

Lecture 14 – James 3-5: Conventions of Rhetorical Analysis

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. James 3:1

Key Terms

Rhetorical analysis, deliberative rhetoric, proposition, reason, confirmation, embellishment, resume

Lecture Objectives

- Describe deliberative rhetoric as used in the ancient world
- Identify and describe key elements of deliberative rhetoric
- Outline key passages in James using deliberative analysis
- Describe how this rhetorical analysis helps you appreciate James' argumentation and his effectiveness in meeting his pastoral concerns

Preliminary Questions

- James has often been called the "Proverbs of the New Testament." Why do you think this happened? Is it justified? Why or why not?

James 3-5: Conventions of Rhetorical Analysis

I. Introduction

A. Thesis: Understanding the conventions of rhetoric in the ancient world helps us understand the message of James passage by passage and as a whole.

B. Rhetorical analysis

1. Helps us answer criticisms of James
 - a. Chaotic structure
 - b. Graceless legalism
 - c. Superficial morality
2. Shows that shorter units have clear, tight structure that encourages deep analysis.
 - a. James 3:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - b. James 3 does more than warn vs. sin of tongue. It diagnoses us.

C. Rhetorical analysis of James 3

1. James uses the forms of deliberative rhetoric widely known in ancient Greco-Roman world
 - a. Cicero's *Rhetorica Ad Herrenium* (See 2.18.28; 2.29.46; 4.43.56-58 for terminology and cases)
 - b. Aristotle, Anaximenes, Quintilian.
2. The Pattern
 - a. Proposition: what is to be proved
 - b. One main reason: brief explanation of causal basis for proposition
 - c. Confirm: corroboration of the reason through additional arguments
 - d. Embellish: adorning or enriching the argument after proof is established
 - e. Resume or Conclusion: brief conclusion or drawing argument together
3. Why use rhetoric:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

II. James 2 and 3 are deliberately rhetoric; James tries to persuade a course of action in the future

A. James 2:1-13

1. Proposition (v 1):
2. Reason (v 2-4):
3. Confirmation (v 5-7):
4. Embellishment:
 - a. 2:8 cites previous judgment by authorities
 - b. 2:9a: repeats the proposition
 - c. 2:9b-10 amplifies through logical argument: an enthymeme (argument with an unstated premise):
5. Resume: (James does not follow form):
 - a. Mercy triumphs over judgment, therefore act and speak like one to be judged.

B. James 2:14-26

1. Proposition:
 - a. Three rhetorical devices.
 - 1) Repetition: James repeats his proposition in 17,20,24,26
 - 2) Rhetorical questions:
 - 3) Repeated use of “profit” or “advantage” (*óphelos*).
2. Reason: Given by absurd/ironic example:
3. Confirmation (18,19): anticipates objections (per Anaximenes and Quintilian)
4. Embellishment (2:20-25): series of examples: Abraham, Rahab.
5. Resume (2:26):

C. James 3

1. Proposition (v 1a):
2. Reason (v 1b): “Because teachers will be judged more strictly.”
3. Confirmation (v 2): “We all stumble in many ways, especially in the use of tongue.”
4. Embellishment (v 3-10): several standard methods.
 - a. Simile (v 3-5a):
 - b. Amplification (v 5b-6): goal of arousing emotion:
 - c. Example (v 7-8): Tongue cannot be tamed, contrary to animals.
 - d. Corroboration (v 9-12):
5. Resume (3:13) not a traditional conclusion but a final comment.
 - a. Teachers (*didáskoloí*) and the wise (*sophías*) are overlapping groups.
 - b. If untamed tongue can produce problems of 3:13-18, a tamed one can yield benefits.

“Teachers particularly are vulnerable to failures of speech ... they speak more than others ... in public and before a frequently captive audience ... [Further] such a setting provides temptations to virtually every form of evil speech: arrogance and domination over students; anger and pettiness at contradiction or inattention; slander and meanness toward absent opponents; flattery of students for the sake of vainglory.”

III. James 3:13 - 5:6: Two Ways and The Structure of James

A. Even though we lack perfection, it is still ...

B. The issue: The cohesiveness of James

1. Theme of James: life of genuine faith in face of tests. All of James develops this. How?
2. Protestants regard 2:14-26 as the centerpiece. But James makes 3:13-4:13 his climax.

