

# **A word with the rich (Ja 5:1-6) - Part I<sup>1</sup>**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A word with the rich (Ja 5:1-6)**

*The rich are apostrophised by the author of the Letter of James for their disregard for and exploitation of the poor who, ironically, are the “elect” of God. A social scientific study of the apostrophe is undertaken with a view to approximating the challenge, which the author offers the rich in the face of his (the author’s) perceived imminent Parousia and its accompanying judgement. The study provides insights for the examination of the implications of the challenge of the author of James to the rich, for Christians in Nigeria, in particular, and perhaps also for Christians in Africa, in general. This part examines the gulf between the rich and the poor in the Nigerian society as well as some existing works on the problem of wealth and poverty with regard to the Letter of James.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The Letter of James is perhaps that writing in the New Testament in which the rich is most harshly condemned (Bernheim 1997:228). The condemnation is provoked by their wicked disregard for and exploitation of the poor, whom the author of James, in the spirit of the New Testament, declares as apparent heirs of the Kingdom of God. The condemnation of the rich, and wealth as such, is not treated within a pericope; it is found here and there. It is found in greater details in three pericopes, namely 1:9-11; 2:1-9 and 4:13-5:6 (Maynard-Reid 1981:132), apart from a few other isolated references to the same matter. Chapter 5:1-6, however, forms the climax of the condemnation. The author appears to have dealt with the issue in stages, holding the worst charge until last (Davids 1982:114). Efforts will be made to cover the three pericopes because they are “vitaly connected” (Boggan 1982:212) and thematically related (Hamann 1980:70; Felder 1982:81). The important

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isolated references will, as well, receive attention in the course of the investigation.

Many African nations currently witness the type of situation experienced by the “community of the wise” (Kee 1995:55-57), as the readers of the Letter of James are often referred to in NT scholarship. Unimaginable poverty co-exists with extreme abundance. The lot of the poor largely remain unattended to by the rich who also control the apparatus of governance. This essay is an attempt to approximate the mind of the author of James in order to establish his message for African Christians of today. It is, however, impossible for me to take the whole of Africa as a context of my study as this will be tantamount to speaking in dangerously general terms. It is generally inadmissible in modern scholarship to treat the whole of Africa as a unit as if there are no differences, when indeed there are glaring social, cultural and religious differences among the multi-racial peoples of the vast continent. This is, however, no attempt to deny some common grounds that exist among the various peoples. I shall be focusing on Nigeria, with the hope that our findings therein may be of use to other African Christians.

In this part, the meanings of the terms “poor” and “rich” will be considered, followed by a discussion on the context of interpretation in the Nigerian social and historical milieu. Then, a review of some scholars’ interpretations will be undertaken after which a conclusion to this part will be given.

## **2 WHAT ARE THE MEANINGS OF THE “RICH” AND THE “POOR”?**

In understanding the meanings of “poor” and “rich”, it would be necessary, firstly, to consider the dictionary meanings of the various Greek vocabularies employed by James to refer to the poor and the rich, and secondly, to consider their “linguistic collocation”, that is to say consider the lexical company that the words keep. Since the words are used in the company of other words, they may clarify their range of meanings (Malina 1987:335). “Words”, as a rule, “operate in context and receive meaning from that context” (Van der Watt). Apart from the words “poor” and “rich” appearing in a number of passages, there are also some descriptions of the conditions of the persons respectively labelled “poor” and “rich”. Both phenomena will be considered in order to have the correct meaning of the words as used in James.

First, let us consider the word “poor”. Two Greek words are employed in the texts that are translated as “poor” in the English translations of the Bible. The first one is ταπεινός (1:9), which literally means “humble, lowly”, in the sense of having a low or humble status

(Louw and Nida 1988, 87:61; Rienecker 1980:722). This word is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew word for “poor”, “without possession” (Rienecker 1980:722). Davids (1982:76) is however of the view that the word by itself does not necessarily mean “poor”, for it usually means “unimportant” in the social sense, as in 2 Corinthians 7:6,10. But in the context in which it appears in 1:9a, he believes, its meaning as “poor” is not in doubt, as it stands in parallel to πλούσιος (rich). Perhaps the poor of this category were not quite destitute but were very much economically vulnerable and could easily find themselves in the class of those who are really poor through bad harvests, taxes, increased rents and debts (Bauckham 1999:189).

