

“The Epistle of James: Fruits Not Roots”

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INTRODUCTION

In the providential working of the Lord GOD He used man’s evil to carry out the divine plan of church planting.¹ Scripture states, “*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles*” (Acts 8:1). As Jewish Baptist church members faced persecution in the form of physical (slaughter, beatings, and imprisonment) and financial (loss of possessions and income), they scattered with their families for their lives. The scattered Jewish Christians from the Jerusalem church became known as the *Diaspora* (διασπορά).² The Lord Jesus experienced the scattering of His “*little flock*” (Lk. 12:32) as well when persecution arose. He cited Zechariah’s prophecy and said, “*All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*” (Mk. 14:27; see Zech. 13:7). The God-Man Jesus, the son of Mary, chose one who had pertinent family training and biblical instruction to minister ultimately to the Jerusalem assembly and her dispersed church members. James (Ἰάκωβος *Iakobos* [42x]), the step-brother of Jesus, being well-grounded in the theological precepts and the illustrative narrative of the *Tanak*, wrote his encouraging *Epistle of James* “*to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*” (Jam. 1:1). In his unsaved state until after the resurrection,⁴ James nevertheless gleaned knowledge, experience, and a growing burden as God was developing this special brother for post-conversion Christian service. He became one of the three pillars in the church of Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9).

Unlike Peter, “*the apostle of the circumcision*” (Gal. 2:7) with the gift of prophecy, James, the second Bishop of Jerusalem, employed his gift of exhortation to encourage all, especially the ecclesiological groups of the recent *Diaspora*. James had a heart for those who were experiencing persecution, ridicule, rejection, and poverty for identifying with the Lord Jesus Christ. This “*servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Jam. 1:1) implemented “*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer*” (Rom. 12:12), as he exhorted the churches “*throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria*” (Acts 9:31) and beyond (Mt. 28:19-20). His message was not one of evangelism but of edification. Because of James’ personal background, he was well-versed in “*the principles of the doctrine of Christ*” (Heb. 6:1), even prior to conversion. He realized that biblical Christianity was not mere knowledge of biblical facts, but a changed life which produced fruit. Likewise with the audience of his *Epistle*, evidence of a changed life must evince from every church member. The scattered Baptist churches needed to move on from dealing with “*the root of salvation*” (i.e., **faith**), but now to “*the fruit of salvation*” (i.e., **works**)!

¹“*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*” (Ps. 76:10).

²Jehovah predicted that dispersion would be the lot of His people, saying, “*And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone*” (Dt. 28:64).

³The noun διασπορά *diaspora* occurs also in Jn. 7:35 and I Pet. 1:1.

⁴Cf. “*For neither did his brethren believe in him*” (Jn. 7:5) and “*After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles*” (I Cor. 15:7).

AUTHOR

By the process of elimination of the four men bearing the name James in the New Testament (NT), James the son of Joseph and Mary and step-brother of Jesus becomes the obvious author of this *Epistle*. James “the less,” apostle and son of Alphaeus (Mt. 10:3), and the unknown James (Lk. 6:16), are easily dispatched as inconsequential candidates. John’s brother and son of Zebedee, James the apostle was martyred early (AD 43-44) and is eliminated. James, the step-brother of the Lord, heads the list of Jesus’ siblings (Mt. 13:55) and became a believer around the time of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (cf. Jn. 7:3-5; I Cor. 15:8; Acts 1:14). Although James grew up in a seemingly dysfunctional family with absent father and “questionable” mother, he knew the *Tanak* thoroughly and heard the preaching and teaching of Jesus frequently. He was familiar with the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Jam. 1:22 with Mt. 7:20, 24; Jam. 3:12 with Mt. 7:16; Jam. 2:5 with Mt. 5:3; Jam. 4:11-12 with Mt. 7:1; Jam. 5:1-6 with Mt. 6:19-24; Jam. 5:12 with Mt. 5:34-37).⁵ He lived with the perfect Man who never sinned, even with His mouth (Jam. 3:2). He had first-hand experience observing practical Christian theology as lived out by the perfect God-Man. He watched as his brother Jesus resisted temptation perfectly, practiced impartiality perfectly, showed the fruit of righteousness perfectly, controlled the tongue perfectly, dealt with lusts perfectly, showed wisdom with wealth perfectly, and practiced the life of prayer perfectly.

James was a baptized church member of the Jerusalem church who matured spiritually during the days of Saul’s persecution, and developed a burden for his fellow dispersed family and church members. When the Apostle Peter began to travel (Acts 8:14 ff.; 9:32 ff.; 10:5 ff.), James grew in spiritual stature as one of the three pillars of the Jerusalem church (Gal. 2:9), and ultimately became the second bishop of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:17; 15:28; and 21:13). James had vast head knowledge about the Scriptures long before he was converted. He knew that head knowledge was not sufficient for salvation, but that faith in the truth brought salvation. He had heard and heard and heard what Jesus had taught, and presumably had assimilated into his family life as a hearer but not a doer. He was deceived. Once he realized he had no fruit of a believer’s life, which teaching Jesus repeated (Mt. 3:10; 7:17-19), James recognized his fruitless condition, exercised faith (Heb. 4:2), and later wrote, “*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*” (Jam. 1:22). Now, converted to Christ and pastor of the Jerusalem assembly, James wanted to encourage his scattered church members as they faced many trials. He felt at liberty to use many imperatives, commanding the audience to obey, starting with “*let patience have*” (1:4).

AUDIENCE

The early Christian church at Jerusalem was primarily Jewish, comprised of Jewish apostles (Mt. 10:1-4), sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt. 10:5-7), and increased with Israelites (Acts 2:1 ff.; 6:1, 7). Albeit in time, initially through Peter (Acts 10:5 ff.) and then primarily Paul (Acts 9:15; 11:25-26;

⁵The *Epistle of James* is replete with illustrations from nature and life within the Lord’s creation, referring to sea waves (1:6), grass and flowers (1:10-11), the sun’s heat and movement (1:11 and 17), conception (1:15), firstfruits (1:18), mirrors (1:23), horses (3:3), ships (3:4), fire (3:5), water (3:11), fruit (3:12), sowing and harvesting (3:18), insects (5:2), rust (5:3), wages (5:4), rain (5:7), anointing with oil (5:14), and drought (5:17).

