the scholarship on James being relegated almost entirely to the sphere of quasi-Christian ethics.[213] Unfortunately, this "tale of two Martins" has left the epistle of James "disparaged by Luther and broken into context-less pieces by Dibelius."[214] As a result, James has "struggled for its theological voice to be heard" and can now be seen as "virgin territory" for theological discourse.[215] This chapter will explore this "virgin territory," search for the supposed missing theology of James, and

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[212] Dibelius, *James*, 21, 25. Dibelius, as with the supposed lack of continuity of thought, lays blame for the lack of theology on the paraenetic character of the letter.

[213] See discussion in Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 35. Dunn interestingly asserts that the letter is "undistinctively Christian." James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, 3rd ed. (London, UK: SCM Press, 2006), 271. Andrew Chester claims that "James presents a unique problem within the New Testament. The questions that loom over it are whether it has any theology at all, and whether it should have any place in Christian Scripture." Andrew Chester and Ralph P. Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3. Mason and Lockett respond to this claim by asserting, "Perhaps such an assessment is most acute when expecting the theological message of James to conform to a Pauline matrix." Eric F. Mason and Darian R. Lockett, *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students* (SBL Press, 2019), 2. See also discussion in Hartin, *James*, 2.

[214] William R. Baker, "James," in *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Daniel Treier, and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 200. Interestingly, Baker points out that Augustine, Origen, and Cyril of Alexandria all flip the common issue on its head and suggest that Paul should actually be read through James rather than seeing the issue through Luther's Pauline priority. Additionally, Calvin rejected Luther's narrow understanding of James, his take on faith, and his unique view on canonicity.

[215] William R Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James," *Evangelical Quarterly*, 2002, 47. Thankfully, there has recently been a rising tide of interest in James. For a brief discussion of the "new perspective on James," see Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, "James in the Minds of the Recipients: A Letter from Jerusalem," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 44; Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 25–40.

read James on his own terms without depending on a Pauline backdrop.[216] This chapter will also build on the survey of NT Christology and ethics in the literature review, which substantiates and situates the claims made during the exegetical analysis of select passages in James. As the chapter concludes, a defense will be made of the presence of an early, high Christology in the epistle of James, one of the earliest documents of the NT. Additionally, drawing on the interpretive strategies discussed in chapter three, this chapter will analyze the ethical and persuasive intentions embedded in James' presentation of his half-brother, Jesus. The outcome of this discussion will result in a refutation of Luther's claims about Christology and will also show that James does, in fact, contain theology, contrary to Dibelius's position.

Background of James

As mentioned above, James has not enjoyed a rich reception history. Struggling to recover from the "tale of the two Martins," James's theological voice has often been muted and rarely considered.[217] In fact, of all the resources reviewed for the above section on the field

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[216] Johnson says, "The most important gain from breaking the Pauline fixation is that it liberates James to be read in terms of 108 verses rather than 12 verses, in terms of its own voice rather than in terms of its supposed muting of Paul's voice." Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries 37A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 114. Byron adds that the "tendency to focus on the relevance of James only in contrast to the teachings of Paul overshadows the theological treasure and unique storehouse of material contained in this letter." Gay L. Byron, "James," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount et al. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 461.

[217] Thankfully, this trend is beginning to wane. See Mariam Kamell Kovalishyn, "The Epistle of James," in *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 419. Also, on the rising tide of scholarship on James, see Bruce Lowe, "James 2:1 in the Πιστις Χριστου Debate: Irrelevant or Indispensable?," in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2009), 239–257. Lastly, Brosend II points out that the discovery of the ossuary of James in 2002 has also promoted research into this early NT document. Brosend II, *James and Jude*, 1.

of NT Christology, the epistle of James rarely received any discussion in the body of the text and was also almost entirely absent from the Scripture indexes. As for the particular passages surveyed in this project, only a few journal articles and a few commentaries have given brief attention to the theology and ethics in these significant verses. Though Bauckham is a rare exception in his suggestion toward the presence of a "divine identity Christology" in James, not many have given it the detailed treatment it deserves.[218] This project aims to show that James deserves a seat at the early, high Christology table.

Historical and Literary Context

The letter of James has not received the theological attention it deserves because scholars often are sidetracked with issues of genre, structure, date, and authorship. To avoid this error, this project will only discuss the relevant aspects of these issues to further support the claims of the thesis. The titles "*Late and Hellenistic Origins*" and "*Early and Jewish Origins*" have been retained from the literature review to make the connection to the thesis apparent. The assumption is this: if the letter can be demonstrated as written early by James, it follows that the Christology embedded within the letter is also *early* and *Jewish*.

Authorship and Dating Orientation

As is often the case, authorship and dating are two sides of the same historical coin. After a presentation of the various views on both authorship and dating, this section will conclude with the position taken by this thesis.[219]

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[218] Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 139.

[219] For an excellent and expanded discussion of all relevant issues, see McCartney, *James*, 8–31.

Alternative Views on Authorship and Dating: Late and Hellenistic Origins

The alternative positions to traditional authorship and dating, typically holding that the epistle arises out of a later Hellenistic context, are all essentially based on similar arguments.[220] First, some scholars point out the absence of any mention of James's relationship with Jesus. This argument assumes that if James was indeed the brother of the Lord, he would have naturally leaned on this derived authority.[221] Second, it is supposed that the language and cultural background of the letter are out of reach for a Galilean Jew with the reputation of being a conservative Jewish Christian who likely never left Palestine. Third, some claim a lack of early attestation and acceptance of the epistle.[222] Lastly, others, such as Davids and Hartin, see the epistle as containing teaching from the historical James

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[220] For an extended treatment of the pseudepigraphal position, see Nienhuis, *Not by Paul Alone*. Nienhuis estimates that James was written in the late second century by "an individual (or perhaps even a group of individuals)" and included in it "a series of intertextual links with the contemporary 'canonical' Scriptures, in order to create an apostolic letter collection." Ibid., 22. For a fuller treatment of Nienhuis and others who support a later, canonically motivated composition, see chapter 3 of this thesis.

[221] Bauckham points out that "[a] pseudepigraphal work fictionally attributed to James would be more likely to call him "the Lord's brother" (the *First Apocalypse of James* from Nag Hammadi has Jesus call him "James, my brother" in its third sentence) or even "the Just" (as the *Second Apocalypse of James* from Nag Hammadi does)." Richard Bauckham, "James and Jesus," in *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 101–103. See also Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 121.

[222] See, for example, Painter, "James 'the Brother of the Lord' and the Epistle of James." This aspect (the "lack of early attestation" argument) will not receive much attention here. Several scholars have refuted this claim and made a case for an early date based on the likely use of James by 1 Peter, 1 Clement, and the Shepherd of Hermas. Lockett contends that, while "knowledge and use of the Epistle of James was perhaps sparse in the early church," this "so-called *silence* was not, in the end, a reason to exclude the text from the New Testament canon, nor did it deter Origen and others from receiving it as an authority." See Darian R. Lockett, "Use, Authority, and Canonical Status of James in the Earliest Church," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 255ff. See discussion in Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 72–79, 126–127. In addition, Carson and Moo point out that what may appear to be early hesitations to accept the letter may have actually been the product of uncertainty about the author and the relative neglect of the book in general. His neglect was possibly due to the fact that the book's Jewish and practical/ethical nature kept it from being widely used in the doctrinal controversies of the early church. D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2005), 631. McCartney explains this as a by-product of attempts to protect the perpetual virginity of Mary. McCartney, *James*, 24.

but understand the composition of the letter to be attributed to James by a later editor.[223] As representative figures who capture the heart of the alternative positions, Dibelius, Ropes, and Laws each explicitly argue for a *late* date of composition with *Hellenistic* rather than *Jewish* origins, claiming the letter's attribution to James[224] was sheer pseudepigraphal fiction.[225]

Laws attempts to set the parameters of the discussion by saying that the *terminus a quo* must be AD 62 since this is the accepted date of the martyrdom of James, the brother of the Lord.[226] In contrast, most scholars who hold to traditional authorship would say that AD 62 should actually be understood as the *terminus ad quem* or the latest possible date of writing. This *late* and *Hellenistic* position of Laws, Dibelius, Ropes, and others will be set aside in favor of an *early* and *Jewish* origin of the letter.

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[223] Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 12–13; Hartin, *James*, 25. Carson and Moo say that this later editor position is the most important alternative to authorship by James. However, many realize that if the content can plausibly be attributed to James, then there is no reason why authorship in the full sense cannot be as well. Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 623.

[224] For a discussion of why someone would choose to write under the name of James, see Matthias Konradt, "The Historical Context of the Letter of James in Light of Its Traditio-Historical Relations with First Peter," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 117–125.

[225] Dibelius, *James*, 11–21; Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 42; James H. Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1916), 49.

[226] Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 42 fn. 3.

Traditional Views on Authorship and Dating: Early and Jewish Origins

The arguments against *late* and *Hellenistic* origins and for an *early* and *Jewish* origin consist of a few features.[227] First, Carson and Moo make a case based on the relationship between Paul and James.[228] Setting a frame for the earliest possible and latest possible dates, they say that James's letter must have come *after* Paul's teaching had become known and begun to have an influence, and yet *before* Paul and James meet at the Jerusalem council in around AD 48–49.[229] Related to the discussion above concerning the relationship of the CE to the book of Acts, Carson and Moo observe that if traditional authorship is accepted, then the striking similarities between the letter attributed to James at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:13–21) and the epistle of James itself become apparent.[230] For

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[227] Interestingly, aspects of each of the passages to be explored below could both be used to support an early dating. For example, the use of the word "synagogue" in 2:2 and the mention of the "early and late rains" in 5:7 are seen, by many, to date the letter in early, Jewish contexts.

[228] Contrary to other readings of James and Jude, this Pauline comparison is not one of dependency but is designed to support the "apostolic theology" claims made above. For a similar argument related to the relationship of Paul and James, see Jonathan Bernier, *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament: The Evidence for Early Composition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022), 198–200. Bernier thinks James' epistle may have predated Paul's.

[229] This may make sense of Paul's comment about the "men from James" (Gal. 2:14). James seems to mention these men in his letter (Acts 15:24). This explanation of the data could not be further from the second-century composition date that has emerged from the historical reconstruction proposed by Nienhuis. For a summary of his dissertation, see David R. Nienhuis, "The Letter of James as a Canon-Conscious Pseudepigraph," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 183–200.

[230] Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 622. Laws dismisses this line of reasoning, saying, "Little weight can be put on similarities between the epistle and the speech and letter of James in Acts 15, since the historical accuracy of Luke's report is debatable, and many of the suggested parallels are anyway familiar expressions." Laws, *The Epistle of James*. 39–40. However, Mayor points out, "I cannot but think it a remarkable coincidence that, out of 230 words contained in the speech and circular, so many should reappear in our Epistle, written on a totally different subject." Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, Comments and Further Studies in the Epistle of St. James* (London, UK: Macmillan and Co., 1913), iii–iv. Though I certainly do not agree with all of his conclusions, Wall is perhaps one of the most committed researchers in the area of the relationship between Acts and James. See, for example, Robert W. Wall, "Acts and James," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 127–152.

example, though the salutation χαίρειν is common in Greco-Roman and Jewish letters, in addition to Acts 15:23 and James 1:1, it is used only one other time in the NT (Acts 23:26).[231] Vlachos says that since "the pres. act. inf. Χαίρειν" occurs "only here in NT epistolary salutations" and also "in the Jerusalem Council letter," it may be safe to conclude that this letter was "drafted by the same James."[232]

Additionally, further situating the letter within the historical frame set by Carson and Moo, Vlachos observes the absence in James of any reference to the "Gentile situation," which precipitated the Jerusalem council in Acts 15.[233] Moreover, related to the early Jewish origins of the letter and further tying Acts 15 with James, Cheung and Yu classify James as a Jewish diaspora letter containing Jewish wisdom instruction.[234] While Acts 15 was addressed to Gentiles in Antioch, it served a similar function as the epistle of James and other Jewish diaspora letters sent from leaders in Jerusalem. The epistle of James, then, fits the design and function of this additional letter from the pen of James. In this way, the genre, purpose, and audience may be very closely connected.

Lastly, though he agrees that James has "deep and abiding roots within the heritage of Judaism," Hartin also explains that "from the perspective of language and style," the

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[231] Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 168–169. See further Acts parallels in McCartney, *James*, 26.

[232] Chris A. Vlachos, *James*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 4, 11. See also David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 436–437; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 292.

[233] Vlachos, *James*, 5–6. James's mention of the synagogue (and, by way of extension the diaspora) in Acts 15:21 is also interesting. James is also surprisingly void of any discussion of Jewish practices such as circumcision and sabbath keeping. This "new brand of Judaism" was obviously different from the old.

[234] Luke L. Cheung and Kelvin C. Yu, "The Genre of James: Diaspora Letter, Wisdom Instruction, or Both?," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 97.

letter of James "is among the most Hellenistic of New Testament books."[235] How might the Jewish flavor of the letter be reconciled with this polished *koine* in a way that avoids the conclusions related to alternative views on authorship? First, Guthrie points out that the church in Jerusalem led by James had a "broad constituency of both Palestinian Jews and Jews of the Diaspora," suggesting that James had "extensive exposure to people of a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and levels of education (Acts 6)."[236] Second, Johnson and Allison attribute James's Greek to the influence of the Septuagint (LXX).[237] Allison goes as far as saying that James is "full of scriptural and LXX idioms, and every single paragraph carries forward themes at home in the Jewish Bible."[238] These observations, along with the

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[235] Hartin, *James*, 1. See also Matt Jackson-McCabe, "The Letter of James and Hellenistic Philosophy," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 45–71.

[236] George H. Guthrie, "James," in *Hebrews–Revelation*, rev. ed., The Expositor's Bible Commentary 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2006), 200. If James writes ten years or more after the resurrection and has been in this leadership position for nearly a decade, it would seem that he would be positioned to gain all sorts of exposure and perhaps even intentional education. See also McCartney, *James*, 28.

[237] Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 7. See also, Luke Timothy Johnson, "The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101, no. 3 (1982): 391. Dibelius says, "Undoubtedly, James used the LXX as his Bible." Dibelius, *James*, 27. McCartney points out that "all but thirteen of James's words are found in the LXX." McCartney, *James*, 6.

[238] Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James*, ed. G. I. Davies et al., International Critical Commentary (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 52. See also Eric F. Mason, "Use of Biblical and Other Jewish Traditions in James," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 27–44. Additionally, related to the Hellenization of Judaism discussion, see deSilva's work for a discussion of the Hellenization of those in the diaspora. David A. deSilva, "Jews in the Diaspora," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 281–283.

broad Hellenization of Judaism, make the most sense of the Jewish roots and the Greek style of James, answering the critics of James's authorship convincingly.[239]

Authorship and Dating Conclusion

In light of the above, this project sides with several scholars today and bases a significant portion of the subsequent arguments on an *early* and *Jewish* origin of the epistle of James.[240] It is here held that James, the brother of Jesus, wrote this letter to his diasporic audience during the early stages of development of the young church sometime between AD 40 and 50, making his epistle possibly one of the earliest books in the NT canon.[241] This conclusion has inescapable Christological implications and begs the question: How was James's audience familiar with and accepting of such a Christology?

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[239] Vlachos adds additional lines of evidence for the early and Jewish origins of the letter. He says the affinity with the teachings of Jesus and the potential use of pre-synoptic traditions may also reveal James's authorship. Vlachos, *James*, 5–6. A possible additional point is brought up in an interesting MA Thesis. Writing under the supervision of Luke T. Johnson, Thomas Jared Farmer discusses James' uses of pre-synoptic material (possibly "Q"), which also points to an early dating of the epistle. Thomas Jared Farmer, "James in the 'Q' Sayings Tradition: An Examination of the Jesus Logia in the Epistle of St. James" (MA Thesis, Candler School of Theology, 2012). For a book-length treatment, see Patrick J. Hartin, *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus*, The Library of New Testament Studies (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 1991).

[240] Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 121; Carson and Moo, An Introduction to the New Testament, 627; Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James*, cxxvi; Wright and Bird, *The New Testament in Its World*, 735–736; Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 37. Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles say there is a "trend among scholars" to accept authorship by James the Just, even among those who "are otherwise critical of traditional views." Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament,* 2nd. ed., (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 808.

[241] Vlachos, *James*, 5–6. See also Brandon D. Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2015), 161; Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, 809–810; John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1976), 139.

James, the Religious Leader of the Jerusalem Church

If this James is indeed the author, historically, his "Jewishness" has never been questioned. *This* James was the *one* James who could simply be called "James" without risk of misidentification (Gal 1:19, 2:9, 12; Acts 12:17).[242] While the traditional view is that James was not a follower of Christ until after the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 1:14),[243] he eventually emerged as a major figure in, if not the leader of, the Jerusalem church as its chief spokesperson (Acts 21:18).[244] As such, it would not be surprising that *this* spokesperson would send a letter to the diaspora as the opening of the letter claims (1:1; cf. Acts 15:13 to see James as an early authority).[245] If the letter is early, and if his diasporic audience was, in fact, Jewish, then the claims that will be made concerning James's Christology are all the more striking. Interestingly, this exploration into the historical setting seems implies that the views James puts forth (which are not

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[242] For other NT passages on James, see Mark 3:21–35, 6:3, Acts 1:14, Gal. 1:19, Jude 1; Carson and Moo claim that the lack of elaboration on authorship in James points to a well-known James. They list four possibilities, but end up siding with "James, the brother of the Lord." Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 621–622. See also Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, 2nd. ed., Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021), 48. For a discussion of others named James in the NT, see Painter, "Who Was James? Footprints as a Means of Identification," 10–12.

[243] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 307. However, Bauckham asserts that it is possible that James and his mother and brothers may have at least joined the Jesus movement by the end of his ministry. Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 109. Additionally, Painter makes an extended case supporting that the mother and brothers of Jesus were, in fact, believers during Jesus' ministry. Painter, "Who Was James? Footprints as a Means of Identification," 24–31. In the end, I am unsure if it is possible to come to a clear conclusion.

[244] McCartney, *James*, 9–11; Bruce, *New Testament History*, 210–211; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 239, 292; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of The Apostles*, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 213, 373; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 430; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 429.

[245] Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 121. See also Richard Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al., vol. 4, 7 vols., The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 415–480.

defended or elaborated) must have been widely accepted before what may be the earliest NT document.

James, the Representative Theologian of the Early Church

Additionally, throughout his life, James's theological opinions never appear to be understood as cavalier. In other words, he is not the theological trailblazer of the group; instead, he is the stabilizer, the truth-teller, and the one upon whom others depend (see Acts 15:13, 21:18).[246] This "mediating role" reveals James to be a conservative representative of the early church's theology, one from whom they would not expect to receive a letter promoting theological innovation. Instead, readers would expect this James to uphold broadly accepted theological traditions.[247]

This point may unveil a slight point of departure from claims made by others who advocate for an early dating. This disagreement arises amidst the suggestions related to a lack of Christology in the epistle of James.[248] In contrast to these views, James's letter may offer interpreters a glimpse of the widely accepted Christological beliefs at this early stage.[249] Hurtado makes a similar argument in relation to the apparent wide acceptance of the theology presented in Paul's early letters. He says that there is "nothing in Paul's

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[246]Frank S. Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2005), 496. See also Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church," 423–425, 434–437.

[247] Guthrie, "James," 201. Guthrie says that James "seems to have played a mediating role, at once sensitive to the need to stay oriented to Scripture and God's commands to the Jewish people and also to the powerful work of God among the Gentiles." See also McCartney, *James*, 26.

[248] McCartney, for example, says that James "exhibits almost no Christological development." McCartney, *James*, 5.

[249] McCartney says, "James nowhere addresses doctrine as a point of contention. The assumption is always one of agreement on doctrine." Ibid., 30.

letters" that indicates "any awareness that his fundamental view of Christ was unique or that he had made any serious innovation in the way Christians before him had regarded the exalted Jesus."[250] This point is significant when one considers the evidence related to the other swirling debates in the first-century church. In this controversy-laden context, it is shocking that the worship of Jesus or the ascription of Divine titles to him never appears to be a point of conflict in any of the NT epistolary material.[251] Additionally, it is interesting to note that James's diasporic audience, much like Paul's audiences, also appears to stretch across a broad geographical range, underscoring what appears to be a broad acceptance of an early, high Christology.[252]

This line of reasoning may reveal that, contrary to the letter of James *lacking* a developed Christology, this letter may be *assuming* a high Christology. It appears that the letter can do so because of the early date of composition and the widely accepted apostolic theology present in the early church.[253] The recent resurrection, no doubt, served as a defining event that generated the formation of a high Christology for these first-century

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[250] Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 4–5. Similarly, Warfield says, "Such details are never communicated to Paul's readers as pieces of fresh information. They are alluded to as matters of common knowledge, and with the plainest intimation of the unquestioned recognition of them by all. Thus, it is made clear not only that there underlies Paul's letters a complete portrait of Jesus and a full outline of his career, but that this portrait and this outline are the universal possession of Christians." B. B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1989), 7.

[251] Capes makes a similar observation in Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 39.

[252] Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 4–5. See also the unique take on this point discussed in Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 132.

[253] Bernier notes that "[o]ne can indeed plausibly explain" the absence of Christological language by "stating that the Epistle of James predates the development of such language." He takes James as predating the Christian distinctives that arise in the latter part of the first and the early part of the second centuries. He also says that if James is taken as a later document and seen as not possessing a high Christology, then, like Luther, one must ask why it is even in the canon. He concludes, "This problem largely disappears the moment we affirm that the Epistle of James originated relatively early, during a time before Christianity had yet to develop much of the distinctive language on display in other New Testament texts." Bernier, *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament*, 204–205.

believers. This observation reveals a dynamic in which it may be possible for an author to assume that their Christological beliefs are shared with their audience. More than that, these beliefs may be held so firmly by their audience that the authors may also be able to ground their ethical instructions upon this assumed and shared Christology. In this way, the epistle of James represents the widely accepted theology of the early church. This would explain why he does not find it necessary to defend his Christological claims throughout his epistle (2:1, 5:9) but can merely assume that his audience is on the same theological page. This train of thought contributes much that has been missing for the "tale of two Martins."

Occasioning Incident

Though scholars differ on the question of a real or imagined audience in the letter of James, this project holds that James addresses a real audience of Jewish-Christians in the διασπορᾶ. However, while he addresses real problems, his audience is likely spread across a broad geographical range. This accounts for the generalized nature of his wisdom instructions as he seeks to address issues shared by his wide audience.[254] But how and why were these Jewish-Christians dispersed? Why did James feel the need to write to them from Jerusalem?[255]

In a way that draws James into the narrative of the book of Acts, Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles provide an excellent case for a plausible historical situation that may

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[254] McCartney, *James*, 32.

