

# James and Jude



JOHN PAINTER  
and  
DAVID A. deSILVA

**B**  
**Baker Academic**  
*a division of Baker Publishing Group*  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

James © 2012 by John Painter  
Jude © 2012 by David A. deSilva

Published by Baker Academic  
a division of Baker Publishing Group  
PO Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287  
www.bakeracademic.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Painter, John.

James and Jude / John Painter and David A. deSilva.

pages cm — (Paideia: commentaries on the New Testament)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8010-3634-7 (pbk.)

1. Bible. N.T. James—Commentaries. 2. Bible. N.T. Jude—Commentaries. I. DeSilva,

David Arthur. II. Title.

BS2785.53.P35 2012

227'.9107—dc23

2012022166

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12 13 14 15 16 17 18      7 6 5 4 3 2 1



For DWBR in gratitude and with thanks  
*J. P.*

In honor of N. Clayton Croy,  
a reliable friend, meticulous scholar,  
and faithful Christ-follower  
*D. A. deS.*

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## Foreword



*Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament* is a series that sets out to comment on the final form of the New Testament text in a way that pays due attention both to the cultural, literary, and theological settings in which the text took form and to the interests of the contemporary readers to whom the commentaries are addressed. This series is aimed squarely at students—including MA students in religious and theological studies programs, seminarians, and upper-division undergraduates—who have theological interests in the biblical text. Thus, the didactic aim of the series is to enable students to understand each book of the New Testament as a literary whole rooted in a particular ancient setting and related to its context within the New Testament.

The name “Paideia” (Greek for “education”) reflects (1) the instructional aim of the series—giving contemporary students a basic grounding in academic New Testament studies by guiding their engagement with New Testament texts; (2) the fact that the New Testament texts as literary unities are shaped by the educational categories and ideas (rhetorical, narratological, etc.) of their ancient writers and readers; and (3) the pedagogical aims of the texts themselves—their central aim being not simply to impart information but to form the theological convictions and moral habits of their readers.

Each commentary deals with the text in terms of larger rhetorical units; these are not verse-by-verse commentaries. This series thus stands within the stream of recent commentaries that attend to the final form of the text. Such reader-centered literary approaches are inherently more accessible to liberal arts students without extensive linguistic and historical-critical preparation than older exegetical approaches, but within the reader-centered world the sanest practitioners have paid careful attention to the extratext of the original readers, including not only these readers’ knowledge of the geography, history, and other contextual elements reflected in the text but also their ability to respond

correctly to the literary and rhetorical conventions used in the text. Paideia commentaries pay deliberate attention to this extratextual repertoire in order to highlight the ways in which the text is designed to persuade and move its readers. Each rhetorical unit is explored from three angles: (1) introductory matters; (2) tracing the train of thought or narrative or rhetorical flow of the argument; and (3) theological issues raised by the text that are of interest to the contemporary Christian. Thus, the primary focus remains on the text and not its historical context or its interpretation in the secondary literature.

Our authors represent a variety of confessional points of view: Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox. What they share, beyond being New Testament scholars of national and international repute, is a commitment to reading the biblical text as theological documents within their ancient contexts. Working within the broad parameters described here, each author brings his or her own considerable exegetical talents and deep theological commitments to the task of laying bare the interpretation of Scripture for the faith and practice of God's people everywhere.

Mikeal C. Parsons  
Charles H. Talbert

# Abbreviations



## General

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//	indicates textual parallels	i.e.	<i>id est</i> , that is
BCE	before the Common Era	Lat.	Latin
ca.	circa, approximately	<i>m.</i>	Mishnah
CE	Common Era	MS(S)	manuscript(s)
cf.	compare	n(n)	note(s)
chap(s.)	chapter(s)	no.	number
contra	in opposition to	n.s.	new series
ed.	edition, editor	NT	New Testament
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example	OT	Old Testament
Eng.	English	par.	and parallel(s)
esp.	especially	pl.	plural
ET	English translation	p(p.)	page(s)
Gk.	Greek	v(v.)	verse(s)
Heb.	Hebrew		

## Bible Texts and Versions

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ESV	English Standard Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NA <sup>26</sup>	<i>Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . Edited by Kurt Aland et al. 26th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979.
NA <sup>27</sup>	<i>Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . Edited by Barbara and Kurt Aland et al. 27th rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NLT	New Living Translation

## Abbreviations

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version
UBS <sup>2</sup>	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> . Edited by Kurt Aland et al. 2nd ed. London: United Bible Societies, 1968.
UBS <sup>3</sup>	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> . Edited by Kurt Aland et al. 3rd corrected ed. Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1983.
UBS <sup>4</sup>	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> . Edited by Barbara and Kurt Aland et al. 4th rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft / United Bible Societies, 1994.

