

# **Dr. David Bauer, Inductive Bible Study, Lecture 14, Interpretation, Historical Background, Textual Criticism, Wisdom Word Study from James 1:5**

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This is Dr. David Bower and his teaching on Inductive Bible Study. This is session 14, Interpretation, Historical Background, Textual Criticism, Wisdom Word Study from James 1:5.

We want to go ahead now and just round out this discussion of the various types of evidence. We've worked all the way through inflections and so we want to look now at historical background.

I might just say, though, before we leave inflections, just one tag on that. We talked about it; I gave an example of the noun. Let me give an example of inflections having to do with verbs.

This example also comes from Matthew chapter 16, verse 19, where Jesus says to Peter, I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. You know that this is greatly debated, what's involved here in the giving of the keys and the like, but I would note the future tense.

I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. If you take that inflection seriously, that suggests that whatever is involved in the keys, it's something that Peter and perhaps the disciples, other disciples will have, but don't yet have at this point in Matthew chapter 16. That limits very significantly the possibility of what these keys may involve.

At least the inflection suggests that whatever is involved in the keys is something that they do not yet have at this point in Matthew chapter 16 but will have in the future vis-a-vis Matthew chapter 16. All right, now, back to a historical background. There are really two levels or two aspects of historical background.

One is the historical background of the book itself. That is to say, when was it written, by whom was it written, to whom was it written, what was the occasion of writing, all this kind of thing can be, of course, very helpful in understanding what the writer is attempting to say or to do within the book. The default place to go for this kind of information is, first of all, Bible dictionaries.

Any Bible dictionary, we talked about these earlier, Bible dictionaries earlier, any Bible dictionary will have articles, of course, on the various biblical books where these background issues will be discussed. There is also a resource which is called

New Testament or Old Testament introductions. A New Testament introduction or an Old Testament introduction really deals with the historical background in some depth, with the historical background of the various books.

I do have a section on New Testament introductions in my Essential Bible Study Tools for Ministry, and we talk about some of the major ones there. The other type of historical background, though, is a historical background pertaining to things mentioned within the book. I say story here, but really, what I mean is allusions within the text, things that are mentioned within the text.

Quite often, of course, you have things mentioned within the text and the writer just assumes that the original reader would have that knowledge because, of course, that is part of the historical context. The writer and the reader share the historical context. We do not necessarily have that same kind of background knowledge, and therefore, we need to bring ourselves up to speed to have the same level of knowledge competence as the intended reader of the text.

Let me give an example or two from the parables of Jesus. In Matthew chapter 13, with regard to the parable of the soils, we read in 13:3 and 4, a sower went out to sow, and as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and then other seeds fell on rocky ground, and other seeds fell on thorny ground, and other seeds fell on good soil. Here, then, you have a method of sowing, according to which the sower has seed, probably in a bag, and just throws it with liberal abandon, and it falls on various types of soil.

Over against, testing the soil and making sure that the soil is good, and sowing seed only on good soil. This raises a question; this method of sowing here that Jesus describes in this parable raises a question as to how the method of sowing of this sower related to general methods of sowing in that historical context. Was this a typical way of sowing, or was this not? And historical context tells us that this was absolutely not a typical way of sowing.

That it was much more common, almost exclusively, sowing involved testing the soil and making sure that the seed was sown only on good soil, because, unlike today, seed was not so easy to come by. Seed was relatively expensive. You did not want to waste seed.

I remember John Nolan commenting on this issue, saying something like no farmer in his right mind would have ever thought of sowing in this fashion. So, historical background tells us that one of the really surprising things, one of the arresting things that Jesus is introducing here in this parable, is the way this sower sows. And Jesus may therefore, because this is so unusual, so different from what anyone would have expected, he may be drawing our attention to this method of sowing and saying, this is important for understanding the point of this parable.