[255] The place of writing actually further connects this document to its Jewish origins. Coker says James writes from the center of "Judaeanness geographically" and embodies the center of "Judaeanness personally." K. Jason Coker, "Calling on the Diaspora: Nativism and Diaspora Identity in the Letter of James," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 443. He further speculates and draws interesting observations from the fact that Ιάκωβος and διασπορά (two *very* Jewish concepts) frame James's introduction. This shows James to be at the center and the diaspora at the margins.

provide answers to these interrelated questions and offer insight into the occasioning incident.[256] Building on the likely early date of the letter, these three authors explain that the diaspora that James is addressing is likely made up of those who, following the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), have been recently persecuted and "scattered" (διεσπάρησαν) throughout the surrounding regions of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1; 11:19).[257] While the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, the church faced difficult times in these new regions. This historical explanation makes sense of the wisdom instruction offered by James concerning issues of poverty and wealth (James 2:1–7), the oppression of laborers (James 5:1–6), and endurance through other "trials" (James 1:2–4; 5:7–11).[258] Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles conclude, "The encouragement to live out their lives fully committed to Christ's lordship would certainly be appropriate for such a group."[259] These dynamics could have easily prompted James to write to his audience.

In addition to explaining the wisdom topics covered by James, the historical situation also implies that his theological assumptions can be explained by the previous

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[256] Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, 811.

[257] This persecution continues through Herod Agrippa I. Here, the death of a different James (the son of Zebedee) is said to have pleased the Jews (Acts 12:1–4). The likely date of this event is around AD 43.

[258] Guthrie says that "this situation matches what certainly must have been the experience of Jewish believers, 'scattered' from Jerusalem in the early years of the church first to broader Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1) and then beyond (Acts. 11:19)." Guthrie, "James," 203. Davids says, "James writes to a community under stress, externally by the 'rich' and internally by conflicts among individuals and groups belonging to the community. The purpose of the work is to assist the community in coping with this stress, which he refers to as 'trials.'" Davids then explains that the "proper response to trials is the maintaining of patient endurance due to one's eschatological perspective." Peter H. Davids, "James's Message: The Literary Record," in *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 85.

[259] Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, 811. Additionally, these sorts of topics are very commonly covered in other diaspora letters. The diaspora letter "generally consoled the diasporic communities for having to live among gentiles outside of Jerusalem." Coker, "Calling on the Diaspora: Nativism and Diaspora Identity in the Letter of James," 445. See more below on genre.

formulation of this apostolic theology in Jerusalem before the dispersion (cf. the apostolic preaching throughout Acts).[260] The preaching of the apostles in the early sermons in Acts represents a clearly articulated theology.[261] Jude even expects that his audience will remember this apostolic preaching and use it as the measuring rod for orthodoxy (Jude 3, 17–18). Relatedly, social memory theorists point out that the diaspora language in James (e.g., James's repeated use of the vocative ἀδελφοί)[262] may function rhetorically to socially unite the author and audience by utilizing an "identity context that runs throughout the letter" and is built on an assumed and shared theological background.[263]

Genre and Structure

Dibelius's claims regarding the genre and structure of James have reverberated for years. His labeling of James as paraenetic literature launched his entire interpretive scheme. Two key implications resulted from Dibelius's assessment. First, he assumed that if James was

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[260] This section draws on Newman's explanation of NT epistles as the "literary products" of the authors thinking through the "implications of a set of (shared) convictions in light of immediate pastoral concerns." Living behind the epistles, Newman claims, is a "theological competency, a grammar of sorts, a potentiality that yields a pastoral letter when an apostolic authority is faced with a pastoral crisis. Letters are specific performances of this theological potential." Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," 374.

[261] See the book-length discussion of this in Chris Bruno, Jared Compton, and Kevin McFadden, *Biblical Theology According to the Apostles: How the Earliest Christians Told the Story of Israel* (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2020).

[262] Based on the ratio of usage per verse, James uses this designation more than other NT writers. Only 1 Corinthians and Acts use it more in total. This is a rhetorical attempt to pull his audience close or "call them home." Coker, "Calling on the Diaspora: Nativism and Diaspora Identity in the Letter of James," 449.

[263] See James 2:6–7, for example. K. Jason Coker, "James," in *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. J. Brian Tucker and Aaron Kuecker (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 515. The diaspora language, like the language of "others" in Jude, draws a line between those on the inside and those on the outside. McCartney concludes that the letter's purpose "is not merely to demarcate and identify the characteristics of a community, but to exhort those who wish to be associated with that community to conform to those characteristics." McCartney, *James*, 37–38.

paraenetic in form, it was not designed to carry theological freight.[264] Instead, the letter merely offered ethical instruction. Second, according to Dibelius, paraenesis typically did not follow any clear structure but was merely a collection of wisdom sayings. He famously said, "The entire document lacks continuity in thought."[265] This section will demonstrate, contra Dibelius, that the epistle of James contains significant theological content and is structured in an intentionally Christological way. Drawing on Carolyn Miller's definition of genre as "centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action, it is used to accomplish,"[266] this section will examine the way paraenesis functions within a diaspora letter, and once the specific communicative purpose is in view, the rhetorical structuring possibilities offered by scholars will be examined.

Genre

As alluded to above, this project follows Cheung and Yu in their understanding of the letter of James as containing features of a Jewish diaspora letter[267] and Jewish wisdom

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[264] He succinctly said, "James has no 'theology.'" Dibelius, *James*, 21, 25.

[265] Dibelius describes paraenesis as "a text which strings together admonitions of general ethical content." Ibid., 1–11. McCartney says, "few scholars now support Dibelius's pronouncement that James has no formal structure." McCartney, *James*, 42.

[266] Miller, "Genre as Social Action," 151. The number of imperatives in James alone should signal to interpreters that he desires his audience to *do* something.

[267] McCartney says diaspora letters were "sent by a person of recognized authority in Judea to Jews outside the land." These letters typically gave "advice on how to maintain integrity as the people of God in the midst of a non-Jewish world" and were meant to be circulated. McCartney, *James*, 39. Jeremiah 29 may contain one of the most famous of these types of letters. For a discussion of those for or against classifying James as a diasporic letter, see Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 15–16.

instruction.[268] Similarly, several follow Bauckham's understanding of James as a "paraenetic encyclical," a letter built around exhortation and meant to circulate among numerous churches.[269] This broad description connects the occasioning incident discussed above to the genre and rhetorical structure chosen by James to achieve his specific communicative purpose. However, with an emphasis on paraenesis and ethical instruction, how does this view differ from Dibelius? A reassessment of paraenetic literature is in order.

Contrary to Dibelius and the form critics, paraenesis is no longer understood in NT studies as a genre that included a string of loosely connected ethical imperatives appended to NT letters without any connection to the letter's theological content. Instead, many now view paraenesis in light of its social and ethical functions, which are based on previously agreed-upon theological convictions.[270] This style of exhortation developed within Jewish wisdom traditions and was regularly utilized by NT authors to position ethical appeals

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[268] Cheung and Yu, "The Genre of James: Diaspora Letter, Wisdom Instruction, or Both?," 97. Revealing that first-century Judaism was the principal religious context of this letter and further linking authorship and style, Bauckham discusses how James shows himself to be "a wisdom teacher" who "seeks to appropriate and to develop the resources of the Jewish wisdom tradition." Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 30. Bauckham also insightfully shows how James uses the Jesus sayings like Ben Sira uses the Proverbs. For further exploration, see Richard Bauckham, "James and Jesus Traditions," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 9–26. This use of traditional Jewish Wisdom material is matched by Jude's appropriation of the Jewish Apocalyptic tradition. These various Jewish aspects only further situate this letter in Jewish rather than Hellenistic contexts. Bauckham points out that, "how the letter of James is related to Jewish religious traditions is an important issue in determining the character of this NT document." Richard Bauckham, "The Relevance of Extracanonical Jewish Texts to New Testament Study," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 65–66, 73. For a further discussion of the "Jewish Matrix" within which James likely wrote, see Bernier, *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament*, 203–204. Bernier also adds a brief section on the use of "synagogue" in 2:2 as a possible signal toward James' early Jewish origins.

[269] Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 11–13; Guthrie, "James," 203.

[270] As regards the social function of paraenesis, Starr says that "it was intended to foster the working out over the course of a lifetime of the moral ideal inherent in a given theology or philosophy. Paraenesis assumed its greatest role in social groups that had already adopted the new worldview." Frequently, it is found that paraenesis was "aimed to help the writer's like-minded friends understand more fully the moral implications of their worldview, so as to live out those implications more completely." James Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, ed. James Starr and Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 111.

within theological contexts.[271] Linking this genre discussion with several components of this thesis, Dryden says the purpose of parenetic epistles was to "sustain the relationship between teacher and pupil." These letters were "not the arena for developing complex formal arguments" but typically functioned to "remind students" of "basic teachings" and "encouraged the formation of character in conformity with those basic teachings."[272]

This "conformity" aspect is drawn out further by Thurén. He says what makes "paraenesis different from other forms of exhortation is its reconfirming nature." Instead of "bringing new information," it seeks to "enhance existing values and behavior." In other words, paraenetic epistles were needed not in the event of a "lack of knowledge" but were sent to groups of people who were not "satisfactorily" applying the knowledge they already possessed.[273] Similarly, McCartney says James "assumes that the audience already accepts the precepts and truth of the Christian message, and he presumes that they already know and accept the ethical teaching of Jesus." The problem is (see James 2:1–7), is that they are

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[271] It also appeared within Hellenistic contexts. Popkes takes a sort of "maximalist" approach to the presence of paraenesis in the NT. He is also explicit about theological connections. He says, "Is there then anything in the New Testament that would or could not be paraenetic in character and function? Basically, the answer is indeed: no; at least hardly anything. At numerous and crucial points in the New Testament we may notice paraenetic remarks even at 'high' dogmatic moments. The Christological hymn in Phil 2:6–11, for instance, is framed by remarks on behaving accordingly (2:2–5, 12ff.). Eschatological sections are usually concluded by a word on proper attitudes (e.g., 1 Thess. 4:18; 1 Cor 15:58; Mark 13:33–37). The relations between dogmatics and paraenesis are evidently too close to be severed (cf. Hebrews)." Wiard Popkes, "Paraenesis in the New Testament: An Exercise in Conceptuality," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 24–25.

[272] The quotes from the two preceding sentences are from Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 167–168. These observations have clear links with social memory theory, relevance theory, rhetorical theory, and speech act theory. Popkes says paraenesis "reminds of practices to be pursued or avoided in the Christian way of life, expresses a shared, articulated world view, and does not anticipate disagreement." Popkes, "Paraenesis in the New Testament: An Exercise in Conceptuality," 43. For pushback on Popkes definition and handling of paraenesis, see Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "The Concept of Paraenesis," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 47–72.

[273] Quotes in the preceding three sentences are from Lauri Thurén, "Motivation as the Core of Paraenesis—Remarks on Peter and Paul as Persuaders," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 355–356. Wilkins points out that paraenesis is so familiar that it is often presented as a "reminder." M. J. Wilkins, "Teaching, Paraenesis," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, 1157.

not behaving "according to the precepts they have already acknowledged."[274] It can be concluded, therefore, that paraenesis is not best understood through Dibelius's eyes. On the contrary, paraenesis does more than merely *contain* theology; it is entirely built upon the assumption of a previously *agreed upon* theology that serves as the basis for its comprehension. It seems, therefore, that the genre choice of paraenesis functions quite well with the emphasis in this project on a pre-diasporic apostolic theology. The following section will now attempt to show, further contradicting Dibelius, how James is able to possess structure and theology.

Structure

A wide variety of opinions have been offered concerning the structure of James. Guthrie proposes a chiastic or symmetrical structure.[275] Similarly, Krüger sees a concentric structure with 2:1–13 as the centerpiece.[276] Moo suggests that James uses the repeated appearance of the vocative ἀδελφοί as his primary structuring element.[277] Davids argues

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[274] Quotes from the previous two sentences are from McCartney, *James*, 40. Obviously, diasporic letters, such as James, easily accommodated this paraenetic mode. "Taking this idea a step further, a paraenetic letter from a teacher of a particular school to students, who were geographically removed from their teacher and possibly a minority in their social setting, could serve to give the students a surrogate meeting with their mentor again and thereby reaffirm their convictions and resultant habits." Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?," 84. For an interesting connection between paraenesis and the ἀδελφοί language of James, see Reidar Aasgaard, "'Brotherly Advice': Christian Siblingship and New Testament Paraenesis," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, 237–265.

[275] Guthrie, "James," 203–206.

[276] See the discussion in Elsa Tamez, "Don't Conform Yourselves to the Values of the Empire," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 193–207.

[277] Moo, *The Letter of James*, 122. While this vocative often introduces a new section, it is not a reliable structuring element. Some sections lack it, and in others, it appears in the middle of a section.

for a series of two thematic introductions.[278] Similar to Davids's double introduction proposal, Bauckham suggests that the structure of James may be built around the "strategic placement" of the two explicit references to Christ. The first (1:1) introduces the letter and leaves no doubt that this letter is a Christian document from a disciple of Jesus. The second reference to Jesus (2:1) is significantly placed at the opening of the main body in order to frame all that follows within this Christological context.[279] Therefore, contrary to common readings, this paraenetic letter may actually be structured by key Christological passages that form the core of its theology.[280] While there are apparently many disagreements about the proper way to structure the letter as a whole, most commentators agree that the opening of the body of the letter occurs at 2:1, and the beginning of the conclusion happens at 5:7.[281] Perhaps by happenstance or by design, these verses, which occur at critical junctures, also

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[278] Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 23–25. See discussion of Davids's influential view in McCartney, *James*, 59–60.

[279] On this point, Bauckham explains that "the question of the presence or absence of Christology in James is very connected to the question of genre." Bauckham explains that early Christian paraenesis and early high Christology are not at odds. Additionally, tying these structural features with the exegetical portion below, Bauckham says that the strategic position of 2:1 partly explains the rather elaborate title for Christ in this verse. Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 133. Bauckham says that the "significance of these two references is out of proportion to their number." Bauckham builds on this line of reasoning later in Richard Bauckham, "Messianic Jewish Identity in James," in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, 115.

[280] To demonstrate the presence of theology within James's paraenetic letter, Bauckham conducts a comparison of James with the paraenetic portions of the Pauline literature. He discovered that James has no less Christology than any of the Pauline paraenetic material. James, then, is as Christological as we should expect this type of literature to be. Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 139–140.

[281] See, for example, Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 311–312; Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 28; Hartin, *James*, 38; Guthrie, "James," 264; Coker, "James," 516.

represent two of the most Christologically dense passages in the entire letter.[282] Because of their strategic positioning, embedded Christological and ethical content, and relevance for early and Jewish origins, these passages have been selected for extended exegesis below (2:1–7; 5:7–11).

While more traditional approaches to the structure of James are represented above, others advocate for the influence of various Greco-Roman rhetorical structures.[283] Watson essentially understands James to progress through episodic moments of deliberative rhetoric.[284] Thurén, on the other hand, sees epideictic rhetoric at play.[285] Though McCartney thinks James may exhibit characteristics of deliberative rhetoric and protreptic literature, he and McKnight exercise caution in their application of these Greco-Roman

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[282] Concerning 2:1 Laws explains, "Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is seen as a possible interpolation because of the separation of τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν from τῆς δόξης. It has been suggested, therefore, as with 1:1, that the reference to Jesus Christ is an interpolation to Christianize the document, and that originally the definition of faith was that of the Jew in 'the Lord of Glory', Yahweh (cf. 'the God of glory', Acts 7:2)." Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 94. Johnson points out that there is actually no text-critical basis for this suggestion. Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 48. On the possibility of a Christian interpolation see further Vlachos, *James*, 68; Martin Dibelius and Heinrich Greeven, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (Fortress Press, 1976), 126–127. Additionally, see the detailed look at this issue using the coherence-based genealogical method in Peter Gurry and Tommy Wasserman, "Textual Criticism and the Editio Critica Maior of James," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 212ff.

[283] Hartin says, "Without doubt the author of James must have been educated in the art of rhetoric." Hartin, *James*, 127.

[284] Duane F. Watson, "James 2 in Light of Greco-Roman Schemes of Argumentation," *New Testament Studies* 39, no. 1 (1993): 94–121. Watson says, "James blends rhetoric common to both the Jewish and Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions." Duane F. Watson, "The Rhetorical Composition of the Epistle of James," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 100. See also Wesley H. Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus in the Social Rhetoric of James*, Society of New Testament Studies 106 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 59–113. See also his discussion in Duane F. Watson, "The Rhetoric of James 3:1–12 and a Classical Pattern of Argumentation," *Novum Testamentum* XXXV, no. 1 (1993): 48–64. He says James is "Jewish Christian wisdom influenced by Hellenistic rhetoric but arranged in the topic-to-topic manner of Jewish wisdom that had not fully adapted the Greco-Roman elaboration pattern of arrangement."

[285] Lauri Thurén, "Risky Rhetoric in James?," *Novum Testamentum* 37, no. 3 (1995): 262–284.

rhetorical conventions.[286] While this caution related to rhetorical structuring elements is warranted, interpreters must not ignore the additional value of rhetorical analysis. As discussed above, rhetorical theories assist interpreters in identifying what the author intends to accomplish with his writing.[287] In this way, the paraenetic purpose of James has a close relationship with the rhetoric employed. Thurén is here worth quoting at length.

> All the studies discussed suffer from the same basic deficiency: They concentrate on the contents of the text but pay too little attention to its goal. It is not plausible that the author presented different themes, ideas, and perceptions only in order to inform his possible readers about his moral views or theology. Instead, James—as most texts—is to be seen as a tool for persuading the addressees, or modifying their attitudes, opinions, and behavior.[288]

Thurén represents well the perspective of this thesis. James is writing to *persuade* his audience, not merely to *inform* them. Thurén is persuaded that James implements features

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[286] McCartney, *James*, 41–43. McCartney thinks those pursuing this rhetorical structure can sometimes push "the material of James into the framework" and minimize the fact that at points it is "forced." Ibid., 61. McKnight says, "Tidying up James for him by filling in the lines with rhetorical theory gets in the way of reading the text." McKnight thinks it "imposes on James categories" that were not original to him. McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 403.

[287] Lockett, An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles, 33. McCartney explains that "rhetorical analysis focuses on how a text functions as an effort to affect people or cause something to happen." McCartney, *James*, 60. McCartney explains that the value in rhetorical approaches is that they "recognize that the letter's overall purpose is not simply to 'prove a point' or 'make a case.' Instead, James assumes that his readers share a number of basic theses and truths that he puts forward and then seeks to move his readers to action. In other words, the problem is not that his audience has different assumptions and ought to change their minds; instead, it is that the audience, who are assumed to agree with James's theology, may be living in ways inconsistent with that theology." Ibid., 61.

[288] Thurén explains that the basic notion that James may have used or been aware of rhetorical conventions used for persuasion "does not presuppose that the author had received formal education in letter-writing or rhetoric. First, corresponding conventions are common in any human communication and interaction; second, the art of speaking and writing was an important element of the Hellenistic culture at all levels." Thurén, "Risky Rhetoric in James?," 265. See further Lauri Thurén, "On Studying Ethical Argumentation and Persuasion in the New Testament," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1993), 464–478.

of communication that are similar to what is known as epideictic rhetoric.[289] This form of rhetoric to reinforces values already held by the audience. This opinion certainly reinforces the notion of an assumed and shared theology explored previously and further validates the choice of paraenesis by James. While Thurén appears to press the evidence a bit too far and applies epideictic rhetoric to the entire letter, he is undoubtedly correct in detecting epideictic aspects throughout the letter.

In the end, though this project openly harvests insights from several perspectives, when it comes to the structure of James, it is best to follow the advice of Bauckham, who says that it is a "mistake to think that coherence in James must be sought in the form of a logical sequence of thought running through the whole text."[290] Instead, Bauckham holds that it is more beneficial to implement an approach that searches out the "micro-structure" of smaller units rather than attempting to find a "macro-structure" in the epistle.[291] This

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[289] Thurén, "Risky Rhetoric in James?" He explains, "In terms of ancient rhetoric, the confirmation of held values approaches the epideictic genre, which is seen by Kennedy as a more subtle way of influencing people than is the deliberative. Instead of an "urgent advice to act," which is typical of a deliberative speech..., the recipients' way of life is at stake. No sudden, definitive decision on some issue is required. Instead, the existing but perhaps too vague values and modes of behavior are intensified in order to implement them." Thurén, "Motivation as the Core of Paraenesis—Remarks on Peter and Paul as Persuaders," 355–356.

[290] Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 112.

[291] Ibid., 62–63. Related to this approach, he explains that Dibelius's claims concerning the epistle's incoherence and "haphazard character" are clearly exaggerated. In fact, the tradition of Jewish wisdom instruction and the diasporic epistolary genre to which James belongs possess more structure than Dibelius allows.

paraenetic encyclical, then, is not absent of theology.[292] It actually may be Christological to the core.[293] This discussion sets up the exploration of the theological context.

Theological Context

The theological context and the history of interpretation of the epistle, have greatly affected the understanding of James's Christology and ethics. In his article *Christology in the Epistle of James*, William Baker points out the widely discussed adage that often exegesis can be determined by pre-existing theology. This has often been the case for the epistle of James, and the pre-existing theology smuggled in is often Pauline.[294]

However, when one takes James on his own terms and asks questions concerning his Christology, one finds a clear presentation of an early, high Christology. His presentation of Christology may seem implicit, compact, and lacking detailed treatment, but it is certainly not negligible.[295] While the supposed lack of Christology was at the heart of Luther's complaint against James,[296] it will be shown that James's Christology is

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[292] In discussing the theological nature of paraenesis, Popkes says that "[n]either in form nor in content can paraenesis be isolated from the underlying soteriological or ecclesiological layers. ... Conversion puts the emphasis on what is new and characteristic of the Christian way of life... The concreteness of the new existence follows from its very nature and roots. There is no such thing as a separate early Christian ethics that would in any sense be alien to the mainstream of what the Jesus movement stood for." Popkes, "Paraenesis in the New Testament: An Exercise in Conceptuality," 24–25.

[293] Morris says, "James is in no doubt about the importance of living out to the full the implications of one's Christian profession." Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 312. See also Sloan, "The Christology of James," 3–4.

[294] Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James," 47. Sloan says, the "so-called problems of the theology and/or Christology of the book of James are, it seems to me, more matters of the paradigms and methods with which it is examined than its supposed sub-Christian qualities." Sloan, "The Christology of James," 3.

[295] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Magnifying God in Christ: A Summary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010). 117.

[296] Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 138; Wright and Bird, *The New Testament in Its World*, 732.

considerably higher than Luther and others since him have supposed. To answer these critiques, the theological context of James will be discussed under three headings: *Sapiential Christology, Neglected Christology,* and *Assumed Christology*.

Sapiential Christology

As this project has attempted to show, there is great value offered by the insights drawn from the brothers of Jesus who enjoyed such close proximity of relationship to the now risen Lord. However, since many would understand James's Christology to be, at best, "submerged" underneath the ethical content of his letter, his contribution to the Christology of the NT has often been neglected.[297] This is due, in part, to the rare realization of how intertwined James's ethical content is with his Christology. Yet, the ethical content of the NT is grounded upon Christology and eschatology, with the resurrection providing the key impetus.[298] Additionally, Baker makes the case that the theology of James should be understood as "sapiential theology."[299] This assertion is in line with the theme of James put forth by McCartney, who says that James "wants those who profess to believe in Christ"

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[297] This take on the relationship of theology and ethics in James is similar to that taken by Dryden on 1 Peter. See J. de Waal Dryden, "Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation" (Cambridge University, 2006).

