

**"THE EPISTLE OF JAMES"**

**Talk the Talk but Walk the Walk**

**Turning Trials Into Triumph (James1:2-8)**

"Pasha Vayera- And he went Out"

James 1:13

Temptation

D. Temptation is inevitable, yet not from God.

1. Understand the process -- 1:16
  - A. Conception of Sin
  - B. Birth of Sin
  - C. Death by Sin
2. Only good comes from God, including salvation -- 1:17-18
  - A. Conception of Good
  - B. Birth of Good
  - C. Life of Good

Psaha – Vayetzi-And he went out

OT Gen

**17**So Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives on camels. **18**He drove away all his livestock, all his property that he had gained, the livestock in his possession that he had acquired in(CA) Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. **19**Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole her father's(CB) household gods. **20**And Jacob tricked<sup>u</sup> Laban the Aramean, by not telling him that he intended to flee. **21**He fled with all that he had and arose and crossed the(CC) Euphrates, and(CD) set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.

**22**When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, **23**he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead. **24**But God came to Laban the Aramean(CE) in a dream by night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob,(CF) either good or bad."

**25**And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead. **26**And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have(CG) tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword? **27**Why did you flee secretly(CH) and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre?**28**And why did you not permit me(CI) to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly.**29**It is(CJ) in my power to do you harm. But the(CK) God of your<sup>y</sup> father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob,(CL) either good or bad.'**30**And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but why did you(CM) steal my gods?" **31**Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. **32**(CN) Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

**33**So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two female servants, but he did not find them. And he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's. **34**Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the camel's saddle and sat on them. Laban felt all about the tent, but did not find them. **35**And she said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot(CO) rise before you, for the way of women is upon me." So he searched but did not find the household gods.

Haf-torah

### Hosea 12:12-13:1-4 (English Standard Version)

12<sup>(A)</sup> Jacob fled to the land of Aram; □ there Israel<sup>(B)</sup> served for a wife, □ and for a wife he guarded sheep. □ 13By<sup>(C)</sup> a prophet<sup>(D)</sup> the LORD brought Israel up from Egypt, □ and by a prophet he was guarded. □ 14<sup>(E)</sup> Ephraim has given bitter provocation; □ so his Lord<sup>(F)</sup> will leave his bloodguilt on him □ <sup>(G)</sup> and will repay him for his disgraceful deeds.

### Hosea 13

1When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling;  
(H) he was exalted in Israel,  
but he incurred guilt(I) through Baal and died.

2And now they sin more and more,  
and(J) make for themselves metal images,  
idols skillfully made of their silver,  
(K) all of them the work of craftsmen.

It is said of them,

"Those who offer human sacrifice(L) kiss calves!"

3Therefore they shall be<sup>(M)</sup> like the morning mist  
or<sup>(N)</sup> like the dew that goes early away,  
<sup>(O)</sup> like the chaff that swirls from the threshing floor  
or like smoke from a window.

4But<sup>(P)</sup> I am the LORD your God □ from the land of Egypt; □ <sup>(Q)</sup> you know no God but me, □ and<sup>(R)</sup> besides me there is no savior.

Nt

James 1:13-18

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15Then desire<sup>(X)</sup> when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and<sup>(Y)</sup> sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

16Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17<sup>(Z)</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from<sup>(AA)</sup> the Father of lights<sup>(AB)</sup> with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.<sup>(d)</sup> 18<sup>(AC)</sup> Of his own will he<sup>(AD)</sup> brought us forth by the word of truth,<sup>(AE)</sup> that we should be a kind of<sup>(AF)</sup> firstfruits of his creatures.

### I Intro:

Jacob's painful lessons cause him to become more deliberate in his faithfulness. The last problematic episode of this whole saga is the "get me out of here at any cost," attitude. God appears to Jacob (Gen. 31) and says it is time to go, given the deteriorating circumstances and Laban's anger at what he felt was Jacob's deception of him regarding the gathering of the flock, (making Jacob a wealthy man):

*"Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan." (Genesis 31:17-18)*

It is not till three days latter that Laban even knows they left, not having a chance to say good bye to his daughters or grandchildren. When he catches up with them all that seems to concern him is his household idol which is missing. Jacob makes peace with Laban who in the end wishes his family well.

