

Office Hours: An Online Popup Bible Study

Hosted by Chris Holmes and Brennan Breed

The Book of James: Wisdom and the Way of Jesus

Syllabus for Summer 202
Wednesdays, August 5–September 2
7:00–8:00 p.m. (EST)

1. Course Description

This course is intended to support the online educational needs of congregations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This course provides a chapter-by-chapter exploration of the Book of James and an examination of its central theological themes.

2. Course Objectives

At the completion of the study, engaged participants will be able to describe the historical and cultural context for the Book of James, the significance of the wisdom genre for understanding James, and the importance of James in the New Testament canon. Participants will be able to reflect theologically upon the Book of James and articulate its theological significance for Christian faith, proclamation, and mission.

3. Learning Resources

Suggested:

- An academic study Bible such as *The HarperCollins Study Bible* (rev. ed.; eds. H. W. Attridge et al.; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006) or *The New Oxford Annotated Study Bible, 5th edition* (eds. M. Coogan et. al.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) or *The CEB Study Bible with Apocrypha* (ed. J. Green et. al.; Common English Bible Committee, 2013), or *The New Interpreter's Study Bible* (ed. W. Harrelson et. al.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003). While many kinds of devotional study Bibles are wonderful tools for your spiritual growth, for the purposes of this class an academic study Bible will enrich your learning by intersecting with the course material.
 - A copy of the Book of James from the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* will be provided to those who register for the class.

Web-based Resources:

- Many readings for the course will be available on the *Bible Odyssey* website and other freely available sites. Others can be found on the CTS [Sharepoint webpage](#). Individual links to articles are listed below.

Class Schedule

Background Resources:

1. The Figure of James:
 - a. “[James](#),” Matt Jackson-McCabe, *Bible Odyssey*
 - b. “[James and Paul](#),” John Painter, *Bible Odyssey*
 - c. “[Who Wrote the Book of James](#),” William Brosend, *Bible Odyssey*
2. The Book of James
 - a. John Painter, “James as the First Catholic Epistle,” *Interpretation* 60 (2006): 245–50.
 - b. Matt Jackson-McCabe, “Enduring Temptation: The Structure and Coherence of the Letter of James,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 37 (2014): 161–84.
 - c. Dr. Margaret Aymer, “[James](#)” video lecture (for intro course to New Testament)
 - d. “[Book of James](#)” introduction from the Bible Project
 - e. Chris Holmes, “[James: Before You Read Lecture](#)”
 - f. Chris Holmes, “[10 Reasons to Teach and Preach James](#)”
3. The Reception of James
 - a. Dale C. Allison, Jr., “James through the Centuries,” *American Theological Inquiry* 7 (2014): 1–23.
 - b. Timothy J. Wengert, “Building on the One Foundation with Straw: Martin Luther and the Epistle of James,” *Word & World* 35 (2015): 251–61.
 - c. James Limburg, “It’s Not Easy Being James,” *Word & World* 35 (2015): 290–97.
4. Short Commentaries on the Book of James
 - a. *The Fortress Commentary on the Bible: New Testament*
 - b. *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*
 - c. *The New Interpreter’s Bible: One Volume Commentary*

Weekly Readings:

1. **August 5:** Introduction to James and James 1: True Faith in the midst of Trials
Guest Host: Dr. Melanie (Melly) Howard, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Director of Biblical and Theological Studies at Fresno Pacific University
 - a. Suggested Primary Reading:
 - i. James 1
 - b. Suggested Secondary Reading
 - i. *True to Our Native Land*, James 1
 - ii. Holly Hearon, “To the Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora’: Faith and Faithfulness in the Letter of James,” *Biblical Research* 61 (2016): 27–45.
 - iii. Marie E. Isaacs, “Suffering in the Lives of Christians: James 1:2–19a,” *Review and Expositor* 97 (2000): 183–93.
 - c. Going Deeper:
 - i. Luke Timothy Johnson, “The Mirror of Remembrance (James 1:22–25),” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1998): 632–45.
 - d. Audio and Visual Resources:
 - i. Brennan Breed, “[James and 2 Peter](#),” *Sunday Seminary Online*

- ii. Roland Deines, “[Why Study James?](#)”

- 2. **August 12:** James 2: Justice, Faith, and Works
Guest Host: Dr. Matthew L. Skinner, Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary
 - a. Suggested Primary Reading:
 - i. James 2
 - b. Suggested Secondary Reading:
 - i. *True to Our Native Land*, James 2
 - ii. Sharyn Dowd, “Faith that Works: James 2:14–26,” *Review and Expositor* 97 (2000): 195–205.
 - iii. Joel Weaver, “The Heart of the Law: Love Your Neighbor (Jas 2:8–13),” *Review and Expositor* 108 (2011): 445–51.
 - c. Going Deeper:
 - i. LeAnn Snow Flesher, “Mercy Triumphs over Judgement: James as the Social Gospel,” *Review and Expositor* 115 (2018): 401–6.
 - d. Audio and Visual Resources:
 - i. Dale Martin, “[Arguing with Paul?](#)” *Introduction to the New Testament*, Open Yale Courses
 - ii. Craig Blomberg, “[Did Luther really want to take James out of the Bible?](#)”

- 3. **August 19:** James 3: Wise and Faithful Speech
Guest Host: Dr. Martha Moore-Keish, J.B. Green Professor of Theology, Columbia Theological Seminary
 - a. Suggested Primary Reading:
 - i. James 3
 - b. Suggested Secondary Reading:
 - i. *True to Our Native Land*, James 3
 - ii. R. Alan Culpepper, “The Power of Words and the Tests of Two Wisdoms: James 3,” *Review and Expositor* 83 (1986): 405–17.
 - iii. William E. Hulme, “Mind Your Tongue: Reflections on Christian Conversation,” *Word & World* 6 (1986): 249–55.
 - c. Going Deeper:
 - i. Dale C. Allison, Jr., “Blessing God and Cursing People: James 3:9–10,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (2011): 397–405.

- 4. **August 26:** James 4: God’s Grace and Community Ethics
Guest Host: Dr. Angela N. Parker, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Greek, McAfee School of Theology
 - a. Suggested Primary Reading:
 - i. James 4
 - b. Suggested Secondary Reading:
 - i. *True to Our Native Land*, James 4

- ii. Thomas More Garrett, OP, “The Message to the Merchants in James 4:13–17 and Its Relevance for Today,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 10 (2016): 299–315.
- iii. Toby Ziglar, “Profit or People First?: An Examination of Jas 4:13–16,” *Review and Expositor* 108 (2011): 453–458.

5. September 2: James 5: Economic Justice and Righteous Prayers

Guest Host: Dr. Raj Nadella, Samuel A. Cartledge Associate Professor of New Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary

- a. Suggested Primary Reading:
 - i. James 5
- b. Suggested Secondary Reading:
 - i. *True to Our Native Land*, James 5
 - ii. Alicia J. Batten, “Rotting Riches: Economics in the Letter of James,” *Vision* 15 (2014): 39–44.
 - iii. Frederick J. Gaiser, “Are Any among You Sick?:’ The Church’s Healing Mandate (James 5:13–20),” *Word & World* 35 (2015): 241–50.
- c. Going Deeper:
 - i. Kelsie Gayle Rodenbiker, “The Persistent Sufferer: The Exemplar of Job in the Letter of James,” *Annali di Storia dell’Esegesi* (2017): 479–96.