[298] Collins lists the following verses as support of James's eschatological interest: 1:12, 21; 2:5, 12–14; 3:1, 18; 4:12; 5:1–11, 20. C. John Collins, "James 5:14–16a: What Is the Anointing For?," *Presbyterion* 23, no. 2 (1997): 89. See also, McCartney, *James*, 48–49.

[299] Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James." 48–51. This is a helpful category in which to understand not only James but much of NT theology. The authors of Scripture did not communicate theology in a vacuum but often did so in order to give specific ethical direction. Conversely, ethics were never communicated apart from a theological grounding. Theology and ethics, then, should be seen as enabling Christians to live wisely and with character shaped by theology. Baker goes on to remind his readers that the NT texts were originally written to change the people to whom they were directed. If we read the bible in a way that simply reinforces our theological categories or convictions, then we have turned it into a mere relic of the past. Instead, we should read the text with expecting that our worldviews and traditions may be challenged.

to "manifest living faith."[300] In other words, James is calling his readers to a lived theology. This observation should lead interpreters to investigate the relationship between James's ethics and his Christology in fresh ways.

Hurtado supports this point by explaining the relationship between James's Christology and ethics by saying, "James emphasizes the practical and ethical consequences of the Christological convictions shared by the author and intended readers."[301] Relatedly, tying Christology and paraenesis together, Sloan says

> What James has to say about Christ lies for the most part beneath the surface of the practical exhortations in the book. In attempting to uncover the Christology of James, therefore, we must look not only at what James says about Christ, but at what James seems to assume about Christ in the course of his ethical instructions.[302]

This observation, which makes explicit many of the key claims of this thesis, means that if interpreters are to understand the ethical directives of James accurately, they must direct their exegetical endeavors toward uncovering the Christological substructure supporting the ethical appeals through methods such as relevance and social memory theory. These insights reveal that James cannot simply be an ethical or practical document; it is inescapably Christological.

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[300] McCartney says James "assumes the content and saving power of the Christian gospel, but his interest in on how that is worked out in life." He continues, "James reminds us that genuine faith is more than a matter of simply acknowledging the right concepts; it is right living in accordance with those concepts." This understanding of the theme makes sense of several other aspects of the letter, including 2:14–26. McCartney says, "the problem in James is not a soteriological issue" as in Paul, but it is "the practical issue of hypocrisy and a disconnection between faith assertions and behavior." McCartney, *James*, 2–3, 36, 57, 68.

[301] Larry W. Hurtado, "Christology," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments,* 173. Interestingly, even the demons appear to have the right theology (James 2:19). What counts is not merely correct doctrine but living this doctrine out in one's ethics. Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption*, 171.

[302] Sloan, "The Christology of James," 14.

Neglected Christology

Perhaps James's Christology has been widely neglected because it is more "submerged" than can be found in other NT documents.[303] The work of Andrew Chester is representative of the wider neglect of James's Christology. For example, in his work on the theology of James, Chester somehow only devotes two pages to Christology. He provides no mention of the Christology embedded throughout the letter, does not offer any discussion of the *parousia* in James 5, and does not make much of the use of κύριος to refer to Jesus.[304] On the other hand, Richard Longenecker, in a wider study on the Christology of early Jewish Christianity, draws out several intriguing Christological observations from the letter of James. Here, only brief mention will be made of relevant insights concerning the passages to be exegeted below.

First, as will be demonstrated in the exegesis section, Longenecker understands 2:7, which is highly related to 2:1, as referring to the blaspheming of the name of Jesus.[305] If 2:7 is understood this way, several further Christological assumptions can be made. For example, Longenecker builds on this reading of 2:7 to highlight other glimpses of James's Christology in chapter 5. Though this passage will only receive a brief mention below, Longenecker sees references to Jesus in James 5:1–6 that many, like Chester, overlook entirely. First, in language similar to that found in Jude, Κυρίου Σαβαώθ in James 5:4 may be a reference to Jesus as the "Lord Almighty." Secondly, the term τὸν δίκαιον in James

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[303] See the discussion in Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:308–310.

[304] Chester and Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, 43–44.

[305] Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* (Vancouver, CA: Regent College Publishing, 2001), 45.

5:6, which may be translated as "the righteous one," could also be understood as a reference to Jesus. To substantiate this claim, Longenecker points to Acts 22:13–16, which may indicate that this term was used to refer to Jesus in the earliest days of Jewish Christianity.[306] With striking similarity in language to Acts 3:14–15 and Acts 7:52, contrary to the opinion of most, this interpretation would then also mean that James *does,* in fact, include a mention of the crucifixion, albeit brief.[307] This final observation necessitates a review of the widely accepted Christological beliefs in the early church.

Assumed Christology

What is striking about the Christology of James is the density of his statements matched with the lack of qualification or defense of his claims.[308] What does this say about his

[306] Ibid., 46–47. Further mention could be made of James 4:14–15. Many see the anointing of the sick "in the name of the Lord" as likely a reference to Jesus, much like that of Acts 3–4. Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 134–135. McCartney lists the two passages under investigation in the exegesis portion below as two of the clear evidences of a high Christology in James. McCartney, *James*, 69.

[307] James 5:6 reads, "You have condemned and murdered the righteous one." Similarly, Acts 3:14 (NIV) says, "You disowned the Holy and Righteous One" and Acts 7:52 (NIV) says, "They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him."

[308] Jobes explains that "because all writers assume shared knowledge with their readers, and often shared values and concepts as well, one can look at what James implies about his knowledge and beliefs concerning Jesus that he presumably shared with the original readers of his letter." Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 185. For the title "assumed Christology," see Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 39. Davids says James "feels no compulsion to explain his Christology."

diasporic audiences' prior reception of these claims? What might be learned by applying insights from relevance or social memory theory?[309] Discussing this very point, Jobes says

> the way that James is able to refer to Jesus in these exalted terms in a passing reference shows that both James and his readers shared a high view of Jesus Christ on which he could assume and for which he did not need to argue. This means that James's Christology is the assumed and implicit perspective from which he writes.[310]

Even in the midst of a practically oriented letter, James's high Christology is evident. Though James affirms monotheism (2:19), he also clearly presents Jesus as sharing the titles of Lord (1:1, 2:1, 5:7–8, 14–15) and Judge (5:9; cf. 4:12) with God the Father; he views Jesus as the "Christ" (2:1); the name of Jesus is understood as powerful enough to heal (5:14), and it is significant enough to be blasphemed (2:7).[311] The only way that those in James's diasporic audience could have possibly accepted these unqualified claims about Christ is if they believed them prior to receiving his letter, even though it was likely written as early as the mid-40s.[312] In agreement, Hurtado says that the Christology of James is

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[309] For a discussion of the influence of Jesus occurring further underneath the surface in James's use of the Jesus traditions, see Christopher W. Morgan, *A Theology of James: Wisdom for God's People*, Explorations in Biblical Theology (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010), 31–37; Bauckham, "James and Jesus Traditions"; Patrick J. Hartin, "James and the Jesus Tradition: Some Theological Reflections and Implications," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 55–70; John S. Kloppenborg, "The Reception of the Jesus Tradition in James," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 71–100. James's potential knowledge of the oral tradition supports the validity of Newman's "apostolic theology" hypothesis. Alternatively, another possible way to explain the similarity in language between the synoptics and James is to remember that Jesus and James were brothers and, therefore, would have grown up with the same influences and would likely have utilized the same language. See mention of this in McCartney, *James*, 13.

[310] Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 187. Similarly, Marshall says the letter hints that the writer had a doctrine but expressed himself without developing it here. I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 633.

[311] Schreiner, *Magnifying God in Christ*, 117; Baker, "James," 202.

[312] Similar arguments are made about Paul's audiences as well. For a discussion of the continued monotheism in the diaspora, see deSilva, "Jews in the Diaspora," 284.

implicit and is "largely a reflection of what the author and first readers" must have "regarded as traditional and uncontroversial Christology."[313] Similarly, McCartney says that "the theology of James is assumed more than expounded." For this reason, "the reader or James must extrapolate the underlying theology by reading the letter against the backdrop of James's Jewish framework and Christian commitment."[314] The shared Christological conviction that lies beneath the surface in James is evidence for Bauckham's claim that "[t]he highest possible Christology – the inclusion of Jesus in the unique divine identity – was central to the faith of the early church even before any of the NT writings were written, since it occurs in all of them."[315]

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[313] Hurtado, "Christology," 173. Hurtado attributes this to the agreed-upon Jewish-Christian theology shared by the author and audience. He says it is interesting to note "what the author and audience... must have regarded as traditional and uncontroversial Christology." Bauckham also explains that the Christology of the letter, "though *presumed* rather than *expounded*, is more prominent and considerably higher than is often allowed." Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*. 138.

[314] For this and the previous quotations, see McCartney, *James*, 67. This is obviously closely related to the discussion above regarding the "implicit ethics" of the NT.

[315] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 19.

Exegesis of Selections from James

James 2:1–7

James 2:1–7 is a critical passage in James's epistle for multiple reasons. Is is placed immediately after the extended introduction and appears at the opening of the letter body. It also contains references that situate the letter in an early and Jewish context. For example, the apparent influence of the LXX (2:1, 8), the mention of the συναγωγή ("synagogue"), and the situation described (explained by the occasioning incident above) all appear to fit clearly within an early, Jewish context. While the entire passage will receive treatment, the focus of the exegesis will be on the Christological opening of 2:1.

Christological Contexts

This passage contains several enticing exegetical interests, two of which will be discussed in this overview. Two other interests, which deal exclusively with Christology, will receive separate, extended treatment below. The initial two discussion points will properly set the context for understanding the final two exegetical and theological concerns.

Christology and Partiality

This passage represents one of the clearest examples of James's ethically motivated reminders concerning the apostolic theology his audience had previously received and believed before the dispersion (Acts 8:1). His primary aim is to show his audience that faith in "our Lord Jesus Christ" is incompatible with showing favoritism.

All editions of the NRSV prior to the most recent update in 2021 take James 2:1 as interrogative, "My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe

in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ?" Most other translations render this in an imperative mood. The CSB, for example, simply says, "do not show favoritism." Favoritism (προσωπολημψία) meaning to show partiality, is "most likely a Semitism and describes the essence of judging based on external appearances."[316] The plural form προσωπολημψίαις may indicate numerous manifestations of such favoritism.[317]

Of particular interest in this context is the first person, plural, genitive pronoun ἡμῶν in 2:1 following τοῦ κυρίου ("our Lord"). By using this pronoun, James is not only linking himself with his audience but also reminding them of the Christological confession they share. This hint toward a shared Christological viewpoint becomes the basis for James's critique of his audience's behavior.[318] According to James, then, faith in Christ "without ethical consequences is an implicit denial of the reality of that faith."[319]

Related to this shared Christological viewpoint signaled by ἡμῶν, Hartin explains that the rhetorical function of 2:2–7, particularly the illustration of favoritism in 2:2–4, is

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[316] Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell, *James*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 16 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 106. Sirach discusses favoritism (7:6–7) and impartiality (35:10–18) as well. See Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 221.

[317] Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, 186.

[318] This leads McCartney to describe James 2:1 as a "general statement that the readers would have trouble disagreeing with, and it becomes the basis for an accusation and a call for behavioral change." McCartney also understands James here to be rooting "his ethics" in his diasporic audience's "faith in Jesus Christ as Lord (2:1)." McCartney, *James*, 134. Guthrie summarizes the message of this passage by saying that "a public commitment to Christ, the Lord of glory, is incompatible with an attitude that degrades a fellow believer or puts the person at a disadvantage." Guthrie, "James," 232. Similarly, Hartin says that James builds a Christological foundation for his position against favoritism. Hartin, *James*, 129. Brosend II, who sees a contrast between "your acts of favoritism" and belief "in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ," understands this juxtaposition to be "crucial for understanding James." Brosend II, *James and Jude*, 57.

[319] McCartney, *James*, 71. Interestingly, related to the earlier discussion concerning NT ethics, this passage appears to be at once uniting a theological and macro-ethical context with an applied, micro-ethical issue. Additionally, understanding this passage in the way described here provides a helpful starting place for the upcoming discussion of faith and works. James begins the case in 2:1–7, and he will further elaborate in 2:14–26. Brosend II explains that Christian practice cannot be separated from Christian faith. Faith includes both belief and practice. Brosend II, *James and Jude*, 56.

aimed at "providing an example of partiality" that would be "so shocking" to the original readers, "that they will spontaneously agree that such action runs counter to the ethical way of life inspired by Jesus" that they have agreed to live by.[320] The second part of James's argument (2:5–7) consists of a series of rhetorical questions that further bring the issue of the incompatibility of faith and favoritism to the fore.[321] After pointing out that God has "chosen the poor" (2:5) while his audience has "dishonored" them (2:6), James then asks,

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[320] Hartin, *James*, 131. Hartin's subjective translation of πιστις χριστου is obvious here. This issue will be discussed below. Relatedly, McKnight detects in this passage what he calls the "Jesus version of the Shema." He says James follows his half-brother's combination of Deut. 6:4–9 with Lev. 19:18 (Matt. 22:37–40) to explain that when partiality is shown, the two greatest commandments are also broken. The Shema certainly seems to be in James's mind (2:19), and Lev. 19:18 is directly quoted in James 2:8. McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 173. Additionally, it appears that James follows the Jesus tradition in his concern for the poor. See Hartin, "James and the Jesus Tradition: Some Theological Reflections and Implications," 68–69. Throughout the letter "rich" (1:10, 11) is understood as a negative term. This is certainly true in the 2:1–7 passage and also in the passage immediately preceding 5:7–11. Cheung adds that "In James, 'the poor' is a form of positive name-calling, while 'the rich' is negative, with the respective accompanying attitudes of being humble and proud... Our author employs such socio-rhetorical strategy to deter those 'deviants' from their community-destructive behaviors and from associating themselves, either in deed or in attitude, with those typified as 'the rich.'" Luke L. Cheung, *The Genre, Composition, and Hermeneutics of the Epistle of James*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 260. Social identity theorists assert that "belonging to a particular group creates an 'in-group' self-categorization and definition over against and at the expense of an 'out-group.' That is, those of the 'in-group' define themselves by categorizing themselves as the opposite of the 'out-group.' Some have argued that this is precisely how the term 'rich' functions in the letter of James." Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 29. This is very similar to the way the "others" are framed in the letter of Jude. For more on this, see chapter 5. Wachob argues that "In James... the 'rich' are the powerful outsiders and enemies of the 'elect poor' (James 5:1–6). Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus in the Social Rhetoric of James*, 153. Drawing in findings from rhetorical theory, Lockett summarizes Wachob's view by saying that the "rich" and "poor" are "not necessarily literal social groups in conflict, but parties rhetorically contrasted for the purpose of persuading the readers of the values, attitudes, and actions they should or should not adopt." Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 30. Bauckham insists that whether the rich are "outsiders or (sociologically) insiders is notoriously hard to determine, since James's concern is rather that the values they espouse are those of the world, not of God's kingdom. The concern is not with sociological boundaries but with values." Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 106–107. Lockett concludes, "Whatever the social identity of the 'rich', the author of James, in prophetic tone, sharply announces judgment on this group and urges the readers to identify with the attitude (and perhaps the socio-economic status) of the 'poor.'" Lockett, *An Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, 31. See also discussion in Scot McKnight, "Poverty, Riches, and God's Blessing: James in the Context of the Biblical Story," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 161–175; Alicia J. Batten, "Reading James with the Social Sciences," in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 186–188.

[321] Hartin and Guthrie both appear to favor the influence of diatribe in this section. Guthrie, "James," 230; Hartin, *James*, 125. Hartin sees this passage as a clear example of "the use of rhetoric to move the hearers/readers to a change in behavior."

concerning the rich that are being favored by James's audience, "is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?" (NIV, James 2:6–7) These three questions, in parallel construction, serve to make the actions of James's audience more appalling. In short, James explains that faith in "our Lord Jesus Christ" is incompatible with the sort of behavior that shows favoritism to those who treat the audience in such a way.

Christology and Judgment

As the previous section has made clear, the ethical issue at the center of this passage is the practice of partiality. James is challenging his audience in their repeated favoring of the rich at the expense of the poor. But, in what social context is this partiality occurring? By opening 2:2 with ἐὰν γὰρ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν ἀνήρ ("For if a man enters into your synagogue"), James sets the scene for these partial practices.

Scholars typically understand this use of the word συναγωγὴν to refer to one of two contexts.[322] Several assume that this word describes an early Jewish-Christian worship service. This use may signal an early date for the letter of James and may also include an implicit reference to the worship of Jesus. Another group of scholars sees James's use of "synagogue" as signaling a judicial context much like what is described in 1 Cor. 6:1–8 (cf. also, Matt. 18:15–20; 1 Cor. 5:3–5; 1 Tim. 5:19–24). It is often noted by these scholars

[322] For a discussion of the various activities that took place in the synagogue, see Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 575–576; Kenneth D. Litwak, "Synagogue and Sanhedrin," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 264–271. Additionally, for an elaboration on the use of the synagogue in the diaspora, see deSilva, "Jews in the Diaspora," 279.

that since James knew of and used the term ἐκκλησία (5:14), if he wanted to describe a Christian gathering for worship, he would have used this more common word.[323] While "synagogue" may have been used to describe a worship service in some contexts, this project sides with the judicial context for several contextual reasons.

First, as Johnson has demonstrated decisively, Leviticus 19:12–18 forms an important textual backdrop for the entire letter. James 2:1–7 specifically appears to be drawing on Lev. 19:15, "Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great but judge your neighbor fairly" (NIV). This context of judgment in Lev. 19 should undoubtedly impact the understanding of the background of James 2.[324]

Second, the legal language scattered throughout 2:1–7 and the surrounding passages seem to indicate a judicial setting. For example, 2:6 describes the rich as those "dragging you into the lawcourts." Chapter 2:8–13 seems to continue this legal language with multiple references to the law. There is conviction by the law (2:9), accountability to the law (2:10), and a transgressing of the law (2:11). These mentions are all followed by

[323] Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, 110.

[324] Johnson says that an "awareness of James's use of Leviticus 19 can lead to exegetical consequences." The consequence here is wrapped up in the judicial context. Johnson, "The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James," 393, 399; Mason, "Use of Biblical and Other Jewish Traditions in James," 31–37. James may have also been influenced by his half-brother's use of this passage. Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 74–83; McCartney, *James*, 45. Additionally, Capes points out that the entire Holiness code of Lev. 17–26 associates the divine name with a variety of commandments (see 17:1–2; 19:1–2). James would then be operating in typical OT and LXX fashion by using the divine name in 2:1. Capes, *The Divine Christ*, 63.

the comments in 2:12–13 that explicitly discuss judgment by law. For these reasons, among others, the majority of scholars side with the judicial context of James 2:1–7.[325]

For the current project, a judicial setting has significant implications. First, if James 2:1–7, which opens the letter body, and James 5:7–11, which opens the conclusion, are both related to the theme of judgment, then this would not only reveal surprising links between these two passages, but it would also significantly increase the likelihood that judgment plays a more prominent role in the letter than is often noticed.[326]

In the wider context of this possible judgment theme, the present expressions of judgment in the diaspora are seen as running contrary to the reality that there is only one Judge and lawgiver who will soon return (4:12, 5:7-11). This perspective on judgment in James not only connects James to the eschatological emphasis in Jesus's teaching and the apocalyptic tradition represented in Jude, but they also unveil James's eschatologically motivated ethics. While this emphasis on judgment will be further explored in the exegesis

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[325] Perhaps the primary champion of this view is Roy Bowen Ward, "Partiality in the Assembly: James 2:2–4," *Harvard Theological Review* 62, no. 1 (1969): 87–97. McKnight, though he favors the "worship center" view, McKnight says that most scholars have sided with the judicial setting. McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 185. See, for example, Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 109–110; Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 223–24; Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, 110–111; Guthrie, "James," 230; Hartin, *James*, 118, 131. Allison Jr. shows that this judicial understanding was frequent in Protestant literature from the 1600s to the 1800s but was somehow forgotten. Dale C. Allison Jr., "Exegetical Amnesia in James," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 76 (2000): 162–165. See also Cain Hope Felder, "Partiality and God's Law: An Exegesis of James 2:1–13," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 39, no. 2 (1982): 51–69; Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 101–102. Many scholars point out that several pieces of Rabbinic material describe this situation exactly.

[326] For example, in addition to the mentions of judgment in 2:8–13, consider how this may impact the interpretation of justification in 2:14–26 or the understanding of 3:1 or 4:11–12. Commenting on James 5 Painter powerfully says, "this is a reference to faith in Jesus as the judge in waiting, who waits in glory but who will come – indeed, whose coming is near, at the door (5:7–9)." Painter then concludes that it "makes good sense that faith in the immediately coming judge should be opposed to discriminatory behavior that favors the rich and disadvantages the poor." Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 90–91. Painter further draws out the eschatological judgment theme in James when he says, "The critique of discrimination in terms of judges with evil thoughts / motives may arise from a vision of Jesus's exaltation to glory as the imminently coming judge of all, whose judgment they will face without favor or prejudice (5:8–9)."

of 5:7–11, for now, it is important to note that James's diasporic audience may have been inserting themselves as judges (2:4; 4:11), practicing partiality in judgment (2:2–4, 6), and ignoring the reality that there is only one Judge (4:12). As 5:9 will demonstrate that Judge's name is Jesus.[327]

Christological Questions

The previous section addressed two contextual concerns related to partiality and judgment. This section will ask a series of exegetical questions to discover if James 2:1 and 2:7 indeed possess what this project has defined as an early, high Christology. After the Christological questions are answered, the final section will draw Christological and ethical implications.

An early, high Christology was defined in chapter 2 as surfacing within *monotheistic categories* inside of *early* and *Jewish origins*. This Christological development occurred through the reciprocal synthesis of *exegetical* and *experiential* methods. The presence of high Christology in James 2:1 depends upon how two grammatical-syntactical problems are resolved. Both problems revolve around the "string of genitives" that Laws calls "syntactically extremely awkward."[328] After James's typical

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[327] With the judicial context of Lev. 19:15 likely in the background ("do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly"), James is establishing a Christological motivation for equality that is rooted in the coming judgment (5:7–11). Davids explains that those who hold faith with favoritism are denying the exalted Lord whose glory will be revealed in eschatological judgment. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 107.

[328] Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 94. As a reminder of an earlier point, Bauckham explains that the strategic position of 2:1 partly explains the rather elaborate title for Christ in this verse. Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 133. Witherington explains the complexity of this verse by conjecturing that James may be "thinking in Aramaic but composing (or having someone compose) in Greek." Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 453. Brosend II explains that the rather "awkward" expression "argues in favor of its originality, for an interpolator would likely have provided a smoother phrasing less apt to call attention to itself." Brosend II, *James and Jude*, 57; Dibelius, *James*, 127.

vocative introduction (Ἀδελφοί μου), the first genitive of concern comes in the prepositional phrase, ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ("hold the/your faith in our Lord"). The second string of genitives in question comes in the appositional clause Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης ("Jesus Christ, the glory"). After each genitive receives treatment, a presentation of Christological implications will be offered.

