

Saved by the Will of God.

James 1:18

James 1:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.
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.

Introduction

Much of what is taught and written today in the visible evangelical church presents a completely different picture of God's work in saving sinners than the Bible actually teaches.

If you were to only listen to these voices and read only this literature, you would come away believing that God has done all that He can to save you and is hoping and desperately waiting for you to respond to his loving invitations.

He has done all that he can now the ball is in your court. The entire sacrificial death and work of Christ on the cross can fully rejected by every single person on this planet, and God can do nothing about it, nor would He.

According to this view, the will of man and his decision to follow Jesus reigns supreme. God's will is subordinate to the will of man. God can't violate nor would he violate the will of man. Man is free to choose to be saved when ever he wants to and God will only save him when man decides to let God save him.

A popular hymn which reflects this theology, reads,

1 The Savior is waiting to enter your heart,
Why don't you let Him come in?
There's nothing in this world to keep you apart,
What is your answer to Him?

Refrain:

Time after time He has waited before,
And now He is waiting again,
To see if you're willing to open the door,
Oh, how he wants to come in.

This whole system of theology by default teaches a very weak God and powerless Savior. And it assumes something that becomes the cornerstone of the entire view.

The assumption is that the sinner is alive. That he is not in bondage to his sin and that he is not blind but can see, that his will is free to come to Christ

But the Bible says as a sinner, you are dead. You are spiritually dead.

You don't have the want to or the desire to, nor the ability to come to Christ.

Ephesians 2:1–3 (NKJV)

2 And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Romans 8:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

John 6:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ **No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.**

John 3:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

The other sad reality is that men who are in this condition don't realize they are dead. They believe they are alive and that they are ok with this God and that if they died all would be OK and they would go to heaven.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

The picture of the sinner who's in need of salvation who is often presented as a man drowning in the sea. Jesus is on the shore calling on him to take hold of a life preserver so he can be saved.

But that's not the picture of the Bible gives. The picture that the Bible gives is of a sinner who is dead.... he is really dead. He is not struggling in the

ocean hoping he won't drown but rather he is already at the bottom of the ocean and is dead and has been dead for a long time. He does not need resuscitation he needs regeneration.

He doesn't need someone to help him breathe we need someone to give him breath.

He doesn't need a little prodding and pushing and persuasion, he needs resurrection.

Returning to the hymn I previously quoted.

If we look at it through the lenses of the previous verses and the Biblical view of the spiritually dead sinner.

Then when the author says,

[The Savior is waiting to enter your heart](#), — — I would say, Well, the Savior is going to be waiting an awful long time...

[Why don't you let Him come in?](#)

First, you are dead and you can't get up and come.

Second, You don't want to to come.

[There's nothing in this world to keep you apart,](#)

Yes there is, your sin and your love of your sin.

[What is your answer to Him?](#)

No, never!!!

Theologians refer to this as Monergistic vs Synergistic

Monergism refers to God being the sole source of all that pertains to salvation. He does all the work

Synergism refers to the part man plays in salvation. He cooperates with God. But God can't do it alone.

RC Sproul, put it this way.

Monergism is derived from a combination of a prefix and a root. The prefix mono is used frequently in English to indicate that which is single or alone. The root comes from the verb "to work." The erg of monergy comes into our language to indicate a unit of work or energy. When we put the prefix and root together, we get monergy or monergism. Monergism is something that operates by itself or works alone as the sole active party. Monergism is the opposite of synergism. Synergism shares a common root with monergism, but it has a different prefix. The prefix syn comes from a Greek word meaning "with." Synergism is a cooperative venture, a working together of two or more parties.

When the term monergism is linked with the word regeneration, the phrase describes an action by which God the Holy Spirit works on a human being

without this person's assistance or cooperation. This grace of regeneration may be called operative grace. Cooperative grace, on the other hand, is grace that God offers to sinners and that they may accept or reject, depending on the sinner's disposition.

Monergistic regeneration is exclusively a divine act. Man does not have the creative power God has. To quicken a person who is spiritually dead is something only God can do. A corpse cannot revive itself. It cannot even assist in the effort. It can only respond after receiving new life. Not only can it respond then, it most certainly will respond. In regeneration the soul of man is utterly passive until it has been made alive. It offers no help in reviving itself, though once revived it is empowered to act and respond.