13:1-4; Gal. 2:7-8), Gentiles became prominent within Christianity, certainly after AD 70.⁶ Both Peter and James shepherded the Jerusalem church and were consequently concerned about the Jewish *diaspora* Saul had caused (Acts 8:1 ff.). The Apostle Peter addressed the scattered Jews about the reality of persecution and apostasy in the *First and Second Epistles of Peter* (I Pet. 1:1; II Pet. 2:1). However, James counseled the *diaspora* about the response to persecution and temptations, showing that the fruit of faith is necessarily obedience, both required and costly. He knew and loved his audience, calling them “*my brethren*” or “*my beloved brethren*” numerous times (1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 5:10 and 12).

The audience of the *Epistle of James* was “*the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*” (Jam. 1:1). Certainly, this referred to the descendants of the sons of Jacob as the expression finds employment elsewhere (Gen. 49:28; Ex. 24:4; 28:21; 39:14; Ezk. 47:13; Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30; and Rev. 21:12). Also, years later the Apostle Paul utilized the term when speaking to King Agrippa, saying, “*Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews*” (Acts 26:7). As stated earlier, both Peter and James knew personally the individuals and families who were recipients of Saul’s fierce fury, and had a pastoral burden to inform and encourage the *diaspora* victims. Not so, says some, who suggest the possibility that the technical expression “*twelve tribes*” may be used metaphorically referring to Gentiles or to all Christians. For instance, the international scholar Douglas Moo avers about this postulation, saying, “*But the New Testament shows that the phrase could be applied broadly to believers in general as the new people of God, the fulfillment of the Old Testament and Jewish expectation of a regathered and renewed Israel (Mt. 19:28; Rev. 7:4-8; 21:12; cf. Gal. 6:16 [sic]). Thus, while the content and tone of the letter strongly imply that the readers are Jewish Christians, the designation ‘twelve tribes’ in itself does not require this restriction.*”⁷

However, the content of the *Epistle* belies its Jewish nature supporting the position of a Jewish author writing to a Jewish audience. James employed Jewish elements in the inspired homily such as τήν συναγωγὴν (*ten sunagogen*) for “*assembly*” (2:1), the OT expression “*Lord of Sabaoth*” (Κυρίου Σαβαώθ⁸ *Kuriou Sabaoth*) in 5:4, the reference to τῆς γέεννης (*tes gehenna*) for “*hell*” (3:6), the citation of five *Tanak* passages (cf. James 1:11; 2:8; 2:11; 2:23; and 4:6), numerous allusions to OT characters such as Abraham (2:21), Isaac (2:21), Rahab (2:25), Job (5:11), and Elijah (5:17), and the argument for monotheism (2:19). James made no reference to the Gentiles; Peter did but he distinguished his Jewish audience from the Gentiles (I Pet. 2:12; 4:3). Bishop James wrote to his former Jewish friends, family, and congregation, who knew their respective tribes,⁹ and were now scattered throughout the Mediterranean basin.

⁶The Lord Jesus predicted the prominence of the Gentiles following the Jew’s rejection (Mt. 21:43). After the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Second Temple, the Jewish nation finalized its apostasy with very few Jews turning to Jesus Christ. Conversely, gentile salvation increased dramatically and any aspects of Judaism decreased immediately.

⁷Douglas J. Moo, James. *An Introduction and Commentary. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, Vol. 16 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), p. 46.

⁸The Greek translates literally the Hebrew יהוה צבאות *Jehovah tzeva’oth*.

⁹Anna knew her tribe was “*Aser*” (Asher [Lk. 2:36]) as did Paul, whose tribe was Benjamin (Phil. 3:5). The Jews of the first century did not lose their tribal identity!

DATE

Certain chronological parameters set the possible date of writing of the *Epistle of James*. Tradition maintains that James was martyred in AD 62, setting the latest parameter for writing. The earliest parameter, of course, would be sometime after he was converted (AD 30).¹⁰ Since James and Paul deal with faith and works from two different perspectives, it seems germane to discuss the chronology of Paul and his relationship with James. Following a strict and compressed chronology of Paul based on the literal interpretation of key passages (Acts 9:1 ff.; Gal. 1:13-16), it seems that Saul's persecution and conversion occurred within a year of the Lord crucifixion (AD 30-31). After three years in Arabia, Paul made his first trip to Jerusalem (AD 33-34) and saw Peter and James (Gal. 1:17-19). He wanted to clarify that these apostles were preaching the same Gospel that he preached, and certified that Peter preached justification by faith (cf. Mt. 18:6; Acts 10:35) and that James preached faith has works or fruit (Mt. 3:8-11; Jam. 3:18), all of which truth the Lord Jesus taught as manifested in the Apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). After fourteen years, Paul made his second visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30; Gal. 2:1), during which time Peter left the Jerusalem pastorate (Acts 8:14; 10:5-6), referred the experience of his escape from Herod in AD 42-43 to the assembly leader James (Acts 12:17), and subsequently submitted to the leadership of Bishop James of the Jerusalem assembly (Acts 15:7-14). Although Paul began and concluded his first missionary journey sometime between AD 47-49 (Acts 13-14), James who knew how to construct letters (Acts 15:20-29), wrote to the *Diaspora* sometime between AD 42-47. The Jerusalem Council occurred in AD 49, but neither author of *Galatians* or of *James* alluded to its yet future decree condemning works salvation (Act 15:1). The date of AD 42 for the *Epistle of James* makes it the earliest NT canonical Scripture, and suggests the urgency for pastoral exhortation to the persecuted Jews from their beloved and former Shepherd James.