Who is the Object of Faith?

James 2:1 has recently received attention in the ongoing πιστις χριστου debate.[329] The primary issue in this debate is this: Is Jesus the *object* of faith? Or the *example* of faith? The objective understanding would read "faith *in* Christ" with the genitive substantive functioning as the *direct object* of the verbal idea implicit in the head noun (πίστιν). The subjective rendering would read the "faith/faithfulness *of* Christ" with the genitive substantive functioning as the *subject* of the verbal idea implicit in the head noun. Wallace advises, "Since the lexico-syntactic features in such instances are identical, appeal must be made to context, authorial usage, and broader exegetical issues."[330] Scholars have offered a variety of opinions related to the context, authorial usage, and other exegetical issues in their subjective and objective readings of this phrase.

In favor of the subjective rendering, prominent scholars such as Hartin and Johnson base their argument on their observation that, in James, faith is directed toward God the

[329]Lowe, "James 2:1 in the Πιστις Χριστου Debate: Irrelevant or Indispensable?"

[330] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 1997), 113–116. Interestingly, Wallace lists James 2:1 as one of the two or three clear instances of πίστις + objective personal genitives in the NT (Mark 11:22; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13).

Father (2:19, 23), not Jesus.[331] Johnson, directly tying this debate to the Christology of the letter, says, "The Christology of the letter is not such as to make 'faith in Christ' natural."[332] This argument is based on too narrow an understanding of James's Christology. First, when James 2:19 (an obvious allusion to the Shema) is read in the broader context of NT Christology, it becomes clear that this verse does not necessitate an interpretation that restricts faith as that which can only be placed in God the Father alone. As was evidenced in the discussion of 1 Cor. 8:6 in chapter 2, the Shema was innovatively reimagined by Paul (and presumably the entire early church) to include Jesus within the divine identity. Second, referencing a later use of τοῦ κυρίου ("the Lord") in James 5, Bauckham says that the "changing reference of 'the Lord' within the space of a few sentences in 5:7–11 reflects a high Christology in which Jesus shares the divine throne in heaven and is coming to execute the eschatological judgment of God."[333] The significance of this passage for the Christology of the letter will receive fuller treatment below. If these observations are accurate, the argument concerning God the Father as the sole object of faith in James cannot be maintained. To reason that the Christology of the letter of James does not allow for Jesus to be the object of faith misreads not only 2:1 but other Christological passages in James as well.

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[331] Hartin says, "The value of James's approach lies in providing a direction for Christianity that values the ethical direction of Jesus's life as of fundamental importance." Hartin, *James*, 31, 117, 130. For Johnson's take, see Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 217–218. Additionally, Brosend II thinks that an objective reading is "overly dependent on readings of Paul." Brosend II, *James and Jude*, 58. In all honesty, the attractiveness of the subjective reading is bound up with its emphasis on the *life* of Jesus. Those who see an objective reading are also those who often downplay the importance of the life of Jesus. However, salvific faith can only be faith *in* someone who has displayed perfect faith. This project does not have space to adequately explore the importance of the life and teachings of Jesus as that which provides further context for James and Jude's ethical teachings.

[332] Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 220.

[333] Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 138.

As Wallace suggested, context, authorial usage, and broader exegetical issues must be the deciding factors when distinguishing between an objective and a subjective genitive. The contextual concerns listed in the previous section ("Christological Contexts") must be considered to support the objective reading. What is evident from the immediate context is that the nature of the diasporic audience's faith represents the passage's main idea, not Jesus's faith. The prevailing contextual issue that should drive the interpretation of this passage is the realization that the audience (Ἀδελφοί μου) is attempting to hold (ἔχετε) their faith (τὴν πίστιν) *in* Christ along with (ἐν) their acts of προσωπολημψίαις ("favoritism"). The subject of ἔχετε (2nd person plural) who holds partiality must inescapably also be the holder of the faith. On this point and against subjective readings, McKnight says, "It is much more difficult to suggest that this person holds 'Jesus Christ's own faith in partiality' than to think that he or she is holding two things at the same time: his or her own faith and own partiality."[334] In other words, introducing the concept of the faith *of* Christ in this context unnecessarily complicates the reading.

Lastly, the context of the entire letter reveals that it is precisely this type of "doublemindedness" (the holding of faith and partiality) that is at the heart of a significant portion of James's criticism of his audience (see, e.g., 1:8; 4:8). The whole letter appears to be solely fixed on the faith of the diasporic audience (1:3, 6, 2:5, 14–26, 5:15), not the faith of Christ. Therefore, it would seem to be not only outside the logic of the immediate passage but also the coherent logic of the entire letter to read in a statement about the

[334] McKnight also says that calling Jesus "Lord" and "Glorious" imply a believer's faith. These elements make the subjective genitive unlikely. McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 177. See also Vlachos, *James*, 68; Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, 187; John B. Polhill, "Prejudice, Partiality, and Faith: James 2," *Review & Expositor* 83, no. 3 (1986): 395–404.

faithfulness of Jesus. This leads Bauckham to say that the subjective genitive is "improbable," even "more improbable than the Pauline examples" in the πιστις χριστου debate.[335] McCartney, drawing in the next genitive in this verse, says, "James's reference to Jesus Christ as 'our Lord' and the addition of the genitive 'of glory,'... are patent evidence that James regards Jesus not just as an example for faithfulness, but as the Master to whom one must give allegiance."[336]

What is the Meaning of τῆς δόξης?

The second genitive construction in question concerns the reading of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης. As with the previous question, there are essentially two majority options: either τῆς δόξης (the glory) is adjectival or appositional.[337] By far, the most common is the adjectival reading, or more specifically, the attributive or qualitative genitive: "our glorious Lord Jesus Christ."[338] The alternative option is to read τῆς δόξης in apposition to Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. More precisely, according to Wallace, this genitive would be in *simple* apposition since the two nouns are in the same case, though of different gender.[339] If we follow this appositional

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[335] Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 133.

[336] McCartney, *James*, 135. See also discussion in Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 633–634.

[337] Jobes adds a third possibility and explains that *doxēs* could be construed as a genitive of place. This would mean that James is making an allusion to the state of the resurrected Jesus and his current ascended position at the right hand of God. Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 186.

[338] Hartin, *James*, 33, 130; Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 220–221; Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, 187; Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 106–107.

[339] Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is genitive, singular, masculine, while τῆς δόξης is genitive, singular, feminine. Wallace defines simple apposition by saying that the genitive in question "gives a different designation that either clarifies who is the one named or shows a different relation to the rest of the clause than what the first noun by itself could display. Both words thus have the same referent, though they describe it in different terms." Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 96.

reading, rather than the attributive ("glorious Lord Jesus Christ"), the verse would read "the glory" as a title in apposition to "Lord Jesus Christ." While either the attributive or the appositional reading is undeniably representative of a high Christology,[340] this project slightly favors the appositional along with Blomberg and Kamell,[341] Laws,[342] and Mayor.[343] It appears that various translations of this appositional rendering may be available. Some take it quite literally ("faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory"), others seem to blend the adjectival with the appositional ("faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious one"), while others supply an additional κυρίου ("faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory"). This appositional reading certainly casts the favoritism of the audience in an especially hypocritical light. Further penetrating, in the context of the mistreatment of the poor, is the memory that this glorious one "became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).[344]

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[340] Vlachos explains "whatever the exact rendering, ascribing glory to Christ would be particularly relevant to any of James's readers either because ascribing glory to anybody but Christ would be inappropriate or, more likely, because discrimination against the impoverished would be inconsistent with the incarnation, where Christ laid aside his glory and became poor (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9)." Vlachos, *James*, 68. See also discussion in Moo, *The Letter of James*, 101.

[341] Blomberg and Kamell explain that "a simple descriptive genitive seldom puts the noun functioning as a modifier so far from the word modified; the unique syntax must be stressing the role of "glory" in some fashion." Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, 106–107.

[342] Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 94–97.

[343] Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James*, 78–82. Mayor makes a good case for the validity of using "the glory" as a title of Christ. He says, "other abstractions are used of Christ. He calls himself the Truth, the Life; He is called the Word, why not the Glory? If we had before us such a sentence as μὴ ἔχετε ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ λόγου, we should have no scruple in translating it 'Do not hold in folly the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word,' ...Why should we object to the similar translation here, 'the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the glory'? Ibid., 77–78.

[344] Though Laws thinks that James is here less interested in Christology and more concerned with the relation between faith and behavior, this project claims that James is interested in both. Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 97.

Whose Name is Blasphemed?

James 2:7 represents yet another implicit piece of evidence for the high Christology of James. In 2:6, James describes two ways the rich exploit his audience. Then, in 2:7, he asks, "Are they (the rich) not the ones who are blaspheming (βλασφημοῦσιν) the καλὸν ὄνομα (good/noble/excellent name) of him to whom ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς (you belong/is called over you)?

Since, the "name" in all uses of this Hebrew idiom in the LXX refers to the Hebrew divine name (the Tetragrammaton), some have suspected a reference to YHWH in James 2:7.[345] Others, noting the apparent relationship with 2:1, have suggested that the καλὸν ὄνομα is, in fact, a reference to the name of Jesus.[346] With sensitivity to both perspectives, Bauckham concludes that "it is quite possible that in James 2:7 'the good name that is invoked over you' echoes the usage of the Hebrew Bible but refers to the name Jesus."[347] Elsewhere, Bauckham says that "this treatment of the name of Jesus as equivalent to the divine name of the God of Israel is of a piece with the considerable influence of Joel 2:23 ("everyone who calls on the name of YHWH shall be saved"), understood Christologically, in early Christian usage (Acts 2:21, 38, where it is connected with baptism in the name of Jesus.)"[348] Additionally, throughout the book of Acts the name of Jesus is repeatedly

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[345] See Bauckham's discussion in Bauckham, "Messianic Jewish Identity in James," 112.

[346] Johnson says that 2:1 forms the most logical antecedent to 2:7. Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 226. See also Dibelius, *James*, 140–141.

[347] Bauckham, "Messianic Jewish Identity in James," 112.

[348] Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 135. Bauckham lists Deut. 28:10; 2 Chron. 7:14; Dan. 9:19 as OT examples of the invoking of the Divine name to indicate God's ownership over his people. The continued influence of Lev. 19 in the epistle of James may also be seen in 2:7. "Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:12).

mentioned as powerful enough to heal and save (Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10, 12; 9:34; cf. James 5:14).[349] Most notable, however, is James's repeated references to the "name" in his address to the Jerusalem council and his letter to the Gentiles (Acts 15:14, 17, 26).[350] These references seem to indicate that the use of "the name" for Jesus was a common practice in the early church. In fact, McKnight says, "When James refers the 'excellent name' to Jesus Christ (2:1), the glorious one, we gain a glimpse into the emerging high Christology of the earliest messianic community."[351] This reverence for the name of Christ leads several to conclude that if "Christ's name can be blasphemed, it is a divine name."[352]

Christological Implications

After surveying the Christological contexts and questions, the Christological implications will now be addressed. This section will be a theological synthesis of the findings from the exegetical portions above.

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[349] See also the discussion of "the name" in the exegesis of Jude 5 below.

[350] James quotes Amos 9:12 in Acts 15:17. For a discussion of the significance of this quotation, see Douglas J. Moo, *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. Nicholas Perrin, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 16 (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 125; James B. Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 113.

[351] McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 201. It is also interesting to consider that, not too many years before James writes, his brother was crucified for supposedly blasphemously claiming the Divine Name for himself.

[352] Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 2:526. Jobes adds, "Given the serious nature of blasphemy in first-century Judaism, James's use of the title Lord is truly extraordinary and indicates an assumed high Christology that elevates Jesus to the status of God." Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 189. Hartin supports this reading as well. Hartin, *James*, 121.

Jesus as the Object of Faith

James explains to his diasporic audience that it is incompatible to ἔχετε (have/hold) partiality and faith "in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory" at the same time (2:1).[353] James also exhibits a profound reverence for the "noble name" of Jesus (2:7) when he condemns the rich who are blaspheming this name. This passage (2:1–7) is bookended with an apparent view of Jesus as the appropriate object of faith,[354] which is all the more shocking when one pauses to consider who is writing. James, the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19), who grew up with Jesus, now ascribes divine titles to him (2:1, 5:9), understands his name to be powerful enough to heal (5:14), and calls his audience to obey him.[355] James and his other brother, Jude, also sees Jesus as one to whom prayers and doxologies can be addressed (e.g., Jude 1 and 24–25). Also shocking is that James and Jude, along with all of Jesus's early followers, viewed Jesus as not only the object of faith but also worship.

In Hurtado's opinion, the worship of Jesus constitutes the single most remarkable development in early Christianity and is the phenomenon that characterized the Christian movement from its earliest stages.[356] Hurtado beautifully recounts the history surrounding the worship of Jesus when he says:

> Jewish Christians gathered in Jesus' name for worship, prayed to him and sang hymns to him, regarded him as exalted to a position of heavenly rule above all angelic orders, appropriated to him titles and OT passages originally referring to God, sought to bring fellow Jews as well as Gentiles to embrace him as the divinely appointed redeemer,

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[353] Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 90–91.

[354] If Jesus is seen as the object of faith, this surely represents a high Christology. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 429. Hartin, who supports the subjective reading, still agrees that the title for Jesus in 2:1 is "one of the most expressive titles attributed to Jesus in the entire NT." Hartin, *James*, 129.

[355] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 129–130, 138, 147.

[356] See discussion in Chester, "High Christology—Whence, When and Why?" 28–29.

> and in general redefined their devotion to the God of their fathers so as to include the veneration of Jesus. And apparently, they regarded this redefinition not only as legitimate but, indeed as something demanded of them.[357]

James's labeling of Jesus as the object of faith and worship is surprisingly prototypical for early church practice. As was mentioned above, James was not a theological trailblazer but a conservative conventionalist. His letter seems to be a snapshot of the early church's widely accepted and practiced Christology.

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[357] Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 12. MacLeod makes very similar claims in his excellent work, *The Person of Christ.* He is worth quoting at length. "The early church believed Jesus Christ to be divine. It applied to him the highest conceivable designations (Son of God, Son of Man, Lord, God); it saw him as possessing the full range of divine attributes, performing the full range of divine functions, and enjoying the full range of divine prerogatives; it worshipped him and prayed to him and broke out in doxology at the mere mention of his name. These early Christians did not simply catch the faith of Jesus: they had faith in Jesus. The extraordinary thing is that there is no trace of any controversy on this issue in the early church. There was fierce argument over many things, notably the Gentile mission, the nature of justification, and the place of the law in the Christian life. There was obviously also fierce debate between the church and the outside world as to the identity of Christ. But within the church itself there was no such debate. Considering the implications of belief in the deity of Christ, this unembarrassed, un-self-conscious, unhesitating belief is quite remarkable. They believed God to be invisible, yet worshipped one they had seen, heard, and embraced. They believed in a God of almost absolute transcendence yet worshipped a man. They believed God to be one yet worshipped him and his Son. *A priori,* all such developments were inconceivable. Yet the evidence that this is what actually happened is overwhelming." Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 1998), 109–110.

Jesus as the Lord of Glory

James's application of the divine name to his brother must not be overlooked. By his use of κυρίου in 2:1, James includes Jesus within the honor reserved for God alone in the monotheism of Judaism. The bearing of this divine name "signifies unequivocally" that James understood Jesus to be included within "the unique divine identity."[358] However, James adds even more to this exalted title when he labels Jesus as τῆς δόξης. Though Bauckham admits that the precise function of τῆς δόξης is not "entirely clear," he proposes that the phrase is best understood as "a combination of the common early Christian formula, 'our Lord Jesus Christ,' and the rare Christological title, 'the Lord of glory,' found elsewhere as a Christological title only in 1 Corinthians 2:8."[359] The title "Lord of Glory," which may have arisen through Christological exegesis of Psalm 24:7, was also used in parts of the Enoch literature (1 Enoch 22:14, 25:3, 27:3–5, 40:3, 63:2) as a title for God enthroned in glory.[360] Bauckham concludes that "the high Christology which seems to be implicit in this unusual Christological designation in James seems to be just the kind of high Christology that we know to be very early." Advocating for an early Jewish origin of

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[358] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 200.

[359] Bauckham explains that James appears to be "closely in touch with early Christian Christological exegesis of Scripture and the high Christology that it entailed." Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 134. See also, Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 139. For additional parallels of "glory" language with Second Temple Literature, see Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism*, 230ff.

[360] Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 133. In the early writing of 1 Cor. 2:8 (written in the AD 50s), the title is κύριον τῆς δόξης. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 5. Another possible indicator of the early dates and customs of this era of primitive Palestinian Christianity would be the judicial direction given by both Paul (1 Cor. 6:1–6) and James (see judicial context of 2:1–13). Is it perhaps possible that this is an early title for Christ that eventually passed out of common use before the rest of the NT was written? Was it used in the early Palestinian circles in which James and Jude wrote (Jude 24)? If so, it may not be as strange of a title as some have imagined. Moo argues against the interpretation by claiming that "never in the OT or in the NT is the word 'glory' used by itself as a title of God or of Christ." Moo, *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, 101.

high Christology, Bauckham then calls his readers to "abandon the notion that a properly divine Christology developed only as the Christian movement spread outside its early Jewish Palestinian context."[361]

Still more, if the appositional reading of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης is accepted, and "the Glory" is seen as a title in its own right, then Jesus is here equated "with the *shekinah* glory of God," the "localized presence of Yahweh."[362] As the "very embodiment of the divine glory," or the radiance of his glory (Heb. 1:1–3; 2 Cor. 3:3–4:6), Jesus, as Immanuel, is *truly God* with us.[363] Similar to applying the κυρίου title to Jesus, this application of the concept of *shekinah* should carry significant weight.[364] In fact, the term "glory" has a "long pre-history in Jewish history and theology as a euphemism for Yahweh" (Ex 40:34, 1 Kgs 8:11, Ezekiel 1:28).[365] The temple, once was the home of the *shekinah*, has now been replaced by the one who became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14).[366] The one God

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[361] For this and the previous quote, see Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 133. See also, Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 138–139.

[362]Blomberg and Kamell, *James*, 51; Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ*, 106–107. See also Polhill, "Prejudice, Partiality, and Faith," 396. Laws examines the OT evidence that shows how the "eschatological hope of the future enjoyment of the presence of God may be expressed as a hope for the return of glory." Likewise, in the NT, "Jesus is frequently associated with, or described in terms of, glory." She argues against reading in the full idea of a hypostasis of Yahweh into this passage; rather, she sees the absolute noun "glory" as standing in apposition to Lord. Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 95–97. Guthrie, who appears to maintain the adjectival reading, still draws implications from this title that are similar to what I am discussing here. He says, "That Christ is 'glorious' points to his manifestation of the presence of God, as seen in the *shekinah* glory of the OT (e.g., Ex. 14:17–18; Ps. 96:3; Isa. 60:1–2), and passages in the NT relating to his exaltation and eschatological salvation." Guthrie, "James," 231.

[363] Polhill, "Prejudice, Partiality, and Faith"; Kurt Richardson, *James: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (B&H Publishing Group, 1997), 109; Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 95–97.

[364] Schreiner says that the glory typically associated with God is ascribed here to Jesus (Ex 16:7, 10, 24:17; Lev. 9:6, Psalm 24:8, 10). Schreiner, *Magnifying God in Christ*, 117.

[365] Robert B. Sloan, "The Christology of James," *Criswell Theological Review* 1, no. 1 (1986): 21.

[366] Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James*, 78–79. 78–79,

who said, "I will not give my glory to another" (Isa. 42:8), who has a "majesty and glory entirely peculiar to himself," has made himself known in Jesus (John 1:18).[367] James 2:1 would then not only include Jesus within the divine identity but would make James 2:1 one of the most profound Christological statements in the NT.[368] "The Shekinah glory," it turns out, has "a human face."[369]

The image suggested by this exalted title likely understands Jesus as participating in God's sovereignty, now reigning from this throne in heaven, and planning to one day return as the eschatological judge.[370] Situating this title within the ethical context, Baker adds, "Such a deft reference to Christ as the manifestation of God's presence seems more compatible with the emphasis here on impartiality." Connecting this title to the broader judgment theme in James and explicitly making connections with 5:7–11, Baker explains that "this interpretation is reinforced by the reference to Christ as Lord and Judge upon his return in 5:7–9." This would mean that δόξης in 2:1 "is best recognized, then, as signifying the presence of God as judge."[371] Guthrie agrees and explains that the "glorious" qualifier

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[367] Petrus Van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology: Faith in the Triune God*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 2:472, 549.

[368] See Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James," 55.

[369] Wright, "Jesus and the Identity of God." Wright suggests that in Jesus, we have the biblical portrait of YHWH come to life: the loving God, rolling up his sleeves (Isa. 52:10) to do in person the job that no one else could do... This is the OT portrait of YHWH, but it fits Jesus like a glove."

[370] Bauckham says, if this title "echoes the divine title 'Lord of glory," then it also "alludes to Jesus's exercise of sovereign authority from the divine throne." Bauckham, "Messianic Jewish Identity in James," 115. See also Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 133–134; Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians*, 453. McCartney says, "In calling Jesus 'glorious Lord,' James effectively ascribes the divine attributes and importance to Christ." McCartney, *James*, 137. See also, Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, 213.

[371] For this and the previous quotation, see Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James," 55-56. See also Sloan, "The Christology of James," 20-22.

may here point to "Christ as the exalted Judge,"[372] whose glory will be "fully revealed in eschatological judgment."[373] These implications have vast import for the Christology of James and also appear to reveal further coded references (cf. Newman) within the early Christian movement. The exalted characteristics of the one God (sovereign ruler and eschatological judge), which were typically reserved for YHWH, are freely and unabashedly applied to Jesus by these early Christian authors. More than that, by his very brothers. This observation's connections to the "crater event" of the resurrection, must now be analyzed.

Jesus as the Resurrected One

Explicitly connecting James 2:1 to the resurrection, Luke Timothy Johnson explains that *doxa*, the root of δόξης, is frequently found as shorthand for the glory of the resurrected one (Luke 24:26; Acts 22:11; John 17:5; 1 Cor. 2:8, 15:43; 2 Cor. 4:6; Phil. 2:11, 3:21; Col. 1:11; Heb. 2:7, 1 Pet. 1:11).[374] Bauckham agrees, and submits that "the resurrection, though not mentioned, is inevitably presupposed."[375] If this is the case, then the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to James (1 Cor. 15:7) may be influencing James's

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[372] Guthrie, "James," 231.

[373] Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 107. Moo explains that "[d]escribing Jesus as the Lord of glory suggests particularly the heavenly sphere to which he has been exalted and from which he will come at the end of history to save and to judge (cf. Jas. 5:9). This reminder is particularly appropriate in a situation where Christians are giving too much "glory" to human beings." Moo, *The Letter of James*, 101. For a unique take on the meaning of this verse, see Jack Freeborn, "Lord of Glory a Study of James 2 and 1 Corinthians 2," *The Expository Times* 111, no. 6 (March 2000): 185–189.