The other word translated “poor” is πτωχος (2:2b) and its dictionary meaning is “poor, abject poverty, poor as a beggar” (Rienecker 1980:727). To this category belonged those who lacked economic security, were really destitute, and dangerously living below the level of subsistence. They had no property. One way by which a poor man of this category could survive was by attaching himself as a client to a patron, a very rich man (Stambaugh & David 1986:112). They were quite incapable of surviving except by begging or stealing or selling themselves into slavery (Bauckham 1999:188). Orphans and widows identified as “those in stress” in 1:27, probably belonged to this group.

In James 2:2,3 the poor man referred to is merely described by the condition of his physical appearance: εἰσέλθῃ δὲ καὶ πτωχὸς ἐν ῥυπαρᾷ ἐσθῆτι, “and a poor man in ragged clothes also comes” (TEV). From this description, it is clear that the man has undergone some unfortunate personal experiences and circumstances.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that the poor in the first century CE, when the Letter of James was issued, certainly lacked status and property. They were people of mean personality and were mainly made up of people whom the celebrated Jewish historian, Josephus, rightly describes as “a rabble of slaves and the dregs of the population” (cited in Jeremias 1969:119).

Adamson (1989:256-257) has drawn attention to the fact that most of the poor probably belonged to the Jewish *anawim*, the faithful, God-fearing Israelites, mostly poor, possibly because of their religious loyalty. These common but devout Jews, the “messianic pietists”, adopted by the Qumran community as the “congregation of the poor”, continued the simple “patriarchal-pietistic” life-style of the Old Testament, apparently in protest against the worldliness of the ruling elite. Stressing this point further in his discussion of the audience of the Letter of James, Adamson (1989:257) persuasively argues:

“While it is hard for us to gauge precisely the composition of the first congregations, yet this is what we must attempt; and when we make the effort, we find it highly probable that they were drawn from this unique group. Neither Pharisees nor Sadducees nor Zealots but the *anawim*, these simple yet deeply pious folk of the post-Exilic period shunned all political activity, fostering a growing messianic expectation. Such was the spiritual breeding of the Christian congregation found in the Epistle of James”.

From the strength of the evidence highlighted above, it is clear that to have a correct picture of the poor we cannot merely think in terms of economic situation alone. Indeed, poverty was more of a social than an economic problem as it implied not only lack of resources but also of social standing and the attendant inability to meet social requirements (Malina 1981:84-85). Neither was it a purely social issue, as is being canvassed by Malina (1993:106). Indeed, economic, social and cultural as well as religious considerations all have to be taken into account. The poor therefore were those who could not maintain their status due to circumstances beyond their control such as bad harvest, debt, being in foreign land, death (in the case of orphans and widows), burden of taxes and rents and perhaps force of religious tradition. Since material goods and social status were connected with honour, the poor who lacked the two, normally suffered loss of honour (Neyrey 1996:144). And loss of honour to the ancient Mediterranean people, according to Neyrey (1996:154), was even more serious than mere loss of wealth. Thus, the poor as presented in the Letter of James were those people who belonged to non-elite and also suffered economic need, social deprivation as well as loss of honour.

Secondly, as for “rich”, I shall now consider its dictionary meaning as well as some descriptions used in describing their condition of appearance in the Letter of James. The word “rich” is a translation of the Greek word πλούσιος (1:10; 2:5; 5:1) which is rendered “rich, wealthy, well-to-do”, in the sense of being rich (Louw and Nida 1989 57:16). In 2:2, a rich man is described as χρυσοδακτύλιος, “one with a golden ring on his finger” and in ἐσθῆτι λαμπραῶ, “shining garment”. Such descriptions, in the view of Neyrey (1996:141), are “signals of status and wealth (as the case of prodigal son, see Luke 15:22)”. Also in 4:13, the rich are described by the type of work they do and by the reward that accrues to them from such work. Thus the Greek words ἐμπορευσόμεθα, (fut. mid. ind. ἐμπορεύομαι), “to conduct business” and κερδήσομεν, (fut. act. ind. κερδαίνω), “to make a profit” are so employed. From the perspective of James, the people so described are merchants who no doubt belonged to the rich of the first century CE Palestine. When we also

consider the descriptions in 2:6-7 and 5:4-5a, the picture that is put across is that the rich became rich as a result of their covetousness, greed, avarice, wickedness, arrogance and ungodliness, or those of their ancestors (Malina 1987:357).