GREEK TEXT

The text of the *Epistle of James* reflects the cultured Greek of a well-educated author who employed his vast knowledge of the Hebrew *Tanak* into smooth reading for Greek-speaking Jews. Minor textual variants arise in the *Textus Criticus* (CT) with the exception of the expression of the demons' faith, as the *Textus Receptus* (TR) records, "*Thou believest that **there is one God**; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble*" (Jam. 2:19). The *KJV* renders the TR expression ὁ Θεὸς εἷς ἐστὶ (*ho Theos heis esti*) as "*there is one God*," teaching the single and supreme authority of the monotheistic Lord GOD.¹¹ However, many modern translations render various Greek variants as "God is one" (εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός *heis estin ho Theos*), dealing with the unity of God rather than the monotheism that demands the authority of God (*RSV, ASV, NAS, ESV, et al*).¹² Although elsewhere the Scripture teaches the unity of the Godhead, such as John's asseveration, saying, "*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these*

¹⁰This author defends the AD 30 date for the crucifixion of Christ and the 3-4 BC birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹¹Demons are under the absolute authority of God and not Satan (cf. Job 1:6)!

¹²The Greek variants follow some combination of εἷς θεὸς ἐστὶν (*heis Theos estin*), such as εἷς ἐστὶν θεός (*heis estin Theos*), εἷς ὁ ἐστὶν θεός (*heis ho estin Theos*), θεὸς εἷς ἐστὶν (*Theos heis estin*), εἷς ὁ θεός (*heis ho Theos*), and ἐστὶν θεός (*estin theos*).

three are one” (I Jn. 5:7), James’ point is that demons recognize their subjugation to the ultimate authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹³ Certainly, Satan is the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33), and the various contrasting and conflicting Greek renderings bespeak of this spiritual reality.¹⁴

PURPOSE

The purpose of James’ *Epistle* was to exercise his spiritual gift of exhortation in written form, employing the traits of such gift, such as expressed by Paul, saying, “*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer*” (Rom. 12:12). He observed his step-brother Jesus exercise perfectly¹⁵ all seven spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:6-8),¹⁶ and James no doubt wanted to emulate the Lord with regard to the gift of exhortation, of course being empowered by the Spirit of God. The *Epistle of James* is a literary homily focusing on joy (1:2; 4:9), patience (1:3, 4; 5:7, 8, 10, and 11),¹⁷ and prayer (5:15-16) in both his introduction (1:2-18) and conclusion (5:12-20), inserting pastoral counseling concerning various issues facing the scattered churches. Dealing with mature Jewish believers, James did not write a theological treatise as such,¹⁸ but he presented the practicality of theological truth represented perfectly in the life of Jesus Christ as a guide for believers to live out doctrinal truth with Christ-like behaviour. James gave a dissertation on the “Theology of Behaviour” which demands “showing faith by works” (2:14-26). The **root** of salvation is faith; the **fruit** of salvation is works!

CANONICITY

Having not been written by one of the Twelve, and not to one specific church, the *Epistle of James* was somewhat neglected by the patristics and slow to canonization. Moreover, since the audience was obviously Jewish, interest in it by Gentile Christians after AD 70 was minimal. Among the early Greek Church Fathers Origen and Eusebius alluded to the *Epistle* by name. The later Antiochene Fathers embraced it in the east, but the western Latin patristics rejected it as authentic until the Holy Roman Catholic

¹³Cf. “*And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep*” (Lk. 8:30-31).

¹⁴For an elaborate defense of the TR and thorough expose of the CT, see Thomas M. Strouse, *The Lord GOD Hath Spoken: A Guide to Bibliology* (Cromwell, CT: Bible Baptist Theological Press, 2015), pp. 197-283.

¹⁵See “*For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*” (Jn. 3:34).

¹⁶“*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*”

¹⁷The motif of patience runs throughout the *Epistle*, having been hinged on “*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath*” (1:19).

¹⁸Theological names and expressions are not abundant as the name of the “*Lord Jesus Christ*” occurs only twice (1:1; 2:1), for instance. The doctrines of the incarnation, death, or resurrection are silently omitted. The imprecise expression “*the coming of the Lord*” is important but contextually vague. Certainly, James does not give an organized Bibliology, Theology Proper, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, or Eschatology!

Church canonized *James* in the Third Council at Carthage in AD 397. Both western and eastern Catholicism received the *Epistle of James* without question from that time forth. Then with the Reformation (1517), former Roman Catholic Martin Luther questioned its canonicity because of its apparent contradiction with Romans and Galatians, and with the doctrine of justification by faith. Nevertheless, Protestantism and Catholicism as a whole have supported the canonical status of the *Epistle of James*. Of course, the Lord's churches have received *James* as canonical Scripture from the first century forward!

OUTLINE

Introduction (1:1)

I. Endurance in Tests (1:2-18)

II. Exercise with Truth (1:19-2:26)

III. Examination of Self (3:1-4:12)

IV. Eschaton of Lord (4:13-5:11)

V. Encouragement for All (5:12-20)

BRIEF CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter One

After giving a brief greeting (1:1), James focused on the immediate challenges of his audience, namely trials as Jewish Christians in a pagan world. He dealt with the reason for and reaction to the temptations in the believers' lives as they endured them (1:2-18). He encouraged the churches to exercise the truth they knew with resulting Christian fruit (1:19-27).

Chapter Two

Exercising the truth required showing consequences of a changed life with respect to persons specifically and Christian fruit generally (2:1-26).

Chapter Three

One should have self-awareness in Christian living, especially with regard to the tongue. Control of words in humility will emulate the perfect God-Man Jesus, as believers are enjoined with examination of self (3:1-18).

Chapter Four

This self-examination extends to behaviour towards others, avoiding various social transgressions and submitting to God (4:1-12). Realizing the future is unknown and imminent, James encouraged his audience about the *eschaton* or coming of the Lord (4:13-17).

Chapter Five

The coming of the Lord should impact the focus on the riches of the world with appropriate disinterest (5:1-12) and the encouragement about prayer with great interest (5:13-20). In conclusion, when trials come, the Christian should respond as did the perfect Lord Jesus Christ: "*Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*" (1:4). After all, Job did: "*Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy*" (Jam. 5:11)!