Think of all the nastiness, deceit, manipulation and anger. There were no happy goodbyes or tearful embraces, but only cutting their losses, praying nobody gets hurt and hoping for the best. What a terrible way to end a 20 year relationship, or for children to leave their parents. You see that was the world in which Jacob found himself because he made some really bad judgment calls against his brother and father. God's grace and promises won the day, but Jacob had to learn painful lessons along the way. God uses flawed people just like Jacob, so that we should not kid ourselves and think that painful lessons are not lying in wait for us either. Our choices have the potential to create havoc for us or those around us. It was later on Jacob wrestled with God and was worthy to be called "Israel" despite himself. Most of us want to be worthy of God. May our lessons yield a result that serves us well also

This week's message is about choices we make in our walk

- It is Faith vs Works
- It is listening vs doing
- it is doing good vs doing evil
- it is about being tested and as well as being tempted

*Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him*

### **Temptation**

D. Temptation is inevitable, yet not from God.

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. One of the greatest challenges of living the Christian life is dealing with "temptations"
2. This is especially true for new Christians:
  - a. For it can be frustrating to know that your sins have been forgiven...
  - b. ...only to immediately find yourself bombarded by temptations to continue in your sins
3. In [Jm 1:12-18](#), we find helpful words for the Christian in the form of:
  - a. A PROMISE to those who endure temptations
  - b. A CAUTION not to wrongfully impugn the source of those temptations
  - c. AN UNDERSTANDING of how sin develops

[As we begin with **verse 12**, we notice...]

## **I. THE PROMISE (12)**

### **A. THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION WILL BE "BLESSED" ...**

1. The Greek word for "blessed" is "**makarios**"
2. Which means "happy, blessed"
3. The nature of the happiness enjoyed is described as the verse continues...

### **B. FOR AFTER HE HAS BEEN "PROVED" HE WILL RECEIVE "THE CROWN OF LIFE" ...**

1. The promise is that of "eternal life"
2. The promise is given by Him Who cannot lie - cf. [Tit 1:2](#)
3. The promise is given to those who "demonstrate" (prove) their love for God by their endurance of the temptations

[And so, to Christians facing temptations, first we have an ENCOURAGING word. As we read on, though, we notice a word of CAUTION...]

#### The Truth About Temptation

In Jewish thought there were many ideas concerning the source of temptation. Some said it started with Satan, or fallen angels were responsible. Some even argued that since God was the Creator of all things, that God must be responsible for evil. Draper notes, 'Testing and temptation are not necessarily the same thing. A trial is not necessarily an enticement to do evil. And yet we need to recognize that in every test of our faith, in every trial of our lives, in every pressure that we experience, there is an element of temptation. It contains, for example, an opportunity to become bitter or resentful, or to let animosity and hatred build.' (p. 39)

'The Christian life is not always the tranquil experience that is commonly expected. Believers are not less subject to trouble and calamity than are other people. They are often part of a minority, and this can provide special pressures. Their physical bodies are just as susceptible to disease or injury as their neighbors'. Their houses catch fire, their possessions are stolen, their jobs are lost, and their families are threatened....Another kind of trouble, however, is more subtle and is often more difficult to handle. This is the problem of evil thoughts, tendencies to sin, feelings of guilt and discouragement....Every person has such temptations, and Christians are not immune. Some have tried to escape the problem by associating only with other Christians, or even by withdrawing totally from the world into some monastic setting, however, those who are perceptive and honest will admit their sinful thoughts went right along with them.' (Kent pp. 47-48)

Last week we understood the idea of tests:

Test: *dokimē*

- 1) proving, trial
- 2) approved, tried character
- 3) a proof, a specimen of tried worth

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

This week we will see the idea of Temptations

verb  
*peirazō*

6:23,822

[View Entry](#)

*pā-rā'-zō* (Key) □

From *πειρά* (G3984)

- o try whether a thing can be done
- o attempt, endeavour
- o try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quantity, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself
- n a good sense
- n a bad sense, to test one maliciously, craftily to put to the proof his feelings or judgments
- o try or test one's faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin
- o solicit to sin, to tempt
- f the temptations of the devil
- fter the OT usage
- f God: to inflict evils upon one in order to prove his character and the steadfastness of his faith
- nen are said to tempt God by exhibitions of distrust, as though they wished to try whether he is not justly distrusted
- y impious or wicked conduct to test God's justice and patience, and to challenge him, as it were to give proof of his perfections.

