

THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION, PT. 1, JAMES 1:13-15 (Ed O'Leary)

TODAY, ~ WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO JAMES ~ 1: ~ 13-18.

IN THIS PARAGRAPH, ~ JAMES TURNS HIS ATTENTION ~ to the source of temptation.

▶▶ The passage consists of two subsections ~ that are each introduced ~ by an exhortation.

VV. 13-15, ~ COMPRISE THE FIRST SUBSECTION.

▶▶ The exhortation introducing it is [verse 13a](#).

▷▷ Here James exhorts believers not to blame God for their temptations.

▶▶ James goes on ~ to give two reasons ~ why we should not blame God for temptation, ~ [13b-14](#).

▷▷ 1st, ~ God is not temptable and does not tempt, ~ [13b](#).

▷▷ And 2nd, ~ an analysis of the temptation and sin process ~ ¶¶

↳↳ places responsibility for sin ~ squarely on humans, ~ [14](#).

→→ [But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.](#)

▶▶ Finishes first subsection with a note detailing the dire consequences of succumbing to temptation, ~ [vs 15](#).

▷▷ [Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. ¶¶ 1/11](#)

VV 16-18 ENCOMPASS THE SECOND SUBSECTION.

▶▶ Vs 16 contains the exhortation introducing this subsection.

▷▷ Here James shifts discussion from ~ that of which God is not the source ~ to that of which he is.

▶▶ Rather than the source of temptation, ~ he is the source of all that is good, vs 17.

▶▶ Then in v 18, ~ James identifies one ~ of these good gifts.

NUTSHELL.

▶▶ Unpack 1st subsection, ~ 13-15.

▶▶ 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. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

JAMES' EXHORTATION INTRODUCING FIRST SUBSECTION, ~ VS 13a.

LET NO ONE SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, "I AM BEING TEMPTED BY GOD."

▶▶ James categorically prohibits ~ the claim that temptation comes from God.

▶▶ The prohibition, ~ stated in the singular, ~ demands that "no one," ~ i.e., ~ not a single individual, ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ however severe the temptation, ~ is to make such a claim. ¶¶ 2/11

▶▶ James sharply rebukes ~ anyone harboring such an excuse ~ for their failure.

▶▶ Human nature is ever prone to blame someone else for its sins.

▷▷ That cowardly tendency ~ is as old ~ as the sinful human race.

↳↳ The garden of Eden

▶▶ People today ~ play the same blame game.

▷▷ God might not be the one they blame, ~ but they blame someone or something.

▷▷ Some seek to hide behind ~ their heredity ~ or their poor environment ~ or their evil companions.

▷▷ In late '80's popular to blame mom and dad.

▷▷ And then, ~ of course, ~ we have the ever popular, ~ "The devil made me do it."

▷▷ But all such claims ~ are simply futile efforts ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to escape personal responsibility ~ for their actions.

JAMES GOES ON TO GIVE TWO REASONS ~ ¶¶

WHY WE SHOULD NOT BLAME GOD FOR TEMPTATION.

1st, ~ VS 13b, ~ FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL, ~ AND HE HIMSELF TEMPTS no one. ¶¶ 3/11

IN THE FIRST STATEMENT, ~ WE HAVE A REMINDER ~ OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ whose moral purity is ~ absolute, ~ unassailable, ~ and undefiled.

▶▶ There is not ~ the smallest trace of evil ~ in God's nature.

▶▶ Unlike us, ~ there is nothing within God ~ to which evil can appeal.

IN THE NEXT STATEMENT, ~ "AND HE HIMSELF TEMPTS NO ONE," ~ ¶¶

▶▶ the statement asserts that God ~ never tempts his people ~ at any time.

▶▶ We will never ~ have to worry about this.

NOW, ~ JAMES DOES NOT CLAIM ~ THAT GOD NEVER ALLOWS TEMPTATION INTO OUR lives.

▶▶ God allowed Satan to tempt Job.

▶▶ Nor does James imply ~ that God ~ never tests his people.

▶▶ He is not denying ~ that God does indeed subject believers to testing.

▶▶ But he does ~ deny the claim ~ that God tests his children with an evil intent, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to lead them into sin.

▶▶ Our God can be turned to ~ in times of temptation, ~ for he does not cause it, ~ James assures us. ¶¶ 4/11

▷▷ This principle accords with 1 Co 10:13, ~ where Paul promises ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that God will provide a way out for us ~ to bear up under the pressures to cave in to sin.

THE 2nd REASON ~ WHY WE SHOULD NOT BLAME GOD FOR TEMPTATION.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEMPTATION AND SIN PROCESS ~ places responsibility for sin ~ squarely on humans. VV 14.

▶▶ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

▶▶ The real source of blame for temptation ~ is not be found outside of us, ~¶¶

▷▷ but within us.

▶▶ James was not discussing ~ how sin entered the human race in the Garden of Eden; ~¶¶

▷▷ nor ~ was he denying the role of Satan ~ in this matter.

▶▶ He was explaining how ~ we encounter temptation.

▶▶ The blameworthy aspect of temptation ~ is inward, ~ not outward.

THE SINGULAR ~ "EACH PERSON" ~ STRESSES ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that the universal experience of being tempted ~ is an individual matter, ~ assailing each individually.

▶▶ No human ~ is exempt from the experience. ¶¶ 5/11

THE PRESENT TENSE ~ "IS TEMPTED" ~ POINTS ~ ¶¶

▶▶to the repeated experience ~ of being tempted ~ as characteristic of each human being.