**James and Astronomy (James 1:13-18):
All the Christian Needs to Know about Solar Parallax**
Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is the self-revelation of God. It reveals the absolute truth about the Lord and His creation. The Scriptures give special revelation about the Lord Jesus Christ as Creator and Savior. The Bible writers build their teaching of the great redemptive truths upon the physical realities of the created heavens and earth (e.g., Ps. 19:1-14; Mal. 4:2).¹⁹ James²⁰ is no exception as he based several truths about God and sin's temptation upon the physical objects and movements within the created heavens. This simple believer and member of the holy family of Joseph and Mary had a thorough understanding of the workings of the heavens and illustrated the Lord's perfections in contrast to sin. Using several technical terms historically associated with astronomy, James revealed a biblical cosmogony²¹ upon which he taught redemptive analogies. He used at least four terms that relate to astronomy, including “do” [not] *err*” (πλανᾶσθε *planasthe*), “lights” (τῶν φώτων *ton photon*), “variableness” (παραλλαγῆ, *parallage*), and “shadow of turning” (τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα *tropes aposkiasma*). The terms, when used biblically, give the absolute heavenly foundation upon which redemptive truths are understood. Did not the precious Saviour assert, saying, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” (Jn. 3:12). Since the Apostle John assured his audience of local church members that “ye know” (οἶδα [*oida*] = absolutely) *all things*” (I Jn. 2:20), it follows that Christians, with the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit (I Jn. 2:27), may have absolute knowledge not only about redemptive truths but also about His creation.²² This essay will show exegetically that James used several analogies from creation to teach that the Lord does not tempt men to sin. The primary import of this passage teaches that God is unchanging in His goodness toward man. The secondary emphases relate to biblical revelation about planets, stellar lights, solar parallax and tropic movements. James revealed under inspiration all the absolute knowledge the Christian needs to know, and for that matter can possibly know, about these astronomical phenomena.

¹⁹For instance, the Lord Jesus Christ taught many truths from parables, building a spiritual truth upon a physical truth. In Mt. 13 he assumed the physical reality of seeds, tares, leaven, treasure, pearls, and nets, and taught spiritual realities built upon these items from the natural realm.

²⁰Of the four men named James in the New Testament (NT), only the half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 13:55) is the plausible explanation. James believed in Jesus as Savior only after His resurrection (Jn. 7:5; I Cor. 15:7), was counted among the apostles (Gal. 1:19), and became a leader in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13).

²¹I.e., “the origin and movements of the heavens.”

²²The Lord's ἐκκλησία (*ekklesia*), the visible assembly of immersed believers with pastors and deacons is “*the pillar and ground of the truth*” (Mt. 28:19-20; I Tim. 3:15), needs only the authoritative and sufficient Scriptures to understand all truth (II Tim. 3:16-17).

CONTEXT

James wrote his epistle to Christian Jews who were scattered about, although meeting in synagogues and organized as local churches (cf. Jam. 1:1; 2:2; 5:14). These early churches were undergoing severe persecution (cf. Acts 8:1-4; 11:19; 12:1 ff.) and needed the divine perspective concerning trials and temptations. In the aforementioned *pericope* (1:13-18), James lists five reasons why God is not the source for the temptation to sin. Having declared that trials or “*temptations*” (πειρασμοῖς *peirasmois*) are to be endured (1:2-12), James now asserted that temptations are to be resisted. He needed to instruct his audience as to the source for the enticement to evil.

The writer's first argument dealt with the nature of God (v. 13). God's holy nature perfectly resists sin (cf. Lev. 11:44-45). He has no fallen nature to submit to the appeal of evil (literally “evils”). He “*cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth* (πειραζόμενος *peirazomenos*) *he any man,*” James declared. The nature of the Godhead is separated absolutely from all moral wickedness. Why would a Christian Jew think that the holy God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would tempt a believer to ungodliness?

The second argument James established was that temptation comes from within man.²³ Using the present passive verb “*is tempted*” and the two present passive participles “*is drawn away*” and “*enticed,*” the writer focused on the culprit—“*his own lust.*” Man's Adamic nature (cf. Pss. 51:5; 58:3; Rom. 3:23) lures and snares its victim, the man himself. Following the genealogical motif, James expressed the origin and destination of sin. When temptation comes to man's lust, his old nature conceives and gives birth to sin. When the sin is mature, it bears offspring in terms of death. Man is the culpable one, and not God, with regard to the enticement to sin.

Next, James warned his audience about being deceived (I Cor. 6:9; 15:33; Gal. 6:7). The present passive imperative “*err*” (πλανᾶσθε *planasthe*) with the negation (μὴ *me*) suggests that his audience was actively engaged in thinking of God as the author of temptation. The verb πλανᾶω (*planao*) is translated twenty-four times in the AV as “*deceive,*” six times as “*err,*” five times as “*go astray,*” twice as “*seduce,*” once as “*wander,*” and once as “*be out of the way.*” It is the root from which the noun “planet” comes, and a planet is an astral object which “wanders” around the sun. James' audience was allowing itself to go astray in deception about God's role in temptation. James used an apt illustration for Christians whose theological perspective strays from the Scriptures (cf. also Jam. 5:19). They were like “*wandering stars*” that go astray (cf. Jude 1:13).

In contrast to the deceived perspective some held, James asserted that the fourth reason God was not the author of temptation is His nature of goodness (v. 17). Only good comes from the Lord (Ps. 34:8) as His act of giving (δόσις *dosis*)²⁴ is good and His “*gift*” (δῶρημα *dorema*) is perfect. His benefits are from above, rather than “*earthly, sensual, devilish*” (cf. Jam. 3:15), descending from the loving Heavenly Father. To illustrate the magnitude of the Lord's beneficence, James affirmed that God, as “*the Father of lights*” (πατὴρ τῶν φῶτων *patros ton photon*),²⁵ created the astral lights known as the morning light, sun, moon, and stars for man's

²³This statement does not ignore that Satan is the great tempter and who knows how to appeal to the lusts of Adam's sons (Mt. 4:1, 3).

²⁴Cf. Phil. 4:15.

²⁵Cf. Ps. 84:11; Mal. 4:2; Eccl. 12:2. God is likened to the sun and He created the lights.

continued blessing (cf. Gen. 1:2-5; 14-18). But the Lord God, unlike the sun, has no variableness (παραλλαγή *parallage*)²⁶ or shadow of turning (τροπής ἀποσκίασμα *tropes aposkiasma*).²⁷ The sun's apparent movement from the perspective of observers on earth at two different points simultaneously or what is known as "parallax," and its movement above and below the equator (cf. Rom. 8:39) or its "tropic," are observationally indiscernible. Nevertheless, the Lord absolutely never changes (cf. Mal. 3:6) in contrast to the indiscernible parallactical angle and tropical movement of the sun.

