

Sin's Genesis  
James 1:13-16

November 11, 2012

A. Introduction

1. Text: <sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. <sup>15</sup> Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. <sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

2. Seven Truths Concerning Temptation

- a. James 1:13
- b. Job
- c. James 1:12
- d. I Corinthians 10:13
- e. James 1:14
- f. Hebrews 4:15
- g. I Corinthians 19:12

B. God Is Not the Source of Sin ..... 1:13

1. It's Easy to Blame God

- a. Augustine
- b. in the Garden <sup>A</sup>
- c. man's excuse

2. Blaming God Will Not Hold Water

- a. in these verses 'testing' = T \_\_\_\_\_ to S \_\_\_\_\_
- b. God's nature

C. The Cause Is to Be Found in Ourselves. .... 1:14

1. What Makes Temptation Successful?

- a. our eager desires: lust means <sup>B</sup>
- b. even legitimate desires <sup>C</sup>

2. Temptation is Tricky – a picture of hunting and fishing

3. What Does Lust Include?

- a. our usual ideas <sup>D</sup>
- b. but the Bible has a broader view <sup>E</sup>

D. The Genesis of Sin ..... 1:15

1. Temptation Let Loose – the four generations

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

2. An accelerated version – conception, bearing, birth, death

3. How Do We Escape from this Path? <sup>F</sup>

E. Conclusion: the Final Warning ..... 1:16

1. Do Not Be Deceived

2. Temptation to Sin is Not from God <sup>G</sup>

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<sup>B</sup> Philippians 1:23, Numbers 14:8

<sup>C</sup> Luke 4:2-3

<sup>D</sup> Leviticus 18 and 20

<sup>E</sup> Deuteronomy; Proverbs 6:16-19, 11:1, 15:8, 17:16, 28:9 and many others

<sup>F</sup> John 15:5

<sup>G</sup> James 4:7

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<sup>A</sup> Genesis 1:26-28, 3:1-12

A. Introduction

1. My Title Today —{2}.

- a. is thanks to a sermon by the Welsh preacher Rev. Geoff Thomas
- b. as are some of the illustrations and thoughts

2. Seven Truths Concerning Temptation

a. before going on, let me also quote from Rev. Jeffrey Stratton, of Evansville, Indiana<sup>—{3}</sup>. – here are some truths about temptation that we should all remember

- (A) God does not tempt a person to sin; verse 13 says, 'He Himself does not tempt anyone.'
- (B) God allows us to be tempted; the great example of this is found in the OT, as God allows Satan to tempt Job to the extreme.
- (C) Temptation presents a choice to a person, to fail or to succeed, as in James 1:12, 'Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, ...'
- (D) God will help us make the choice – 'No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.' (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- (E) The choice brings out what is in our hearts, verse 14, 'But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.'
- (F) Temptation in itself is not sin; of Jesus we read in Hebrews 4:15: 'For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.'
- (G) We never outgrow temptation; 'Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.' (1 Corinthians 10:12)

b. obviously, we shall return to some of these truths; and the first is ...

B. God Is Not the Source of Sin . . . . . James 1:13

- 1. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and

He Himself does not tempt anyone.

## 2. It's Easy to Blame God

a. Despite having a godly mother, young Augustine lived a dissolute life. Frequently he would be overcome by guilt, but the attraction of sin kept him pursuing its pleasures. That he held God to be responsible for his waywardness is implied in the prayer that he would pray in those days, 'Lord, make me pure; but not yet.'

b. such blaming of God goes back to the man's fall into sin in the garden – let us continue reading on in Genesis 3 from where we stopped a few minutes ago in our Scripture reading:

(A) '8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.'" (Genesis 3:8-12)

(B) In other words, 'If you had not given me the woman all this would not have happened.' What God had designed to be a blessing and a help for Adam – the gift of a wife so that he would not live alone – is demeaned, and God is accused of having been largely responsible for what had happened.<sup>{4}</sup>

(C) and that was Sin's Genesis for mankind

(D) but, today we want to speak to Sin's Genesis for the individual

c. of course, ever since then, man has excused his sin 'because that is how God made them. He created them with a certain temperament, and so they can't help doing what they do. So it is ultimately God's fault.'<sup>{5}</sup>

d. Robbie Burns, the Scottish poet and loose liver made that his excuse:

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me  
With passions wild and strong  
And listening to their witching voice

Has often led me wrong.

e. when we sin, we say to God, 'You made me what I am today, so what do you expect? ...'

