

Studies in the Letter from James 1:9-18

Sunday AM, May 5, 2019

The Letter From James: James is faith with feet; it is a letter of practical exhortation and an expression of what living out the Christian life is like. James demonstrates saving faith by action, so much so that Luther thought it was an epistle of straw and not worth much. The key verse in James is:

***Show me your faith without the works,
And I will show you my faith by my works.***

I. Wealth & Poverty Each Have Their Own Peculiar Trials and Temptations (James 1:9-11)

Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God. (Pro 30:8-9 NAU)

- A. The risk of wealth is pride and self-sufficiency, a tendency to forget God and to see no need to depend upon Him. Living for riches is like expecting the beauty of the flowering grasses to last forever (11).
- B. The trials of poverty often lead to the temptation to blame God and to make excuses for one's behavior that is ungodly and even criminal

II. Transitional Verse: The Person Who Is Blessed (v12)

Perseverance through trials (faithfulness) builds character and holds the promise of the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him

III. Temptation Does Not Come From God (vv13-16)

Truth is liberating; understanding the nature of trials and the source of temptation enables us to have wisdom in the midst of life's severest tests

- A. Understanding the nature of life's tests (trials)
 - 1. God does allow tests to prove our faithfulness: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil
 - 2. Satan brings temptation into the trials of life
 - 3. We live in a fallen world subject to the products of sin
 - 4. All people suffer trials in life, it is the nature of a fallen world

B. God cannot be tempted with evil and neither is He the source of our temptations

C. The source of our temptations lies within our own nature

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (Jam 1:14-16 NAU)

- 1. Lust is a passionate desire to have what we want, regardless of what God has for us
- 2. It is this pursuit of our own desires that leads us into sin
- 3. The Lordship of Christ and obedience to and acceptance of His will comes from submission

IV. God Gives Good Gifts (vv.17-18)

A. He created the universe, the sun and moon and stars; He has given us everything we need for life and godliness and He never changes in His character or provision

B. He Himself has caused us to be born again by the Word of Truth and we are the first fruits among all His creatures. We have a marvelous provision in Jesus Christ and a wonderful future in Him