Here we reach the ultimate point of separation between semi-Pelagianism and Augustinianism, between Arminianism and Calvinism, between Rome and the Reformation. Here we discover whether we are utterly dependent on grace for our salvation or if, while still in the flesh, still in bondage to sin, and still dead in sin, we can cooperate with grace in such a way that affects our eternal destiny. Arminianism reverses the order of salvation. It has faith preceding regeneration. The sinner, who is

dead in sin and in bondage to sin, must somehow shed his chains, revive his spiritual vitality, and exercise faith so that he or she may be born again. In a very real sense regeneration is not so much a gift in this schema as it is a reward for responding to the offer of grace. The Arminian argues that in this universal prevenient grace is primary, in that God first offers grace for regeneration. God takes the initiative. He makes the first move and takes the first step. But this step is not decisive. This step may be thwarted by the sinner. If the sinner refuses to cooperate with or assent to this proffered grace, then grace is to no avail.

<https://effectualgrace.com/2011/02/12/three-quotes-on-monergism-vs-synergism/>

Jonah 2:9 (NKJV)

9 “....Salvation *is* of the Lord.”

Steve Lawson,

“The central truth of God’s saving grace is succinctly stated in the assertion, “Salvation is of the Lord.” This strong declaration means that every aspect of man’s salvation is from God and is entirely dependent upon God. The only contribution that we make is the sin that was laid upon Jesus Christ at the cross. The Apostle Paul affirmed this when he wrote, “From Him and through Him and to Him are all things” ([Rom. 11:36](#)). This is to say, salvation is

God determined, God purchased, God applied, and God secured. From start to finish, salvation is of the Lord alone.”<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/salvation-lord>

Charles Spurgeon, said,

”Salvation is of the Lord.” The Lord has to apply it, to make the unwilling willing, to make the ungodly godly, and bring the vile rebel to the feet of Jesus, or else salvation will never be accomplished.

<https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/salvation-of-the-lord/#flipbook/>

MacArthur, J. F., Jr
 Regeneration is the act, and wholly the act, of God, “the Father of lights” (v. 17), accomplished **in the exercise of His will**. Through **His** sovereign **will**, God washes away sin, grants forgiveness, and plants new life—a completely new nature within each person who trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He even takes residence in that life through His indwelling Spirit (John 14:17; Rom. 8:9). As the Lord 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).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 58–59). Moody Press.

Review

James 1:2–17 (NKJV)

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹ Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. ¹¹ For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

¹² Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted,

“I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Lesson

- I. The Source of our Salvation
- II. The Means of our Salvation
- III. The Result of our Salvation.

I. The Source of our Salvation

¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth

The good gifts of God find specific illustration in His bestowal of the new birth upon believers

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 102). BMH Books.

boulomai: to will

Original Word: βούλομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: boulomai

Phonetic Spelling: (boo'-lom-ahee)

Definition: to will

Usage: I will, intend, desire, wish.

Cognate: 1014 *boúlomai* – to plan with full resolve (determination). [See 1012](#) (*boulē*).

[1014](#) /*boúlomai* ("resolutely plan") is a strong term that underlines the predetermined (and determined) intention driving the planning (wishing, resolving). In contrast, [2309](#) (*thélō*) focuses on the desire ("wishfulness") behind making an offer (cf. TDNT, 1, 629).

[While God's "thelō-offers" can be rejected (see [2309](#) / *thélō*), His [1014](#) /*boúlomai* ("planning") always works out His purpose, especially in conjunction with presetting the physical scenes of history.]

“willing” (*boulētheis*), variously translated “in the exercise of his will” (NASB); “in fulfillment of his own purpose” (NRSV); “he chose” (NIV

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 80). Eerdmans; Apollos.

First in the greek sentence. A.P. Pt.

The term stresses that the new birth roots in “the resolute will of God as the motivating force which gives new life.” Sin brought death (1:25), but God resolutely willed not to let us perish in sin. His deliberate will to save us was not forced by any outside necessity. Having willed it, God acted freely to save us—a fact wholly inconsistent with the claim that God tempts an individual to sin.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 102). BMH Books.