[View this word in Trench's *Synonyms* [here](#).]

AV — tempt 29, try 4, tempter 2, prove 1, assay 1, examine 1, go about 1

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decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

## II Sermon

This week's passage reminds us the realities of life

- A. We will all be tested
- B. We will all be tempted

The question isn't IF, but How do we respond when it happens

If we were to look for underlying themes in this week's Torah reading, one would certainly be deceit. Lavan cheats Yaakov by replacing Rachel with Leah. Later, Lavan acts with duplicity by continually changing Yaakov's wages. Then, Yaakov tries his hand at deceit by sneaking away from Lavan without as much as a "goodbye," at the end of a twenty-year stay. (And while we're mentioning it, let's not forget Yaakov and Rivka's ploy from last week's parsha of deceiving Yitzchak for the blessings.)

As is the case with so much in the Torah, one needs to look a bit more behind the simple external reading to understand the lessons being taught. Through the eyes of our Sages, we see that Lavan's lies and deceit were for his own benefit. His approach in life was like the Mafioso who robs you of everything you own and then declares, with enough insincerity to curdle your intestines, "What!?! Me? Would I ever hurt you? You're my best friend." His name is Lavan. It means white in Hebrew. He's Mr. Squeaky Clean. If you don't catch him red-handed, then he didn't do it.

### 1. Understand the process -- 1:16

- A. The conception of temptation=EVIL

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. **14**But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (James 1:13-14)*

*"But G-d came to Lavan the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him, 'Beware lest you speak with Yaakov (Jacob) either good or bad.'...And Lavan awoke early in the morning; he kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them, then Lavan **went and returned to his place.**" (Beraishis/Genesis 31:24; 32:1)*

- b. **Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed:** God doesn't tempt us. Instead, temptation comes when we are **drawn away** by our own fleshly **desires** and **enticed** - with the world and the devil providing the enticement.

- i. Satan certainly tempts us. But the only reason temptation has a hook in us is because of our own fallen nature, which corrupts our God-given **desires**. We often give Satan too much credit for his tempting powers, and fail to recognize that we

are **drawn away by our own desires.**

ii. Some who like to emphasize the sovereignty of God say that God is responsible for all things. But God is never responsible for man's sin damnation. "When Scripture ascribes blindness or hardness of heart to God, it does not assign to him the beginning of the blindness, nor does it make him the author of sin, so as to ascribe to him the blame." (Calvin) Calvin also wrote, "Scripture asserts that the reprobate are delivered up to depraved lusts; but is it because the Lord depraves or corrupts their hearts? By no means; for their hearts are subjected to depraved lusts, because they are already corrupt and vicious." God is never the responsible for the sin or damnation of any man

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1) notes that Lavan's return to his "place" is not simply a geographic reference; it speaks to his psychological return to his long-held corrupt values. Even though he experienced a personal Divine revelation, the experience did nothing to improve his character or impact him in the slightest. How could such a profound experience simply fail to sway him?

Lavan appreciated that as G-d instructed him not to perpetrate evil toward Yaakov, He neither actively withheld Lavan's freedom of choice nor prevented him from taking any specific action. **Ultimately, Lavan retained his power to decide for himself. And while he chose to follow this particular Divine directive, his deeper understanding of his freedom to pursue evil prevented this experience,** great as it was, from making any impression.

There are two thoughts that eternally run through the minds of most: "**Why must there be evil in the world?**" and "I would be a better person if only G-d would express clearly what to do with my life". G-d created evil because it is only through evil that creation has purpose: without it there is no "choice" in the world, no reason to want to do anything but fulfill G-d's will. But such service would be empty and devoid of meaning. G-d's essential expression of kindness in creation is His allowance for us to foster a relationship with Him and grow in our G-d consciousness through having this RELATIONSHIP

#### **avot**

*"He [Rabban Yochanan] said to them [his students]: Go out and see which is a bad way which a person should avoid. R. Eliezer said: A bad eye. R. Yehoshua said: A bad friend. R. Yossi said: A bad neighbor. R. Shimon said: One who borrows and does not pay back. One who borrows from a person is as one who borrows from G-d, as it says, 'A wicked person borrows and does not repay, but the Righteous One is gracious and gives' (Psalms 37:21). R. Elazar said: A bad heart. He said to them: I prefer the words of Elazar ben (son of) Arach over your words, for included in his words are your words."*

