

WHERE IS GOD IN MY TIME
OF TRIAL AND TEMPTATION?

James 1:13 – 18

- ▶ Given the name “The Just” and “The Pious” for his devotion to Christ
- ▶ One of the major leaders of the early church
- ▶ A mediating influence between the Jewish conservatives and the Hellenistic liberals in the nascent Christian church
- ▶ Writer of a book of the New Testament, brother of Jesus
- ▶ Martyred in 62 CE in Jerusalem by Ananus, the Jewish high priest

POOR JAMES!!!



He didn't get any respect either

- ▶ The book of James has not been treated well:
 - ▶ Luther – An “epistle of straw”
 - ▶ Doubted as authentic and grouped with disputed writings by early church fathers, with no mention at all from the Western church about it
 - ▶ Doesn’t show up in the NT canon list until the late 4th century (Athanasius’ 39th *Festal Epistle* - 367 CE)
 - ▶ Supposed conflict between James and Paul
 - ▶ Not really written by James (Greek is too good)
 - ▶ Believed in Torah, not Jesus (otherwise would have said so in his book!)

POOR JAMES!!!

The martyrdom of James



- ▶ What is the difference between a “test” and a “temptation”?
- ▶ What were the original readers experiencing? How were they reacting?
- ▶ James’ response: Don’t confuse who God is! He is good!
- ▶ The question to us: How do stay faithful to James’ counsel?

TODAY’S STUDY: JAMES 1:13 - 18

- ▶ “Blessed is the man who endures trial, because having become approved (genuine, true), he (or she) will receive the crown of life which he has announced to the ones loving him.”
- ▶ What is James' point here?
- ▶ Is a trial good or bad? Why?

JAMES 1:12

“Let no one being tested say, ‘I am being tempted by God.’ For God is un-tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each one is tempted by the own desires, dragged away and lured. Then the desire, becoming pregnant, gives birth to sin, and the sin, when completed, births death.”

JAMES 1:13 - 15

“Let no one being **tested** say, ‘I am being **tempted** by God.’ For God is **un-tempted** by evil, and he himself **tempts** no one. But each one is **tempted** by the own desires, dragged away and lured.”

- ▶ What is a trial?
- ▶ What is a temptation?
- ▶ What is the difference?
- ▶ Why would someone under trial think God was behind it?

TRIAL VERSUS TEMPTATION

- ▶ “Chrestians” exiled in ~48 CE by Claudius from Rome Continuing conflict with Jewish authorities
- ▶ Social displacement for Jewish Christians / hardening of ethnic categories
- ▶ Militant politics/theology of 1st c. Judea justified religious violence against “heretical” Jews
- ▶ Jews become the scapegoats of Rome for many things (later Christians also included in this (Nero’s fire in 64 CE)

WHAT KIND OF TESTING?

- ▶ Poor being marginalized by rich (1:9-10, 2:1-5, 5:1-6)
- ▶ Anger and careless speech (1:19-20, 3:16)
- ▶ Laziness, lack of compassion to others (2:14)
- ▶ Fights and quarrels, lack of submission to God (4:1 – 3)
- ▶ Selfishness (3:14)
- ▶ Violence to fight back? (1:20)

James' point: They have fundamentally mistaken both who God is and what their salvation is about

WHAT KIND OF TEMPTING?

“But each one is **tempted** by the own desires, dragged away and lured. Then the desire, becoming pregnant, gives birth to sin, and the sin, when completed, births death.”

- ▶ So where does temptation come from?
- ▶ What do you think of this picture of sin as luring us away?
Accurate? Not?
- ▶ What are the three phases of how we sin here?

TEMPTATION'S TRUE AUTHOR

“Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers (and sisters). Every generous act of giving and every perfect gift is **from above**, descending from the father of the lights, with whom there is not one change or turning like a shadow. Having intended, he **birthed** us by the word of truth for us to be a kind of **first-fruits** of his creatures.”

JAMES 1:16 - 18

“Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers (and sisters). Every generous act of giving and every perfect gift is **from above**, descending from the father of the lights, with whom there is not one change or turning like a shadow. Having intended, he **birthed** us by the word of truth for us to be a kind of **first-fruits** of his creatures.”

- ▶ Why is remembering who God is an antidote for temptation?
- ▶ How is God described?
- ▶ How does God show his goodness in v. 18 (3 ways: choice, purpose, means)?

WHO IS GOD WHEN WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS?

- ▶ Do you ever feel you are being tested, personally?
- ▶ What are some reactions we feel to that?
- ▶ What are our responsibilities in our response?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO ME?