

## God as the Father and Source of Our Salvation, James 1:18

This morning we have the opportunity to learn some amazing things about God, about ourselves and about our future. The last time we studied James, Margaret and pastor showed you a skit where they were trying to fix the blame for all their problems. First, they blamed each other, but finally, the blame seemed to fall on God Himself. We naturally say, "Don't blame me!" when what we should be saying is, "Don't blame God!" The bottom line is that whoever else is to blame for our problems or troubles, IT'S NOT GOD! Notice how differently we view our problems than how God does, vs. 2-5. God is Willing to give us His Wisdom concerning our trials, problems and troubles, if we but ask.

The first thing we can learn this morning about ourselves is that our trials, problems and troubles reveal a **dark side** about us, vs. 12-15. Furthermore, we're easily deceived, and that of the worst kind; i.e. self deception, vs. 16; yet, note: "**my beloved brethren**."

The first thing we can learn about God this morning is that ALL GOOD comes (only) from God, vs. 17; note: 1 John 1:5; Prov. 10:22; cf. our problems are *for our Good*; nothing bad comes from God. Etymologically, the word "Good" comes from the root word "God." Going deeper, it can be said, in contrast, that no Good naturally comes from within us; again, vs. 16, because everything within us naturally leads only to lust, and then to sin, and then to death, Rom. 7:18-19, 24-8:1; cf. Rom. 3:10-12; Eph. 2:1-3. If we've truly been saved, the only Good in us is from God since God Placed us "in Christ." It's not me, but Christ in me. How we respond to the Holy Spirit's Conviction to the Truth of our depravity determines how we respond to our problems; i.e. who we blame, what we think we deserve, whether we're thankful, etc. Again, going still deeper, it really shouldn't surprise us that we will ever have problems, troubles or trials (TESTS) in this life since that's probably the least consequence we should expect because of our innate depravity. Thus, God's best GOOD Gift to us is our Salvation (Save us from our sins/ depravity) in Jesus, Titus 3:3-7, but, how did we ever Receive God's best GOOD Gift of all, the Gift of His Son, Jesus, and our Salvation in Him? Look at vs. 18 and learn even more about God (and ourselves):

**1. The ORIGIN of the Good Gift of our Salvation** is here declared (compiling various translations): "**it is the exercise of His** (God's) **Own, Deliberate, Sovereign Will** (GK. Emphatic position), **In fulfillment of His Own** (Eternal) **Purpose, ...we were Born Again**; it's not by our abilities; not from any "good works" we've done, or any good foreseen in us, but Purely from the **Good-Will** and **Mercy** of our **Gracious** God. Regeneration, then, is wholly an Act of God, accomplished in the Sovereign Exercise of *His* Will, not ours, Rom. 3:11b-12; John 15:16. Through His Sovereign Will, God Washes away sin, grants Forgiveness, and Gives New Life, a totally new nature within each person who Trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God Himself even takes Residence in our New Life through His Indwelling Spirit, John 14:17; Rom. 8:9. God Promised through Ezekiel, "**I WILL cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I Will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I Will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh,**" Ezek. 36:25-26. Since God does it all, God Alone should receive the Glory (not us)! > Yet, can/ will you Trust Him? And NOT yourself?

The only way a spiritually dead person (all unbelievers) can have Spiritual Life is to receive (a bit of a stretch> volition is a Gift, Eph. 2:8) it as a Gift from God through faith in Jesus Christ, Eph. 2:4-5; cf. John 3:1-4. Picking up on the figure of physical birth Jesus had just used, Nicodemus was nevertheless confused by what he heard about Spiritual New Birth. Being a highly trained teacher of

the Mosaic Law, he assumed, as did most Jews, that men pleased God and became right with Him by obedience to that Law, and in no other way. He also assumed that whatever was necessary to become right with God had to be done by himself, by his own efforts, accomplishments, and goodness. So his question was, in effect, "How can *I* make myself born again and earn for myself new Life?" Jesus explained in [vs. 5–8](#) that the Spirit of God Sovereignly moves where He Wills and Gives New Birth to those whom He has Predestined to Salvation. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be Holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His Will," [Eph. 1:4–5, 11-12; 2:8](#); cf. [Phil. 1:29](#). Those who have trouble with the 1<sup>st</sup> half (Faith is a Gift) of this verse, have trouble with the 2<sup>nd</sup> half (problems, suffering) also. The source of new Life was not in Nicodemus's (or anyone's) power to achieve or to earn, but it comes from God, through His Holy Spirit. The New Birth is a Sovereign Gift of God, implanted by His Holy Spirit in those who have come to Him by Faith in His Son, [II Cor. 5:17](#). We didn't help God in either His physical or Spiritual Creation. Our conscious experience of Conversion, of **Believing** in Jesus Christ, in His Death and Resurrection on our behalf, of Committing our Life to Him, is all the consequence of God's Sovereign Will, [I John 4:9-10, 19; Rom. 8:29–30](#). Note: 1<sup>st</sup> Regeneration/ Creation, then Faith