I might say, too, with regard to the parable of the weeds, which is the next parable here in the series of parables. In Matthew 13, found in 13:24-30, he talks about an enemy, of course, sowing weeds among the wheat. But the word for weeds here is zinzania, and it refers to a specific kind of weed that was known at that time in that part of the world. And one of the characteristics of that kind of plant, that kind of weed, is that it was practically indistinguishable from wheat until the approach of harvest.

This explains why Jesus says, leave both grow together until the harvest, lest in pulling up the weeds, you pull up the wheat along with them. Another characteristic of that plant, we know on the basis of historical background, was that the root system of these weeds, the zinzania plants, became inextricably intertwined with the root system of the surrounding wheat plant. So, for that reason, it was impossible to pull out the weeds without also ripping up the wheat along with it.

By the way, historical background also tells us that among the rabbis, this kind of plant, zinzania, and the poisonous spores that it borne, was seen as a kind of metaphor for evil and the like. Again, this clarifies greatly, this historical background greatly clarifies what we have here in this story. Now, a further type of evidence is the history of the text.

This really involves historical, this involves really textual criticism. Many of you will know that the Bible was transmitted, our Bibles have been, our Bible has been transmitted throughout most of the last 2,000 years, not by the printing press, which came relatively late onto the scene, but by scribal copying. And therefore, a number of errors crept into the manuscript tradition of our New Testament.

And a whole discipline has arisen whose purpose, main purpose, is as best as possible to identify what the inspired writers actually wrote. As I say, to discern in the midst of various types of errors that might have crept into the manuscript tradition what the original wording of the text was. And you have really two types of errors here.

One is an unintentional error, and the other is an intentional error. In terms of unintentional error, these can be errors either of hearing or of sight. Sometimes, of course, when a scribe was copying a manuscript, the scribe would misread a word, or maybe would overlook a word, or the like.

So, you have errors creeping into the manuscript tradition in that way. But sometimes it was by errors of hearing because the ancient version of mass production of books was for there to be a room, a large room full of monks, with the big monk standing in the front of the room reading out the text, and all the little monks being there writing down what they heard. Sometimes, the monk did not

speak clearly, or one of the little monks did not hear quite right, and they got the word wrong.

So, you have those kinds of errors. Those are unintentional errors. If it's not an oxymoron, to put it so, there are also intentional errors.

This happened when a scribe attempted to quote, unquote, and correct the text. Certainly, Jesus could not have said that. He must have said this instead.

I will correct the text, quote, unquote. Those are intentional errors and the like. And so, a discipline has arisen, a very sophisticated one called textual criticism, which, whose purpose is, main purpose is to consider all these kinds of things, and on the basis of a sophisticated process, to determine as best we can what was the original wording of the sacred text.

Now, there is also a, and of course, this is important for interpretation because we want to make sure that the passage, the text that we are interpreting, is actually what the inspired writer actually wrote. This would give us at least significant pause in making, in interpreting as part of Mark's gospel, the so-called long ending of Mark, Mark chapter 16, verses 9 through 20, which almost certainly was produced by a scribe at the end of the first, maybe beginning of the second century, as a way of rounding out a gospel which, in his mind, ended all too abruptly there in Mark 16.8. And it's really a combination of Luke 24 and of Matthew 28 that is not original, almost certainly, we know, was not original to Mark's gospel. And you have other verses here and there, or other readings here and there, that were added by scribes, or reflect scribal error, and the like.

There is, however, a second, well, that's the main purpose, really, of textual criticism. Now, most of you will not become expert in textual criticism. It's simply important to know that you do have these kinds of things going on in the textual tradition, and to take seriously the footnotes and things like, in versions like the RSV or even the NIV, when they will make reference, you know, to textual variants and the like.

The rereading that appears in the translation, say the RSV, is the one that, according to the judgment of the translators, is most reliable, is most likely to be the wording of the original inspired author, and the like. And, of course, if you make use of commentaries, commentators will often discuss textual variants. It's just good to be aware of the issue so that you're able to understand those kinds of discussions when you run into them.