#### **Point To Note:**

In view of the above statement, certain conclusions must be made. Since Jesus is God (John 1:1), it is also clear that Jesus never tempts anyone and there is nothing in Jesus which would respond to evil. Which means that when the Bible says that Jesus was tempted, it doesn't mean that there was something in Jesus which would respond to sin. It doesn't mean that Jesus was often on the verge of yielding to sin (Hebrews 2:18; 4:14-16). When the text says that Jesus was tempted, it is clear that all the various trials which come upon all men generally, fell upon Jesus, but there was nothing in the nature of Jesus which responded to any of those temptations. Some seem to think that since Jesus had a physical body that such made Him more vulnerable to evil. But there is nothing evil about our physical bodies, and temptation arises in the mind, not the body (Mark 7:20-23). In addition, I would think that absolute and unlimited power would be a greater "temptation" to someone who could be enticed to sin-then a physical body.□□

**1:14 'But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.'**

'is tempted'-Obviously, the word "tempted" here means to be enticed to sin. Carefully note that the idea of entire sanctification wherein one rises above the possibilities of sin by the eradication of evil tendency in himself is false. In this life, the Christian never rises above the possibility of being tempted (1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 John 1:8).

'carried away'-to lure forth' (Thayer p. 222); 'as in hunting or fishing game is lured from its haunt' (Vine p. 337); 'drag away, taken in two by his own desires' (Arndt p. 274)

'and enticed'-to lure by a bait' (Vine p. 36). 'Temptation is the pull of man's own evil thoughts and wishes' (Draper p. 41) These two words "carried away", "and enticed" are hunting and fishing terms. 'one can visualize the fish being first aroused from its original place of safety and repose, and then being lured to the bait that hides the fatal hook.' (Kent p. 51)

'by his own lust'-Man is not enticed by Adam's sin or the sin of his parents, but rather, his own lusts. Man does not sin due to circumstances, determinism, fate, predestination, natural forces beyond his control, inherited factors or the whim of various deities.

***Points To Note:***

1. But someone may argue, 'How can God blame me for yielding to lusts which God created in me?' 2. The truth of the matter is that God made us with desires, pure and noble, but we are the ones who take those wholesome desires and turn them into selfish demands. God didn't create us with evil desires, rather whatever evil desires are presently within us are of our own making, the result of twisting legitimate desires, of creating false needs. Carefully note that our body isn't the source of sin, but rather, the origin is found in our own evil thoughts (Mark 7:20-23).

**B. The Birth of Sin**

15 Then desire<sup>X</sup> when it has conceived gives birth to sin.

***Points To Note:***

1:15 'Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.'

'when lust has conceived'-'The will yields to lust and conception takes place' (Robertson p. 18). 'sin occurs following the arousing of sinful desires and the attraction to some tempting lure.' (Kent p. 51)

c. **When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin:** Springing forth from corrupt **desire** is **sin**. Springing forth from **sin** is **death**. This progression to death is an inevitable result that Satan always tries to hide from us, but we should never be deceived about.

***Point To Note:***

Various writers have noted that James seems to place a gap between lust and sin, that the moment an evil thought enters your mind, doesn't mean that you have right then and there sinned. Woods notes, 'James does not affirm that sin sprang into life at the moment desire was experienced...it is impossible to purge our minds of fleeting desires, improper thoughts, and questionable ideas.... We must, when such occur,

rigidly exclude them, and never harbor and entertain them.' (p. 61) Some have said that while you can't stop evil thoughts from entering your mind, you do have control as to whether or not you will dwell upon those thoughts. Such things must be resisted (2 Timothy 2:22), we must work on having our minds and thoughts in subjection to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8). A good illustration is that while you can't stop the birds from flying over your head you can certainly prevent them from building a nest in your hair. All of these are good thoughts. But, we need to warn people that God doesn't tell us what the "time frame" is between lust and sin. In certain situations, it may be very short! And the line between the evil desire and the point of sin might be thin. Jesus pointed out that evil deeds are the result of evil desires (Mark 7:20-23). And He rebuked people for having or dwelling upon sinful desires (Matthew 5:28; 5:22). In view of these last two passages I think most would agree that while the initial evil thought might not be viewed as sin, a lust upon which one dwells is sin.