THE GRK WORD ~ ἐπιθυμίας, ~ TRANSLATED HERE AS ~ "DESIRE," ~

▶▶is in itself ~ a neutral term.

▶▶It simply denotes ~ strong desires or cravings.

▶▶The desires ~ may be either good or bad.

▶▶In the NT, ~ the word is used in a good sense.

▶▶But generally ~ it carries an evil connotation.

▶▶Context ~ must decide the meaning.

▷▷And the context indicates ~ that James here ~ has evil desires in view.

▶▶¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own [evil] desire.

DESIRES, ~ OF COURSE, ~ ARE NECESSARY ~ FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL.

▶▶E.g., ~ desire to eat, ~ desire to take care of your self.

▶▶But human experience shows ~ that our desires and cravings ~ are predominantly evil.

▶▶They are evil ~ whenever they are self-centered & contrary to God's will. ¶¶ 6/11

JAMES' ASSERTION ~ ASSUMES THE DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

▶▶ This was the teaching of Jesus in [Mark 7:21-23](#).

▷▷ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ~ ~ ↴↴

↵↵ "All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

▶▶ David recognized this fact ~ in his confession of sin recorded in [Ps. 51](#).

▷▷ Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

▶▶ In Romans, ~ Paul brought out the fact of our sinful nature as well.

▷▷ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature (NIV).

BACK TO VERSE 14.

▶▶ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own [evil] desire.

THE TERMS ~ "LURED" AND "ENTICED" ~ WERE TERMS USED IN CONNECTION ~ WITH the activity of fishermen.

▶▶ The phrase, ~ is lured ~ expresses ~ the intensity of evil desire ~ ↴↴

▷▷ forcefully drawing the tempted individual toward the object of desire ~ ↴↴

↵↵ and pictures the movement ~ of the tempted one toward it. ↴↴ 7/11

▶▶ The word ~ enticed" ~ depicts the juicy worm being dangled in front of the fish.

▷▷ His inner craving to appropriate it for himself ~ prompts him to bite.

▷▷ But he is deceived and caught.

▷▷ Instead of enjoying the anticipated pleasure, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ he is caught on the hook concealed within.

IT IS AN APT PICTURE ~ OF THE DECEPTIVENESS ~ OF SINFUL DESIRE.

▶▶ When a person ~ is confronted with alluring temptation, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ they see ~ only the attractiveness ~ of the desired object.

↪↪ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it (NIV).

FINISHES FIRST SUBSECTION OF THE PARAGRAPH ~ 13-15 ~ WITH A NOTE ~ ¶¶

DETAILING THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES ~ OF SUCCUMBING TO TEMPTATION, ~ VS 15.

▶▶ Then [evil] desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

▶▶ Evil desire, ~ James says, ~ is the mother of sin.

▶▶ Then, ~ after sin is brought forth, ~ it grows (or, ~ is repeated). ¶¶ 8/11

▷▷ IOW, ~ one sin can lead to another and another, etc.

↳↳ Every time sin, ~ resistance to sin weakens.

▶▶ Sin, ~ when allowed to grow, ~ becomes fully grown.

▶▶ Then sin in turn ~ bears a child of its own ~ namely, ~ death.

AT THE OUTSET, ~ WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND ~ that the results of sin ~ are always bad.

▶▶ Joseph recognized that.

▷▷ He said to Potiphar's wife that ~ he would be betraying his master's trust and sinning against God.

▶▶ The world says, ~ "sin is pleasurable." ⇔⇔ Right, ~ but pleasurable ~ only short time.

▷▷ Moses chose to be mistreated along with the people of God ~ rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

↳↳ "Fleeting" pertains ~ to a relatively short period of time, ~ ↴↴

→→ with emphasis upon ~ the temporary nature ~ of the event or state.

▶▶ The trajectory of sin ~ is always downward.

BUT, ~ WHAT KIND OF DEATH ~ IS JAMES REFERRING TO HERE?

▶▶ Number of options ↴↴ 9/11

▶▶ The one I feel best fits the context.

▷▷ Contrast with "the crown of life." ⇔⇔ Results in this life

↪↪ So, ~ we see a parallelism here.

▶▶ Death then, ~ in this context, ~ refers to consequences of sin ~ suffered in this life.

▶▶ Metaphorically here

▶▶ Think about the downward trajectory of unchecked sin ~ ↓↓

▷▷ and what kind of deaths to which it can lead.

↪↪ Unchecked sin ~ can kill your marriage.

↪↪ It can kill your career.

↪↪ It can kill your relationships with others.

↪↪ Unchecked sin can kill your Christian testimony.

↪↪ Ten minutes of sin ~ can stain years of godly living.

↪↪ It will kill your spiritual life.

↪↪ It will kill your spiritual ministry.

ALL KINDS OF DEATH FLOW OUT OF SIN. ↓↓ 10/11

▶▶ So the idea ~ that you are bringing some satisfying behavior to life ~ 77

▷▷ by yielding to temptation ~ is a lie.

▶▶ All you bring ~ is sin. ⇨⇨ **And all sin brings is death.**

GOOD ADVICE FOR US (#364).

▶▶ Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin; ~~ 77

▷▷ Each vict'ry will help you some other to win; ~~ Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue; ~~ 77

↪↪ Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

BUT IF WE DO YIELD, ~ THEN IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE IS IN ORDER.

▶▶ Never let sin go unchecked. **11/11**