If we take all the above into consideration, the rich are particularly known for their amassing of surplus and the insatiable desire to have more than enough and more than every other person else. So they became rich by defrauding and eliminating others and were always out to exploit others to the extent that they became wretched and miserable. It is well known, too, that they were extremely extravagant and wasteful (Jeremias 1969:92). Indeed, the rich ranked with people who were easily blindfolded by their lust for material wealth, power and status. They were those in positions of authority and those close to them. They were generally haughty and often overstepped their social rank. Yet, the rich in the ancient Mediterranean society in which the readers of the author of the Letter of James lived, were in the estimation of the people men of honour. Honour, at any rate, was symbolised by wealth, especially as represented by land and family (Neyrey 1996:143). At the same time they were very avaricious, rapacious and oppressive. The rich, therefore, should not be considered only from the economic point of view, as in the modern world; they were people who belonged to the elite, who were of high status or honour and had a great deal of wealth, but were far from being true worshippers of the One God.

Having clarified the perception of the people of the world in which the Letter of James was issued in respect of who was rich and poor, I shall now proceed to discuss the context against which I want to examine the author of James' apostrophe against the rich. My context of interpretation, as earlier indicated, will be the social and historical situation in Nigeria, particularly in the last twenty years, characterised by the rapacity, avarice, wastefulness, arrogance, kleptomania or, better put, stealing of public funds and gross abuse of power by the elite, at the expense of the workers and the rest of the populace.

### **3 CONTEXT OF INTERPRETATION**

The condemnation of the rapacious rich by the author of James will be read against the notoriously big gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria, a country that is well blessed with numerous and highly sought-after mineral resources in the modern world. Incidentally, the world-view of modern Nigeria has some affinity with the Mediterranean world that is being studied in terms of personal social values. Wealth and poverty traditionally are not considered purely in economic terms. Material wealth in the traditional Nigerian societies is regarded as God's gift not necessarily to individuals but to the community at large; "hoarding

and profiteering at the expense of others are to be abhorred” (Nkpong 1996:192). The society at large is community-based. Each member of the community has responsibility to the community. S/he cannot afford to live her/his life the way s/he wants. Everybody is the brother’s keeper. So, the wealth of individuals is utilised to the advantage of all. Poverty is normally disdained, but those who become poor as a result of one inevitable natural disaster or the other, such as bad harvest, fire outbreak, flood, death or loss of job in the modern setting, are assisted by the community.

Individualism, as is the order of the day among US Americans (Malina 1996:38,52), is discouraged. The ordinary Nigerian is not individualistic but collectivistic. Parents do take exemption to their young children in whom they notice traits of individualism even in the modern world. The etiquette of standing by members of one’s community in times of need is inculcated into the people right from childhood. Even though it is the prayer of every family to have wealthy children, people are very mindful of sources of wealth. Wealth that is known to have derived from foul means is regarded as “blood money” and parents always warn their children to abhor such. People with such wealth do not command respect in the society. The poor are preferred to them just as many people prefer poverty with honour to wealth without honour.

With the advent of Western civilization, and its attendant advancement of science and technology into Nigeria as from the 1840s, the society became exposed to different cultures, some of which are certainly relatively more sophisticated. The traditional value systems are affected by this general change. A few individuals with the type of US American lust for material wealth, regardless of its sources, are now to be found in the society. Some individuals now go out to do outrageous things just to make money or to become wealthy. Hence some youth’s involvement in illicit drug business, armed robbery and organised fraud, while the older ones who find themselves at the corridors of power engage in, not just embezzlement of some funds, but extremely callous mass looting of the public treasury. This wicked practice was foisted on the society by the military’s incursion into power, and the attendant misrule that has left the wealthy nation seriously impoverished and the lot of the generality of the people miserable and hopeless.