James concluded with his fifth argument that God does not entice to temptation. The Lord is the God of creation not destruction.²⁸ His will includes begetting (cf. v. 15) man through the instrumentality of the word of truth (cf. II Cor. 6:7; Eph. 1:13) for regeneration (cf. Jn. 3:3, 5). James assured his audience that God's purpose was to give them eternal life through the new birth so that these Christian Jews would become firstfruits (cf. Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:10) of the anticipated greater harvest of mankind (cf. Rom. 11:25). James effectively repudiated any notion from his audience that God tempts man to sin. He based his arguments on the biblical nature of God, man, and the heavens. As his audience was deeply inculcated in biblical knowledge based on the OT Scriptures, they would have understood James explicit and implicit teaching, including his cosmological analogies. The remainder of this essay will address the implications of James' biblical model for his cosmological analogies and will repudiate evolutionary theories that contradict this model.

JAMES' BIBLICAL ASTRONOMY

Because of James' early childhood education from his godly parents Joseph and Mary, he would have learned and understood the biblical teaching concerning the Old Testament (OT) cosmogony. His *Epistle* is replete with references to twenty-two OT books and numerous analogies from the natural realm, including vegetation, procreation, astronomy, animal husbandry, anatomy, hydrology, etc. He built his spiritual truths on the reality of the natural realm, in which he had a solid biblical education. James assumed his audience would have a basic understanding of the heavenly terms and expressions he employed in his analogies. Concerning the origin and structure of the created heavens and earth, James understood the following Scriptural truths.

1. James knew that God created the heavens and earth from no existing material (*creatio ex nihilo*), but through the Logos (*creatio ex Deo*) during the creation week (cf. Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:1-3; Heb. 11:3).
2. On the first day He created a darkened sphere (cf. Isa. 40:22; Prov. 8:27) of water called earth, and the Spirit Himself moved over the surface of the earth, illuminating the sphere as He moved over it as the light source (cf. Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:2).

²⁶This biblical *hapax legomena* (word used only once, although compare II Kings 9:20 [LXX]) refers to change or variation. Lexicographers such as Arndt and Gingrich cite ancient usage of *parallage* in Aeschylus and Plato. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 625.

²⁷These two nouns are *hapax legomena* and form the genitive construction. In this case the genitive is one of cause, "a shadow because of change."

²⁸Cf. Lk. 9:56: "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

3. On the second day God created the firmament (= Heavens [dual ending on Heavens means this refers to only the atmosphere and stellar “outer space”]) and placed it between the waters under (i.e., the earth) and the waters above the firmament, the outer limit of His physical creation (cf. Gen. 1:6-8; Ps. 148:4).
4. By the end of the third day the cosmos was clearly geocentric, with the light source in the heavens moving around the stationary earth (cf. Gen. 1:2-13).
5. On the fourth day, God created and put the greater light, the lesser light and stars in the firmament for the benefit of the earth. The earth was distinct from the revolving heavens with its various component parts, such as sun, moon, and stars. These moving lights became the basis for the daily, seasonal and yearly light sources for the stationary earth (cf. Gen. 1:14-18).
6. The remainder of the OT Scripture builds upon the revelatory truth of the creation week, consistently teaching that the earth is stationary and that the heavens, including the sun and stars which were placed in the heavens, move around it.
7. James knew that from Joshua's perspective the sun and moon moved phenomenologically around the earth (cf. Josh. 10:12), but he also knew that from God's perspective, Who is outside of His creation and Who declared absolutely that the sun and moon moved, and He caused them to stop (cf. Josh. 10:13; Hab. 3:11).
8. James knew that the author of Judges taught absolutely that the stars moved through their respective courses in the heavens (cf. Judg. 5:20).
9. James knew that King David taught absolutely that the sun moved through its circuit as a racer around the track (cf. Ps. 19:4-6).
10. James knew that wise Solomon taught absolutely several natural phenomena moved relative to the stationary earth, including the sun, wind, and rivers (cf. Eccl. 1:5-7).
11. James knew that the prophet Isaiah recorded absolutely that the shadow of the sun (and therefore the sun) moved ten degrees backward as a cosmological sign (cf. Isa. 38:8b).
12. James knew that the psalmist Asaph revealed absolutely that the sun rose and went down relative to the stationary earth (cf. Ps. 50:1).
13. James knew that Eliphaz declared absolutely that God walked in “*the circuit of heaven*” which carries the sun, moon, and stars (cf. Job 22:14).
14. James knew that the OT Scriptures taught absolutely and consistently that the sun, moon, and heavens moved relative to the stationary earth, with the exception of the Lord's shaking the earth in judgment, along with the heavens, during the Tribulation (cf. Job 38:14; Isa. 13:13; and 24:19-20).
15. James knew that God affirmed absolutely that the heavens could not be measured accurately and absolutely (cf. Jer. 31:37).²⁹

The Problem of the Parallax

Since the Lord's stepbrother used the Greek noun *parallege* from which “parallax” comes, it behooves the Christian to know what the biblical writer meant to be able to refute false theories. James compared God's absolute lack of variation with the indiscernible “parallax” of the sun from the observer's perspective. Man,

²⁹Thomas M. Strouse, “Biblical Geocentricity,” *The Biblical Astronomer* 109 (2004): 69-89.

who cannot physically measure the real parallactical angle of the sun, should believe by faith that the Lord is absolutely immovable with regard to fulfilling His promises.

History of Parallax

The Greek word James employed means “variation, change, alteration or vicissitude.”³⁰ In the context it seems he contrasted God's lack of parallax with that of the sun's change, whether apparent or real. It may refer only to the sun's diurnal, annual and tropical movements in the heavens. Mayor asserts, “We may therefore take the word to express the contrast between the natural sun, which varies its position in the sky from hour to hour and month to month, and the eternal Source of all light.”³¹ However, the writer may have referred to the *vox technica* of astronomy, acknowledging the angle of parallax for the simple triangulation calculations necessary for distances. Solar parallax refers the sun's apparent shift when viewed simultaneously from two different vantage points.³² An astronomical definition of parallax is the “apparent displacement of an object due to a motion of the observer.”³³ The simple experience of parallax would occur when one puts his thumb over an object viewed from a distance and attempts to view the object with one eye closed and then the other. The thumb seems to “move” back and forth, first blocking the view of the object and then moving off of the object when viewed by the other eye. Parallax produces angles from which distances may be determined through trigonometry. The trigonometric parallax method, or triangulation, is the foundation for astrometry, the measurement of star distances.