A further type of evidence would be the history of the tradition. I'm not going to spend much time with this. It really is a way of, in terms of explanation, it is really a way of saying that in some portions of our Bibles, more than others, we think especially of the Gospels, there is a history of tradition.

That is to say, there is a kind of prehistory to the final form of the text. In the Gospels, of course, you have really four levels of prehistory. One might say the historical Jesus, that is to say the deeds and teachings of Jesus as he actually walked the shores of Galilee.

You have the period of a kind of oral transmission of the Jesus tradition in the years immediately following the resurrection. The sayings of Jesus and the accounts of Jesus' deeds circulated by word of mouth, especially in teaching and preaching. And then, as the apostles and other eyewitnesses began to die off, these traditions were reduced to writing, so you have the emergence of written sources.

And then you have our final Gospels, where our evangelists actually used the traditions that were available to them, both written sources that were available to them, as well as this oral tradition that continued to circulate and form their Gospels out of this tradition in order to communicate what we consider to be the inspired message that they had to convey to their readers and the like. And that critical disciplines and critical study, have developed directed at each of these levels and the like. And that we have nothing really to fear from a legitimate, responsible use of these kinds of critical approaches.

And they're actually part, as everything is, of an inductive approach. We take this kind of thing seriously, especially insofar as the history of the tradition toward the final form of the text may, in fact, illumine the final form of the text. Now, as I said with regard to text criticism and also with regard to the history of the tradition, it's unlikely that most of you will become experts or even want to become experts in these critical disciplines.

It's just helpful to know that there is, in some parts of the Bible, a kind of history of the tradition that lies behind the text, a growth of the tradition towards what we have in our final Gospels. And this can, if used properly and carefully and responsibly, illumine, in some ways, what we have in our final text. Again, if you have access to commentaries, quite often they will bring these kinds of discussions to bear.

And you may find that helpful as you make use of commentaries. This actually, speaking of commentaries, leads to the last of these types of evidence, and that is a history of interpretation. We do think, insofar as you're able to do so, insofar as you have access to resources, it's important to make use of the interpretation of scholars.

This is usually found in commentaries. And to relate what you found in your own work, direct study of the text, with what scholars are saying. Now, I do think that, ideally, well, let me say, with regard to the choice of commentaries, what we have in mind here is the use of exegetical commentaries over against devotional commentaries on the one hand and homiletic commentaries on the other.

An exegetical commentary doesn't mean that it's necessarily hard to understand, but by exegetical commentary, we mean a commentary whose purpose is to give an interpretation of the text. Whereas, the purpose of a devotional commentary is to bring out certain devotional thoughts pertaining to the text. There's a place for those kinds of commentaries, one of the best of which, by the way, is Matthew Henry's very classic commentary.

There's a place for those kinds of commentaries, but that's not what we have in mind here. This will, that will not be particularly helpful for the kind of interpretation that we're about here. And we're talking about exegetical commentaries in contrast also to homiletic commentaries.

The purpose of a homiletic commentary is to give sermon ideas, and sometimes even sermon outlines. I'm not quite as confident about the value of homiletic commentaries as I am of devotional commentaries, but no matter what you think about the value of that kind of thing, I do think that it's very helpful for preachers actually to develop their own sermons over against getting them secondhand from someone else. But at any rate, no matter what you think of homiletic commentaries, that's not what we have in mind here, but rather exegetical commentaries.

The best type of exegetical commentary is one that sets forth the interpretation of the text by the commentator with evidence so that the commentator just doesn't give an opinion with regard to what he or she thinks this means but actually cites evidence and on the basis of evidence cited goes ahead and draws the conclusion. It's helpful, I think, if you can, to choose commentaries that represent a variety of periods of the church, not just modern, most recent commentaries, although you should always make use of those, but if possible, even commentaries from the fathers. There is a series called Ancient Christian Commentary on the Scriptures.