## Ancient Corpora

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### OLD TESTAMENT

Gen.	Genesis
Exod.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus
Num.	Numbers
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1–2 Sam.	1–2 Samuel
1–2 Kings	1–2 Kings
1–2 Chron.	1–2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh.	Nehemiah
Esther	Esther
Job	Job
Ps(s).	Psalms(s)
Prov.	Proverbs
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes
Song	Song of Songs
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Lam.	Lamentations
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel
Hosea	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obad.	Obadiah
Jon.	Jonah
Mic.	Micah
Nah.	Nahum
Hab.	Habakkuk
Zeph.	Zephaniah

Hag.	Haggai
Zech.	Zechariah
Mal.	Malachi

### DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS

1–2 Esd.	1–2 Esdras
Jdt.	Judith
1–4 Macc.	1–4 Maccabees
Sir.	Sirach
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

### NEW TESTAMENT

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

DEAD SEA SCROLLS		T. <i>Ash.</i>	<i>Testament of Asher</i>
CD	<i>Damascus Document</i>	T. <i>Dan</i>	<i>Testament of Dan</i>
1QH	<i>Hodayot, or Thanksgiving Hymns</i>	T. <i>Iss.</i>	<i>Testament of Issachar</i>
1QpHab	<i>Pesher Habakkuk</i>	T. <i>Levi</i>	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
1QS	<i>Serek Hayahad, or Rule of the Community</i>	T. <i>Naph.</i>	<i>Testament of Naphtali</i>
		T. <i>Reu.</i>	<i>Testament of Reuben</i>
RABBINIC LITERATURE		APOSTOLIC FATHERS	
'Abot	'Abot	1–2 <i>Clem.</i>	1–2 <i>Clement</i>
Roš Haš.	Roš Haššanah	<i>Did.</i>	<i>Didache</i>
		<i>Herm.</i>	<i>Mand.</i>
OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA		<i>Herm. Sim.</i>	<i>Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate</i>
<i>Apoc. Ab.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Abraham</i>	<i>Herm. Vis.</i>	<i>Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude</i>
2 <i>Bar.</i>	2 <i>Baruch</i>	<i>Ign. Pol.</i>	<i>Ignatius, To Polycarp</i>
1 <i>En.</i>	1 <i>Enoch</i>	<i>Ign. Trall.</i>	<i>Ignatius, To the Trallians</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>		
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>	NAG HAMMADI CODICES	
T. <i>Ab.</i>	<i>Testament of Abraham</i>	<i>Gos. Thom.</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>

## Ancient Authors

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ANAXIMENES		DIOGENES LAERTIUS	
<i>Rhet. Alex.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Alexandrum</i>	<i>Vit.</i>	<i>Vitae philosophorum</i>
ANONYMOUS		EPICTETUS	
<i>Rhet. Her.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>	<i>Ench.</i>	<i>Enchiridion</i>
ARISTOTLE		EUSEBIUS	
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	<i>Ethica nicomachea</i>	<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicon</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetorica</i>	<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
ATHANASIUS		HESIOD	
<i>Ep. fest.</i>	<i>Epistulae festales</i>	<i>Theog.</i>	<i>Theogonia</i>
AUGUSTINE		IRENAEUS	
<i>Civ.</i>	<i>De civitate Dei</i>	<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Adversus haereses</i>
<i>Doctr. chr.</i>	<i>De doctrina christiana</i>	JEROME	
CICERO		<i>Vir. ill.</i>	<i>De viris illustribus</i>
<i>De or.</i>	<i>De oratore</i>	JOHN CHRYSOSTOM	
<i>Fin.</i>	<i>De finibus</i>	<i>Hom. Act.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Acta apostolorum</i>
<i>Nat. d.</i>	<i>De natura deorum</i>	<i>Hom. Gal.</i>	<i>Homiliae in epistulam ad Galatas commentarius</i>
CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA		<i>Paenit.</i>	<i>De paenitentia</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromata</i>		
DIO CHRYSOSTOM			
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orationes</i>		

