

## James 1:18-24

**18.** "Of His own will **He brought us forth by the WORD of TRUTH**, that we might be a kind of **FIRSTFRUITS** of His creatures."

- **I Corinthians 16:15-16** "I urge you brethren - you know the household of Stephanus, that it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints - that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us."
- **Romans 16:5** "Likewise greet the \_\_\_\_\_ that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Achaia to Christ."

**Definition: "He brought us forth by the WORD of TRUTH"** - This is one of those places where the translation is so much better in the original King James Version. The KJV says, "Of His own will **BEGAT He us WITH the word of truth.**" Now, I realize we don't talk like that any more, and it's old fashioned, but the word "begat" is so much more descriptive of what God is doing here! Begat means to cause to be conceived and be born, so **God is causing us to be BORN AGAIN by His WORD**, the word of truth. The dictionary says to "beget" means "to procreate as the father", and the "seed" that the Father uses by which **to bring about our spiritual conception and birth** is His word, the word of God, the word of truth. This is why it is so important for us to either recite Scriptures we have memorized or read Scripture when we are witnessing to someone - that "seed" of the word of God is what will cause them to be born again if they just believe it and receive Jesus.

- **I Peter 1:23** "Having been \_\_\_\_\_, not of corruptible \_\_\_\_\_ but incorruptible, through the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ which lives and abides forever."
- **John 1:12-13** "But as many as received \_\_\_\_\_, to them He gave the right to become \_\_\_\_\_ of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were \_\_\_\_\_, not of blood, nor of the will of the \_\_\_\_\_, nor of the will of man, but of \_\_\_\_\_."

**Definition: "BORN OF GOD"** - John 1:13 says we are born, NOT of certain things, but we **ARE BORN** of GOD. The New Birth (being Born Again) (1.) Does NOT happen "by blood", which means by inheritance from human ancestors; (2.) Does NOT happen "by the will of the flesh", which means by human sexual desire; and (3.) Does NOT happen "by the will of man", which means by human will power or determination. It is a SUPERNATURAL ACT OF GOD that happens to us when we BELIEVE in Jesus and RECEIVE HIM as Savior.

**Definition: "A kind of FIRSTFRUITS of His creatures"** - In the Old Testament, the offering of the "FIRSTFRUITS" was the FIRST PART of the HARVEST. The first "fruits" or first part of the crops were given to God as an offering, in FAITH that the REST of the HARVEST would be plentiful and good. When God's word tells us that this group or that group of people in a certain area is the "firstfruits", He means that they are **the first ones of a greater HARVEST of SOULS** that will be coming. Paul tell us in I Corinthians 16:15-16 that the household of Stephanus is the "firstfruits" of the area known as Achaia. In Revelation, we see that the 144,000 Jewish evangelists are the firstfruits of the Jewish people who will become believers in Jesus Christ during the Great Tribulation. They are not the ONLY ones saved during the Great Tribulation, as some groups teach, because it says they are the FIRSTFRUITS. A "firstfruit" offering is always the first part and an indication of a far greater harvest to come.

- **Exodus 23:16** "Also you shall observe the Feast of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of your labors from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field."
- **Proverbs 3:9** "Honor the \_\_\_\_\_ with your \_\_\_\_\_, and with the \_\_\_\_\_ of all your increase."
- **Matthew 9:36-38** "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like \_\_\_\_\_ having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The \_\_\_\_\_ truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the \_\_\_\_\_ to send out laborers (workers) into His \_\_\_\_\_.'"
- **John 4:35-36** "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the \_\_\_\_\_?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white (ripe) for \_\_\_\_\_! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ life, that both he who \_\_\_\_\_ and he who \_\_\_\_\_ may rejoice together."
- **Revelation 14:3-4** "And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the \_\_\_\_\_ wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and to the \_\_\_\_\_."
- **Revelation 7:4 & 9-10** "And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the \_\_\_\_\_ of the children of \_\_\_\_\_ were sealed....." "After these things I looked, and behold, a great \_\_\_\_\_ which no one could number, of \_\_\_\_\_ nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the \_\_\_\_\_, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, '\_\_\_\_\_ belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"
- **Revelation 7:13-14** "Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, '\_\_\_\_\_ are these arrayed in white robes, and \_\_\_\_\_ did they come from?' And I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' So he said to me, 'These are the ones who \_\_\_\_\_ out of the \_\_\_\_\_, and washed their robes and made them white in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.'"

**19-20.** "Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be **swift to HEAR, slow to SPEAK, slow to WRATH**; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

- **Ephesians 4:26-27** "Be \_\_\_\_\_ and do not \_\_\_\_\_; do not let the sun go down on your \_\_\_\_\_, nor give place to the \_\_\_\_\_."
- **Ephesians 4:31** "Let all \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, clamor, and all evil \_\_\_\_\_ be put away from you, with all malice."
- **Proverbs 19:11** "The discretion of a man makes him \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, and it is to his glory to \_\_\_\_\_ a transgression."
- **Proverbs 16:32** "He who is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ is better than the mighty, and he who \_\_\_\_\_ his \_\_\_\_\_ than he who takes a city."
- **Mark 4:23-24** "If anyone has \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, let him \_\_\_\_\_. And He said to them, 'Take heed what you \_\_\_\_\_. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who \_\_\_\_\_, more will be given.'"
- **Colossians 4:6** "Let your \_\_\_\_\_ always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to \_\_\_\_\_ each one."