The sun's parallax is of utmost importance to evolutionary astronomers since it would give not only the alleged distance from earth to sun, but also would establish the Astronomical Unit (AU).³⁴ The ancient Greek astronomers attempted to understand the phenomena of the heavens. For instance, Aristarchus of Samos (310-230 BC) tried to determine the sun's distance through somewhat accurate calculations of the moon's phases, concluding that the sun was about twenty times as distant from the earth as the moon. Furthermore, he

³⁰H. G. Liddell, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (NY: Harper & Brothers, Publ., 1899), p. 599.

³¹Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1954), p. 60.

³²The sun's parallactical movement is apparent and not real since the observation points are in two different locations. The attempt to measure the sun's parallax is only for the purpose to determine angles and distances. In order to determine the height of an isosceles triangle, one would have to know any two consecutive sides or angles: side, angle, side (SAS) or angle, side, angle (ASA). The sun does have real motion against its background (i.e., the constellations), although heliocentric astronomers term this “apparent motion.”

³³George O. Abell, *Exploration of the Universe*, (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), p. 688.

³⁴The distance from the earth to the sun has been estimated to be about 93,000,000 miles and has become the “absolute” basis for astrometry as 1 AU. Backhaus lists five reasons astronomers want to know the sun's parallax. 1) The sun's distance from earth would help determine the magnitude of the solar system. 2) Solar system distances help determine astrophysical properties of the sun and planets. 3) Gravitation factored into these distances help determine planet's positions more accurately. 4) This leads to better astronomical navigating. 5) Stellar parallax helps determine the size of the universe. U. Backhaus, “Astronomy On-Line Project: Measuring the Sun's Parallax” <http://didaktik.physik.uni-essen.de>, 7-4-05, pp. 2-4. Not until 1961 were radio waves (radar) used to measure the distance from Earth to Venus and then the data were extrapolated to estimate sun's distance.

determined the relative sizes of the earth, moon and sun, postulating that the earth must rotate upon its axis and revolve around the stationary sun.

Other ancient Greek astronomers such as Hipparchus (c. 160-127 BC) and Ptolemy (2nd century BC) made further calculations to determine the relative distance of the moon from the earth through the use of eclipses. Although these astronomers made refined advances based on previous work, they rejected the hypothesis that the earth rotated and revolved around the sun. The major problem the ancients had in determining absolutely the distances of astral objects was the severe limitations placed on geometric triangulation. The base for their triangle was the diameter of the earth at about 8,000 miles. Because of the far distance even to the moon, the triangle was “long and skinny.” Two of the angles of the triangle practically were 90 degrees each, producing near parallel sides for the triangle. The truth of Jeremiah's prophecy that the heavens could not be measured absolutely held firm (cf. Jer. 31:37). Until the time of the Reformation (16th century) astronomers were complacent with their mathematical limitations and Christians were satisfied with their biblical geocentricity.

The Need and Result of Solar Parallax

Through the influence of the notion of *Sol Invictus* (“unconquered sun” god) the Roman Empire prepared the way for incipient heliocentricity,³⁵ which finally blossomed by the work of Copernicus (AD 1473-1543), Kepler (1571-1630), and Galileo (1564-1642). Copernicus, greatly influenced by Greek philosophy and astronomy, rejected the geocentrism of the Bible and posited the heliocentric theory that his book *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (1543) declared. Kepler attempted to calculate the parallax of Mars, which planet is far closer than the sun, to measure the sun's distance (1600). Galileo, of course, popularized Copernicanism in his *Dialogo dei Due Massimi Sistemi* in 1632. Later astronomers attempted to refine the sun's parallax by observing the transits of the planets Mercury and Venus across the sun's disc.

The theory of heliocentricity postulates that the earth revolves around the sun yearly in an orbit having a diameter of 186,000,000 miles. This anti-biblical and unproved assumption now gave new momentum to triangulation for distances because the base line was no longer the earth's diameter of 8,000 miles but its orbit of 186,000,000 (2 x 93,000,000) miles. This change based on the unproved assumption of heliocentricity, immediately expanded the distances of the stars by the factor of 23,500 times.³⁶ Friedrich W. Bessel employed this new perspective and measured the parallax of the star 61 Cygni, concluding that it was more than 10 light years from the earth (1838).³⁷ His work became foundational for measuring the heavens and fostering other speculative alternatives of astrometrics.³⁸ Although evolutionary astronomers considered Bessel's detection of

³⁵Gerardus D. Bouw, *Geocentricity*, (Cleveland: Association for Biblical Astronomy, 1992), pp. 153-155.

³⁶186,000,000 miles/8,000 miles = 23,500.

³⁷Abell, p. 120.

³⁸Wright lists 25 methods additional to that of trigonometric parallax to help refine the measurement of the sun's parallax, all of which are based on speculative evolutionary assumptions: Moving Cluster, Secular Parallax, Statistical Parallax, Kinematic Distance, Expansion Parallax, Light Echo Distance, Spectroscopic Visual Binaries, Baade-Wesselink Method, Spectroscopic Eclipsing Binaries, Expanding Photosphere Method, Main Sequence Fitting, Spectroscopic Parallax, RR Lyrae Distance, Cepheid Distance, Planetary Nebula Luminosity Function, Brightest Stars, Largest H II Region Diameters, Surface Brightness Fluctuations, Type I-a Supernovae, Tully-Fisher Relation, Faber-Jackson Relation,

stellar parallax the *coup de grace* for geocentricity, the biblical writer James implied the reality of solar parallax about eighteen centuries earlier (cf. Jam. 1:17). The simple and biblical fact of the matter is that the stars move diurnally with the sun within the revolving firmament relative to the stationary earth.