## Abbreviations

<b>JOSEPHUS</b>		<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>	<i>Mos.</i>	<i>De vita Mosis</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>	<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De opificio mundi</i>
<i>Vita</i>	<i>Vita</i>	<i>Post.</i>	<i>De posteritate Caini</i>
		<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
<b>LUCRETIUS</b>		<i>Sobr.</i>	<i>De sobrietate</i>
<i>Rer. nat.</i>	<i>De rerum natura</i>	<i>Spec.</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus</i>
<b>ORIGEN</b>		<b>PLATO</b>	
<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i>	<i>Phaed.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Comm. Jo.</i>	<i>Commentarii in evangelium Joannis</i>	<b>QUINTILIAN</b>	
<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	<i>Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei</i>	<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutio oratoria</i>
<i>Comm. Rom.</i>	<i>Commentarii in Romanos</i>	<b>SENECA</b>	
<i>Hom. Exod.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Exodum</i>	<i>Ben.</i>	<i>De beneficiis</i>
<i>Hom. Jes. Nav.</i>	<i>In Jesu Nave homiliae xxvi</i>	<b>SOPHOCLES</b>	
<i>Hom. Lev.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Leviticum</i>	<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antigone</i>
<b>PHILO</b>		<b>TERTULLIAN</b>	
<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo</i>	<i>Cult. fem.</i>	<i>De cultu feminarum</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>De decalogo</i>		
<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod deterius potiori insidari solet</i>		

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## Modern Works, Editions, Series, and Collections

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BDAG	W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
PNPF	<i>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> . Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 2nd series. 14 vols. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca</i> . Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris: Migne, 1857–86.
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina</i> . Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris: Migne, 1844–64.

# James

*John Painter*



# Preface to James



## Orientation to Reading James and the Introduction

More than fifty years ago, as a student at Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia, I heard a sermon on James 1:17 preached by D. W. B. Robinson, then vice-principal of the college and later the archbishop of Sydney. Though I remember little of the sermon, the words of the text have remained indelibly imprinted in my mind, as are the image and the echo of D. W. B.'s distinctive enunciation of that text: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. . . ." Since that time, I have had a growing conviction that this text expresses a profound insight into the depths of the mystery of God and resonates with strands of the Jesus tradition found in the Gospels and paradoxically has the power to withstand the trials and temptations that assault believers in the world. Reflection on this text and its place in the epistle as a whole was renewed when, late in 1988, D. Moody Smith invited me to write a book on James the brother of Jesus in a series that he was editing. I was delighted to take this on, although only passing treatment of the epistle was possible. Now, in this commentary, I hope to do more justice to the theme. But this can only be comparatively so, because here we plumb the mystery of God in relation to the enigma of the world and our place in it.

The distinctive language of the epistle signals that James develops this theme in a distinctive way, though not without significant relationship to the Jesus tradition and connections and tensions with Paul. This short epistle uses sixty-three words not found elsewhere in the NT, and ten of these are first known in James. Another nineteen are found only in James and Paul, and one of these is first known in their writings. The distinctive language not found elsewhere in the NT suggests that the epistle emerges from a stream of early Christianity not well represented in the NT. The language used only

by James and Paul in the NT attests more common ground between the two than is usually acknowledged but also bears witness to significant tensions even in their use of shared distinctive language.

Already in 1892, J. B. Mayor drew attention to James's use of the Wisdom literature and the sayings of Jesus found in the traditions used by Matthew and Luke. More recent scholars have reiterated his observations. They have added little to the detail but have built much on this basis. Strong support has been given for the recognition of a connection between James and the sayings traditions in oral or written form rather than to the Gospels. The question has been raised as to whether the relationship of James to the wisdom tradition is via the wisdom of Jesus. Though the relationship to the Jesus tradition is evident, the use in James is distinctive. The evidence confirms that James uses the Jesus tradition for his own purposes and does not quote it. The vocabulary and the language of James are closer to the Jesus tradition than to the writings of Paul.

James also has a relationship to Hellenistic literature and the writings of the Greek moralists. Though James and Paul are much closer in thought than is usually recognized, the use of language in James is generally different from Paul's, and when it is the same, it is often used to assert a difference between them. This is the case with the notorious "faith and works" dispute. Though James and Paul are not as distant from each other as James implies, a significant point of difference remains even when allowance is made for their different use of the same language. Why do they use the language of faith and works differently? Why does the one give priority to faith and the other to works?

Authors construct meaning from existing pools of language. Words are like the individual pieces of a jigsaw puzzle; their meaning is discerned through seeing the way they are used in a large sample of puzzles. Not only do different speakers/authors use the same words in different and distinctive ways; the same author/speaker may use the same word in multiple ways. Further, some pieces/words are distinctive to certain puzzles. Thus, recognition of word choice and word use is important for understanding.