It's edited by Thomas Oden and it's on the whole Bible, and for every passage he will give maybe anywhere from two to five brief commentary passages from the fathers, selected from the fathers. Of course, these are highly selected commentary from the fathers, but the helpfulness is that this series makes that patristic commentary accessible to us, pretty easily accessible to us. Calvin was a great commentator.

If you can make use of the commentary from Calvin, you'll find great richness there. Luther also was, so from the Reformation period. From the early Pietistic or Puritan period, Johannes Bengel was again a great commentator and the like.

Wesley has commentary on both the Old and the New Testaments, as well as, I say, of more recent commentary and the like. The thing to keep in mind, especially when you're working with the history of interpretation here, is not simply to assume that what a commentator says is right but actually to engage in critical conversation with

the commentator, critical interaction with the commentator. How does what the commentator says relate to what you yourself have found in your own direct study of the text? Do you agree or disagree with the interpretation of this commentary? Why or why not? Because it's really out of that interaction, it's out of that conversation, that you gain greater insight into the meaning of the text.

Now, of course, it's important, as in each case, to cite the evidence from these various types of evidence, to cite the evidence, to discuss the evidence, and then to draw inferences from each piece of evidence cited, and your inference should be a possible answer to the question raised. On the base, really, a matter of saying, this evidence implies that the answer to my question is such and such. And, of course, you have to be very careful that your logic is sound as you move from evidence to interpretive conclusion.

Now, we want to look at the, we want actually to look at the interpretation, making use of these, of this method of interpretation, to look at the interpretation of a passage from the first chapter of James, specifically James 1:5. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. So, go back here, and now, so my, our question is, what is the meaning of wisdom here in 1, 5, if any of you lacks wisdom? We begin with the preliminary definition; the word in Greek is sophia. Bauer-Danker defined it as the capacity to understand and function accordingly.

Thayer defines it as wisdom, broad and full intelligence. So, what kinds of inferences can we draw from this basic, these basic definitions? Well, they imply that in terms of character, sophia implies, that this implies that wisdom involves the element of knowledge or of understanding, of thinking, really. Also, in terms of extent, it implies that wisdom involves complete or full knowledge, understanding, extensive or comprehensive knowledge or understanding.

Now, we move on to context, and everything else being equal, evidence from context is the most significant kind of evidence, so I would, I would be careful not to move away from evidence too quickly. But this is what we can say with regard to evidence from context. First of all, James refers to some of his readers who may lack wisdom, and James addresses his readers as brethren repeatedly, thus indicating Christian readership; there are a number of other indications throughout the book that James considers his readers bona fide, that is, to say, real McCoy Christians.

Therefore, this implies that the wisdom James here describes is not inherent to persons in general, nor inherent even to Christian believers. It is not a necessary or essential part of the Christian experience. In other words, he puts forth the possibility here that real Christians may lack wisdom.

Continuing whereas again with context, James emphasizes that those who lack wisdom are to ask God versus seeking this wisdom from anyone or anything else. You notice how we're making use of observations that we made in detailed observation, turning them into evidence here. James emphasizes that those who lack wisdom are to ask God versus seeking this wisdom from anyone or anything else, whereas James assures his readers that those who ask God for wisdom in the proper manner will receive wisdom from God.

Therefore, this implies that the wisdom James describes is a transcendent and divine reality, not belonging to the plane of human potential and possibility. This may also imply a distinction or contrast between human or worldly wisdom and divine wisdom. Then, continuing with evidence from context, whereas 1:5 through 8 may present the general means for the particular ends described in 1:2 through 4 and 9 through 15.

Remember, we saw from the survey and from our detailed observation the possibility that 1:5 through 8, this wisdom may be the means of fulfilling his exhortations regarding steadfastness in the midst of trials in verses 2 through 4 and verses 9 through 15. Here, I actually give support for the notion that wisdom may, in fact, function this way. I would note that the situation of lacking wisdom is apparently not determined by specific external circumstances, while the surrounding context has to do with specific external circumstances, namely facing trials and especially trials in the form of oppression from the wealthy.