“He chose to give us birth” asserts how God’s will expressed itself. “Give us birth” (*apekuēsen*) is the same verb used in verse 15.

apokueó: to give birth to

Original Word: ἀποκυέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: apokueó

Phonetic Spelling: (ap-ok-oo-eh'-o)

Definition: to give birth to

Usage: I bring forth, give birth to (a child), a medical or physical word, marking the close of pregnancy.

There is pictured a terrible bringing forth of sin unto death; here we have God's will acting to bring us forth as new beings

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 102). BMH Books.

The aorist tense looks back to the time of our conversion and records the fact of our spiritual birth as a historical reality

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 102). BMH Books.

John 1:12–13 (NASB95)

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,

13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:3–8 (NKJV)

³ Jesus answered and said to him, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**”

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?”

⁵ Jesus answered, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.** ⁶ That which is born of the

flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

1 John 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Luke 10:21–24 (NKJV)

²¹ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. ²² All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.”

²³ Then He turned to *His* disciples and said privately, “Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see; ²⁴ for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have

not seen *it*, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard *it*.”

1 Corinthians 3:6–7 (NKJV)

⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

John 6:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

2 Corinthians 4:6 (NKJV)

⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ (as it is written, “*I have made you a father of many nations*”) in the presence of Him whom he believed —God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

Acts 13:48 (NKJV)

⁴⁸ Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

I. The Source of our Salvation

II. The Means of our Salvation

¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth,

βουληθεὶς ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς λόγω ἀληθείας εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχὴν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων.

God will accomplish this spiritual birth by the “word of truth” (James 1:18). That phrase appears five times in the New Testament—once here, and four times in Paul. Paul’s use of the phrase clearly means “the gospel,” as these examples show:

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. (Eph. 1:13)

Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you. (Col. 1:5b–6a esv)

Dorioni, D. M. (2007). [James](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Dorioni, Eds.; pp. 40–41). P&R Publishing.

Neither “word” nor “truth” has the article in the original; the stress is on the quality of each. The “word” used as the instrument of regeneration denotes a divine message, spoken or written. God used “the message of truth” (Williams). The genitive “of truth” may be appositional, “a message which consists of truth” (cf. John 17:17), but it seems better to take the genitive as objective, “a message which proclaims truth.” Under either view it is a direct reference to the gospel, a message that embodies the divine truth of God in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

James 1:21–22 (NKJV)

²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Faithfully proclaimed under the power of the Holy Spirit, this message works regeneration in the

hearts of those who receive it. There is no substitute for the proclamation of the gospel.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [*James*](#) (Revised Edition, p. 103). BMH Books.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Corinthians 4:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

1 Peter 1:23–25 (NKJV)

²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴ because

*“All flesh is as grass,
And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.
The grass withers,
And its flower falls away,*

²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures forever.”

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, ¹⁴ to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We live in an age where everything else under the sun is used to “win people to Christ”. We will love our neighbor, do good to others, help the

community, make our church services more accommodating. Be as friendly and inviting as we can. We will do everything we possibly can in our friendship evangelism, except evangelize with the Gospel.

The only thing that makes our witness different from the morally committed mormon or the religiously committed catholic, is our Message. We have the truth of the gospel. If all we do is live it and never speak it, we have failed.

When it comes to our churches.

We will turn the lights down low, turn the stage lights high. Dress with holes in our jeans. Fill the services with shallow doctrinally deficient songs that we repeat over and over. We will make the sermon, light, short and non-offensive and most important as practical as possible about you. The Gospel is minimize and squeeze out of the worship services more and more.

We are only as effective as the clarity of gospel is preached.

The early church turned the world upside down, not by friendship evangelism, but by preaching the Gospel.

Peter begins on the day of Pentecost, not by serving the community and being a good neighbor but by preaching the gospel.....

Acts 2:22–24 (NKJV)

²² “Men of Israel, **hear these words**: (*not look at my life and love for you*) Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Acts 2:37–41 (NKJV)

³⁷ Now when **they heard this**, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Then Peter **said to them**, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰ And with **many other words he testified and exhorted them**, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Then those who gladly

received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

Acts 4:1–4 (NKJV)

4 Now as they (*Peter and John*) **spoke to the people**, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, ² being greatly disturbed that **they taught** the people **and preached** in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ However, many of those who **heard the word** believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Acts 4:17–20 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But so that it **spreads no further** among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on **they speak to no man** in this name.”

