



# *Epistle of James*

## *James 1:16-18 - Every Perfect Gift is from Above*

- ***James 1:16-18 – Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 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 first fruits of His creatures.***
  - Review from last week - *Temptation in the Christian Life Part 2*
    - How should we interpret *peirazō* – being *tempted* vs. *tested*?
    - What is *drawing* us *away* more - Satan, the world system (*kosmos*) or our own sin nature?
    - How do we respond when drawn away?
- ***James 1:16 - Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.***
  - Notice first to whom this is addressed - *my beloved brethren.*
  - *Do not be deceived* is present, passive and imperative – don't allow this to occur and now!



# Epistle of James

## James 1:16-18 - Every Perfect Gift is from Above

- Why this warning?
  - Do you think this relates to *verses 13-15* or *verses 17,18* to follow and if so, how/why?
  - Or is this simply a reminder of NT doctrine elsewhere?
    - » *1 Cor 15:33 - Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*
    - » *Gal 6:7 - Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*
    - » *Col 2:8 - Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*
    - » *1 John 3:7 - Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.*
  - Perhaps this best relates to the verses that precede this, i.e., the devil is a master at blinding our eyes to sin.
    - » *Eph 4:14 - that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,*
    - » *2 Cor 4:3,4 - But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those **who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded**, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*
    - » *Eph 2:1,2 - And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which*



# Epistle of James

## James 1:16-18 - Every Perfect Gift is from Above

*you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*

– But we are not the **perishing ones** remember, *the sin nature never changes!*

- **James 1:17 – 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.**

– What comes to mind when you think about *every good gift and every perfect gift?*

- *perfect* enlarges upon *good*, bringing out more distinctly the *moral* quality of the gift.

»1 Tim 6:17 - *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

– And of course, this is *from above and from the Father of lights* and does not include temptations!

- *from above?*

– *Constable* – “From above” is the translation of the same Greek word (*anothen*) Jesus used in *John 3:7* when He told Nicodemus that he must be



# Epistle of James

## James 1:16-18 - Every Perfect Gift is from Above

born "again." There the new birth is the good gift from God that is in view.

- » *Amos 5:8 – He made the Pleiades and Orion; He turns the shadow of death into morning And makes the day dark as night; He calls for the waters of the sea And pours them out on the face of the earth; The Lord is His name.*
- » *John 3:31 - “He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.*

- And in contrast to sin.

- » *James 3:15 - This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.*

- Why is God called the *Father of lights*?

–McCalley – ‘The word lights is used of the heavenly bodies such as stars, planets, and constellations. This gives reason for the title: **The heavenly bodies exist in lavish abundance**; we have yet to discover their number. **So, with God, His goodnesses are without number.** Linked to this fact is the truth that such a lavish giver never changes.’

– *with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

- » *Rom 9:14 - What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!*

- Could this relate to variation of light vs. dark as the earth turns around the sun?



# *Epistle of James*

## *James 1:16-18 - Every Perfect Gift is from Above*

- Of interest, *variation or shadow of turning* is only NT use of this phrase (words).
  - » Num 19-23 - “**God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?** “
  - » Mal 3:6 - “**For I am the Lord, I do not change;**
  - » 1 John 1:5 - **This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**

- ***James 1:18 – Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.***

- *Of His own will* is one word – *boulomai*
  - Which translates best as to will deliberately, have a purpose, or be minded.
    - » John 1:12,13 - **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**
- *He brought us forth* (aorist active indicative) *by the word of truth*
  - How should we interpret *word (logos) of truth*?
    - Is this the written word (scripture) or the living word (the Lord Jesus Christ)?



# Epistle of James

## James 1:16-18 - Every Perfect Gift is from Above

- » 2 Cor 4:6 - *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*
- » Col 1:15 - *because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,*
  - With the mention of *the word of truth*, James hints at the theme of vs.19-27.
- *that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures*
  - *Why a kind of first fruits?*
    - Constable – ‘The “*first fruits*” probably refer to all Christians who persevere in spite of trials. All believers will bring glory to God's name, but believers who remain faithful to Christ will please Him greatly, as the *first fruits* in Israel were a special offering to God. The Greek word translated “*first fruits*” (*aparche*) refers to what is first in honor as well as to what is first in order. **The biblical writers used it “of persons superior in excellence to others of the same class.”**
    - Vincent – ‘*A kind of* indicates the figurative nature of the term. Time figure is taken from the requirement of the Jewish law that the first-born of men and cattle, and the first growth of fruits and grain should be consecrated to the Lord. **The point of the illustration is that Christians, like first-fruits, should be consecrated to God.**’
      - » Rom 16:5 - *Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epapnetus, who is the first fruits of Asia to Christ.*





# *Epistle of James*

## *James 1:16-18 - Every Perfect Gift is from Above*

» *1 Cor 15:33 - But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*

- Are we really *creatures*?
  - Perhaps best interpreted as true Christians as created anew by regeneration.
- I think Darby puts this section in a heavenly perspective –
  - **‘By the word of truth, He has begotten us to be the first and most excellent witnesses of that power of good which will shine forth hereafter in the new creation, of which we are the first fruits. This is the opposite of being the source of corrupt desires. The word of truth is the good seed of life; self-will is the cradle of our lusts — its energy can never produce the fruits of divine nature; nor the wrath of man the righteousness of God. Therefore we are called to be docile, to be ready to hear, slow to speak slow to wrath, to lay aside all filthiness of the flesh, all energy of iniquity, and to receive the word with meekness — a word which, while it is the word of God, identifies itself with the new nature that is in us (it is planted in us) while forming and developing it according to its own perfection; because this nature itself has its origin from God through the word. It is not as a law which is outside us, and which, being opposed to our sinful nature, condemns us. This word saves the soul; it is living and quickening, and it works livingly in a nature that flows from it, and which it forms and enlightens.’**