The last fifteen years, prior to the coming of the current civilian administration in May 1999, were terrible years for Nigerians. The whole of the social and economic systems not only got paralysed, the welfare of the people was not attended to. Provision of social facilities not only received the least attention of the military regimes, the existing ones broke down everywhere due to neglect. Education was treated with

levity. Primary and secondary school education was unattended to, while University and other tertiary education was disdained, most likely due to the fact that University lecturers remained the only organised labour union that refused to be silent in the face of military tyranny. Schools remained closed most of the school years because teachers were on work-to-rule for either unpaid salaries or improved conditions of service, or some civil right organisations called out all workers and market women for a stay-at-home protest, or there were some other forms of protests in the streets. Transportation became a luxury, as fuel (petrol or gasoline) became a scarce commodity in a country that is one of the world's leading producers of petroleum. People queued in petrol filling stations for a week or two with no fuel to buy while they were at the same time whipped with horse-whip or soldier's belt by soldiers who were stationed at the filling stations to ensure orderliness but who had turned emergency fuel dealers.

The psyche of the people was generally traumatised, particularly with the annulment of the 1993 presidential election, after, officially releasing over fifty per cent of the results (see Adebisi 1998:147). The acclaimed winner of the election was put in jail where he died in 1998. Members of his family and associates came under persecution. His most senior wife and some of his associates were brutally murdered by agents of Government, some of whom are now standing trial in a Lagos High Court. People of his tribe came under severe persecution, which caused to many of the best brains draining to foreign countries where they have remained aliens. Not even the election of another son of theirs' as the incumbent President has encouraged them to return home; the gory experiences of the military era are probably too recent for them to forget. The Ogoni people of South-Eastern Nigeria also had a taste of the military's bitter pill. Soldiers killed scores of their illustrious sons. Among them were the play-writer and environmentalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa and his fellow eight patriots who were silently executed before the world knew what was happening. Their sin was organising their people into calling Government's attention to their over-exploited but extremely marginalised community, from where much of Nigeria petroleum is derived.

All dissenting opinions were suppressed and all trade unions were banned. Civil right organisations were dismembered, and many of their leaders being jailed without trial. Citizens lost their fundamental human rights completely. Many people lost their lands to military rulers who drove them from their houses and went ahead to demolish such houses. The lands were re-allocated to officers without alternative provision for the rightful owners, who became permanently displaced. The current civilian administration got much of such lands back in 1999, but it

cannot be said whether or not they had been returned to their rightful owners.

It must be noted that the working class, which normally constitutes the middle class in most societies, was dislodged and forced to merge with the lower class due to absolute disregard for their welfare. Aside from the poor salaries that were not always forthcoming, other emoluments of office such as leave allowances suffered. Some workers had some of such allowances written off as bad debts that “must be forgotten” and where they were even paid, it was not unusual for some heads of institutions and parastatals to put such money in fixed accounts; the interests that accrued thereof belonged to such heads. And the situation remained so for months. A daring worker who questioned such a practice was sacked if he was lucky; an unlucky one was assassinated. Workers in most cases became chronic debtors. It became difficult for many of them to maintain their tenancy, as landlords were no more willing to have civil servants and teachers, in particular, in their houses as tenants. In the face of this notorious neglect of the lot of the people, the Nigerian military leaders were daily looting public funds and taking them to foreign Western banks for safe keeping. It is also noteworthy that these looters are very arrogant and power-drunk. They parade their ill-gotten wealth with impunity. Their extravagance and conspicuous consumption have no parallel. The problems caused in these many years of military misrule, the worst of which is the bastardisation of the economy, are being painstakingly attended to by the current civilian administration, though meaningful results are still a matter of expectation.

Five of the eight military heads of state that ruled Nigeria were Muslims. Things became especially bad under the last three. The issue at stake here is not that they misruled because they were Muslims, but in reflecting on the role played by some Christians in those gloomy days of tyranny. For instance, a Chief-of-Army Staff and a Sergeant, among four people being tried now in a Lagos High Court for the murder of the wife of the acclaimed winner of the 1993 Presidential election, are Christians.

#### **4 REVIEW OF EARLIER INTERPRETATIONS**

A number of modern scholars have done some work on the problem of poverty and wealth or the poor and the rich in the Letter of James. Their interpretations generally focus on who make up the apostrophised rich in the texts of this study, as well as the application of the spirit of the apostrophe in our modern times. Some of such studies will now be examined.