- **Psalm 39:1** "I said, 'I will \_\_\_\_\_ my ways, lest I \_\_\_\_\_ with my \_\_\_\_\_; I will restrain my \_\_\_\_\_ with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me.'"
- **Ephesians 4:29** "Let no \_\_\_\_\_ communication (speech) proceed out of your \_\_\_\_\_, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart \_\_\_\_\_ to the hearers."

**Definition: "SLOW to WRATH" and "All BITTERNESS, WRATH, ANGER"** - Wrath is defined in the dictionary as "strong vengeful anger or indignation", especially with the idea of punishment for an offense or crime, such as God's wrath against sin. Bitterness is anger that is held onto, and is allowed to fester and be a deep burning in the heart and soul of a person, often as a result of severe pain, abuse and suffering. When James says that "**the WRATH of MAN does not produce the righteousness of God,**" he means that the dysfunctional ways we have of dealing with anger, bitterness and wrath only produce more heartache and sorrow, not a righteous state of being for either the one holding onto the anger, or for those who are the brunt of someone's anger and wrath. **Bitterness hurts MANY MORE people than just the one who is bitter.** Many family dysfunctions and generational sins begin as a ROOT of BITTERNESS in someone's life, which then passes down to their families in the form of more DYSFUNCTIONS, ADDICTIONS, low self-esteem and other problems. Instead, we are commanded to FORGIVE and not take vengeance for ourselves, but leave the vengeance up to God (Romans 12:19).

- **Ephesians 4:32** "And be \_\_\_\_\_ to one another, tenderhearted, \_\_\_\_\_ one another, just as God in Christ also \_\_\_\_\_ you."
- **Colossians 3:12-13** "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and \_\_\_\_\_, put on tender mercies, \_\_\_\_\_, humbleness of mind, \_\_\_\_\_, longsuffering (patience); bearing with one another, and \_\_\_\_\_ one another, if anyone has a \_\_\_\_\_ against another; even as Christ \_\_\_\_\_ you, so \_\_\_\_\_ also MUST DO."

**21.** "Therefore **LAY ASIDE all FILTHINESS** and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness **the implanted WORD**, which is able to save your souls."

- **II Corinthians 7:1** "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse \_\_\_\_\_ from all \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
- **II Peter 1:4** "By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious \_\_\_\_\_, that through \_\_\_\_\_ you may be partakers of the \_\_\_\_\_ nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
- **I Peter 2:1-2** "Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_ all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy and all evil speaking, as newborn \_\_\_\_\_, desire the pure milk of the \_\_\_\_\_, that you may \_\_\_\_\_ thereby."
- **Proverbs 4:4** "...let your heart \_\_\_\_\_ My \_\_\_\_\_; keep my commandments and \_\_\_\_\_."

**Definition: "The implanted WORD, which is able to SAVE your SOULS"** - Yes, we've already seen that it is **the WORD of God** that is the seed which causes a person to be born of God and saved, but in this context, the phrase "save your souls" does not mean our initial salvation and receiving eternal life. In this context, where James is talking to "the Brethren", meaning those who are already Christians and "saved", it means **a RENEWING of our MINDS, as the mind is part of the SOUL.** We "receive the implanted word" every time we hear a sermon or Bible study, or read God's word on our own, if we really pay attention and receive His word "with

meekness" (humility), which means a teachable spirit. Peter calls it "**desiring the pure milk of the WORD**" for "baby Christians", and also that it is through **these PRECIOUS PROMISES from GOD'S WORD** that we become "partakers of God's own divine nature". We become partakers (take part in) God's nature as **we are transformed into the image of His Son Jesus Christ**, and this happens as our minds are renewed and "saved" by the word of God.

- **Romans 12:2** "And do not be conformed to this world, but be \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ of your \_\_\_\_\_ that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
- **Romans 8:29** "For whom He foreknew, him He also predestinated (planned ahead) to be \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ of His \_\_\_\_\_, that He (Jesus) might be the firstborn among many brethren."

**22-24.** "But **be doers of the WORD**, and not HEARERS ONLY, **deceiving yourselves**. For if anyone is a **HEARER of the WORD and not a DOER**, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was."

- **Matthew 7:24-27** "Therefore, whoever \_\_\_\_\_ these sayings (words) of Mine, and \_\_\_\_\_ them, I will liken him to a \_\_\_\_\_ man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did \_\_\_\_\_, for it was founded on the rock. Now everyone who \_\_\_\_\_ these sayings of Mine, and does not \_\_\_\_\_ them, will be like a \_\_\_\_\_ man who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it \_\_\_\_\_. And \_\_\_\_\_ was its \_\_\_\_\_."
- **Revelation 3:14-19** "..... 'These things says (Jesus) the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning (origin) of the creation of God: "I know your \_\_\_\_\_, that you are neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are \_\_\_\_\_, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew (spit) you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am \_\_\_\_\_, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' - and do not know that you are wretched, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, blind and \_\_\_\_\_ - I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the \_\_\_\_\_ of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.'"

**Definition: "HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOURSELVES"** - This church in Laodicea thought they were "RICH, and had become WEALTHY, and had NEED of NOTHING" when in reality Jesus said they were "**wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.**" They had **DECEIVED THEMSELVES** about their true condition. Their attitude is one of PRIDE, self-sufficiency, the attitude of "I don't need any help from anyone - I've got it all together", which is often accompanied by apathy and indifference towards the things of God. Another name for this in the Bible is "worldliness" or "loving the world" more than loving God.