C. A review of structure and theological themes of James

1. Trials and Scripture (1:2-27)
 2. Caring for needy (2:1-26).
 3. Control of tongue (3:1-12).
 4. Control of the tongue by the teacher leads to discussion of true wisdom (being unstained by the world (3:13-4:13).
- D. True wisdom in structure of 3:13-5:6 (climax of book.)
1. The introduction contrasts two kinds of wisdom (3:13-17):
 - a. Wisdom which produces:
 - b. Wisdom which produces:
 2. A description follows (4:1-4):
 - a. Unrequited desires
 - b. Selfish requests
 - c. Two allegiances
 3. Therefore, an antithesis (4:5-6): a choice between two ways of life
 4. A summons to repentance or conversion (4:7-10)
 5. The life of envy, boasting and arrogance and oppression (4:11-5:6)
- IV. Two Wisdoms 3:13-4:10
- A. Connections: 3:13-17 connects to 3:1-12 in several ways
- B. Marks of worldly wisdom contrasted with marks of heavenly wisdom
1. Envy of worldly wisdom
 - a. Identity:
 - b. Logic of worldly wisdom
 2. Gentleness of heavenly wisdom
 - a. Lifestyle:
 - b. Humility:
 - c. _____
 3. Example: Jacky Robinson and the integration of baseball
 4. Results of worldly wisdom
 - a. (4:1)
 - b. _____
 5. Effects on prayer (4:2-3)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 6. People are spiritual adulterers (4:4,8). This is covenant language.
 - a. Having possessions vs ...
 - b. Living for ...
 - c. The antithesis: A friend of the world is an enemy of God (4:4b Gr.)
 7. The third sign of true religion: True religion is unstained from the world.
- C. Crucial difficult text of 4:5-6
1. “Do you think that the Scripture speaks in vain” (4:5a)?
 2. Two possible translations of the following:
 - a. Option #1:
 - b. Doriani interpretation:
 - c. Option #2:
 - d. Doriani interpretation:
 3. This passage seems to be a question, anticipating a negative answer, despite the absence of *mē* (a conjunction): “Does the spirit which he [God] made/ caused to dwell in us craves “toward envy” Glosses: (envies intensely (?))
 - a) The spirit (*pneuma*) is the human spirit, not Holy Spirit who is not

in context.

b) “He” = God. He made our spirits. Did he make them to be controlled by envy? Is it his plan for us, to live for envy? No! Rather, he gives grace - esp. to the humble. (Johnson 282)

c) *pròs phthónon epipothei*. The word *phthonon* (“jealousy,” “envy”) is always pejorative in New Testament or Greek literature.

1) Did God create your spirit for jealous desires?

2) Is this the God-given plan - that we be directed by envy?

4. The Gospel of James

a. God opposes _____, but gives _____.

b. Therefore repent, submit.

c. By this grace we can _____ (4:7-10).

5. So, James 3:13-4:10 portrays the need for choice between the two ways of wisdom.

D. Come to God in repentance (4:7-10)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. Challenges to the way of wisdom (4:11 - 5:6)

a. Slander (4:11 - 12)

b. Boasting (4:13 - 17)

c. Oppression (5:1 - 6)

5. Implicit Theology in 4:12 - 5:6

a. Biblical anthropology

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. Implicit theology

f. _____

g. _____

h. _____

V. The Structures of James 5:7-20 (a mirror to 4:11 – 5:6)

A. God created us to humbly come to grace. Warnings against arrogance:

1. (A) 4:11-12 Using the word to slander and judge the brother

2. (B) 4:13-17 Boasting and bragging; forgetting God’s sovereignty

3. (C) 5:1-6 Hoarding, abusing wealth, using power to condemn righteous men

4. (C) 5:7-12 Be patient; ...

5. (B) 5:13-18 Instead of making arrogant plans ...

6. (A) 5:19-20 Instead of using word to judge, use it to ...

B. 5:13-20: “Anyone among you” (*tis en humin*): four conditionals or questions and linked commands

1. If anyone suffers hardship, let him ...

2. If anyone is in good spirits, let him ...

3. If anyone is sick, let him ...

4. (Implicit) If he calls elders, let them ...

C. Topical structure of 5:13-20: four groups at prayer

1. The individual: 5:13-14

2. Elders: (over sickness) 5:14-15

3. Friends: (over sins) 5:16

4. Prophets: 5:17-18

VI. James 5:13-18 Prayer and Healing - Exposition of Main Points

A. Text could be expounded simply by asking questions

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. Main idea:

C. The scene:

1. If sick, call ...
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. Prayer is for _____; not for _____.
3. Oil and procedure
4. A major malady.
5. Yet the sick one takes ...

VII. The Hard Question: How to Proceed?

A. Nature of the problem and its spiritual import 5:15-16

1. Sickness may not be purely physical - see *astheneō* (“to be weak”); *kámnonta* (“worn out”).
 - a. 4:5:15a: If he has committed sin, it will be forgiven.
 - b. Disciples tended to over spiritualized (John 9).
 - c. In the West, we tend to de-spiritualize.
2. OT and NT connecting sin and illness. Select data
 - a. Deut 28:58-63
 - b. Ezekiel 18
 - c. John 5:14 Man at pool of Bethesda “Stop sinning or something worse will happen to you.”
 - d. 1 Cor 11:30 At Corinth “Some sick and have died due to abuse of L.S.
3. Illness gives us an opportunity for self-examination.
4. The language: The prayer of faith will save (*sōizō*) – ambiguity
 - a. Miracles performed for three reasons:
 - 1) Acts of love
 - 2) Self revelation
 - 3) Stimulation of faith.
 - b. Issue is not quality of faith. (see Mark 9:21)
 - c. But does the prayer of faith guarantee healing?
5. The Lord will raise him up (*egerei*): language of resurrection.

B. A righteous man’s prayer

1. (5:17-18) Elijah’s case.
2. Elijah was like us: weak, powerful arrayed against him, despair

C. Example from Dr. Doriani’s life

VIII. Conclusion of Epistle 5:19-20

A. Communal interest emerges again

1. Community should do same for spiritual health.
2. To return the straying brother stands in contrast to using truth to judge and slander.

B. Unites several themes of book:

1. It is a proper response to a trial
2. It is a form of kindness to a brother

3. It is a proper use of speech
4. It leads people to humble selves before Lord.

Questions / Answers

It's very difficult for A-type personalities ...; is there anything good in us? (answers by giving positive, biblical answers ...) why does the Bible say "humble yourself" rather than asking God for humility?