[374] Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 49, 221. See also, Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 40–41; Hartin, *James*, 33, 117; Genderen and Velema, *Concise Reformed Dogmatics*, 445, 487; Letham, *Systematic Theology*, 81; Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 300.

[375] Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, 139. See also, Hartin, *James*, 130.

thought. More than that, prior to their dispersion (Acts 8:1–2), members of his diasporic audience may very well have been among the 500 witnesses to whom Jesus appeared, since most of these witnesses were "still living" when Paul wrote in the early AD 50s (1 Cor. 15:6).

Is it possible that after seeing his crucified and now risen brother James, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, returned to the LXX and began understanding Jesus as the "Lord of Glory?" Did he utilize a form of "charismatic" or *reciprocal exegesis* and understand his recent experiences through his exegesis? Did he now see the OT texts through the lenses of the resurrection? Witherington certainly thinks so. He says James's "experience of the risen Lord" likely "totally changed his opinion and impression of Jesus" to the point that the risen and returning Christ becomes the primary way James understands his brother throughout this letter.[376] Likewise, and related to the Christology of the letter, Adamson says that the resurrection is what inspired James's use of such exalted Christological titles.[377] Similarly, Wall and Niebuhr claim that James's perspective toward all "Christian existence" is entirely "framed and freighted by his Easter experience."[378] In fact, Niebuhr says elsewhere that the "belief in the resurrection of Christ" is the "precondition for understanding the letter of James."[379]

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[376] Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:310.

[377] Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, 24–25.

[378] Niebuhr and Wall, "The SNTS Seminar on the Catholic Epistles (2001–2006)," 2–3.

[379] Niebuhr says, "For the Epistle of James, as for all NT writings, the Easter event functions as the starting point of understanding... In asking about any substantial relationship between the Epistle of James and Jesus, either thematically or traditio-historically, one always has to take into account the Easter perspective of the letter and its author, even though the testimony of the Easter event does not play any important part in it explicitly." Niebuhr, "James in the Minds of the Recipients: A Letter from Jerusalem," 50.

One additional and perhaps controversial point concerns the presence of a possible embedded reference to the cross of Christ. If Newman's claim is accurate concerning the shared apostolic theology's ability to invoke "signal events" such as the cross and resurrection, then references to such events can be contained in short confessions such as "Jesus is the Christ" or "Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 4:15; 5:1). On this point, Newman explains that a preferable way to understand Christological confessions is as "shorthand for the full story of Jesus (incarnation, life, death, exaltation)." He says these short confessions may be "an intentional (and later) condensation of a longer narrative." Specifically, he says that "when read in light of the sermons in Acts (and other confessions in the CE as well)," these confessions "do invoke the larger narrative of Jesus and, most importantly, the cross and resurrection."[380]

When James references the "Lord of Glory," therefore, is he not *only* thinking of the resurrection, but does he *also* have the crucifixion in mind? Is he, like the apostles' early sermons in the book of Acts, emphasizing the resurrection yet assuming the crucifixion?[381] This observation would undoubtedly be in line with Longenecker's claims

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[380] For this and previous quotations, see Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles," 372. Bavinck similarly makes a case for the fact that in NT theology, the "cross and crown, death and resurrection, humiliation and exaltation all lie on the same line." These events are not meant to be parsed out but are understood collectively as the Christ event. Stated another way, Bavinck says, "For Christ, his death was the end of his humiliation and, at the same time, the road to this exaltation... the sum and substance of the original gospel, therefore, was the Christ who died and rose again." Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 449–450.

[381] Steve Walton, "Acts," in *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Daniel Treier, and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 81–82.

concerning the term τὸν δίκαιον in James 5:6 (cf. Acts 3:14–15, 7:52, 22:13–16).[382] There may be no way to gain conclusive evidence, but if James is following the typical style of his early contemporaries, this may point in the direction of a more fully developed gospel in the epistle of James than has previously been acknowledged. Like so much else in his letter, this would be assumed rather than made explicit.

James 5:7–11

The second key passage for investigation is James 5:7–11. Since many of the Christological issues were covered in the section on 2:1–7, this section will be succinct. These issues were addressed above because the material in 2:1–7 is closely related to what occurs in 5:1–11.[383] As mentioned in the section on the structure of James, the opening of the body occurs in 2:1, and the conclusion begins at 5:7. These passages, occurring at critical points in the letter, are both highly Christological and highly eschatological. Their shared emphasis on the theme of judgment provides rarely observed links between these two passages and unveils James's eschatologically motivated ethics.[384]

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[382] Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, 46–47. Further mention could be made of James 4:14–15. Many see the anointing of the sick "in the name of the Lord" as likely a reference to Jesus, much like that of Acts 3–4. Bauckham, "James and Jesus," 134–135. McCartney lists the two passages under investigation in the exegesis portion below as two of the clear evidences of a high Christology in James. McCartney, *James*, 69.

[383] Byron, "James," 469. It is possible that Lev. 19:13 is in the background of 5:1–6.

[384] Kreitzer explains that 5:7–8 is one of the "few places in the epistle where something explicitly Christian is said, making it (together with 1:1 and 2:1) a key focal point in debates about whether James is a Christian or a Jewish document." He also points out that the term "*parousia*" only appears 6 times outside of Matthew and the Pauline literature, and 2 of those occurrences are in 5:7–8. Lastly, Kreitzer says that 5:7–11 contains a "double-barreled declaration about the *parousia* of the Lord." Kreitzer, "Parousia," 863. This is because of the notice to both believers and non-believers. Moo, *The Letter of James*, 225–226; Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 185.

Christological Contexts

While the vocative ἀδελφοί signals a transition from 5:1–6, the postpositive οὖν at the beginning of 5:7 also reveals that a logically inferential relationship exists between the two passages.[385] This flow of thought continues even through 5:9, where another vocative ἀδελφοί occurs. While often in James, this vocative signals a shift in the topic, here it does not. Instead, the topic remains patient endurance, though the motivation shifts slightly from the imminent return of the Lord (5:7–8) to the coming judgment (5:9).[386] These eschatological and macro-ethical realities shape James's appeal and must be further explored.

Christology and Eschatology

McCartney claims that the whole of James "should be seen from the perspective of eschatological judgment."[387] In agreement, Davids explains that while "eschatology is not the burden of the book," of James, it is the "context of the book." This context is shared with his original readers, "so there is no need to give detailed instruction" or elaboration.[388] Similarly, Hartin says that James "presupposes his eschatology" and "presumes his audience shares his eschatological views."[389] This shared eschatology appears to be an

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[385] Moo, *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, 211; Vlachos, *James*, 169.

[386] Vlachos, *James*, 169, 172.

[387] McCartney, *James*, 70.

[388] For this and previous quotations, see Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 35.

[389] Hartin says, "Eschatology is an essential feature of this letter. It is the very air James and his hearers/readers inhale. Because they share this same worldview and imagination, James takes it for granted and does not find it necessary to explain his vision." Hartin, *James*, 250–252.

extension of their shared Christology.[390] This is a result of receiving Jesus's eschatological teaching and his expected imminent return as Judge. Perhaps due to the recent proclamation of Acts 1:10–11, the expectation that Jesus's return was at hand was a solid conviction in the early church.[391] Indeed, the brothers of the Lord were perhaps there to hear this proclamation (Acts 1:12–14). As the exegesis below will show, this shared Christological and eschatological orientation is one of James's motivating forces behind his ethics.[392]

Christological Questions

Who is the Returning κύριος?

As has been mentioned throughout this thesis, much of the debate concerning the Christology of James hinges upon the use of the word κύριος. Does this title apply to Jesus in some or all appearances? Does it refer to YHWH in some or all occurrences? The repeated use of this title in 5:7–11 brings this question to the fore.

McKnight represents a minority position that sees τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ("the coming of the Lord") as referring to "the presence of God/Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem."[393] He reasons that "Jesus taught that the *parousia* would occur within one

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[390] McCartney, *James*, 268.

[391] On the issue of the unexpected delay of the return of the Lord in early Jewish Christianity, see Richard Bauckham, "The Delay of the Parousia," *Tyndale Bulletin* 31, no. 1 (1980): 3–36. Additionally, Adamson points out that the suspected imminence of the *parousia* is yet another strong argument for the early date of James. Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, 191.

[392] McCartney, *James*, 4. "James shares the Christian eschatological orientation, evident in that the motivation for ethics is chiefly the knowledge of the imminent coming of the Lord in judgment." Later McCartney says, "Eschatology in James is focused on the expectation of coming judgment and is put forward principally as a motivation for faithful obedience to God." Ibid., 70. In other words, this eschatological context "provides the horizon for communicating all ethical wisdom instruction." Hartin, *James*, 35.

[393] McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 406; Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 213.

generation of the moment he spoke and that it had to do with the sacking of Jerusalem as an act of God against the Jewish leaders for their complicity in violence and their rejection of Jesus as God's son and message for the nation (cf. Matt. 21–23)."[394] This understanding of the *parousia* is influential in McKnight's opinion that κύριος in 5:7–8 and ὁ κριτής in 5:9 both refer to YHWH and not Jesus.[395] However, it appears McKnight may be allowing his reading of Matt. 21–23 to overinfluence his exegesis of these passages in James.

Building on the use of Apollonius's Canon, Bauckham handles the various occurrences of κύριος in James more carefully. This canon states that in "genitive phrases, both the head noun and the genitive noun normally have or lack the article."[396] Drawing on this general rule, Bauckham says, "This rule is obeyed by James" in all of the cases where the κυρίου is Jesus (1:1; 2:1; 5:7, 8, 14). However, Bauckham points out, "in the three cases where the κυρίου is God (5:4, 10, 11), the rule is broken." Analyzing these references to YHWH will reveal that the first noun in each case is arthrous, but κυρίου lacks the article. Bauckham explains that "in these cases, James is following the practice of the Septuagint, where, when the word κύριος is used as a substitute for the divine name, κύριος is treated as a name, to which the canon of Apollonius does not apply." Thus, in 5:10, where κυρίου substitutes for the divine name, the practice of the LXX is followed. But in 5:14, where κυρίου refers to Jesus, Apollonius's Canon is observed. Bauckham concludes that "six of the fourteen occurrences of κύριος in James refer to Jesus (1:1; 2:1; 5:7, 8, 14, 15), while

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[394] McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 406.

[395] Ibid., 408, 415; Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 213.

[396] Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 239.

seven clearly refer to God (1:7; 3:9; 4:10; 5:4, 10, 11 [twice]).”[397] This project sides with Bauckham and reads τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου as referring to the return of Jesus in the eschaton, not the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.[398] Additionally, with the apparent parallelism of 5:7–8 and 5:9, it appears that ὁ κριτής likely also refers to Jesus.[399]

Who is the Eschatological κριτής?

McKnight, along with Hartin and Laws, views ὁ κριτής “the judge” in 5:9 to be a reference to YHWH, not Jesus.[400] However, Johnson holds that it is contextually difficult *not* to see ὁ κριτής as Jesus.[401] In his explanation, Johnson makes a passing parenthetical reference to Acts 10:42. This reference to the narrative of Acts, as previously explored, yields significant insights for the interpretation of the given passage. The passage surrounding Acts 10:42 appears to be closely related to several issues in James. It is worth quoting in its entirety.

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[397] Bauckham, “Messianic Jewish Identity in James,” 118–119.

[398] As was mentioned above, by connecting the title used for Jesus in Jude 14–16, I may take 5:4 to refer to Jesus, not YHWH. Davids entertains the possibility that these titles are so “closely associated” for James that “he is not concerned about clear differentiation or simply does not notice the ambiguity.” Peter H. Davids, “The Good God and the Reigning Lord: Theology of the Epistle of James,” in *Reading the Epistle of James: A Resource for Students*, 125.

[399] Moo, *The Letter of James*, 225; Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 317; Vlachos, *James*, 172. The term “parousia” is normally connected to Jesus so it is “most probable that here ‘the Lord’ and ‘the Judge’ are Jesus.” Davids concludes that James “believes that Jesus’s “coming” will be the initiation of final judgment, that Jesus will be “the Judge,” and that the coming of this judge is imminent.” Peter H. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude: Living in the Light of the Coming King*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2014), 84.

[400] McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 408, 415; Hartin, *James*, 243; Laws, *The Epistle of James*, 213.

[401] Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 317. Bauckham says that Jesus, in addition to being understood as “Lord” in James, should also be seen as eschatological “Judge” in 5:9. Though the “one lawgiver and judge” in 4:12 seems to be a reference to God the Father, the “overlap of terminology” is “theologically significant.” It is not untypical of early Jewish Christianity, and it reflects the extent to which the figure of the exalted and coming Jesus was assimilated to God in his sovereignty over the world.” Bauckham, “James and Jesus,” 134. Bauckham also links this to his work on Jude’s Christology as well. For more on this, see chapter 5.

> Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:34–43, NIV)

Though several observations could be offered, space allows only a few points to be mentioned. First is Peter's mention of favoritism, perhaps a common issue in the early church for a variety of reasons. Second, Peter's repeated usage of "you know." He says, "You know the message" and "You know what has happened." These uses indicate a widespread knowledge of the gospel events that create the plausibility of the presence of a shared and assumed apostolic theology. Third, Peter reports that the resurrection was widely witnessed. Fourth, belief in Jesus as the object of faith and forgiveness of sins through his name is mentioned as an accepted given that is rooted in the OT prophetic witness. Finally, and most significantly for the current discussion, is the content of the message that Jesus instructed the apostles to preach. This message bears repeating. "He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42). This command by Jesus concerning the content of the apostolic message reveals that Jesus should be understood as the Judge in James 5:9 and indicates that the view of Jesus as Judge was a central feature of the early

apostolic theology that provided the basis for apostolic preaching. Thus Bauckham concludes, "For early Christian readers or hearers" of James, "there would be no ambiguity in this passage as to the identity of the Lord and the Judge."[402] This line of reasoning not only has significant implications for the content of the widespread apostolic theology, but also signals toward key features of the macro-ethical framework within which James's readers understood themselves to operate. This observation is completely in line with Keck's view concerning the theme of God's coming judgment functioning as the "ultimate moral sanction" in the NT.[403] This theme of eschatological judgment, linked with accountability to the person of Christ, captures the essence of the ethics of the brothers of Jesus.

Christological Implications

While many have overlooked the significant Christological implications of James 5, this project sides with Witherington III, who claims that "James 5 proves to be a highly Christological chapter."[404] Interestingly, Jobes says this passage is the "most telling clue

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[402] Bauckham, "Messianic Jewish Identity in James," 116–117. Similarly, Seifrid says, "A prominent and distinctive aspect of the NT is the prospect that Christ himself will judge all humanity at his parousia." M. A. Seifrid, "Judgment," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments,* 621. For the host of others who agree, see Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 185; McCartney, *James*, 242; Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 317. See also Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 633–634. Davids says, "The imminence of divine judgment through this Lord is an important part of his description of Jesus." Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 75.

[403] Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" 16.

[404] Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:310. This observation concerning the high Christology of this chapter is certainly in line with Longenecker's claims discussed earlier concerning the term τὸν δίκαιον in James 5:6. Unfortunately, Capes, Rodney, and Richards seem to have totally neglected this passage. They claim that James has an underdeveloped Christology and that without 1:1 and 2:1, there would "be nothing uniquely Christian in the letter." David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Jesus: An Introduction to Biblical, Religious, and Cultural Perspectives on Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 126–127.

to James's implicit Christology," because "James does not teach about the future return of Jesus or give any additional details about this extraordinarily mysterious event." Instead, he "simply assumes that his readers are acquainted with the belief in the *parousia*, and he uses it to encourage his readers to persevere." [405] As in Acts 10, James's assumption that his readers would be acquainted with this eschatological belief seems safe.

Conclusion

This project has set out to argue that James and Jude provide a unique, early, and Jewish-Christian perspective on the relationship between Christology and ethics. This chapter has demonstrated that, contrary to Luther's claims, James does, in fact, possess a high Christology that is situated firmly within an *early* and *Jewish* context. What is, perhaps, shocking about this high Christology is that it is coming from the pen of Jesus's physical brother. James's unique familial perspective, paired with his exalted Christological language, indirectly reinforces the historicity and gravity of the event of the resurrection and the role it played within the early church.[406] Additionally, drawing on insights from social memory and relevance theory, James's assumed and unqualified Christological claims reveal how widely accepted this early apostolic theology must have been in the diaspora. This apparent wide acceptance also enabled James to assume his audience agreed

[405] For this and the previous quotations, see Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 196.

[406] This chapter has also shown that the resurrection prompted adjustments in James's exegetical methods and theological categories. Titles, roles, and concepts once reserved for YHWH are liberally applied to his brother, Jesus. Further, OT passages and categories (Lev. 19, Psa. 24) are now interpreted Christologically and reciprocally and are applied within an eschatological frame.

with his Christological convictions and agreed with them to the point that they were willing to shape their lives and ethics around these convictions.

This observation demonstrates one of the key points of this project. While the *defense* of a high Christology does not appear to be the burden of the book of James, it is the *assumption* of a high Christology that undergirds the entire letter and is utilized for ethical purposes. In other words, James is not writing to defend a high Christology; he assumes his audience shares his Christological views. Instead, James is writing to address specific ethical issues arising from various elements of the occasioning incident. In line with the emphases of speech act and rhetorical theories, this perspective shifts the exegetical and theological focus from the question of the *presence* of a high Christology to the intended ethical *purpose* or sapiential use of high Christology. In short, it appears that James is wielding his Christology and drawing upon the authority of Christ as Lord and Judge to address specific issues faced by his diasporic audience (i.e., favoritism, patience, grumbling, suffering).[407]

[407] In emphasizing the role of Jesus as Lord and Judge I am simply reporting what James calls his brother. I am not divorcing Jesus's divinity from his humanity in a move reminiscent of Nestorianism. Jesus is certainly the human prophetic lawgiver and moral exemplar, but this thesis is merely focused on reporting how James and Jude described their brother in their letters.

Chapter 5:

The Christology and Ethics of Jude

Background of Jude

Jude's epistle, among the CE collection, is regrettably at the bottom of this discarded pile. Virtually every treatment of the epistle of Jude since 1975 opens by mentioning Rowston's article, calling Jude the "most neglected book in the NT."[408] Though interest in this letter is increasing,[409] one can still argue that Jude could be considered "the Rodney Dangerfield of the NT," because he never seems to get much respect.[410] This lack of respect is primarily due to a string of misunderstandings concerning Jude's theology, ethics, and persuasive intent. For example, when Jude is read as a sharp, overly impassioned, polemical

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[408] D.J. Rowston, "The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament," *New Testament Studies* 21 (1975): 554–563. Charles says, "Since the publication in 1975 of Douglas J. Rowston's now famous essay that appeared in *New Testament Studies*, virtually every treatment of the Epistle of Jude—whether in the form of commentary or journal article—has begun with the caveat that Jude is 'the most neglected book in the NT'." Charles, "Polemic and Persuasion," 81.

[409] See the recent surge of interest documented in Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, 873. As will be made evident below, Bauckham's 1983 commentary on 2 Peter and Jude and his subsequent volume on *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus* has led to a revival of interest in this short letter and set a trajectory for interpreting numerous apparent difficulties. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*; Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*. Regrettably, due to the narrow focus of this project, many important topics and themes in Jude that Bauckham has helped clarify and others have since explored will not be afforded the attention they merit. For example, the theme of "keeping" or "being kept." Keating understands this to be a primary motif of the letter. See Daniel Keating, *First and Second Peter, Jude*, ed. Peter Williamson and Mary Healy, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 194. This project will also not be able to explore the likely influence of several Zechariah texts, the frequent use of χριστός (6 times in only 25 verses), or the counterexample of Michael amongst the others. Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 62.

[410] Charles, "Polemic and Persuasion," 81. Interestingly, even advocates for the CE collection like Wall and Nienhuis say that Jude may have "little to offer on its own" when interpreted apart from the entire collection. This sort of opinion obviously results from an overestimation of their approach to the CE collection. Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture*, 219.

document, interpreters maintain a low estimation of its theological value.[411] Alternatively, consider the fascination with the question of the literary relationship with 2 Peter. Unfortunately, as an exegetical red herring for many interpreters, this fascination has distracted readers from Jude's contribution.[412]

To set the stage for the exegesis, a brief discussion of the relevant background material will enable interpreters to follow the suggestions of relevance theorists and "attend to what is implicit" in this letter. Drawing on insights from social memory theory will also enable readers to attend to the unspoken realities so that they can access the "cultural encyclopedia" of the shared knowledge of the author and the original audience. Lastly, as the rhetorical outline is discussed and the occasioning incident described, interpreters will be equipped to ascertain the communicative intent of the author.

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[411] Darian R. Lockett, "Purity and Polemic: A Reassessment of Jude's Theological World," in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. Robert L. Webb and Peter H. Davids, Library of New Testament Studies 383 (London, UK: T & T Clark International, 2008), 5–31. This has resulted in Bauckham saying, "in regard to its theological character" Jude is "perhaps the most misunderstood New Testament work." He goes on to explain that there has been a long tradition of the "theological denigration of Jude" that has led to the "widespread acceptance of a largely negative evaluation of the letter which is based on highly questionable but usually unexamined assumptions." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 155.

[412] This debate will not factor into this thesis in any significant way. For the distraction of this debate, see Lockett, *Letters for the Church*, 186. Also, Bauckham says, "The habit of classing 2 Peter and Jude together has for too long been a serious hindrance to research." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 147. For a possible solution, see the above section detailing Newman's approach. In support of this hypothesis, Hultin says that while there are certainly similarities between Jude and 2 Peter in content, vocabulary and sequence, there is "no extensive verbatim agreement between Jude and 2 Peter, such as is found among the Synoptic Gospels or between Ephesians and Colossians. Instead of word-for-word agreement, Jude and 2 Peter often describe the same details with different words." Jeremy F. Hultin, "The Literary Relationships Among 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude," in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, ed. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin, Society of Biblical Literature: Resources for Biblical Study 77 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 30. Hultin then surveys the major hypotheses for understanding this literary relationship and seems to prefer an approach that understands Jude and 2 Peter as using a common source. Though many scholars "mention this possibility only to dismiss it as superfluous," he thinks that this approach may be "more compelling than is usually acknowledged." Ibid., 37. Rather than a common literary *text*, my view is that there is a common *source* in the oral apostolic theology (1 Cor. 15:1–11).

Historical and Literary Context

Rather than entering deeply into each of the complicated questions represented by the topics in this section, the following subsections will only briefly discuss the possible positions and then summarize the position taken by this project.

Authorship & Dating Orientation

As is always the case, the issues of authorship and dating are inseparably intertwined. Like James above, this section will summarize the various viewpoints on *Late and Hellenistic Origins* and conclude with the *Early and Jewish Origin* position.