### 3. Blaming God Won't Hold Water

a. James is adamant and categorical: 'for God cannot be tempted by evil.'

b. actually this is one of those phrases that is easy to see the meaning in the original Greek but very difficult to render briefly into English

c. after forbidding saying (or thinking, for that matter), 'I am being tempted by God' James gives the first of a number of reasons

(A) 'for the God' – the translators leave out that little word 'the' for it sounds strange in English – but it is important; in contrast to the false pagan gods who were but enlargements of immoral man, the One, True God is perfectly pure and holy

(B) 'is without or outside of testing' – let us leave the word as neutral for a moment – God in His holiness, in His utter 'apartness' from His creation, cannot be touched by 'testing'; His very nature precludes His being other than what He Is: pure, righteous, holy

(C) 'causing evil'<sup>{6}</sup>. show that James is now not talking merely about testing as a neutral action, but as that which entices one to sin

(D) God cannot, then, by His very nature have any connection with such testing, for which we use the word, 'temptation'

d. from this then follows the truth: 'He Himself does not tempt any one.'

e. you cannot blame God for your falling in the face of temptation

### C. The Cause Is to Be Found in Ourselves . . . . . James 1:14

1. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

### 2. What Makes Temptation Successful?

a. in this verse, James moves further along the path from that testing where temptation suggests that we sin, to where we begin to attend to that suggestion; when our mind and will begin to play with the thought, to entertain themselves with the idea of sin

b. what is it that causes our doing this?

(A) is it God? no way!

(B) it is our own eager desires – I am using the neutral word for the moment because there is a point or two to be made here

(C) this is the same word that Paul uses in Philippians 1:23, 'But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better'

(D) at the time of the translation of the AV, the word 'lust' was used in both a positive and negative sense

(1) e.g., in 1535, Coverdale's Bible translated Numbers 14:8 as 'Yf the Lorde haue lvst vnto vs' (AV 'If the Lord delight in us, ...')

(2) it could also mean 'desire, appetite, relish,' as in this quote from 1528 – 'No man ought to eate but after he hath a lust.'

(E) yet, it is a testimony to the power of the English Bible and its use of the word 'lust,' that today it has almost entirely a negative meaning; it is not just desire, or eager desire, but evil desire

c. so here is the first point: the desires that feed temptation may be in themselves legitimate; think of the first listed temptation of Jesus by Satan: 'for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."' (Luke 4:2-3) – Jesus had a legitimate desire to eat; but if He had let it control Him, it would have led to sin

### 3. Temptation Is Tricky (Because Satan Is Tricky)

a. The words 'carried away' and 'enticed' are hunting and fishing words

b. the first has to do with drawing an animal away – away from the herd or the protection of the forest – that it can be captured and slain

c. the second is the dangling of a lure – and when the poor fish strikes at it, only then does he perceive the hook and find himself caught

d. so it is with the temptation that leads to sin – that, perhaps at first innocent, desire takes hold and what is being offered seems so alluring that only when it is too late, does the realisation dawn of having been fatally hooked – that is the second point

#### 4. What Does Lust Include?

- a. just so that we know what is meant by evil desires
- b. I think that most people, at least Christians, when they hear that word 'lust' immediately associate it with sexual immorality – and no wonder since our culture is constantly thrusting sex at us in advertising, in the media, in the arts
- c. we may particularly associate 'lust' with perverted sexual practices, because the Bible (and we shall not stop to read them as found in Leviticus 18 and 20) labels these as 'abominations' before God.
- d. we tend to view these as particularly reprehensible forms of sin – but, as G. K. Chesterton said, 'Men do not differ much about what things they will call evils; they differ enormously about what evils they will call excusable.' – and, because we may not be susceptible to such sins (but are indeed very susceptible to others), we consider them being worse
- e. in both Deuteronomy and Proverbs there are many things listed as being 'abominations' before God – things we like to excuse
  - (A) Proverbs 6:16-19, 'There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.' Note the last one
  - (B) Proverbs 11:1 – sharp business practices
  - (C) Proverbs 15:8 – hypocritical religious acts
  - (D) Proverbs 17:16 – injustice
  - (E) Proverbs 28:9 – prayer of those deliberately disobeying God
- f. there is no such thing as inconsequential sins – sins without effect – 'In 1912 a tragic event occurred which shocked the world. The unsinkable Titanic sank. 1513 of the 2200 people aboard ship died. All of the prideful statements once expressed by the naval architects, builders, and owners were silenced that terrible night. But ever since they found the unsinkable ship 1200 feet beneath the sea, an historic pride has risen. As we've studied the wreckage with the latest underwater technology, we've discovered some surprising information about what happened to the grandest ocean liner in the history of mankind. Did you know that the Titanic was the equivalent of four city blocks long? Many people might think it plowed

into this huge iceberg and opened up a gaping hole in its bottom. But now the truth is known. The Titanic merely sideswiped that iceberg. In fact it's speculated that most of the passengers aboard didn't even know anything had happened at the time it sideswiped the iceberg. And it wasn't some gaping hole that sank the unsinkable ship. It was what one newspaper called, "small wounds that doomed the Titanic." There were six relatively small punctures in the hull - "pin pricks" according to a TV special on the subject. Here's a ship that was 46,000 gross tons in size and it was sunken by little leaks that, all put together, would have been about twelve square feet. Twelve square feet! A ship four blocks long sank because of holes in its hull<sup>{7}</sup> totalling 12 square feet!