Wisdom is presented here as a preeminent gift of God along with the Word and, therefore, as a preeminent requirement for meeting the specific challenges and fulfilling the specific demands of this context. All of that really supports our surmise that wisdom is the means, divinely provided means, for the readers to fulfill the exhortations that surround this passage of endurance in the midst of trials and temptations. So, whereas 1:5 through 8 may present the wisdom, maybe, in other words, the means for the particular ends of enduring well trials and temptations, and whereas the particular exhortations and descriptions throughout verses 2 through 15 involve proper response to trials. Therefore, this implies that the wisdom in 1:5 through 8 involves specifically the proper response to trials or temptations, or at least the ability to respond properly to trials or temptations, but at the same time may not be absolutely limited to the Christian's response to trials or temptations.

Now, we will go ahead then with the evidence from context and note that whereas, according to the preliminary definition, wisdom involves mental comprehension or understanding, and whereas the basis for proper response to trials in verse 3, knowing, and in verses 9 through 15 is right thinking, here we note verses 9 through 11, and the connection between enduring trials and knowing the nature and source of temptation, and whereas, the wisdom motif of 1:5 through 8 may relate directly to the contrast between being deceived and knowing, and whereas, in 3:13, wisdom is



linked to understanding, who is understanding and wise among you, therefore, all this implies that wisdom has to do with accurate knowledge and right thinking, and emphasis upon the intellect. I hope you see how the premises here, these are evidential premises from context, actually lead to this interpretive conclusion. On the other hand, whereas the ultimate concerns throughout 1.2 through 27 and the book as a whole are not right thinking but right acting, the declarations serve as a basis that leads to the exhortations.

Declarations are never made and end in themselves but always made to serve exhortations, and whereas, the epistle emphasizes the unacceptable character of right thinking apart from right actions, and here I cite various passages, you can look at them to see that that's the case, and whereas, the use of wisdom in 3:13 through 18, which we saw, of course, in the book survey, particularizes the reference to wisdom here, has to do primarily with behavior, with actions, and not with thinking, and whereas, the epistle itself conveys knowledge and right thinking so that if these were the primary content of wisdom, the readers could not, by the nature of the case, lack wisdom, they have this information, in other words, given to them in the epistle itself, and would have no need to pray for wisdom, therefore, all this evidence implies that wisdom has primarily to do with behavior, with right actions, with an emphasis upon doing, continuing the evidence from context, whereas, the preceding evidence indicates that wisdom in James may be used both of thinking and actions, and whereas, the epistle is profoundly concerned with the connection between right knowledge and right action, and here, I would note the specific character of the recurrence of causation and substantiation, the hortatory pattern throughout the book, where right ideas, right thinking, the indicative knowledge, leads to right behavior, and this whole connection is explicitly addressed in 1:22 through 25, and in 2:1, and again in 2:14 through 26, arguing that right knowledge by itself is not sufficient, but also that right action can come only through right knowledge, and whereas, lack of wisdom is seen as a violation of perfection and completeness, indicating comprehensiveness and coherence, so that lacking wisdom is to be, so lack, lack, lacking wisdom is imperfect in the sense of lacking completeness and coherence, and whereas, wisdom as a gift of God is good and perfect, that is, brings completeness, wholeness, and coherence, therefore, this implies that wisdom involves the congruence and coherence of right thinking and right action. Moreover, in 3:13 through 18, which, as we remember, particularizes this general description of wisdom in our passage, James argues for the necessary linkage between wisdom in understanding and wisdom in behavior. True wisdom must be expressed in action to be true, even as he argues elsewhere that true faith must result in works to be true. He says in 3.13, who is wise in understanding among you, by his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

This is very similar to what he has said with regard to faith and works in 2.18, but someone will say, you have faith, and I have works; show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. This implies then that wisdom

involves the congruence and coherence of right thinking and right action. So, in summary of context, this wisdom is to be divine and transcendent.