'when sin is accomplished'-'when it has run its course' (Arndt p. 101); 'to perfect, to bring to maturity, to become "full-grown", the full development of sin.' (Vine p. 101) James is not saying that a some sins or sin at a certain level doesn't result in spiritual death. Rather, sin does develop, and again, this process can be very rapid and quick. In Matthew 5:28 we see sin at a certain stage, still within the mind. There is a warning here and that is that sin will grow. Unchecked, lusts will break out into action and evil deeds.

### C. Sin brings death

#### Romans 3:16 The wages of sin is death

C Satan's great strategy in temptation is to convince us that the pursuit of our corrupt desires will somehow produce life and goodness for us. If we remembered that Satan only comes *to steal, and to kill, and to destroy* (John 10:10), then we would resist the deceptions of temptation more easily.

'bringeth forth death'-(Romans 6:16,21,23; 2 Cor. 7:10; 1 John 5:16,20). 1. If sin is not repented of, if lustful thoughts are not checked, such will always result in spiritual death! 2. Sin, uncontrolled and unrestrained and allowed to run its natural course will always result in separation from God, and if one dies in that condition, eternal separation from God. Carefully note that this warning was given to Christians! Christians can sin and they can so sin as to forfeit their salvation (James 5:19-20). James is not teaching that sin separates us from God only when it has done all the damage it can accomplish. Because even evil thoughts can defile a man (Mark 7:20-23). There is a warning here. If we refuse to check an evil thought which enters our mind--we already know the outcome! We will always pay a high price for being spiritually slack. Carefully note, that people end up separated from God, not because of the sins of others, but because of their own choice in yielding to sin. The good news is that since sin is our fault, it also means that we can do something about it! We can short-circuit the process! (Philippians 4:8)□

#### 1:16 'Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren'.

**'Do not be deceived'-'make no mistake' (Arndt p. 665). It includes the idea of deceiving yourself. Christians are often warned against being deceived (1 Cor. 6:9; 15:33; Galatians 6:7). 'Make no mistake about this' (Mof).**

'my beloved brethren'-Notice the combination of pointed teaching, of warning and admonition, with an intense love for these people (2 Timothy 2:24-25).

**Points To Note:**

Verse 16 is a transition verse between 1:13-15 and 1:17. 'God cannot be the author of temptation, which thus leads to sin and death, because all good and perfect gifts, and these only, come from Him.' (P.P. Comm. p. 4) 2. Anyone who allows themselves to be convinced that somehow someone or something else is to blame for their sins, is walking right into a falsehood. 3. 'Only good comes from God; all good originates with God. Don't be deceived into thinking there can be anything fulfilling, anything worthwhile, anything good or proper anywhere else but with God.' (Draper p. 45) 4. But the verse infers that even Christians can be deceived. The Calvinistic idea that God makes sure that the predestined always make the right choices, runs counter to this verse. 'This command is no less valid for every modern reader. Our efforts to blame environment, poverty, bad luck, circumstances, or our humanness (which comes from God) have not enabled us to solve our sin problem. The reason is told to us by James: we have deceived ourselves by looking in the wrong direction.' (Kent p.54)

□

**2. Only good comes from God, including salvation -- 1:17-18**

A. Conception of Good

1:17 'Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.'

'Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift'-'Every beneficent gift and every perfect present' (Ber). "Good"-useful, being good in its character or constitution, beneficial in its effect. 'Fit, capable, useful' (Arndt p. 2)

'perfect'-complete or without defect. In addition, this also could mean that what God gives us, is perfectly suited for us and the stage in our life when it is given. 'appropriately suited to the person or the occasion. It is all that the gift should be.' (Kent p. 55)

3. (17-18) God's goodness stands in contrast to the temptations we face.

**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.**

a. **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above:** From our own fallen natures and from those who would entice us, we expect no true goodness. But **every good and every perfect gift** comes from God the Father in heaven.

i. Of course, the ultimate goodness of any gift must be measured on an eternal scale. Something that may seem to be only good (such as winning a lottery) may in fact be turned to our destruction.

**Point To Note:** But do we really believe this assertion? How many Christians are still convinced that there is "good" outside of what God allows or gives? How many think that God and His way of doing things actually prevents us from receiving good things? In view of such a statement how can any of us ever claim that we don't have everything we need to live happy and productive lives? Do you believe that God is taking good care of you, do you believe that every good thing you enjoy, comes ultimately from God?