D. The Genesis of Sin . . . . . James 1:15

1. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
2. Temptation Let Loose
  - a. when temptation is give free rein by our desires, now evil, then it gallops off to achieve its foul purpose of sin
  - b. there are, in a sense, four generations listed in this genealogy of sin
    - (A) temptation
    - (B) lust
    - (C) sin
    - (D) death
  - c. suggesting a protracted period, a century, before its effects are felt
  - d. but, this morning, although it is not good Greek translation, I want to suggest another look at the picture drawn by James
    - (A) in Greek the word for temptation is masculine; for lust, feminine
    - (B) there are two different words to give birth, the second being that used for the actual delivery of the child
    - (C) so, and this is purely to make the picture clear, let us render it
    - (D) 'Then when lust by temptation has conceived, she is bearing the child of sin, and when sin comes to full term, it is born as death.'

(E) you can see from this, perhaps, the path that temptation runs relentlessly from conception to death e. what took place in the garden of Eden that brought spiritual, and eventually physical death to mankind, is what takes place in the individual when he or she surrender in their desires to temptation; and the results are not pretty – Paul warned ‘**For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.**’ (1 Corinthians 11:30)

### 3. How Do We Escape from this Path?

a. Geoff Thomas closes with some practical suggestions

(A) understand how dangerous it is to dally with temptation

(B) do not play with your Christian liberty

(C) realize your own inability to keep out of temptation – ask the Saviour to help you – ‘**Without me you can do nothing**’ John 15:5

(D) trust in God’s promise to keep you – even when you have fallen

b. when the horse bolts, get off the cart!

## E. Conclusion: The Final Warning . . . . . James 1:16

1. **Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.**

### 2. Do Not Be Deceived

a. do not be lead astray into thinking that it is God who is directing you to do something – some action which the Word of God clearly forbids – because God does not tempt any one to do evil

b. though God may allow Satan to tempt you, He does so that you may find in Him a way of escape and come through it as fine gold

### 3. Temptation to Sin Is Not of God

a. Satan delights in masquerading as an angel of light

b. Satan knows the Scriptures and will use them to trick you

c. take refuge in this fact, that God does not tempt men to evil

d. then, James 4:7, ‘**... Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**’



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Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard version, used by permission. Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in (*braces*). Version identifiers are:

ASV American Standard Version of 1901

AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769

NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)

NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society

NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

WEY The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of my commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870

EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan – Volume 12, James, by Donald W. Burdick, Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary, ISBN 0-310-36540-6

EGT – The Expositor’s Greek Testament, *James*, by W. E. Oesterley, Hodder & Stoughton, 1910 (Liberal, but generally helpful on Greek idiom.)

Lange – Commentary on the Holy Scriptures by John Peter Lange, translated by Philip Schaff, Volume 9 of the New Testament; Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915 (His interpretations sometimes take strange twists.)

NICNT – The New International Commentary on the New Testament , *Commentary on the Epistles of James and John* by Alexander Ross, Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1954 – ISBN 0-8028-2192-8

TYN – Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, *The General Epistle of James*, by Professor R. V. G. Tasker, The Tyndale Press, 1956

Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com).

2. Acknowledgement: in preparing my messages on the book of James, I am deeply indebted among others to the Welsh preacher, Rev. Geoff Thomas. of Alfred Place Baptist Church in Abertswyth, Wales and his sermon

series "Expository Sermons on James." These can be found in the Kerux database; in particular, sermon #2373, "The Genesis of Sin" for this message. They can also be retrieved (and in some cases listened to) at <http://alfredplace.simbahosting.co.uk/pages/sermons.php>

3. Rev. Jeffrey Stratton, "I Have a Friend Who Is Really Tempted", Kerux sermons, #26826.
4. Thomas, *op cit*.
5. *ibid*
6. This κακῶν is usually interpreted as an adjective with the plural of intensity, but a present participle active of κακῶ, nominative in apposition to ἀπειραστός makes more sense to me.
7. Fr Ed Jansen, Church Of The Holy Comforter, Charismatic Episcopal; Stuart, Florida, 'Overcoming the Small Sins in Our Lives,' – Kerux sermons, #17184.