Alternative Views on Authorship and Dating: Late and Hellenistic Origins

As for James, scholars offer various points to defend a *Late and Hellenistic* position. One common difficulty raised concerning the authenticity of Jude's authorship relates to the quality of the Greek, argued as evidence of a later, Hellenistic origin. This view, however, overlooks the widespread Hellenization of Galilee as discussed in chapter two above.[413] The evidence for Hellenization is, in fact, so strong that Jobes asserts it is "no longer permissible to dismiss the family and twelve disciples of Jesus as necessarily incapable of writing the Greek found in the New Testament books."[414]

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[413] Wright and Bird comment, "The language of the letter, as with James, is quite good Greek; again, some might say it was too good for a rural Galilean, but we should not underestimate the Hellenistic penetration of Galilee or the Greek facility of the early Christians." Wright and Bird, *The New Testament in Its World*, 733. This view also overlooks the common use of amanuenses in this era. See the discussion in Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, ed. Robert Yarbrough and Robert Stein, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 8; Herbert Bateman, *Jude*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife Corporation, 2017), 34.

[414] Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 241.

Undeterred, a minority group of scholars still claim Jude is pseudonymous.[415] In refuting the claims of pseudonymity, most have explained that Jude (the obscure) is not a prominent enough name to use as a pseudonym. However, though this might be true from today's vantage point, the evidence presented below does not support Jude's obscurity in the first century. As a result, this line of reasoning alone is not strong enough to refute a pseudonymous position.[416]

Additionally, by their mishandling of Jude 17, many interpreters claim a late date for writing by asserting that Jude is here referencing an "early Catholic" faith positioned against Gnostic opponents. This claim is based on faulty exegesis and results in an abstraction of the letter away from its Palestinian and apocalyptic context. Against this view, the several mentions of the *parousia* of Jesus throughout Jude should signal to interpreters that this is not a letter written in the context of a second century, "early Catholicism." J. Daryl Charles explains that the allusions to OT characters and intertestamental Jewish sources would have been "relatively insignificant in the second century, considering the church's expansion in the Gentile world." On the other hand, in

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[415] Donelson is a recent example of someone who still takes Jude as pseudonymous. Lewis R. Donelson, "Gathering Apostolic Voices: Who Wrote 1 and 2 Peter and Jude?," in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, 11–26. Frey also refutes Jude's authorship. Jörg Frey, "The Epistle of Jude Between Judaism and Hellenism," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 309–329. For further discussion, see Richard N. Longenecker, "On the Form, Function, and Authority of New Testament Letters," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, 2nd. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), 101–114. Additionally, see the excellent discussions concerning pseudepigraphy in Richard Bauckham, "Pseudo-Apostolic Letters," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107, no. 3 (1988): 469–494; Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91, no. 1 (1972): 3–24; James D. G. Dunn, "Pseudepigraphy," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments.*

[416] Others have claimed that if Jude were, in fact, selected as a pseudonym, his brotherhood to Jesus would have been more explicitly expressed in the letter. On this point, Bauckham says, "The description of Jude as 'brother of James' only (v 1) is much more easily explicable on the hypothesis of authenticity than on that of pseudepigraphy." Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 14, 21–23.

the "first-century Palestinian environment," these images would have been "pregnant with meaning."[417] Bauckham agrees, saying that the "early Catholic" reading of Jude is a "reading-between-the-lines which the text of Jude itself does not require." This approach has "blinded scholars to the evidence that Jude really belongs to a quite different theological milieu: that of Palestinian apocalyptic Christianity."[418] Bauckham concludes:

> Once Jude has been disentangled from the 'early Catholic' interpretation, it is possible to recognize that the letter belongs simply within the milieu of apocalyptic Jewish Christianity. All the evidence points in this direction: the use of 1 Enoch and the Testament of Moses, the use of the Hebrew Bible and the probable use of 1 Enoch in Aramaic, the pesher exegesis of vv. 5–19, the emphasis on ethics rather than doctrine in the controversy with the opponents, the prominence of angelology.[419]

These key points mentioned by Bauckham (the apocalyptic features, the exegetical methods, and the ethical emphasis) figure prominently and lead this project to conclude, along with the majority of scholars, that the *Early and Jewish Origins* viewpoint should be preferred over the *Late and Hellenistic Origins* position.

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[417] For this and the previous quote, see J. Daryl Charles, "Jude," in *Hebrews–Revelation*, rev. ed., The Expositor's Bible Commentary 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2006), 541.

[418] Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 155.

[419] Ibid., 161.

Traditional Views on Authorship and Dating: Early and Jewish Origins

Taking Jude at his word at the outset of his letter, most scholars agree that the author is the half-brother of Jesus and the brother of James (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3).[420] Though the brother of both,[421] Jude intentionally takes care to note the difference in his relationship with each, calling himself a "servant"[422] of Jesus and a "brother" of James.[423] Largely paralleling the self-identification of James (James 1:1), this similarity is particularly noteworthy and will be discussed below alongside Jude 4.

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[420] Others in the NT named Jude are Judas Iscariot, (e.g., Mt. 10:4); Judas the son of James (Lk. 6:16; Acts 1:13; cf. Jn. 14:22); Judas of Damascus, who provided lodgings for Saul (Acts 9:11); and Judas called Barsabbas, a prophet in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22, 27, 32). Strangely, The Syrian tradition tended to equate "Judas" with "Thomas," a tradition known to Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 1.13.10). Provided is a selection of those who agree with Jude's authorship. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*. Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians*; R.L. Webb, "Jude," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments;* Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*; Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2003); Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 1997).

[421] See the discussion above related to the various views of Jesus' relatives.

[422] deSilva and others have pointed out that "slave" or "servant" was an honorific title for those who served God. For example Moses (Neh. 9:14), Joshua (Josh. 24:29), David (2 Sam. 7:25–29), etc. Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 183.

[423] Some explain that the death of James would be the latest possible date for Jude since, if he had died, Jude would have no doubt referred to him as "blessed" or the "righteous." Instead, merely labeling him as "James," with no qualifiers, signals that James is still alive and is a contemporary of Jude. Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, 877; Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 197.

Authorship & Dating Conclusion

Jude the Married Missionary

Though Jude's authorship is accepted by most, he remains an enigmatic figure in the early church. Piecing together the available evidence,[424] it appears that he likely came to believe in Jesus as Lord after the resurrection (John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:1–11),[425] was likely married, and may have traveled with his wife as a missionary (1 Cor. 9:5).[426] Given the unspoken assumptions embedded in Paul's description of the "brothers of the Lord" in 1 Cor. 9:5, it appears that Paul can take for granted his audience's awareness of the Lord's brothers' active engagement as his ministry contemporaries. In other words, without explanation or defense, Paul states what he expects to be an accepted fact: the Lord's brothers are well-known ministry leaders. From this angle, then, Jude and his brothers, far from existing in obscurity, are so prominent that they are listed as contemporaries of Peter and Paul, as serving in the apostolic mission.[427]

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[424] Clarifying several issues at once, Joseph says, "We do not know if he 'believed' in Jesus prior to Easter (John 7:3–8) or was present at Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Paul may indirectly refer to 'Jude' as one of the 'brothers of the Lord' (1 Cor. 9:5), but the fact that 'Jude' does not mention the destruction of Jerusalem nor the deaths of Peter and James (c. 62 CE) suggests that the letter was written before 62 CE, and further supports a Palestinian Jewish provenance." Joseph, "Seventh from Adam," 464.

[425] Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 14. Perhaps Jude was among the 500 witnesses to whom Jesus appeared (1 Cor. 15:6)?

[426] 1 Corinthian 9:5 (NIV) says, "Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas?"

[427] Bauckham says, "For Paul it was a well-known fact—well-known even in Corinth—that they [the brothers of Jesus] played a major role as influential Christian leaders." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 1. Eusebius also, based on reports from Julius Africanus (*Hist. Eccl.* 1.714) claimed that relatives of Jesus from the villages of Nazareth "travelled around the rest of the land."

Jude the Contemporary of Paul

Webb notes that "the tone of Jude's letter" indicates active ministry involvement at the time of writing. Additionally, 1 Corinthians (written in the AD 50s) understands Jude to be engaged in active ministry before or when the audience reads the letter. By association, therefore, we may also hypothesize that Jude may have written his letter sometime in the early AD 50s as a contemporary letter of 1 Corinthians.[428] If interpreters follow these possible parallels between the letters of these ministry peers (Jude and Paul), several valuable insights emerge.[429] However, only two can be addressed in the next section. As will be shown, various parallels with 1 Corinthians will help make sense of the occasioning incident and the antinomian opponents of Jude. To conclude, Bauckham summarizes the primary issues of authorship and dating by saying:

> Jude, the Lord's brother, a prominent missionary leader in the Palestinian churches of the earliest period, is entirely plausibly the author of this letter. It could easily be among the earliest of the New Testament documents, as well as being a rare and valuable firsthand evidence of the character of the Christian devotion and developing

[428] For this and the previous quotation, see Webb, "Jude," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments,* 617. Using similar logic to what is employed here, Bauckham argues for a date in the AD 50s as well. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 13. Blomberg claims that James and Jude may be two of the earliest written letters we have in the NT. Blomberg, *A New Testament Theology*, 137. He dates James somewhere in the range of 44–49 and Jude sometime in the latter half of the 40's. Green opts for the 50s or 60s while Witherington suggests the 40s or 50s.

[429] For instance, 1 Cor. 15:1–11 supports not only the conversion experience of James and possibly Jude, but also 15:1–3 highlights the same apostolic tradition discussed by Jude in vv. 3, 17, 20. Second, a similar dating of 1 Cor. and Jude would highlight the likelihood that this "apostolic theology" was in the air as Newman has suggested (see chapter 3). Third, the use of the Exodus narrative (Jude 5, 1 Cor. 10:1–13) may have been an early feature of the apostolic tradition. Lastly, the common issues related to feasts also may signal parallels (Jude 12, 1 Cor. 10:14–22).

> theology of those original Palestinian circles in which Jesus' own relatives were leaders.[430]

This concluding quote, especially the portion related to the "developing theology" of the early church represented in the letter of Jude, situates the following discussion.

Occasioning Incident

As mentioned above, Jude was writing to address issues that include significant similarities with the Corinthian situation. These Corinthian parallels also inform interpreters concerning the identity of Jude's "opponents." The position taken here is that the occasioning incident involves the opponents' divergence from the apostolic tradition (Jude 3; 1 Cor. 15:1–3). Witherington says that the complaint about the false teachers "regards both their ethics and their theology: they are antinomian... in their behavior and heterodox in their denial of Jesus Christ."[431] Watson explains that the letter of Jude arises as a result of "the appearance of teachers within the church with a theology and ethics that diverge from apostolic tradition."[432] This early apostolic theology, that the Jude's opponents are diverging from, is likely the oral tradition of the faith "in the apostolic air" (See Jude 3, 17,

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[430] Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*. 178. In his commentary, Bauckham explains that "we should notice that the general character of the letter, its Jewishness, its debt to Palestinian Jewish literature..., its apocalyptic perspective end exegetical methods, its concern for ethical practice more than doctrinal belief, are all entirely consistent with authorship by Jude the brother of Jesus." Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 16.

[431] Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians*, 604.

[432] Duane F. Watson, "The Epistolary Rhetoric of 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude," in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, 59. This is similar to Chester and Martin's explanation. They say Jude writes a "pastoral and persuasive call to stand firm in the apostolic faith (v. 3), to take steps to ensure their continuance in that faith (vv. 20–21), and to be concerned about their fellow-believers who have been seduced (vv. 22–23)." They go on to say that "He underscores the need to maintain adherence to the teaching already given by, and derived from, the apostles themselves (vv. 3, 17, 20)." Chester and Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, 75–77.

20).[433] Jude is, therefore, instructing his readers to protect the apostolic tradition and to stand against the intruders (Jude 3–4) who are perverting the received faith and are engaging in "ungodly" behavior.[434]

The repeated word, ἀσεβεῖς ("ungodly") acts as a one-word summary of and indictment against the intruders.[435] Jude uses ἀσεβεῖς to package two primary issues concerning "these people who have crept in" (Jude 4), understanding his opponents to be both *antinomian*[436] and *anti-authority*.[437] This description arises from Jude 4, where these "ungodly ones" are not only *perverting* (μετατιθέντες) the grace of God and turning it into

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[433] The lack of "explicit citations from the gospels or Pauline epistles points to an oral rather than a literary acquaintance with the emerging Christian tradition." Ritva H. Williams, "Constructing Identity in the Epistle of Jude," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 516.

[434] Though this observation cannot receive treatment here, there is significant possibility that these intruders held some sort of leadership position. This is most clearly illustrated by the likely influence of Ezekiel 34 in the background of Jude's letter. Eze. 34:1–10 discusses the shepherds tending themselves (much like Jude 12) and then the Lord coming in judgment (much like the main point in Jude). These "shepherds" are "all promise with no delivery." Lockett says, "Where Jude need only mention the name of an individual to draw attention to an entire Old Testament narrative, (e.g., Cain, or Korah), here a key phrase in Ezekiel 34:2 calls up the entire prophetic message with the expectation that the audience should read his condemnation of the intruders in the light of the whole prophecy." Lockett, *Letters from the Pillar Apostles*, 158. See discussion Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 273–286. Block describes this passage as an "announcement of judgment" on the shepherds. It seems James and Jude may both be influenced by this prophetic tradition. Allison further draws out these parallels in Dale C. Allison Jr., "A Liturgical Tradition Behind the Ending of James," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34, no. 1 (2011): 3–18. R. Alan Streett, "Jude," in *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, 575–584.

[435] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture*, 228.

[436] Bauckham says, "Everything Jude says about them can be directly related to their antinomianism." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 165.

[437] Interestingly, 1 Enoch links the "ungodly" to a "denial" of authority also. This could be further evidence of Jude's relationship with this book. 1 Enoch labels this sort of activity as "denying the name of the Lord of the Spirits" (1 Enoch 38:2, 41:2, 45:2, 46:7, 48:10). This is very similar to Jude 4, "disowning the Master and Lord." See also 1 Enoch 48:10: "denied the Lord of Spirits and his Anointed one." See discussion in Chester and Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, 68ff. Chester and Martin assert that, according to Jude, at stake is "an attack on divine authority as centered in apostolic tradition (v.17) and the deposit of faith (vv.3, 20), and a denial of the moral issues that God's judgment on sinners illustrates (vv.5–7). Yet the main critique Jude makes of the teachers is that they denied the only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ (4), and showed an attitude of rebellious unbelief (5). On both counts, they merit judgment which will be swift in its execution." Ibid., 74.

a license (ἀσέλγειαν) to sin, but they are also *denying* (ἀρνούμενοι) their only Lord and Master, Jesus Christ (τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν). These opponents are, therefore, "not dissimilar" to those "Paul faced in Corinth."[438] In fact, Thielman describes Jude's opponents as those characterized by a "Corinthianesque antinomianism"[439] that denies Christ's authority as Lord and Master.[440] Relating these two areas, Bauckham concludes that "their denial of Christ as Master and Lord (v. 4) is not to be understood as a doctrinal error, but as a rejection of his moral demands: by their immoral practice they in effect disowned him as Master and repudiated his authority as Lord."[441] In other words, the heart of the issue is related to the Christology and ethics of the intruders.

Genre and Structure

Jude's interpreters typically consider his letter overly impassioned (and therefore unorganized) or highly structured. This project sides with a prominent group of scholars that understand Jude to be a "literary-rhetorical artist at work"[442] who has a "calculated

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[438] Webb, "Jude" in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, 615.

[439] Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 512–516. See also, Charles, "Jude," 552. Bernier also makes a similar point in Bernier, *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament*, 232.

[440] Bateman seems to be the only scholar who thinks that Jude's opponents are Zealots. Bateman, *Jude*.

[441] Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 167.

[442] Charles, "Jude," 544. See also Bauckham, "The style is lively and vigorous, and the whole work gives evidence of careful composition. Close exegesis soon reveals great economy of expression." Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 6. Bauckham again says, "Properly understood, it is a sophisticated theological document, a precious relic of the messianic-apocalyptic Christology which the brothers of Jesus preached on their missionary travels throughout Palestine." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 3–4. Watson, along with Bauckham and Charles, thinks Jude is a "rhetorically sophisticated letter." Watson, "The Epistolary Rhetoric of 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude," 60.

polemical strategy" that he employs to create distance between the faithful and the "others."[443]

To demonstrate Jude's careful structure, Charles skillfully blends insights from Greco-Roman rhetoric and Jewish exegetical practices.[444] Rhetorical theory enables interpreters to detect the deliberative or persuasive aims driving the letter's composition (Jude 3; 20–23) and helps explain the epideictic design behind the use of illustrative stories and examples.[445] Additionally, when Jude is read through the lenses of the Jewish exegetical practice known as *pesher midrash,* it is made obvious that Jude's argument

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[443] Charles, "Polemic and Persuasion," 82. Charles does not think many NT letters can match Jude's rhetorical power.

[444] Charles describes his approach this way. "Whatever Jude's personal background, we may legitimately detect in his work a blend of the Jewish and the Hellenistic, of particular source-material, that is strategic in its mobilization and application, and of rhetorical technique that is calculated, remarkably compact, yet extraordinarily effective." Ibid., 108. See also Charles' book-length treatment and excellent article. J. Daryl Charles, *Literary Strategy in the Epistle of Jude* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1993); J. Daryl Charles, "Jude's Use of Pseudepigraphical Source-Material as Part of a Literary Strategy," *New Testament Studies* 37, no. 1 (1991): 130–145. Most prominent among interpreters who have approached Jude rhetorically is Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style*. Watson says, "To do justice to its content, the epistle must be interpreted in light of the conventions of Greco-Roman rhetoric." Watson rightly detects features of both deliberative and epideictic rhetoric within Jude. Watson says, "these forms of rhetoric are complementary in that what "deliberative advises and dissuades, epideictic praises and blames." As for Jewish exegetical practices, it is widely understood that while Ellis was the first to detect the presence of Jewish exegetical practices in Jude, Bauckham is responsible for taking this observation to new heights. E. Earle Ellis, "Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Jude," in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 220–236.

[445] Charles, "Polemic and Persuasion," 97. One feature Jude often employs is that of "amplification by accumulation." See Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style*, 47. Additionally, others have pointed out Jude's creative use of both rare words and vivid imagery. See Robert L. Webb, "The Rhetorical Function of Visual Imagery in Jude: A Socio-Rhetorical Experiment in Rhetography," in *Reading Jude with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of Jude*, ed. Robert L. Webb and Peter H. Davids, Library of New Testament Studies 383 (London, England: T & T Clark International, 2008), 109–135.

advances by the typical formula followed in this approach.[446] The distinctive characteristic of this method is essentially a rhythm that includes "citation plus comment." Charles says that Jude "links prophetic types of the past to the present midrashically, that is, by modifying texts or traditions to suit the particular needs in the community."[447] This method appears repeatedly in Jude and greatly aids interpreters in discovering Jude's structure. Bauckham helpfully explains that "the transition from 'citation' to commentary is in each case formally marked by a shift of tense and by the use of a phrase including οὗτοι, usually οὗτοί εἰσιν, to introduce the comment."[448] These features of both rhetorical theory and Jewish exegetical practices will be reflected in the outline below.

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[446] Bauckham says that though early Christians read the bible from the perspective of their faith in the risen Jesus, they "also read it within the Jewish traditions of interpretation that they learned from Jewish Christians." Bauckham, "The Relevance of Extracanonical Jewish Texts to New Testament Study," 65. See also discussion in Lidija Novakovic, "The Scriptures and Scriptural Interpretation," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 92–93. Even in Brooke's somewhat limited definition, it still appears that Jude is implementing this method. G.J. Brooke, "Pesharim," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000). Novakovic says, "Jewish interpretive strategies provide the most important backdrop for understanding early Christian exegetical practices... What differentiated Christian exegetical endeavors was their unique perspective on Jesus and his career, which represented the main vantage point for Christian interpreters as they were searching the Scriptures." Novakovic, "The Scriptures and Scriptural Interpretation," 97.

[447] Charles, "Polemic and Persuasion," 87.

[448] This identification of Jude's commentary structure, according to Bauckham, is "perhaps the most important advance in recent studies on Jude" because it rescues the letter from the assumptions of other scholars who have assumed Jude was made up of a "mere stream of undisciplined denunciation." Bauckham concludes, on the contrary, that "this section of the letter is a very careful piece of scriptural exegesis." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 151–152.

Outline of Jude

1–2 – Introduction (τετηρημένοις; "having been kept')

3–4 – **Occasion:** Appeal (v. 3) and Background (v. 4)[449] (Ἀγαπητοί; "beloved")

Background: vv. 5–19 (Corresponds to v. 4)

5–7 – Citation: Three Examples (Ὑπομνῆσαι; "to remind")[450] - *aorist verbs*

8–10 – Application to "others"[451] (οὗτοι; "these") - *present verbs*

11 – Citation: Three Examples - *aorist verbs*

12–13 – Application to "others" (οὗτοί εἰσιν; "these ones are") - *present verbs*

14–15 – Citation: Written Apocalyptic Tradition - *aorist verbs*

16 – Application to "others" (οὗτοί εἰσιν; "these ones are") - *present verbs*

17–18 – Citation: Oral Apostolic Tradition (μνήσθητε "to remember") - *aorist verbs*

19 – Application to "others" (Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ; "these are the ones") - *present verbs*

20–23 – **Exhortation:** Climactic Appeal (Corresponds to v. 3)[452] (ἀγαπητοί; "beloved")

24–25 – Closing Doxology (φυλάξαι; "able to keep")

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[449] Bauckham sees the initial appeal in Jude 3–4 to contain two parts: Appeal and Background. An initial appeal to Jude's readers to "carry on the fight for the faith" (v. 3) is accompanied by the background to this appeal – namely a warning against the adversaries who threaten the faith (v. 4). The body of the letter then unfolds in opposite order and corresponds to this opening theme. This reveals that Jude 5–19 does not contain the purpose or the appeal but provides the background to that appeal which is to fight for the faith (:3–4, 20–23). Bauckham explains that the aim of 5–19 is to "demonstrate the danger posed by the false teachers to the readers by showing how their practice and advocacy of libertine behavior corresponds to the character of those ungodly people whose appearance in the last days and who judgment at the imminent *parousia* has been prophesied." For Bauckham this is a type of a chiastic structure, but he does not press this too far. Ibid., 150, 180–181. Several have offered various chiastic structures. For example, see Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, 884. See Schreiner's discussion Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 424–425.

[450] Brosend and others see an *inclusio* with :5 and :17. Brosend II, *James and Jude*, 180. Bateman, on the other hand, explains that "the simple recalling of a single word like 'remember' does not an *inclusio* make." Bateman, *Jude*, 338. However, Davids points out that Jude loves rhetorical repetition. Davids, *A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, 263. The opinion followed here is that, in light of Jude's highly rhetorical and structured letter, these repetitions are not accidental but are meant to send signals to the reader.

[451] Michael is the one counterexample in Jude 9 that sits in between the two sets of three bad examples.

[452] As the climax, Jude 20–23 contains the persuasive aim of the letter. These verses explain *how* to contend for the faith. Marshall says, these verses reveal that the letter is more pastoral than polemical. Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 660.