## B. Birth of Good

b. **With whom there is no variation or shadow of turning:** God's goodness is constant. There is **no variation** with Him. Instead of shadows, God is **the Father of lights**. In the ancient Greek grammar, James actually wrote "**the Father of *the* lights.**" The specific **lights** are the celestial bodies that light up the sky, both day and night. The sun, moon, and stars never "turn off," even when we can't see them. Even so, there is never a **shadow** with God

## C. Life of Good

c. **Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures:** We can see God's goodness in our salvation, as He initiated our salvation **of His own will**, and **brought us forth** to spiritual life by His **word of truth**, that we might be to His glory as **firstfruits** of His harvest.

i. James may be speaking of his own generation of believers when he calls them **firstfruits**. Some have speculated on this even more, saying that James has in mind a wider redemption among unknown creatures of God, of which we are the **firstfruits** of that wider redemption

### *Points To Note:*

This generation of Christians constituted the first-fruits of a larger harvest to follow in the succeeding ages. 2. As first fruits, these Christians are also to see themselves as dedicated to God and to the purposes of God (Ephesians 2:10). 3. The word "creatures" may either mean mankind (Mark 16:15), or all created things. Here it probably means 'mankind'. 4. The word first fruits, should also remind us, 'God did not want the gospel to stop with us. God wants us to be a vehicle through which other people may hear the Good News.' (Draper p. 49) 5. The term first fruits is also used of the first converts in a region (1 Corinthians 16:15) The truth is staying connected to what is right and not being controlled by our natural desires. Sometimes we have desires to be open when the correct response is border control. At other times, we want to set a limit where the correct response is to show boundless love

### Speaking Of Gifts: Our Salvation

1:18 'In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.'

'In the exercise of His will'-'Of his set purpose' (NEB); 'Voluntarily' (Ber); literally, having willed. Let the reader be impressed that man's salvation was a deliberate choice on the part of God. It wasn't a forced choice or a regretted choice. Rather, God freely chose to have Jesus die for our sins (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). Note, that it wasn't God's fault that we sin, for God gives only good things (1:17). God gives every incentive as to why we shouldn't sin.

'brought us forth'-'to produce' (Thayer p. 64); 'bear young' (Vine p. 153). This is the language of the new birth (John 3:5; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Peter 1:23).

'by the word of truth'-God didn't cause us to be born again in some miraculously or mysterious manner. Rather, it was through the Gospel message that we came to believe (Romans 10:17), our hearts were pricked (Acts 2:38), and this message also told us to repent of our sins (Acts 2:38), confess Christ (Romans 10:9-10) and submit to water baptism for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). Compare with 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Peter 1:23; Luke 8:8,15. The statement "word of truth" contradicts the idea that the Bible is a mixture of truth and error. The "word of truth" is simply another way of saying the gospel message

(Colossians 1:5), or the word of God (John 17:17). □

***Point To Note:***

Seeing that the preaching of the Word of God and the acceptance of that Word brings about the new birth. And that the gospel message is to be preached to all (Mark 16:15). It is clear that God hasn't predestined who will be lost and who will be saved. In saying that the exercise of the will of God resulted in our salvation is not to say that His will was exercised arbitrarily or that the choice was made independently of human choice. The Lord calls men and women by the gospel message (2 Thess. 2:14); but all are called (Mark 16:15). Remember, whenever we talk about the new birth, we need to remember that the writer is addressing people who have been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. □

'so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures'-the phrase, "as it were" is also translated, "a kind of" (KJV); "in a sense" (Bas); "so to speak" (Phi). Which means, not literal first fruits. In the Old Testament, the first fruit was the first portion of the produce or livestock. It belonged to God and was to be offered to Him before the rest could be used by man. It was to be the choicest part of the harvest (Deut. 18:4; Numbers 18:12; Exodus 13:11-16).

**III Conclusion:**

Temptation is inevitable, yet not from God.

1. Understand the process -- 1:16
  - A. Conception of Sin
  - B. Birth of Sin
  - C. Death by Sin
2. Only good comes from God, including salvation -- 1:17-18
  - A. Conception of Good
  - B. Birth of Good
  - C. Life of Good