It is not inherent to human life or Christian existence. It comes from God and from God alone. As such, it reflects the nature of God.

Also, the wisdom in 1:5 through 8 may concern primarily a Christian's response to trials, but it is not absolutely limited to this. It appears to be more general. Third, wisdom may involve one, primarily right thinking, intellectual; two, primarily right acting, behavioral; or three, both right thinking and right acting, and the critical connection between the two.

Now, in terms of word usage, I've gone ahead and looked at every occurrence of the word Sophia in the New Testament, and I discuss these occurrences under evidence and then draw inferences and possible answers to our question in our passage here on the right side. Usually, Sophia in the New Testament is used in the sense of knowledge, understanding, or insight, intellectual. It is sometimes used in the sense of knowledge, even revelation, and sometimes in the sense of understanding, insight, that is to say, discernment or judgment.

This implies that the wisdom of 1:5 through 8 may involve primarily knowledge, understanding, or insight with an emphasis on the intellectual. But also, with regard to New Testament word usage, although the intellectual, the knowing element, is emphasized, sometimes there is attention to the role of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding for actions or behavior. The Inference then implies that wisdom in James 1:5 through 8 may involve some attention to the connection between knowledge or understanding and righteous behavior.

Third, often, especially in Paul, a contrast is made between human wisdom and divine wisdom. This is a favored Pauline method of distinguishing between this evil godless age, hence related to unbelief, the principalities and powers on the one hand, and the rule of Christ with emphasis upon the proclamation of the cross in the face of human rejection on the other, the one being worldly wisdom, the other divine or godly wisdom. This godly wisdom in Paul is theological in that it has to do with God's plan.

It is Christological in that it focuses upon the work of Christ, sometimes almost hypothetically, that is to say, that Christ is identified as the wisdom of God. And it is eschatological in that it involves the unveiling of the mystery, hidden for generations but finally made known in Christ. It is emphasized that this true wisdom has its source in God and persons cannot have it or understand it outside of his special gracious revelation.

Now, this implies then that the wisdom of 1:5 through 8 may involve, first, an implicit contrast between divine wisdom, wisdom that comes from God, and human or worldly wisdom, that it may involve a revelation of God's plan, especially as related to the work of Christ, his death and universal lordship. It may involve the person of Christ himself as the wisdom of God. It may involve the eschatological end time unveiling of the mystery of God, his plan for Christ in the messianic period, and that this wisdom cannot be achieved through human thinking skill or ability but only through divine revelation.

Sometimes, we note also, there is a close connection, this is continuous New Testament word usage, there is a close connection between wisdom and the Holy Spirit, but never, it seems, a complete identification. The Spirit is sometimes seen as the agent of wisdom and it may be that in Luke Acts to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with wisdom. This implies that wisdom in James 1:5 may be closely related to the Holy Spirit; in fact, it may come from the Holy Spirit.

Fifth, in the New Testament, wisdom is sometimes, though it should be relatively infrequently, though relatively infrequently related to eloquent speech or persuasive argumentation. This implies that wisdom in James 1:5 through 8 may involve eloquent speech or persuasive argumentation. Sometimes, in the New Testament, it is related to a warning not to be deceived, especially in these two passages.

By the way, those Greek words are words that appear later in James 1. So, with regard to New Testament usage and context, relating, in other words, New Testament usage and context, remember when we mentioned when you're making use of New Testament word usage, it's important to engage in a critical conversation between how the word is used in other New Testament passages and how the word is employed in your passage to identify whether it's used in essentially the same way or an essentially different way, being careful not just uncritically to dump how the word is used in every other New Testament passage into your passage. So, this is what we're doing here. There's evidence for both continuity and discontinuity between word usage and context.

We note, for one thing, there is virtually no concern in the book of James for knowledge and insight in themselves. In fact, there is a major rejection of knowledge and insight as ends in themselves in James. This relates really to numbers 1 and 2, that wisdom in James may, on the basis of New Testament word usage, involve primarily the intellectual dimension and involve some secondary attention to righteous or ethical behavior.