Maynard-Raid (1981:184) believes that the rich in James are not exclusively members of the community. This is to say, some of them are



outsiders. He holds that James stands with the tradition of the rest of early church, which saw its mission as that of the poor, the chosen of God (181). James, to him, does not envision any hope for the rich, but judgement and damnation; they must weep and howl (224). There is no hope, because, like the rest of the early Christians, James holds the view of an imminent Parousia of Jesus (257-259).

Martin (1982:22) in his commentary argues that not all the rich are like those apostrophised by James. James only thinks that vast majorities are. He, however, agrees that many that have wealth and power are easily susceptible to the temptation of having a sense of false security. All he seems to be saying is that not all the rich are under condemnation but “those who draw a sense of security from their wealth and who use their position and power for selfish ends”.

In his own contribution Boggan (1982:213-214, 273) argues that the *Sitz im Leben* of James is the hoarding of wealth and possessions by some members of the Jacobean community. From that premise, he goes on to contend that the rich that are apostrophised must be Christians. In the Christian spirit, he concludes, James offers his readers, that is the rich that are apostrophized, the challenge to make use of their wealth wisely, which is to assist the poor who are, in James’ verdict, “orphans and widows in trouble” (207) as a way of atonement (224).

Laws (1980:190) contends that James will be familiar with the rich he apostrophises, but she rejects the idea that they are members of the Jacobean community. According to her, apostrophe is on the rich because of the indulgent lives that their riches enable them to live (195). She argues that there is a connection between riches and unrighteousness (197). Against the idea that James is accusing known rich persons of a known crime, she interjects: “[it] is, however, more probable that he reiterates a typical accusation against the rich as a class, and one that shows them to be in contravention of the law of God” (202). The theme, in her view, reflects a real concern of the author of James himself, as he does not idealise poverty and is clearly against the rich as a class (9).

Davids (1982:46) is in agreement with Laws that the rich as apostrophised in 5:1-6 are not Christians. He believes that they are enemies of the church. He, nevertheless, agrees that there are rich members within the Jacobean community. According to him, James believes that the poor have a very important place in the church because of the levelling effect of the Christian gospel. Thus he concludes that true faith has no place for the social distinctions of this world (105).

Adamson (1989:ix) observes that James seems to encourage class struggle by setting the poor at odds with the rich. In his view, neither James nor the early church is Marxist (231). James does not necessarily

share the radical anti-rich philosophy of the zealots, but is mainly concerned with “the moral danger of wealth, the sins to which the lust for it leads, the power of oppression that it gives, and that wealth belongs to another, ‘Mammon’, who belongs to someone else, Satan” (232). He is in agreement with Davids (1982:46) that James’ audience is made up of both the poor and the rich and that the apostrophised rich are unbelievers. That is why, according to him, James does not waste words calling them to repentance (230).

In his contribution, Bernheim (1997:232) believes that James’ apostrophe “extends to all the rich” - inside and outside the Jacobean community. In his words: “[t]he attitude of the author towards rich and poor is certainly influenced by the tradition of the poor of Israel and by the words of Jesus as they are handed down in the Beatitudes of Matthew and Luke” (233). He is also of the view that the rich often come under condemnation when they have got their wealth through dishonest means or when they use their wealth to oppress or humiliate the poor (229).

Watson (1997:549) holds the opinion that, although the readers of James are believers, the apostrophised rich that persecute them are members of a Jewish congregation attached to the local synagogue who as outsiders oppress the poor members of the Christian congregation. Dismissing the debate on the identity of the condemned rich, Watson advises that attention should be placed on the ultimate importance of the apostrophe. Apparently influenced by T B Cargal’s theory of Greimasian structural semiotics, he concludes that the exhortations of James are to encourage the repentance and restoration of all immature believers who are scattered from the truth wherever they are found in order to guide them back into homeland, the eschatological reign of God (551).

Hamann’s (1980) major contribution seems to be in the application of James’ apostrophe in the modern society. He doubts its applicability in the affluent countries of the present-day West. His reason is that there are no poor people in the West. In his words: “[r]eal poverty does not exist in Australia, for instance - or are we to define a rich man as a person who has two cars instead of one, or who makes \$20 000 a year instead of \$8 000? Even the really poor, the sick, both physically and mentally, are well catered for by social welfare programs” (73). According to him, “[t]he poorest man today, who still has a salary or pension, is far richer than the richest man James ever got in touch with or heard about” (73). He argues further that James’ position should not be taken as an invitation for the rich countries of the world to help the poorer nations; at best it could imply individual rich people in rich countries sending relief materials to individual poor people in poor

nations of the world (73). His approach only relativises and trivialises the issue of poverty and wealth and that is to sweep the severity of the condition being addressed by James under carpet. The issue involved will be missed if it is not viewed from the absolute sense.

