

James 1.13-15 – The Way of Death

The Nature of God, v. 13

- I. James is addressing those in the church who are thinking of abandoning God altogether, which is the sin that leads to death.
 - A. Every trial and every testing come with temptation, but God himself does not tempt anyone (Job 1.22).
 - 1. God cannot be moved by anyone to evil or with evil. His nature is good and Holy. He puts no one to the test, so we are called not to put him to the test (Deut. 6.16). He cannot be accused of tempting anyone to sin (Gen. 3).
 - a) He allows temptation and he is sovereign over all things, yet he cannot be accused of evil in this world (Acts 2.23; WCF 3.1).
 - (1) Our problem is that our immediate response to testing, trials and temptations is to blame God. He leads us through, guides us through and allows temptation so that we obey from the heart (Gen. 22.1; Deut. 8.2; Ps. 26.2; Matt. 6.13).

The Nature of Man

The Origin of Temptation, v. 14

- I. First, he addresses how we are tempted before who is responsible for temptation.
 - A. Each person is lured or drawn out like prey to be killed.
 - B. Each person is enticed, baited or deceived ...
 - C. By his own desire. He is **self-deceived**. The difference between us and Adam and Eve is that they were deceived first, by an outside intruder; we are all born self-deceived (Rom. 1.21; Eph. 4.18).
 - 1. Our desires work hand in hand with temptation.
 - 2. Man is to blame for his own temptation. God is not.
 - 3. This is human nature after the fall into sin. The desire to sin is already in us.
 - a) Our “free” will is always in subjection to our desire which comes from our sinful nature. We never desire not to sin.
 - (1) Now think of all that you have desired just this week. Our desire is where temptation begins.
 - (a) God wants your desires not just your actions.

The Origin of Death, v. 15

- I. He describes the stages of sin and its fruit in the way the birthing process is described. Sin brings forth death contrasting with steadfast faith which brings forth a crown of life in v. 12.
 - A. Jesus describes the stages of sin similarly in Matt. 5.21-30. The desire in the heart conceives sin before it becomes actions.
 - B. When you act on the desire, you are liable to hell (Matt. 5.22). The grandchild of sinful desire is death.
 1. A similar progression, yet with a different order, is found in Gen. 3.6. She saw, desired, took and ate. This brought forth death.
 - C. When “sin grows into maturity” is speaking of when sin takes over our entire lives and becomes a lifestyle (1 John 3.9).
 1. Sin’s end is to destroy and kill in this life and the next.
 - a) Yet, we have been fooled into believing that there is life in sinning against God (Gen. 3.4-6).
- II. Man is to blame for sin and death in contrast to God who is the Creator and Giver of life (Gen. 1; 2.7; Acts 3.15).
 - A. The solution is found in a Man who has life in himself (John 1.4; 5.26) opposed to man who carries this body of death (Rom. 7.24). Through one man came death, through a second Man came life (Rom. 5.17). He is the Author of life (Acts 3.15).
- III. Application.
 - A. We need a great reversal and a new birth (John 3.3).
 1. The ground of this new birth is God sending his Son into the world to die for our sins, so we might *live* through him (1 John 4.9-10).
 - a) How? He sovereignly calls us to ask in faith.
 - B. Remember, he wants our desires not just our duties.
 1. If we desire Christ at all, then it is a desire from heaven.
 - C. What do we do now?
 1. Kill sin so that it will not be fully grown (Rom. 6.12-13; 8.13; James 1.12) and allow Christlikeness to be fully grown (Eph. 4.13; Col. 1.28).
 2. If you have sinned, confess it and he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of all sin (1 John 1.8-9), for the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6.23).

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