Whereas lack of the language of the Jesus tradition in the Letters of Paul has led scholars to question his knowledge of it, James seems to be saturated with echoes of it. Yet James belongs more to the world of Paul than to the world of Jesus. The letter is addressed to the Diaspora, and any sense of Jerusalem with its temple is entirely absent from it. From this perspective, James shares with 1 John the sense of the allure of the "world," though what the world offers is vacuous and a distortion of the reality of the gift-giving God. Yet humans are susceptible to its attraction because of a propensity to self-deception arising from desire. Here there is an overlap with Paul's treatment of desire (Rom. 7:7–8), but James is conceptually closer to 1 John than to Paul on this issue, though there too significant points of contact occur in the midst of overall differences. James does not seem Johannine in vocabulary, style, or dominant

themes, but at points overlap is evident: in the portrayal of the confrontation with the same alluring world and in a comparable understanding of God, though expressed in different language.

James emerges from a distinctive strand of early Christianity that, though not unrelated to other strands, stands alone in the NT. It stands alone because what might have been the dominant voice of its time had become an anachronism by the time the NT took canonical shape. By then a distinctive Jewish Christianity had been overwhelmed by the burgeoning church of all nations. Although the collection of Catholic Epistles, in which James was given first place, was probably a Jewish collection, it was received as a collection addressed to the church generally. Both James and 1 Peter retain their Diaspora addressees but were read allegorically as if addressed to Christians as strangers and pilgrims in an alien world. The remaining five Catholic Epistles were also probably of Jewish origin and orientation. Thus, there is a question concerning the original use of “catholic” to describe them. While “catholic” might express the perceived orientation of their address, it could be an assertion of their reception as canonical epistles, rather than remaining disputed or being rejected as heretical.

Although James stands as one of seven Jewish documents in the corpus of General (Catholic) Epistles, it stands apart from the other six despite various points of contact. Even Jude (Judas), who identifies himself as “brother of James,” is distant from James and more Pauline in form and expression. Thus James stands out even in this collection. The Johannine Epistles stand more with the Gospel of John than with the other Catholic Epistles, though the conception of the world and the problems to be faced in it is shared with James and to some extent with the other Catholic Epistles. The vision expressed in a fragmentary way in James needs to be discovered from the fragments that make up the epistle, and without too much help from other early Christian writings. Though the parts are fragmentary, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The collection of thematic units in James can be described as a gallery of diverse images that seem to hang together to produce a unified vision of life in the world in relation to God. In the process of reading, we move from *fragmentary words to a unifying vision*.

For Heidegger (1976, 312; 1979), “language is the house of Being.” Because this imagery is evocative, precise implications of meaning remain less than clear. There seems to be some connection with Heidegger’s hermeneutic involving preunderstanding and the hermeneutical circle. Words are the building blocks of meaning. Language is not only the way we communicate with others but also the way we come to understanding—whether of ourselves or of ourselves in relation to others and the world. This is true whether language is the foundation of all knowing or is the way unreflected knowing becomes conscious understanding. Words are important; they are the building blocks of meaning, and it is notable that authors have favorite, characteristic, and

distinctive word choices. That is why the quest to understand the writing of another person, in this case James, begins with the examination of the widest possible range of meanings and seeks to narrow and make precise the way a particular author uses words. Dictionaries define possibilities that need to be refined in the light of the author's particular usage.

In the case of James, the accumulation of words found exclusively in this letter in the NT, a number of which are known first in James, confronts the reader with difficulties that are masked by translation, especially since these words are used only once or twice. The difficulties are increased because our knowledge of this author is confined to five short chapters of just 1,632 words. The five chapters contain 410, 415, 285, 275, and 247 words respectively. This more or less declining chapter length does not belong to the original text, which was not divided into chapters and verses. These divisions sometimes obscure the flow of meaning in the text. On the whole, this is not a serious problem, because of the way James is composed. It does not develop a progressive argument but rather presents a series of related images or sayings that lead to a coherent vision or understanding. Nevertheless, the division between chapters 3 and 4 unhelpfully breaks up thematically related material, and the thematic break in the middle of chapter 2 is likewise obscured by the modern chapter divisions. Thus, in this commentary James is discussed in eight major divisions, not the five corresponding to the traditional chapter divisions.

My extensive introductory chapter lays out the evidence for reading the Epistle of James as a legacy of James of Jerusalem but issuing from a later time in the Diaspora and directed to the Diaspora. The attention to detail there is necessary because of the widespread failure to grasp the problems that lead to this view and the weight of the evidence on which it is based. Nevertheless, those who are anxious to get to the text of James can proceed directly to the text and interpretation, referring to the introductory discussions when so directed by a cross-reference. This is not the recommended approach, but it will work for those impatient to get to the text.

It remains only to thank Micheal Parsons for the invitation to contribute to the *Paideia* series and to thank him and Charles Talbert for their patience in waiting for the manuscript. Thanks too to James Ernest, Wells Turner, and his team for their patient help in the editorial process.

John Painter  
Charles Sturt University  
Canberra, Australia  
November 2010