The erroneous distances based on heliocentric assumptions, exacerbated by the factor of 23,500 times, go hand in glove with the near infinite age of the heavens at fifteen billion years. Evolutionary science, in rejecting biblical revelation, can neither measure the vastness of the heavens, nor comprehend the newness of the Lord's creation. In contrast, the Bible teaches that the immeasurable heavens are confined within the water above the firmament (cf. Gen. 1:1-18; Ps. 148:4) were created a mere 6,000 years ago (cf. Gen. 5, 10-11; Mt. 1:17; Jude 1:14). For instance, Eliphaz made the inspired observation, stating "*Is not God in the height of heaven? And behold the height of the stars, how high they are!*" (Job. 22:12). Again, David asserted the truth about vast distances within the heavens, stating, "*for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him*" (Ps. 103:11).³⁹

THE EXEGESIS OF JEREMIAH 31:37

Atheistic evolutionists have completely rejected the Scriptures, and have consequently built a system of "*science falsely so called*" (I Tim. 6:20).⁴⁰ However, creationists who have accepted the heliocentric model have capitulated to some of the myths of evolutionists. For instance, creationist Steidl in describing stellar parallax, asseverates,

By measuring the amount the star appears to shift, and knowing the size of the earth's orbit, one can use trigonometry to find the distance to that star. The distance of stars out to about 300 light years is measurable in this way. This is only a fraction of the size of our galaxy, the Milky Way, let alone the rest of the universe...It is easy to see that with all the assumptions which must be made, and the statistical manipulations which must be carried out, there will be large uncertainties in the distances of extremely distant objects. In fact, the cosmic distance scale is admittedly unreliable.⁴¹

Steidl, following the assumptions of evolutionists, bases the "local" stellar distances on the earth having an 186,000,000-mile diameter orbit around the sun. He admits that beyond the possible trigonometric calculations of close stars, other methods, based on heliocentric and evolutionary assumptions, produce greater, albeit unreliable, distances. However, to the Christian who believes in biblical geocentricity and rejects the notion that the earth has an orbit, triangulation cannot accurately and absolutely be calculated for the sun's parallax, and consequently stellar distances cannot be measured with reasonable accuracy or biblical authority.

Brightest Cluster Galaxies, Gravitation Lens Time Delay, Sunyaev-Zeldovich Effect, and Hubble Law. Edward L. Wright, "The ABC's of Distances," <http://astro.ucla.edu>. July 7, 2005, pp. 1-8. This large number of various techniques shows the impossibility to measure the sun's distance accurately or absolutely.

³⁹Cf. "*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*" (Isa. 55:9).

⁴⁰Supposedly Alpha Centauri A and Alpha Centauri B are about 4.37 light-years from earth.

⁴¹Paul M. Steidl, *The Earth, the Stars, and the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 130, 187.

Of course, the Lord Jesus Christ created the heavens and earth with these physical and mathematical constraints, allowing Him to make the challenge to mankind:

“Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of host is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD” (Jer. 31:35-37).

During the creation week the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:16) placed the sun, moon and stars in the firmament for lights and established the regulation of the sea waves. These natural constants are part of His divine ordinances which will not change, the Lord declared. Using the conditional particle (אם *'im*) (Jer. 31:36-37), Jehovah asserted His immutability of purpose with regard to fulfilling the New Covenant promises to Israel (vv. 31-34), challenging mankind with the impossible task of measuring the heavens or the foundations of the earth.

The Lord's challenging statement *“If heaven above can be measured...I will also cast off”* reveals several truths. 1) The expression represents the classic construction for a contingency, with *'im* (אם) in the protasis and the imperfect verb (אָמַדְתִּים *'eme'as*) in the apodosis. 2) Heaven (שָׁמַיִם *shamayim*) is an anarthrous dual noun referring to both the atmosphere and the stellar outer space. 3) The verb *“can be measured”* (יִמְדוּ *yimmadu*) is the *Niphal* imperfect, third person, masculine, plural form of *madad* (מָדַד). The *Authorized Version* translates this verb as “measure,” “mete out,” “mete,” or “stretched” fifty-one times in the OT. The *Niphal* verb stem is passive, forcing the reader to determine the subject of the verb, which in this case is mankind. The verb *madad* refers to the actual physical measuring of an object. For instance, Boaz *“measured (madad) six measures of barley”* for Ruth to carry to Naomi (Ruth 3:15). His measurement was no doubt accurate and based on a human standard for barley measurements. Likewise, Ezekiel predicted that the construction of the Millennial Temple would be based on accurate measurements, utilizing the verb *madad* thirty-three times for measuring various dimensions for the building of the Temple (cf. Ezk. 40-47). 4) Since man does not have the mathematical or physical wherewithal to measure stellar distances accurately and authoritatively, the Lord assured the immutable promise of the New Covenant. God has determined that man never has, cannot now, and never will measure the heavens accurately and absolutely. 5) Christians are left with the divine revelation of the Scriptures (II Tim. 3:16-17) that reveals absolutely both the vastness of God's creation and its immeasurableness. James hinted at the reality of solar parallax and Jeremiah declared that man cannot measure the heavens. 6) Evolutionary schemes and theories cannot satisfy the Christian because they are based on the satanic lies of the Garden and result in myths (cf. Gen. 3:4-5).⁴² Christians must rejoice in the full extent of truth that the Lord God has determined to give through His Scriptures.

⁴²Satan taught (cf. I Tim. 4:1-3) basic Gnostic Pantheism, postulating the deification and deathlessness of man. Corollaries to these tenets included evolution and "the flesh is evil" doctrine.

THE PLANETS, LIGHTS, AND TROPICS

The noun “planet,” although not found in the Bible,⁴³ astronomically refers to an astral object that wanders through its orbit. Planets as such have orbits around the sun that is in the heavens. The Lord placed the sun with its wandering planets in the firmament. The earth, however, is distinct from the heavens (i.e., firmament) and was never placed in the heavens (cf. Gen. 1:1-19).⁴⁴ Therefore, the earth is **not** a planet, although evolutionists have inculcated their anti-biblical teaching upon the terminology of the western world.⁴⁵ The closest the Bible comes to referring to a planet is Jude’s reference (1:13) to likening apostates to “wandering stars” (אֲסֵרֵי כּוֹכָבִים *asteres planetai*). Since the noun planet is not mentioned in Scripture, the Lord surely does not place any importance on this part of His creation other than to give a spiritual warning for mankind to avoid apostasy by straying from the revealed truth.⁴⁶ Professed Christians should give no thought to whether planets will give further knowledge about the origin and purpose of the heavens.⁴⁷ When a man contemplates planets, his concern should be if he would be likened to a “wandering star.”