Theological Context

Much about James's theological context can be repeated here. Jude's Christology is often neglected,[453] it is everywhere assumed throughout his letter, and it is sapientially oriented toward specific ethical issues. Additionally, as is evident from the discussion on authorship and dating, Jude must be read in light of his early Jewish-Christian and Palestinian apocalyptic worldview. His anticipation of the coming *parousia,* his relationship with prophetic texts and themes, and his utilization of these features in the development of his judgment motif all evidence his firm location in the apocalyptic worldview of early Jewish-Christianity.[454] As a result of this theological context, deSilva notes that this brief letter may very well "provide us with a window into the thought and activity of Jude," a leader within early Jewish Christianity. As one who was "within the circle of Jesus's blood relations," he offers a unique perspective on "an oft-neglected stream of tradition within the early church."[455]

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[453] Capes, Reeves, and Richards claim that "Jude tells us almost nothing about Jesus." Capes, Reeves, and Richards, *Rediscovering Jesus: An Introduction to Biblical, Religious, and Cultural Perspectives on Christ*, 131. These authors even go as far as saying that if we only had the books of James, Jude, and 1–2 Peter, that we would not even know that Jesus was divine. This is shocking in light of the observations that will soon be discussed. Ibid., 133–134.

[454] "An early dating of Jude puts this text in conversation with Pauline Christology." Joseph, "Seventh from Adam," 481. For discussion of the *parousia* in early Jewish Christianity in Bauckham, "The Delay of the Parousia." For his relationship with prophetic texts, see, especially, 1 Enoch, Zechariah, and Ezekiel. For a discussion of 1 Enoch and Jude's use of other pseudepigrapha, see Daniel M. Gurtner, "Noncanonical Jewish Writings," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 291–309. See also Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005). For his emphasis on apocalyptic themes, consider the prominence of angels. See J. J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Literature," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000). See further, Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 668. See discussion of this tradition in Larry J. Kreitzer, "Apocalyptic, Apocalypticism," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*.

[455] For this and the previous quotation, see Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 182.

Exegesis of Selections from Jude

Occurring at crucial points in the development of Jude's argument, several key verses represent a peak into the overall ethical and persuasive intent of Jude's letter. Additionally, the selected verses contain important Christological statements that reflect an early, high Christology. This high Christology is drawn on for ethical purposes and is also a foundational component of the "apostolic tradition."[456]

Jude 4

Christological Contexts

Jude 3–4 contains two parts that structure the entire letter: both an appeal (v. 3) and the background to that appeal (v. 4).[457] Jude 5–19 corresponds to the background, and Jude 20–23 corresponds to the appeal.[458] Interpreters, therefore, must recognize where in the outline their passage resides, and interpret their passage through the lenses of the overarching intended appeal in verses 3 and 20–23. In this way, Jude 3–4 represents some of the most important verses in the letter in that it sets the letter within the frame of Jude's overall persuasive intent.

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[456] Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles."

[457] Jude 3-4 (NIV) reads, "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." Green says, "Jude juxtaposes the final and complete revelation (v. 3) over against the theological novelty that the heretics have introduced into the church by stealth (v. 4)." Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 52.

[458] Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 4.

Christology and Apostolic Theology

The key point of entry for the current project is the final phrase in the verse: τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι ("the only Master and our Lord Jesus Christ they deny.") With Jude's concern in verse 3 for contending for the apostolic faith once delivered (ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει), it seems that this Christological and ethical statement in verse 4 may not only be representative of the explicit error of the "intruders," but may also be a foundational component of the "faith once delivered," the apostolic theology. In short, a belief in Jesus as Master and Lord must entail a corresponding life response.

Christological Questions

What is the Significance of δεσπότην?

While the NIV translation of δεσπότην as "Sovereign" is attractive for an early, high Christology, it does not seem to fit the evidence or the context. Instead, this word is better rendered as "Master" (ESV, CSB, NRSV, and NASB). Referring to Jesus as "Master," a word typically applied to God in the NT, has certainly raised exegetical and theological eyebrows.[459] While many claim that the mere absence of a second article must mean that

[459] The KJV, following the Textus Receptus, reads, "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Omanson explains, "Since δεσπότην was sometimes used by Greek writers to refer to God (in the New Testament at Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev 6:10), the Textus Receptus, in agreement with a few uncials and most minuscules, added θεόν (God) in order more clearly to distinguish δεσπότην from the following κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν (our Lord Jesus Christ)." Roger L. Omanson and Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

the first article governs both nouns, Bauckham does not think the case is settled so easily.[460] He adds additional lines of evidence that strengthen the argument for δεσπότην serving as a title for Jesus.

Of particular importance are the arguments made by Bauckham related to the history of the term δεσπότην. Bauckham explains that, according to Julius Africanus, who lived in Emmaus in the late second century, the family of Jesus was known as οί δεσπόσυνοι ("belonging to the Master," or the "people of the master").[461] This unique usage implies that Jesus was known as δεσπότης ("the Master") in the Palestinian circles in which Jesus, James, and Jude's family was known.[462] If this is so, Jude's audience may not have blinked an eye at the mention of this title.[463] Perhaps this is why Jude can simply use this title for Jesus without defending it. The term "Master" also links to Jude's self-identification as a "servant of Jesus Christ" in 1:1 and distinguishes Jude from the intruders.[464]

It seems that Jude may have added δεσπότην alongside κύριον to highlight the opponent's two-sided error. They have both *disowned* Jesus as their personal "master" that

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[460] Though Moo and Schreiner also add other evidence, they seem to treat this as the decisive blow. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 231; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 439. I side with the following of Greenlee's options, "Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν 'Jesus Christ' is in apposition with both δεσπότην 'Master' and κύριον 'Lord'...: our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. The pronoun ἡμῶν 'our' modifies both δεσπότην 'Master' and κύριον 'Lord.'" J. Harold Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Jude*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008).

[461] See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl*. 1.7.14.

[462] Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 39. See also, Joseph, "Seventh from Adam," 468.

[463] Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 305.

[464] "Jude joins his brother James in servitude to their earthly brother Jesus (v.1). But this very human brother of theirs is, simultaneously, the divinely appointed Sovereign Master and Lord of creation (v.4) before whom all humanity must bow down." Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture*, 240.

purchased and *owns* them (Matt. 26:34; 2 Pet. 2:1) and have *denied* Jesus as the universal κύριος who will *deny* them as their eschatological Judge (Matt. 10:33).[465] Bauckham concludes:

> We may therefore take it that τον μόνον δεσπότην και κύριον ήμών Ίησούς χριστόν is a deliberately full reference to the lordship of Jesus Christ, strategically placed in the statement of theme (v. 4) for the exegetical section of Jude's letter (vv. 5–19), which is concerned with the coming judgment by Jesus the Lord on those who reject his Lordship.[466]

If, as Bauckham claims, τον μόνον δεσπότην και κύριον ήμών Ίησούς χριστόν is a "deliberately full reference to the lordship of Jesus," what does it look like when someone denies this truth?

What Does ἀρνέομαι Mean?

The ethical angle embedded within the Christological claim that Jesus is the "Master" emerges with the word ἀρνούμενοι ("denying"). This present participle indicates that the intruders are actively denying and disowning their only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. This denial seems to be highly related to the intruder's μετατιθέντες ("perversion") of the grace of God into a license to sin.[467] This reveals that their *antinomian* and *anti-authority*

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[465] "Disown" is another possible translation included in the semantic range for ἀρνούμενοι. See discussion in Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:289.

[466] Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 303. Jobes similarly says, "The title Jude uses for Jesus, 'Sovereign' (Gk. *despotēs),* is striking because it is used in Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; and often in the Septuagint to address God. Jude thus implies an equality of Christ's sovereignty with God's." Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 248. Also, Blomberg, "Verse 4 declares that 'Jesus Christ' is 'our only Sovereign and Lord," about as exalted a claim for the deity and rulership of Jesus as one could imagine." Blomberg, *A New Testament Theology*, 170. And Reese: "Used together, these two words emphasize the masterly and authoritative relationship that Jesus Christ has to his followers and highlights the fact that the opponents are denying one who has power and authority over them." Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 40.

[467] In the context of a different early battle with heresy, Paul uses the same word (μεταστρέψαι) in Galatians 1:7 to describe his opponent's error.

behavior are two sides of the same heretical coin and thus also seems to hint toward the existence of a reciprocal relationship between one's theology and ethics.

Christological Implications

Jesus as Master and Lord

Though Jobes and others do not see an explicit denial of any particular Christological doctrine in this passage, the evidence seems to depict the opposite. Jobes says, "Jude does not denounce the 'others' for holding an 'errant Christology'" as found in 1 John 2:18–23. Instead, she sees Jude as condemning the "others" for "being guided by their own dreams and knowledge," as Jude 8 discusses.[468] It seems Jobes may not have considered the relationship between Christology and ethics that Jude appears to be alluding to.[469]

Davids, on the other hand, sees a departure from Jesus embedded within the intruders' ethics. He says that "to call Jesus 'Lord' and reject his ethical teaching is just as much a denial of him as to deny he is Lord."[470] Similarly, deSilva says, "These intruders deny Jesus as 'Master and Lord,' not by verbally opposing the church's claims about Jesus, but by failing to submit to the authority of Jesus's teachings about ethical behavior." He explains, "They serve not Jesus as their Lord and master but instead their own cravings."

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[468] For this and previous quotes, see Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 239, 242.

[469] Consider this: the passage Jobes cites (1 John 2:18–23) uses the same word (ἀρνούμενος; deny) as Jude in three quick instances in vv. 22–23. The ESV reads, "Who is the liar but he who ***denies*** that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who ***denies*** the Father and the Son. No one who ***denies*** the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also." What this is perhaps signaling is the possibility that while John may be emphasizing the reality of someone *theologically* denying Jesus, Jude is highlighting the possibility of someone *ethically* denying Jesus.

[470] He says, "the specific charges Jude brings indicate ethical rather than doctrinal departure from Jesus." Peter H. Davids, "Jude," ed. Brian S. Rosner et al., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000), 355.

He concludes that "calling Jesus Lord" should necessarily entail "acting as an obedient follower of this Lord,"[471] echoing Jude's half-brother's teaching in Luke 6:46 (ESV), "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" Similarly Paul teaches in Titus 1:16 (ESV), "They profess to know God, but they ἀρνοῦνται ("deny") him by their works."[472]

Additionally, Bauckham points out that since the "idea of a denial of God by conduct is attested in Judaism" it is not farfetched for Jude to understand his opponents as committing an ethical form of heresy.[473] Perverting the grace of God and living immorally (antinomianism) are products of a prior denial of Christ as Master and Lord (anti-authority). Jude's Christology and his ethics, therefore, seem inseparably linked.

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[471] For this and previous quotations, see Painter and deSilva, *James and Jude*, 196. Schreiner says, "They denied Christ's Lordship by the way they lived, by their antinomian lifestyle." He then draws in Jude 8 in a way that incorporates Jobes' take by saying that the opponents "defended their 'ethics' by appealing to their revelations." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 414. Similarly, Witherington III understands Jude's Christology and ethics to be "intertwined, and at points almost indistinguishable." For this reason, Witherington III takes Jude to be concerned with both "orthodoxy and orthopraxy." Witherington goes on to explain that NT "theologies always have ethical implications and manifestations. They are never simply abstract things of purely intellectual concern or interest." He says that Jude believes that the false teachers behave badly in part because they believe badly: they have a theology that provides warrants for misbehavior." He concludes by saying that "this is precisely why the final judgment, and thus the judgement theme in this document, is viewed as providing a sanction for certain kinds of current behavior." Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:278, 287–290.

[472] The Heidelberg Catechism also draws this dynamic out in question and answer 30. Question: "Do such then believe in Jesus the only Savior, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?" Answer: No. Though they boast of Him in words, they in fact deny the only Savior Jesus. For one of two things must be true: either Jesus is not a complete Savior, or those who by true faith accept this Savior must find in Him all that is necessary for their salvation

[473] Bauckham cites several verses from 1 Enoch here (38:2; 41:2; 45:2; 46:7; 48:10; 67:8–10). This, along with other evidence presented below, demonstrates Jude's significant interaction with 1 Enoch. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 40. See also Bateman, *Jude*, 155.

Jude 5

Christological Contexts

After Jude has introduced the issues and made his preliminary appeal (v. 3) with the supporting background (v. 4), he begins an extended explanation of this background in vv. 5–19. He signals his transitional shift in v. 5 with a version of a disclosure formula typical of Greco-Roman letters: Ὑπομνῆσαι δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι ("Now, I wish to remind you").

Hafemann says that "an analysis of the rhetorical structure of Jude makes it clear that Jude 5 marks the transition from the body opening of the letter to the body proper." At this pivotal point in the letter, Jude introduces his "lead scriptural support," which describes the background information needed to support the main point of his letter, the appeal in v. 3 and vv. 20–23 to contend for the faith. As such, Hafemann says that "Jude 5 plays a pivotal role in the epistle's argument," and also presents "Jude's view of the basis and motivation for God's judgment."[474] Related to Jude's ethical intent, Hafemann says that v. 5 "functions as part of Jude's overall 'persuasive discourse' in which he intends to "influence the behavior of his audience." If his audience fails to "build themselves up" and contend for the faith, they will end up like the "others" who are "denying" the faith and the "only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."[475]

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[474] For this and previous quotes, see Scott J. Hafemann, "Salvation in Jude 5 and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3–11," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 331. Similarly, Bauckham makes a strong case for the key position of verse 5. He also links this disclosure formula to verse 17. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 44.

[475] For this and previous quotes, see Hafemann, "Salvation in Jude 5 and the Argument of 2 Peter 1:3–11," 339.

Christology and Memory

Bauckham translates Ὑπομνῆσαι δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, εἰδότας ὑμᾶς ἅπαξ πάντα as "Now I should like to remind you, though you have been informed of all things once and for all."[476] This reading, according to Schreiner, forges a connection between "Jude's readers knowing 'all things once for all,' and 'the faith once for all entrusted to the saints'" discussed in v. 3.[477] In contrast to the "intruders" who are introducing new teaching, Jude's readers have already been instructed regarding the apostolic tradition. He now need only remind them of the things they have previously been taught (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1; Acts 10:36–44). Bauckham says this likely includes "all the essentials of the faith in which the apostles instructed" Jude's readers upon their conversion (cf. v. 17).[478] This oral, apostolic theology can be assumed[479] and built upon for ethical direction because Jude is confident that his readers already have been "informed of all things once and for all."[480] In fact, if there had not been an agreed-upon "apostolic theology," there would be no way to identify heresy. Mentions of "the faith" throughout this letter appear to allude to an assumed theology that was more widely accepted in the early church than is often realized. This agreed-upon set of beliefs

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[476] Ibid., 334. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 48. Bauckham and others follow a variant reading. See discussion in Omanson and Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament*, 521. This translation differs from Hafemann's association of ἅπαξ with σώσας.

[477] Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 443.

[478] Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 48–49. See also, Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 183. This may help make sense of Jude's lack of explanatory details when he merely mentions the names of OT characters and expects his audience to comprehend the significance of his instructions. This might also be explained by his audience's rich Jewish heritage.

[479] Jobes says, "Every author assumes certain shared knowledge with his or her readers." An understanding of the audience is often based on "making inferences based on what shared knowledge is assumed by the content of the book." It is obvious that Jude expected his readers, who "already know all this" to be "familiar with the people and events found in the Old Testament." Jobes, *Letters to the Church*, 240.

[480] See the discussion as well in Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 63. Consider also the theological importance that Jude places on memory. See Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption*, 102.

appears to at least have been settled and clear enough that one can judge both a set of beliefs (orthodoxy) and a set of behaviors (orthopraxy) against the backdrop of the preaching of the apostles (Jude 17).

Christological Questions

After Jude's transitional disclosure formula roots his appeal in the apostolic tradition, he then moves to launch the historical background portion of his letter by recalling a foundational narrative of the people of God. Jude says, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς λαὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου σώσας ("that Jesus delivered the people out of the land of Egypt"). This portion of verse 5 contains one of the most difficult text-critical questions in the NT.[481]

Who Delivered the People Out of Egypt?

On this text-critical issue, there are basically two camps among scholars: one supports the reading represented above that contains Ἰησοῦς, while the other supports a reading that contains κύριος. At the outset, it is essential to remember that, based on the reading of Jude 4 above, the context necessitates that even if verse 5 indeed reads κύριος, it should still be understood as a reference to Jesus. In other words, this verse inescapably contains an impressively high Christology regardless of the reading adopted and no matter the decision on the text-critical issue, Jude views his half-brother as decisively involved in the Exodus narrative. A review of the two camps will supply an opportunity to discuss the Christology of v. 5.

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[481] Discussing the entire letter's difficulty, Bauckham says, "Considering the brevity of Jude, the textual critical problems are remarkably numerous and difficult." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 135.

Though the *lectio difficilior* (the more difficult) reading is often preferred, those in favor of the κύριος reading hold that the Ἰησοῦς reading is *too* difficult. Metzger explains that "a majority of the Committee was of the opinion that the reading was difficult to the point of impossibility."[482] Bauckham also thinks that the κύριος reading should be preferred because it could explain what motivated copyists to edit the ambiguity.[483] This is related to the *nomina sacra* discussion above, as it is possible that a copyist simply made an unintentional change to the text, mistaking ΙΣ for ΚΣ.

However, Bartholomä understands this change to likely be intentional and motivated by Christological concerns. He says, "The evidence suggests that at least part of the textual problem has to be seen against the backdrop of the Christological controversies of the first few centuries as a general attempt to avoid the idea of Jesus's pre-existence."[484] Bartholomä builds his case for the Ἰησοῦς reading by using an approach of reasoned eclecticism that incorporates external and internal evidence.

Externally, Bartholomä says that Ἰησοῦς has stronger support from earlier and more reliable Alexandrian sources and is also more geographically widespread. As it relates to transcriptional probability, he says that it is "reasonable to conclude that the Ἰησοῦς

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[482] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 657. Bartholomä points out that what is not often admitted, however, is that "the reading [ὁ] κύριος has been given a {D} rating (which "indicates that the Committee had great difficulty in arriving at a decision.)" He continues by saying, "At the same time, Bruce M. Metzger and Allen Wikgren (as a minority vote) seem to prefer the reading Ἰησοῦς. It is also interesting that UBS 2 still contained Ἰησοῦς as the original reading. Philipp Bartholomä, "Did Jesus Save the People out of Egypt? A Re-Examination of a Textual Problem in Jude 5," *Novum Testamentum* 50, no. 2 (January 1, 2008): 144 fn. 3.

[483] Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 43. Bauckham says the Ἰησοῦς reading appears to be original based on an initial reading of the evidence, but he eventually sides with the κύριος reading. Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 308–312. Green says that it is "hard to comprehend why an original reading of "Lord" or "God" would have been changed to "Jesus." He eventually sides with the "Jesus" reading. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 65. See also Blomberg, *A New Testament Theology*, 171.

[484] Bartholomä, "Did Jesus Save the People out of Egypt?," 150–151.

reading, with its presumption that Jesus acted in the early history of Israel, is more difficult, and thus more prone" to be changed by a copyist."[485] Intrinsically, Bartholomä explains that "in light of the somewhat parallel passage in 1 Cor 10:9" where the testing of Christ is followed by destruction, "it is entirely possible that the subject in v. 5 is the Lord Jesus and that Jude even attributed 'the destruction of those who did not believe'" in Jude 5b to Jesus.[486]

The position taken here is slightly in favor of the Ἰησοῦς reading. While the doctrine of inseparable operations sees each member of the Trinity at work in all economic activity (including the Exodus), there is something significant to be observed if the Ἰησοῦς reading is adopted. If Jude used the personal name of his half-brother and applied it in this OT context, what might this mean for his Christology?[487] Jude indeed was told by Mary and Joseph that this was the name that Gabriel instructed them to give him "because he

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[485] Bartholomä concludes this section, "Having established Ἰησοῦς as the harder reading in terms of transcriptional probability, it becomes evident that a reference to Jesus acting in the early history of Israel is far less unreasonable than most members of the UBS committee have asserted because (1) although the usage of the personal name 'Jesus' remains somewhat striking, the association of the pre-existent Christ with the Exodus may not only be observed in New Testament writings, but in second century literature as well, and (2) the portrayal of Jesus as the exalted judge fits the context in Jude well. Moreover, the observation that the author never employs Ἰησοῦς alone, but always Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, does not necessarily suggest that Ἰησοῦς is the inferior reading. Jude may well be capable of variance, while it is more unlikely that a scribe would create a reading that could be obviously considered as against the author's style. Ibid., 152.

[486] Ibid., 155. This observation may point to the presence and consistency of an oral, apostolic tradition existing among the NT authors. Bartholomä concludes, "Further, Jesus' designation as the one who executes judgment comports well with Jude 4 (where Christ is described as the ruling Master), thus implicitly arguing for his deity. Therefore, based on our text-critical considerations given above, both verses taken together could be used as an argument for the existence of a high Christology (including Christ's pre-existence) by the time the Epistle of Jude was written." Ibid., 157–158. See also, Jessica Fikkert, "Jude 5: Who Saved a People Out of Egypt—'the Lord' or 'Jesus'?," *Presbyterion* 46, no. 1 (2020): 100–110. Related to the Exodus narrative, one interpreter has proposed that the reference in Jude 5 is to the angel of the Lord. Jarl E. Fossum, "Kyrios Jesus as the Angel of the Lord in Jude 5–7," *New Testament Studies* 33, no. 2 (1987): 226–243.

[487] See the previous discussion on James 2:7 as well. While it is acknowledged the Ἰησοῦς was an incredibly common name in this era, it must also be recognized that in James, Jude, and in the gospel accounts, Jesus's name is not only communicating that "Yahweh saves," but these accounts are explaining that Jesus is the one who saves.

will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:26). Further, the broader NT sees this as the only name in which salvation is found (Acts 4:12) and the name at which every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:9–11). As was shown previously, if James understood Jesus's name as holy enough to be blasphemed (James 2:7), then it should not be surprising if Jude attributed to this very name the miraculous and saving work of the Exodus.

Christological Implications

Christological Exegesis

A glimpse into Jude's blend of early Christian exegesis with common Jewish exegetical practices emerges in verse 5. Jude's Christological reinterpretation of the Exodus narrative is similar to that which the disciples practice after Jesus' resurrection (Luke 24, Acts 2–3). As Richard Hays says, "We interpret Scripture rightly only when we read it in light of the resurrection, and we begin to comprehend the resurrection only when we see it as the climax of the scriptural story of God's gracious deliverance of Israel."[488] Only an event as significant as the resurrection would lead Palestinian Jews to Christologically reinterpret their "people-founding-narrative" of the Exodus.[489] These exegetical practices may have been a component of the apostolic theology handed down to Jude's audience (Jude 3, 17).

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[488] Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," 216.

[489] Reese, "Remember 'Jesus Saved a People Out of Egypt,'" 92. Kirk calls the Exodus a "founding event" or a "master commemorative narrative" that is central to the community's understanding of itself. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," 5. Marohl explains that group members, often motivated by clarifying group boundaries and behavior, can tend to "re-interpret and re-construct past, present, and future-oriented possible social identities." He uses the example of the author of Hebrews reshaping the story of Moses through Christological lenses (Heb. 11:26). Matthew J. Marohl, "Letter Writing and Social Identity," in *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 94–95.