**2. WHAT Did God Do in Order to Give us the Good Gift of Salvation? He** (not us!) **brought us forth, 1:18b. Brought ... forth** is the same verb rendered "gives birth" in [vs. 15](#). In Regeneration, God Gives Birth to a New Spiritual Life. Regeneration is a Miracle of God by which the principle of New Life is implanted in man and the Governing New Nature of his soul is made Holy. In Christ believers actually "**become Partakers of the (GOOD) Divine Nature,**" [II Pet. 1:4](#).

Not only Theologically, but logically, the only way Life could be Given to the Spiritually dead is that it come from our Good God. The Spiritually dead aren't even aware of their sin, how bad they are; they have no desire to turn from them, [John 3:19-20](#), and have no power to change even if they wanted to (which they don't), nor, even know that they're Spiritually dead. Regeneration could only happen by the Sovereign Will and Power of God the Father, the Source and Giver of Spiritual Life, [John 1:12–13](#).

No child has ever been born physically into the world by its own Will or plan. Its conception and birth is completely out of its consciousness and control. It is merely the passive recipient of the will and action of its parents. Just as certainly, no person wills, much less creates, a New Spiritual Nature within himself. Jeremiah asked rhetorically, "**Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?**" (implied "no" answer) **Then you also can do Good who are accustomed to doing evil,**" [Jer. 13:23](#). Later, that same prophet set forth the only way that the needed change can and must be made, [Jer. 31:31–34](#) (note: *I Will's*). The natural man not only cannot make such a change in himself, but, apart from God's Word, he cannot even know that he needs such a change. To the contrary, if he thinks he needs change at all, he greatly underestimates what he really needs and presumes that he can do it satisfactorily by himself, [I Cor. 2:14](#). Jesus said, "**No one can come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me draws him,**" [John 6:44](#). Salvation is of the Lord (Alone)! [Psm. 3:8; Jonah 2:8](#).

**3. HOW Does God Give us Salvation? ...by** (instrumental case = the means) **the word of Truth, 1:18c.** Believers are Born Again, or Regenerated, by the Power of God's Word; i.e. the Gospel, [I Cor. 4:15; Rom. 1:16; 10:14, 17; I Pet. 1:23-25](#). We find that the means of our Sanctification is also the Word of Truth, [John. 17:17; Eph. 5:25-26](#).

**4. WHY Does God Give Us the Gift of Salvation? ...so that we would be, as it were, the**

**first fruits among His creatures, 1:18d.** In other words, God Gave Us the Gift of Salvation so that we should be (AMAZING GRACE!) God's Portion and Treasure, and a Peculiar People to Him. Although Salvation is the greatest possible Blessing a human being can receive (God is so Good! = Privilege vs. what we DESERVE!! < MERCY!!!, its primary Purpose (i.e. "WHY") is not to benefit the individual as much as to fulfill God's Sovereign Purpose for believers to become Holy to the Lord and Consecrated to Him, as it were, the "first fruits" among His creatures. GRACE! = What we don't DESERVE! Christ is the "first-fruits" of Christians, and Christians are the ("PRECIOUS") "first-fruits" of all God's creatures, Lev. 23:10-11. Jewish believers who were the first of the Harvest of the Gospel of Jesus Christ were the first of many more to come, including Gentiles, in the Spiritual Harvest God was beginning; cf. Rev. 14:4. Thus, will you Trust Him, Follow and Obey Him? God is SOVEREIGN. God is GOOD. God allows problems to TEST us to see if what comes to the surface is Jesus Life and Faith in Him (or, hurt, even bitterness, because our H/V lusts/ volition has not ALLOWED to have been satisfied). Can you Trust our GOOD GOD? Will you Trust Him that your problems are for your GOOD? Will you Trust Him, Whose thoughts and ways are so different from yours? Trust Him. You can Trust Him.

Have you Received the Gift of God's Salvation? Will you? Jesus Died on the Cross to Pay the Penalty for the sins (Save us from our lusts, sins, death) of the whole world, and He Rose from the grave to Give Forgiveness and Eternal Life to all who Believe in Him. Will you Trust in the Death, Burial and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and Receive a Home in Heaven. Will you Trust in Him today? Don't delay. Trust Him. You can Trust Him.