Wall (1997:14) no doubt agrees with Watson that the condemned rich are outsiders, perhaps members of a local synagogue. He seems to understand James as saying that the conflict among people and between people and God is economic, the result of seeking after material gains rather than God's will (245). He goes further than all earlier scholars by relating the exhortations of James to his North American society. In his view the lust for material gains at the expense of God is the order of the day among his fellow countrymen, whom he calls to repentance. In his words: "[for] the North American middle-class white, which includes myself and most of my students, the words of James sound a prophetic note, sharply critical of business-as-usual values and often inviting our repentance" (2).

In a very recent study on James, Bauckham (1999:198) tries to apply much of the exhortations of James to the problem of poverty in many countries of the world vis-à-vis extreme wealth in the Western world today. He insists that the issue cannot be spiritualised, as real poverty and God's concern for the amelioration of the bad position of the poor will be lost. James, he believes, is clearly speaking of economic poverty and wealth. In order to properly drum home his point on the exhortation of James on poverty and wealth, Bauckham (30,35) digs into the literary roots of James. According to him, James is a paradigm of the Jewish literature of the class of Job and Ecclesiastes. Paradigm works, in his opinion, seek to give instruction in the right way to live and do employ short aphorisms like proverbs, admonitions or precepts, designed to crystallise points in striking and memorable ways. With regard to the affluent West in relation to the rest of the world, he has this to say: "[t]he illusions of affluence are virtually the religion of contemporary Western society. Its spiritual malaise cannot be cured without profound and practical attention to the destitute" (190). He observes further that a change of attitude is necessary, because James' condemnation of the rich, like that of Jesus, is a call for the change of the status quo, it is a call to the effect that solidarity with the poor should replace hierarchy and status (102). A good way of moving towards economic justice in the world today is through social promotion of value (198).

From the foregoing review of relevant literature, it is clear that opinions of scholars vary on the identity of the rich apostrophised in James. What is generally believed by all is that wealth that is not properly acquired, or that is used to the disadvantage of the poor, is

ruinous. It is also clear that the problem of poverty is more of concern to the developing countries of the world, such as African countries. While the objectivity of scholars like Wall and Bauckham in acknowledging poverty as a global problem is appreciated, their approach is too generalised that it lacks specificity. Hamann's honesty is appreciated, too. I, however, disagree with how he relativises the issue of poverty and wealth. His claims, as a matter of fact, in most parts, merely trivialise an all-important issue. Any objective study on the rich and the poor in whatever context, should not merely relativise but should also absolutise it. Since poverty is a problem of the developing countries in the main, the quest for a more humane, "fair" economic system that will bridge the present extremely unjust and wicked gap between the poor and the rich, in all forms they are found, must be championed by those who feel it. "He who feels it knows it".

## 5 CONCLUSION

It is clear that the terms "poor" and "rich" as used by the author of the Letter of James and as understood among the first Christians of the first century CE do not precisely mean the same thing that they connote in our modern times. The rich in the Letter of James essentially were the elite and their associates, while the poor were the non-elite. It, however, remains indisputable that the rich were the privileged in the society, while the poor were the less privileged. Put differently in the modern Marxist jargons, the rich were the "oppressors" and the poor the "oppressed". But while the poor eagerly sought for the βασιλεία του Θεου, the rich were enmeshed in worshipping "Mammon".

The survey of earlier works reveals the tendency to relativise the problem of wealth and poverty in the NT scholarship. That attitude is a product of the fact that NT scholarship is dominated by scholars from the advantaged countries where poverty does not pose major problem. My considered view is that to relativise the issue of wealth and poverty is to do injustice to the spirit of the author of James who considered it a real problem in his community. It is also a disservice to humanity, as poverty remains a threat to the wellbeing of most inhabitants of the Third-World countries such as Nigeria and other African countries. Since "he who feels it knows it", the clarion call for a consideration of the issue of wealth and poverty in NT scholarship has to be championed by scholars from the Third-World countries (an issue further argued in Part II of this essay).

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