¹⁸ So they called them and commanded them **not to speak at all nor teach** in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. ²⁰ For we cannot but **speak the things** which we have seen and heard.”

Acts 4:31 (NKJV)

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and **they spoke the word of God with boldness.**

____After the apostles had been put in prison for preaching and then let out by the angel, they show back up at the temple and teach again, and then....

Acts 5:40–6:1 (NKJV)

⁴⁰....and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they **should not speak** in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. ⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they **did not cease teaching and preaching** Jesus *as* the Christ.

6 Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying....

We are told today that street preaching is not a good approach to evangelism. Some are embarrassed by it. Some of you are embarrassed if someone starts talking about Jesus to someone. We are told that we should not speak the gospel but live the gospel.

We are to show the gospel by our life, and as a last resort use words, only if you have too.

The Bible says different.

The apostles had a different view. The Early church had a different view.

It is preach the gospel first and let your life bring credibility to the words.

This was the commitment of the Apostle Paul

1 Corinthians 2:1–5(NKJV)

2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. **3** I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. **4** And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:21–23 (NKJV)

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save

those who believe. ²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,

1 Corinthians 1:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Romans 1:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

1 Corinthians 9:16 (NKJV)

...., woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

2 Timothy 4:2–5 (NKJV)

² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all

longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

I. The Source of our Salvation

II. The Means of our Salvation

III. The Result of our Salvation.

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.

“That we might be” (*eis to einai hēmas*) indicates purpose, but that does not imply that the purpose is as yet unrealized.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 103). BMH Books.

The **first fruits** were the first and best of the crops that were harvested and were usually an indicator of

what the rest of the crop would be like. A farmer would be inclined to take that early harvest and store it away in case the rest was lost to drought, locusts, or other calamities. But the Lord required that it was to be that first and best which was offered to Him.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 63). Moody Press.

The figure of the “first fruits” is drawn from the Old Testament Law that designated the first portion of the harvest as belonging to God, that was to be offered to Him before the rest could be used for ordinary purposes (Exod. 23:19; Lev 23:9–11; Deut. 18:4). These first fruits were the specimens and pledge of the full harvest. Paul used the term of the first converts in a province as the promise of the coming harvest in the area (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15). The figure would be especially meaningful and challenging to the Jewish Christians to whom the figure was being applied.

When James speaks of “we” as the first fruits, it seems natural that he is applying the term specifically to his Jewish Christian readers. They were the first sheaves of the gospel harvest and the earnest of what would yet be reaped. As the first ripe samples of that harvest, they proclaimed the new

order of spiritual things that God was bringing upon the world scene.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 104). BMH Books.

Revelation 14:4 (NKJV)

⁴ These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

1 Corinthians 16:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—

these believers are to be viewed as the earnest of the transformation awaiting the present creation (Matt. 19:28; Rom. 8:19–22; Rev. 21:1). Creation will yet share in the freedom now being experienced by God's saints.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 104). BMH Books.

ktisma: a creature

Original Word: κτίσμα, ατος, τό
Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter
Transliteration: ktisma
Phonetic Spelling: (ktis'-mah)
Definition: a creature
Usage: a created thing, a creature.

κτίσμα, κτισματος, τό (κτίζω); thing founded; created thing; (Vulg.creatura) (A. V. creature): [1 Timothy 4:4](#); [Revelation 5:13](#); [Revelation 8:9](#) (Wis. 9:2 Wis. 13:5); contextually and metaphorically, κτίσμα Θεοῦ, transformed by divine power to a moral newness of soul, spoken of true Christians as created anew by regeneration (others take it here unrestrictedly), [James 1:18](#) (see ἀπαρχή, metaphorically, a.; also κτίζω under the end, κτίσις, 2 a.); τά ἐν ἀρχῇ κτισματα Θεοῦ, of the Israelites, Sir. 36:20 (15). ((Strabo, Dionysius Halicarnassus))

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Romans 8:19–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the

bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The new birth results from God's sovereignly coming down to a sinner and by His grace cleansing him, planting His Spirit within him, and giving him a completely new spiritual nature. He then has "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph. 4:24).

After Augustine was converted, a woman he formerly lived with called to him as he walked down the street, but he did not answer. She persisted and finally ran up to him and said, "Augustine, it is I." To which he replied, "I know, but it is no longer I."

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 61). Moody Press.