Also, we note that in James, there is no concern at all for the revelation of Christ as God's long-hidden mystery. In fact, very little attention to Christology in James. This relates to numbers 4 and 5 and suggests that you have significant discontinuity

between these Pauline emphases about wisdom and the portrait of wisdom in James.

This pertains, I say, to 4 and 5, that in the New Testament, wisdom often involves a revelation of God's long-hidden mystery centered upon Christ's death and universal lordship and involves the person and work of Christ as the wisdom of God. By the way, in terms of James Barr's warning against illegitimate totality transfer, note how obviously inappropriate it would be to say that when James talks about wisdom in 1:5, he's talking about the revelation of God's long-hidden mystery centered upon Christ's death and universal lordship. There's no reason in the world to think that James has that specific thing in mind here.

Also, we note that there is no concern in James for the Holy Spirit. Not that James himself was against the Holy Spirit, but he does mention the Holy Spirit in his epistle. There is certainly no explicit concern, which relates to number 7, that in the New Testament, often there's a close relationship between wisdom and the Holy Spirit.

Also, we note in the New Testament, in James, I mean, that there is no concern for eloquent speech or persuasive argument. This relates to number 8, involves in the New Testament quite often eloquent speech or persuasive argument. And in 5, James does, however, make a very explicit contrast between human wisdom and divine wisdom, which we found in the New Testament as a whole.

And he does relate wisdom to being not deceived, employing the same terms as Paul does. Therefore, James' use of wisdom is generally quite different from that of the New Testament as a whole, but does contain some common elements, and these are illumined in James by New Testament word usage. In terms of Old Testament word usage, this has to do with how Sophia is used in the Septuagint.

It's sometimes used in the sense of skill and ability, sometimes most frequently used in the sense of right behavior, life of piety. This is especially prominent in the wisdom tradition with which James shares many characteristics. It involves there the understanding of reality translated into action.

That's really, I think, the essence of wisdom in the Old Testament understanding of reality translated into action. It thus has to do with the orientation and ordering of all of life around reality. Sometimes, especially in later Judaism, as reflected in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, as well as in later portions of the Old Testament, is used hypostatically to speak of God or of the spirit of God in his activity, especially his activity in creation, but also his ongoing activity in the life of the world.

Clearly, the only one of these uses that could conceivably be reflected in James is number two. And there is a strong contextual evidence for both, A, the influence of Old Testament wisdom tradition upon James, and B, the notion that wisdom in James

involves the ordering of the whole of life around the reality of God and his revelation. This implies that wisdom in James 1:5-8 is used in the sense of right behavior that stems from an understanding of reality as God has revealed that reality.

Interpretation of others, Sophie Laws says, in terms of her conclusion, wisdom is a unifying bond producing wholeness and perfection. It involves the ground or the basis of action as well as right action itself. She cites as evidence context.

She says it's related to being perfect and complete, this business of producing wholeness and perfection being the basis of action as well as right action, the unifying bond that unifies right thinking and right action. Also, she cites context, that that's a sense of the term in 3:13-18. In word usage, she says that it is sometimes related to wisdom. So, we note that Law's use of evidence is both accurate and logical, especially from context, although her evidence from word usage is somewhat sparse and thin.

So, we draw an inference from that. So, we identify then the main possibilities that emerge from our inferences. That wisdom has to do, A, possibly with intellectual insight and understanding, or that wisdom has to do with right action, essentially behavioral, or that wisdom has to do with the ordering of all of life around reality as God has revealed it, essentially a congruence between right thinking and right actions.

So, we could call the evidence from our inferences above. I would decide based on the evidence that the possibility that has the weightiest and most evidence in its favor, and in my judgment, that would be C, so that that really is then our interpretation, the answer to the question. And here then, in a paragraph, I try to bring in really all that we have there.

At the beginning of the next segment, we will just round out the final conclusion of this interpretation of James 1:5-8.

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