Christological Remembering

As mentioned above, Jude opens this historical background section (vv. 5–19) with a desire to "remind" his audience of things they already fully know, that is, the apostolic tradition (Jude 3; 1 Cor. 11:2, 15:1–3l; Acts 16:4; Luke 1:3). Drawing on insights from social memory theory, it seems that Jude is able to quickly allude to a series of stories (vv. 5–19) without explanation because of the assumed knowledge he expects his audience to share.[490] The foundational OT redemptive event of the Exodus is the first memory that Jude reminds his audience of. [491] Reese says, "centuries after their deliverance from Egypt the Jewish people still speak of themselves as a people who were rescued from the land of Egypt."[492] Strangely, however, Jude does not call his audience to remember this event as it has previously been told. Instead, he freshly retells this narrative, situates his half-brother as

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[490] Williams says that "The use of social memory studies" in interpreting Jude "is appropriate for two reasons." First, Jude introduces the body of his letter by signaling his desire to (remind his audience (v. 5) and closes it with an exhortation that they remember (v. 17). In other words, Jude intentionally makes his case through the medium of collective and cultural memory." Williams, "Constructing Identity in the Epistle of Jude," 511.

[491] Interestingly Carson does not deal with this verse in much detail at all. D. A. Carson, "Jude," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 1069–1079. Also interesting is the absence of much discussion of this verse in African American theology and exegesis. Though it is widely known that the Exodus narrative figures prominently into the liberation theme of African American theology, this reinterpretation of the Exodus through Christological lenses is not mentioned in the commentary on Jude in Larry George, "Jude," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount et al. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 518–522. Edwards says about this theme that, "Liberation has always been a key theme in African American hermeneutics, with the exodus story of the OT providing inspiration and affirmation. African American Christians, since the time of slavery, have seen themselves in the exodus narrative, and thereby have been prompted to worship a God who executes judgment on oppressive powers while rescuing people from bondage and helping them to find their way." Dennis Edwards, "Hermeneutics and Exegesis," in *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 71. On the liberation theme, see also Emerson B. Powery, "African American Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green, 2nd ed.. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 327.

[492] Ruth Anne Reese, "Remember 'Jesus Saved a People Out of Egypt,'" in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, 88.

the subject of the sentence (and therefore the story/memory), and encourages his audience to remember a *person*, not an *event.*[493]

This sort of "Christological remembering" is also designed to produce an ethical effect. Using a form of deliberative and epideictic rhetoric, Jude is instructing his readers to "remember" these stories so that they will stay rooted in and contend for the apostolic faith and will not follow the lead of the grace-perverting and Lord-denying "intruders." Bauckham concludes, "Just as those who had been saved by God from Egypt but repudiated his lordship in the wilderness were judged by him (v 5), so those who have confessed Christ as Lord but refuse to accept his lordship in practice will be judged by him at the *parousia* (v 14)."[494] This hint toward judgment in v 5 sets up the following discussion of judgment in Jude 14-15.

Jude 14–15

Jude not only freshly *retells* a *past* narrative in light of the person of Jesus (Jude 5), but he also Christologically *reinterprets* a common prophetic text concerned with *future* judgment. According to Bauckham, Jude 14 also occupies a "key position" in the historical background portion of vv. 5–19 and is "especially linked to the statement of theme" in vv.

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[493] Ibid., 92–93. Reese says, "The message communicated is both a link to the Old Testament story that Christians are embedded in and a way of telling that story with a new subject, Christ." Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 44.

[494] Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 287. Webb concludes this section well, "If I am correct that Jude's use of Lord' in v. 5 is a referent to the pre-existent Christ, then the story of Jesus in Jude is explicitly interwoven with the story from Jewish scriptural tradition already examined. It is Christ who, having saved Israel in the Exodus, 'afterward destroyed those who did not believe' (v. 3). It is Christ who 'has kept' the fallen Watchers 'in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great day' (v. 6). It is Christ who judged the cities with 'a punishment of eternal fire' (v. 7). And it is Christ who is referred to by the archangel Michael in his response to the devil, The Lord rebuke you!' (v. 9)." Robert L. Webb, "The Use of 'Story' in the Letter of Jude: Rhetorical Strategies of Jude's Narrative Episodes," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 31, no. 1 (2008): 69.

3–4. Bauckham attests that Jude's quotation of 1 Enoch 1:9 is his "key text in his midrash."[495] The focus of this project is on the portion of text that reads, ἰδοὺ ἦλθεν κύριος ἐν ἁγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ ποιῆσαι κρίσιν κατὰ πάντων καὶ ἐλέγξαι πᾶσαν ψυχὴν περὶ πάντων τῶν ἔργων ἀσεβείας ("Behold/look/see the Lord comes with ten thousand of his holy ones to execute judgment against all and to convict all of the ungodly concerning every work/deed/action of ungodliness.")

Christological Contexts

Christology and the Ungodly

Jude 14–15 is closely related to the ἀσεβεῖς ("ungodly") intruders of vv. 3–4.[496] Similarly, the original context of the chapter surrounding the quotation of 1 Enoch 1:9 shows that Enoch is primarily concerned with the judgment of these ungodly people.[497] Jude is drawing on an apocalyptic text familiar to his audience and is reinterpreting it through a Christological lens to describe the coming judgment of the ungodly. Jude's Christological and eschatological hermeneutic is here seen as directing his interpretation of OT passages

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[495] Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 100.

[496] The ESV translates this verse as containing four occurrences of "ungodly": "to execute judgment on all and to convict all the *ungodly* of all their deeds of *ungodliness* that they have committed in such an *ungodly* way, and of all the harsh things that *ungodly* sinners have spoken against him."

[497] "Judgments on the extent of Jude's dependence on 1 Enoch outside verses 14–15 have varied, though it is widely agreed to be considerable." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 139. Additionally, Joseph adds, "There seems to be good reason to suppose that 1 Enoch 1–5 and related passages in the Enoch literature lie at the foundation of Jude's exegetical work." Ibid., 226. Joseph's insightful article explores the "Christological implications of Jude's citation of the Enoch tradition." He eventually concludes that "the adoption of this Adamic motif via the Enoch tradition can also be traced forward to Luke's genealogy, where Jesus is the 'seventy-seventh' from Adam, designating Enoch as the seventh generation and Jesus as 'the climax and end of world history.' Joseph, "Seventh from Adam," 480.

(see Jude 5) and other documents such as 1 Enoch. This passage further situates Jude in the apocalyptic context that emphasizes judgment at the *parousia*.[498]

Christological Implications

The Judge of the Ungodly

As mentioned above, Jude modifies the Enoch quotation and inserts Jesus as the one who will execute the judgment of the ungodly.[499] Bauckham explains that this "exegetical modification" that includes a "Christological interpretation" is designed to show that Jude understands 1 Enoch 1:9 to refer to Jesus' *parousia.*[500] Similarly, Joseph says, "the simple addition of the word 'Lord' (κύριος) transforms the eschatological divine judgment into the parousia of the 'Lord Jesus.'"[501] This interpretation is supported by the early Jewish-Christian and apocalyptic milieu *from* which and *to* which Jude is likely writing.[502]

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[498] This eschatological framework, in Witherington III's view, provides "sanctions for behavior" until the return of Christ. Witherington III, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 1:295.

[499] Practically every commentator agrees that Jude is rewriting this quotation and inserting Christ as Lord. "Most interpreters assert that the author of Jude has recast this quotation as a prophecy of Jesus' *parousia*." Eric F. Mason, "Biblical and Nonbiblical Traditions in Jude and 2 Peter: Sources, Usage, and the Question of Canon," in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, 189. Davids says, "Since every unambiguous instance of the word 'Lord' (v. 4, 21, 25) refers to Jesus, it is probable that ... 'the coming Lord' (v. 14) also refers to him." Davids, "Jude," 355.

[500] Later, Bauckham says, "Jude's addition of κύριος is certainly a Christological interpretation of the text." Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, 210, 288. Related to the interpretation of the 1 Enoch quotation, Bauckham says, that Zech. 14:5 was "from an early stage in primitive Christianity interpreted Christologically of the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus." Richard Bauckham, "A Note on a Problem in the Greek Version of I Enoch 1.9," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 32, no. 1 (1981): 136–138.

[501] Joseph, "Seventh from Adam," 473.

[502] The letter of Jude shows 'a close familiarity' with and an 'evidently high respect for the Book of Enoch. Interestingly, Jude seems to have used the Aramaic version of 1 Enoch, which further affirms Jude's Palestinian Jewish provenance." He concludes, "The implications of Jude's date, provenance, and appeal to I Enoch can thus be assessed in the following way: the letter of Jude is evidence of I Enoch's authoritative status in early Jewish Christianity and illuminates the Christological background of Jude, rooting it in Jewish messianic and apocalyptic ideas developed within the Enoch tradition." Ibid., 468, 472, 481.

If the evidence is read in this way, it seems that Jude is making an intentional effort to remind his audience that judgment is coming in the last days, and the one doing the judging is his half-brother, Jesus.[503] Jesus, the boy James and Jude grew up with, is "the Lord" who "comes with ten thousand of his holy ones to execute judgment." Jude's reinterpretation of this prophetic future-oriented text and retelling of the past foundational event (the Exodus) emphasize his central message: Jesus is the judge of the ungodly who deny him by their lifestyles.

Jude 17

Christological Contexts

If the previous section represented the *written apocalyptic tradition* and primarily had the "ungodly" in mind, this final brief section addresses Jude's "beloved" and represents the *oral apostolic tradition.* Jude says, Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ("But remember, beloved, the words spoken to you beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ").

Christology and Apostolic Preaching

While most translations render this as something similar to "the predictions of the apostles," Green translates this verse as "remember the words previously spoken to you by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ."[504] When translators choose "predictions" it seems

[503] Charles, "Jude's Use of Pseudepigraphical Source-Material as Part of a Literary Strategy," 130-145.

[504] Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 112.

to distract attention from the assumed shared context and the memory triggering function signaled by the personal pronoun ἡμῶν.[505] Green's translation is preferable because it rightly foregrounds the fact that Jude's audience heard these "words previously spoken," or perhaps preached (John 8:20; Acts 2:14; 10:44) by the apostles.[506] Green's translation does not neglect the fact that the apostles made predictions, it simply situates their predictions inside of their preaching, or the oral apostolic tradition.[507]

Christological Implications

Christology and Tradition

The apostles spoke within and underneath the authority of "our Lord Jesus Christ," which flies in the face of the ungodly intruders who were denying this Lord. It is as if Jude counters the innovative, antinomian, and anti-authority intruders with the traditional, apostolic, accepted, and recollected faith that has been entrusted and handed down to his readers (v. 3, 20–23). The words of the apostles, then, are the lens through which Jude is encouraging his readers to view their present situation and understand the "others."

Nienhuis and Wall say, "The emphasis placed on this apostolic tradition makes it clear that Jude considers this the decisive prophecy to end the argument."[508] Once Jude has

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[505] Reese says that Jude asks his audience to remember "not the shared collective memories that have been passed down over centuries, but rather the social memories of a relatively newly formed group…" They are to remember "the words spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." Reese, "Remember 'Jesus Saved a People Out of Egypt,'" 98.

[506] This also assists in refuting those who hold to a late, "early Catholic" date. In contrast, Webb says that it appears that Jude's readers are likely still first-generation Christians. Webb, "Jude," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments,* 617.

[507] Again, see Newman, "Jude 22, Apostolic Theology, and the Canonical Role of the Catholic Epistles."

[508] Nienhuis and Wall, *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture*, 235.

completed his argument related to the background, he then transitions to explain that the way his "beloved" (v. 20) are to "contend for the faith" is by "building themselves up" in this very faith that the apostles have handed down and entrusted to them (v. 17). As has been shown, key features of this apostolic theology include a high Christology and an ethical life lived in light of the Lordship of Christ.

Conclusion

As stated in the conclusion of the previous chapter, this project has set out to argue that James and Jude provide a unique, early, and Jewish-Christian perspective on the relationship between Christology and ethics. As with James, this chapter has demonstrated that Jude possesses a high Christology firmly situated within an *early* and *Jewish* context. Yet again, this perspective is stunning when it is remembered that the author who calls Jesus Lord, Master, and Judge is his very own brother. How is Jude able to claim that Jesus participated in the Exodus (Jude 5)? How does he arrive at the conclusion that places Jesus on the eschatological throne of Judge (Jude 14-15)? It seems safe to conclude that Jude's interaction with the risen Jesus may have prompted a massive overhaul in his understanding of the OT, which provided the hermeneutical matrix within which he could understand the entirety of the Christ event.

Additionally, Jude's assumed, and unqualified Christological claims reveal how widely accepted this early apostolic theology must have been in Palestine (Jude 3, 17). If a deviation from this theology can be labeled as heretical at this early date (Jude 3-4), it follows that there must have been a firm and agreed-upon apostolic theology present, at

least when Jude was writing in the 50s. What is fascinating about this "heresy" is that it appears to be ethical in nature rather than doctrinal.

This observation reveals a key contribution of this project. It is not the *defense* of a high Christology that concerns Jude; it is the lack of an ethical *response* to a high Christology by the "others" that Jude calls into question. This dynamic reveals an inescapable relationship between one's Christological confession and the ethical reflection of that confession in one's life.

Chapter 6:

Christological and Ethical Conclusions

In the beginning, this project set out to argue that James and Jude provide a unique, early, and Jewish-Christian perspective on the relationship between Christology and ethics. With the resurrection as the dominant background event, this thesis has contended that James and Jude built their ethical appeals on an assumed, apostolic theology generated by the resurrection, which included a high Christology and an expectant eschatology. As the watershed, foundational event in the early church, the resurrection prompted massive and widespread shifts in the apostles' Christological comprehension, ethical construction, and exegetical methods. Rather than James and Jude remaining relegated to the unintelligible backwaters of the NT, this thesis has shown that these brothers of Jesus were entirely aligned with the apostolic theology behind all of the NT documents and were influential in its formation and application.

Summary and Synthesis

After situating the project in the field of NT Christology and ethics, clarifying the methodology utilized, and setting the historical, literary, and theological context for the letters under investigation, this project conducted an exegetical and theological analysis of key passages in James and Jude. What surfaced appeared to be a strong case for the presence of an early, high Christology in the letters from these brothers of Jesus. This was accomplished by the analysis of two controversial genitive constructions (James 2:1), the clarification of the use of the divine name (James 2:7), and the description of Jesus as the

eschatological Judge (James 5:7–11). Then, in Jude, the significance of Jesus as "Master and Lord" was investigated (Jude 4), the analysis of a text-critical problem was conducted (Jude 5), the quotation from 1 Enoch was discussed (Jude 14–15), and the presence of an apostolic tradition was confirmed (Jude 17).

Christological Implications

This investigation led to Christological implications that made clear that the highest possible Christology is present in perhaps two of the *earliest* and most *Jewish* NT documents in the canon. This Christology was developed within *monotheistic* categories by using a form of *reciprocal* exegesis wherein James and Jude interpreted their experiences through texts and texts through experiences. By focusing on the Christology of these letters, this thesis offered a fresh appreciation of the unique vantage point of the brothers of Jesus.

The Christology of James and Jude also revealed something about heresy. Dryden explains that "the ancient authors understood theological heresies in terms of the moral and social chaos they unleashed. For NT authors, theology and ethics are two sides of the same coin – distinguishable but inseparable."[509] This has certainly proven true in James and Jude. These letters displayed the importance of one's ethics matching one's Christology, one's life matching one's belief. This dynamic sets up further ethical implications.

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[509] Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom*, 186. Reese adds, "In the first-century, behavior was the ultimate picture of the beliefs held by both an individual and a community." Reese, *2 Peter and Jude*, 39. "Right doctrine (orthodoxy) and right practice (orthopraxy)" seem to be highly "interrelated." Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption*, 98–99, 103, 117.

Ethical Implications

Often discussed underneath the banner of "sapiential Christology," this project repeatedly surfaced evidence of the relationship between Christology and ethics. By utilizing principles from speech act theory and rhetorical theory, this project was able to uncover the persuasive motivation undergirding James and Jude's presentation of Christology. Rather than writing to exclusively present theology, these authors addressed issues related to each letter's occasioning incident. In other words, this project has attempted to foreground the fact that James and Jude wrote their texts to accomplish something amongst their readers. Understanding James to be writing to address specific issues related to diasporic living (e.g., favoritism in 2:1–7; oppression in 5:1–6), this project found James to be drawing on his Christology to achieve his ethical and persuasive purposes. Jude, on the other hand, in writing to confront the "others" who were antinomian and anti-authority, explicitly revealed the incompatibility of a confession of Christ's lordship with a life not lived under that lordship. This approach does not understand James and Jude's Christology to be formed in the moment of writing but to have been previously included within the agreed-upon apostolic theology. It is this theology that James and Jude call their audiences to return to and live in light of.

For an example that draws these insights together, consider Townsend's discussion of James 2:1–7. He connects the Christological to the ethical by explaining that part of the Christian task "is to live as those amongst whom the reign of Christ is a reality." The connection of the theological and macro-ethical to the micro-situation of favoritism explains why James can "move from an exalted Christological statement to a very practical

demand."[510] This theme of living as if the reign of Christ is a reality repeatedly surfaced in James and Jude inside of their eschatological judgment motif. Thus, the coming judgment is a primary motivating force in James and Jude's ethics (James 5:7–11, Jude 14–15).

Exegetical Implications

This project has revealed significant exegetical and methodological implications that may assist interpreters in uncovering a number of implicit insights. For example, interpreters must pay attention to the linguisticality of ethics (speech act and rhetorical theories), and they must also tune their ears to hear the implicit ethics of the NT. Two methods that assist interpreters in uncovering these unspoken and implicit ethics are social memory theory and relevance theory. These theories enable readers to get a glimpse of what can go without being said between an author and his audience. This reading style highlights the likelihood of a wider pre-existing community that included the author, his audience, and others. This project has hypothesized that this community was created around shared memories (namely the resurrection) and shared beliefs (the broader apostolic theology) that may now be assumed inside communications between community members. This reading positions

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[510] For this quote and the previous, see Michael J. Townsend, *The Epistle of James*, Epworth Commentaries (London, UK: Epworth, 1994), 34. Additionally, to call Jesus "Lord" is to acknowledge his "Lordship of his people (and hence the necessity of their obedience to his teaching)." McCartney, *James*, 137. Adamson also reminds readers of the ethical function of 2:1–7 when he says that the shocking title used for Jesus in this verse would convict James's readers, who are currently impressed by the "sham glory of social status." Adamson's translation of this verse seems to get to the heart of the point, "Do not try to combine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our glory, with the worship of men's social status. Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, 101–103. Davids dismisses Adamson's translation as unlikely. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 107 Another translation, the Twentieth Century New Testament, captures this paragraph's ethical and Christological themes with its paraphrastic rendering of v. 1: "Are you really trying to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the worship of rank?"

interpreters to pay careful exegetical attention to the assumed Christology and ethics arising from the NT texts.

Additionally, drawing on the insights from Lockett and others who advocate for reading the CE as a unit, this project has surfaced the value of reading James and Jude together. As the so-called "bookends of the CE," these brothers offer a unique perspective on Christology unshared by other NT authors. In addition to the insights and implications shared above, the following contributions may also be considered.

Above and Below Christology

James and Jude's perspective on Christology is shocking when interpreters acknowledge that the exalted statements about the "glorious Lord Jesus Christ" (James 2:1; cf. Jude 4) come from men who grew up with him. In this way, it seems James and Jude may continue to offer incredibly valuable insights related to the debates about Christology "from above" and Christology "from below."[511] As half-brothers of Jesus who observed his humanity on all levels, no one could possibly offer more of a "from below" Christology. Though they did not enter their understanding of Jesus with an exalted presupposition but maintained a

[511] See the discussion in Robert L. Reymond, "Classical Christology's Future in Systematic Theology," in *Always Reforming: Explorations in Systematic Theology*, ed. Andrew T. B. McGowan (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 67–124. See also the excellent discussion about these seemingly opposing camps in G.L. Bray, "Christology," ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson, J. I. Packer, and David F. Wright, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988). Bray shows the caricatures of each view and also discusses attempts to harmonize these approaches.

skeptical approach to his claims concerning his divinity (John 7:5), it is striking that their later Christology could not be more exalted or "from above."[512]

Functional and Ontological Christology

Though the debates concerning the functional and ontological approaches to Christology may be a thing of the past, it is interesting to note how this distinction does not arise from the text but appears to be placed onto the text by interpreters. In other words, while functional Christologies emphasize *what* Jesus did and ontological Christologies *who* Jesus was, the NT authors do not appear to think in the same categories. The discussion of the letters of James and Jude has demonstrated that Jesus is almost always spoken of in ways that assume the inseparability of function and being. Blomberg lists several fascinating similarities between the Christological titles used by James and Jude that may contribute to this discussion.[513] For instance, the powerful combination of δεσπότην with κύριον in Jude 4b is paralleled nowhere in the NT but is reminiscent of κυρίου σαβαώθ in James 5:4. This use is also similar to the 1 Enoch quotation in Jude 14 where Jude describes Jesus as the κύριος who comes ἐν ἁγίαις μυριάσιν (ten thousand holy ones). This concept of the returning Lord is also paralleled in James 5:7–11.

Further, Jesus's brothers see him not only as the Lord but also as the Judge. For example, Jude (v. 15; v. 21) and James (5:7–9) threaten evildoers with Jesus's return as

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[512] It is fruitful to consider the conversion stories of James and Jude. While Paul's Damascus Road experience typically gets all the press, the stories of James and Jude also represent lives that are changed by an encounter with Christ. These two were apparently non-believers during the earthly ministry of Jesus, but after Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 1:14), they became leaders in the church (1 Cor. 9:5; Acts 15:13). See the discussion in Bruce, *New Testament History*, 205–211.

[513] Blomberg suggests, for these theological and contextual reasons, that it should perhaps be more common to group James and Jude than is normally done. Blomberg, *A New Testament Theology*, 137, 171.

eschatological Judge. As it relates to the discussion at hand, these titles are never merely used to describe the identity of Jesus but are aimed at ethical outcomes associated with ontological and functional realities. In other words, James and Jude do not merely *describe* their brother, but they *prescribe* actions in step with an acknowledgment of their brother as the reigning Lord and eschatological Judge.

Further Research

James and Jude have much more to offer. A thorough investigation into their relationship with one another, as well as their unique relationship with their brother Jesus, has still yet to be written. As the epigraph at the beginning of this thesis stated, "A strong version of high Christology would incorporate a significant element of spirituality and ethics. Here much work remains to be done."[514]

[514] Hunsinger, "Salvator Mundi: Three Types of Christology," 52. The most notable gap in this project is the much-deserved exploration of Jude's doxology in vv. 24-25. This doxology is certainly evidence of the emerging Trinitarian and Christological beliefs of the early church.

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