

The regeneration from being without hope (Eph 2:12) to being a son of God (Romans 8:16) happened by the preaching of the Word of God.

READ 1 PETER 1:22-25, COLOSSIANS 1:3-15. What made the difference for the Christians in these verses?

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READ ROMANS 10:17. Do you think we really understand the importance of the Word of God in the calling, justification, adoption and glorification of God's chosen people?

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What lessons are there for the "contemporary" Church of our day?

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READ HEBREWS 6:17-20. What a marvelous paragraph for Christians who find themselves in persecution, trials and heartache!

The term "firstfruits" in **JAMES 1:18** most probably has in mind that part of God's creation first "harvested" by God as part of his new creation. They have been reborn by the word of truth, the gospel.

James 1:16-18 in summary:

The God who is redeeming creation is a gracious God. Such a gracious God is not one who is trying to lead people to fall, but one who would use his giving to preserve them in the test. In everything He is good and steadfast, without changing.

The word “deceived” or “led astray” in verse 16 picks up from verse 15: God cannot be tempted by evil; temptation comes from within, reinforced by the power of the evil one. If the devil can get us to doubt God and not put our confidence in Him, we are indeed “deceived” or “led astray”.

READ 2PETER 3:16-17 AND 1CORINTHIANS 15:33. The apostle uses the same term here. What does this verse tell us?

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What is the defence of the Christian in such circumstances? **READ 2PETER 3:18.**

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Taking the advice of Peter here, with the same situation in mind, we see the link between the advice of Peter and James.

READ JAMES 1:17. What does the expression “*Father of the lights*” mean?

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In any Jewish mind the imagery of light and stars would associate with God and the good He does, and is probably built from the creation account, and also the fact that God was thought of as light (1 Jn. 1:5).

What are the outstanding characteristics of the sun, moon and stars? See if you can find three!

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Before God made the sun and moon, everything was “void”, dark and uninhabitable. God provided all good things in creation by creating light first.

James wants his readers, now exposed to unthinkable persecution and heartache to look at what they experience not as something bad: the same God who created the heavens and the earth is holding them in their hands. What He does is good and with a purpose!

What is the outstanding difference between God and the lights He made?

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“God does not change, but *people* fail to receive wisdom because they waver (1:6–8) and even accuse God for their own failings (1:13–15).”²

READ JAMES 1:18. When James in verse 17 states that God “does not change”, what is the confidence he gives us in verse 18?

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The term “will” tells us that God wanted to do something: He wanted, and it pleased Him, to give us not only natural birth, but also spiritual birth, which leads to eternal life.

The Christian should know this truth under all circumstances: He is a new creation of God, and God will never let go of those whom He called, justified and glorified (Romans 8:30-39).

² Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James : A commentary on the Greek text* (88). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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FAITH AND DEEDS

A BIBLE STUDY FROM JAMES

ASSURANCE OF KNOWING GOD

Let's once again **READ JAMES 1:2-18**.

Our study of the first chapter of James helped us to understand:

- What testing produces – maturity and joy (verses 2-4)
- How to be victorious in times of testing – faithful prayer (verses 5-8)
- Material things are not everything – what counts is our riches in the Lord (9-11)
- The outcome of “hanging in” when trials come – the crown of life (verses 12)
- The source of testing and temptation – it does not come from God

Tonight we learn about the most wonderful assurance of God's faithfulness, his steadfastness and his eternal calling.

READ JAMES 1:16-18.

The Bible was originally not divided in verses and chapters, let alone paragraphs. But few translations divide James 1 in verses with paragraphs:

- Verses 1-8: the purpose and delivery of temptations
- Verses 9-11: our riches in God, which is forever
- Verse 12: perseverance under trial
- Verses 13-15: the source of temptations
- Verse 16-18: the steadfastness of God who called us

In our study last week we concluded:

“James is drawing upon an important theme in Jewish theology: people in tight places tend to turn and challenge God, lose faith in Him, and blame Him for unfaithfulness.”

READ VERSE 16. With the above quote in mind, in your opinion, where does verse 16 belong – should it be read as a conclusion to the thought of verse 15, or is it better to lump it in with verses 17-18? Why do you say so?

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The uncertainty as to where verse 16 belongs is because it is a hinge verse: “the admonition not to err picks up the problem of 1:13 and carries it forward to its contrasts in 1:17, tying the two paragraphs together.”¹

It is the main thrust of James is to stress to his readers the fact that their circumstances are used by God to produce perseverance. If they forget this, and start doubting God, the seed for unbelief and rebellion is sown: they are enticed to not trust Him – and before they know they will wander off in unbelief, which leads to death.

¹Davids, P. H. (1982). *The Epistle of James: A commentary on the Greek text* (86). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.