James asserted that God was the Father of lights, corroborating other Scripture (cf. Isa. 45:7). As the Father, He created light by giving the divine fiat “*Let there be light*” (אֵר יְהִי אֹרֶר *yehiy ‘or*) on Day One (Gen. 1:2). As He had spoken His creation into existence (Heb. 11:3) He spoke the creation of light into existence. His vocalized consonants “*Let there be light*” produced the vibrations which manifested “*light*” (אֹרֶר ‘*or*).⁴⁸ The psalmist revealed that Jehovah initially covered Himself “*with light as with a garment*” (Ps. 104:2) and moved upon the face of the earth as the original light source (Gen. 1:2), dispelling darkness with light. This apparently was the morning light (cf. I Sam. 14:36; 25:22, 34, 36; 29:10; II Sam. 17:22; 23:4; II Kings 7:9; Isa. 58:8; Mi. 2:1) of the first day and the first of the four created lights. Solomon referred to “*the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars*” (Eccl. 12:2),⁴⁹ all of which have separate glories (cf. I Cor. 15:41). Later, on the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars also contributed as moving light sources for the heavens.

James used the term troph, *trope* (“turning”) in his expression “*shadow of turning*” referring to a shadow caused by turning. As he utilized other astronomical terms to teach spiritual realities about God, it

⁴³Although the Hebrew word מַזָּלוֹת *mazzaloth* is translated “planets” in II Ki. 23:5 (cf. Job 38:32 for the Hebrew מַזָּרוֹת *mazzoroth*).

⁴⁴The Bible writers utilize the expression “*heaven and earth*” at least thirty-one times, always distinguishing between these two realms (cf. e.g., Mt. 24:35).

⁴⁵Even many Christians have been brainwashed by evolutionary philosophy in using un-Scriptural terminology. The Bible never once calls the earth a *planet*.

⁴⁶How ironic it is that evolutionists are “wandering stars.”

⁴⁷The Christian already knows that the Lord’s purpose on earth is to meet the spiritual needs of lost mankind. John summarized this truth, saying, “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (Jn. 3:16).

⁴⁸The Scripture gives the Lord’s quote, revealing these actual words, which were His breath (II Tim. 3:16), and consequently His words vibrated light into existence (this would suggest that light is a wave rather than a particle). Could it be that Quantum Physics, with its Ten Superstrings theory of vibrating strings as the ultimate fundament, is catching up with the Bible?

⁴⁹All four nouns are articular and the last three are separated with the *waw* conjunction, grammatically distinguishing four distinct lights.

seems he was referring to the seasonal shadows cast by the sun in its annual orbit around the earth. Since the axis of the stationary earth is absolutely north and south (Job 26:7),⁵⁰ the sun's plane is not coincident with the earth's but is oblique by 23 1/2 degrees, causing shadows to be cast on the different hemispheres from the region of the Poles to the Tropics. Only the area between the two Tropics,⁵¹ including the equator, receives direct sunlight, and especially twice a year when the sun is directly overhead on the equator. On the summer solstice (June 22), the sun passes the zenith at its highest point on the Northern Hemisphere on the first day of summer, shining directly and causing summer, while at the same time shining obliquely on the Southern Hemisphere causing winter. This is reversed six months later at the winter solstice (Dec. 22). The region from the equator to 23 1/2 degrees North latitude and from the equator to 23 1/2 degrees South latitude receives direct sunlight and is warm year around (i.e., tropical).

The point that James seemed to make was that on a daily basis it is nearly impossible to detect the sun's tropical movement as it moves around the earth and causes the various seasons. He compares the Lord's absolute immovability in relationship to His redemptive purposes with this almost indiscernible solar movement.

CONCLUSION

The stepbrother of the Lord Jesus Christ, under inspiration, wrote to Christian Jews scattered throughout the Mediterranean basin. As they underwent trials in the form of persecution, some of them concluded that God was tempting them to sin. James effectively dispatched of that false notion by giving at least five reasons that God does not tempt man to sin. These reasons centered on the holy nature of God, the old nature of man, the tendency for man to be deceived, the good nature of God, and the creative nature of God. In developing his arguments, James assumed the truths of biblical cosmology to advance his defense of the Lord's nature and person. These realities in nature include truth about the planets, lights, parallax, and tropics. 1) The planets, as wandering stars, depict apostates who deviate from the truth. 2) The good Lord created the heavenly lights, as great and brilliant as they may be. 3) James implied that the sun's apparent parallax is almost imperceptible, contrasting the absolute immovability of the Lord God with this slight parallaxical angle. 4) Finally, to emphasize the Lord's absolute immutability with regard to His promises, James declared that Jehovah did not move or turn, unlike the imperceptible but real seasonal movement of the sun relative to the Tropics. The Lord Jesus Christ created the heavens and earth and then revealed within His Scriptures the full extent that man may know absolutely about the physical phenomena. The creation has built-in limitations so that man, neither evolutionist nor creationist can measure accurately and absolutely the heavens, as Jeremiah predicted. All that the Christian can know or needs to know is that planets revolve around the sun, the lights are in subjection to God the Father, and the sun has parallax, and it has tropical movement around the earth. The

⁵⁰The Lord created the earth's axis north and south with reference to the heavens. The psalmist Ethan stated, "*The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them...*" (Ps. 89:11-12). Even the New Jerusalem will be located absolutely with respect to the directions of north, south, east and west in the New Heavens and Earth (cf. Rev. 21:1; 13).

⁵¹The Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn were so named because the sun's relationship with these two sectors or signs of the zodiac.

evolutionist can only speculate about the heavens and posit anti-biblical myths. The Christian knows absolutely, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork*” (Ps. 19:1).

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