

Receiving the 'Implanted' Word

James 1:19-27

I. Introduction

Two intriguing questions:

1. From v.18- If Christians being "*brought forth*" by the "*word of truth*" are the "*first fruits*," what are the **second fruits**? (Why call them *first* fruits if there aren't *second* fruits?)
2. If Christians are "*brought forth*" by the reception of the "*word of truth*" in v.18, then why is the word not "*implanted*" until v.21?

II. Keeping the Context

- The epistle thus far has primarily dealt with the *temptations* and *trials* by which the Christian is brought to maturity and completeness, cf. vv.2-12.
- God is not the source of temptation; neither does He *tempt* us. He does however, utilize the difficult circumstances of our lives to assist in the process of our growth and development, vv.13-16.
- Every *good thing*, including benefits derived from testing and trials, come from God. Through these the extreme *goodness* of God is manifested, and there is no variation to it, vv.17.
- As evidence of His pleasant disposition toward His own, they are reminded that it was He who "*brought*" them forth by "*the word of truth*," v.18 (cp.v.15).
- This "*word of truth*" is then the agency by which the *first fruits* are created. But, *first fruits* are: ① a token and pledge of a fuller harvest to follow; and ② the necessary *consecration* of that which is to follow.

III. The Reception of the Implanted Word.

A. The Prerequisites, vv.19-21

- Be **brethren**, v.19a. Be relatives of those who have been "*brought forth*" or "*begotten*" by the word. *Beloved Brethren* indicates: 1) the *same parentage*; 2) the *closest kinship*; and 3) *true, deep, and abiding affection*. If we, as Christians, are to be recipients of the "*implanted word*," we must first be "*brethren*."
- Be **quick to hear**, v.19b. This refers to a *fast* and *attentive* mind that has a ready disposition to listen and learn.
- Be **slow to speak**, v.19c. This means *slow* to begin speaking rather than just talking slowly! There may be some benefit to talking slowly, but this has reference to the **restraint** of words, cf. Prov.10:19; 18:21; 29:20.
- Be **slow to anger**, v.19d. What does *anger* have to do with the reception of the *implanted word*? Plenty! The word of God cannot live and flourish where the weeds of *bitterness, malice, and hatred* reside, cp. Matt.13:20-22. If these are present in the heart, and/or there is a general *lack of self-restraint*, the word will never become implanted, cf. v.20.
- Put aside (away) **all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness**, v.21a. How can these be prerequisites to the reception of the word? Wouldn't those actions **follow** the

reception of the word? Understand this does not refer to our **initial acceptance** of the gospel of Jesus Christ in baptism. He is speaking to and about “*brethren*” (v.19) becoming *mature, complete*, and ultimately attaining eternal salvation. For this, one must put aside *all that* (still yet) *remains of wickedness* to “complete the process.”

- Be **humble, v.21b**. Having thus *emptied* ourselves of all that remained of filthiness and wickedness from the depths of our hearts, we now have space for the *implantation* of the word, cf. Phil.2:5-8; Gal.2:20.
- Then, God’s word becomes not just something that you obey to become a Christian, but something that lives in, abides in, and is at the center of who and what you are everyday in every thought and action! **Then, and only then, does the word become truly “implanted.”** This is the ‘*second fruits*’ of which the “*first fruits*” were the surety, pledge, and consecration!

B. The *Requisites* , vv.22-27: Be *Doers* of the Word!

- **Prove** (demonstrate) ***yourselves doers of the word***, v.22 . If one would *receive the implanted word* , then he must allow the word to be that which *motivates* his actions, or conversely *restrains* them, cf. vv.19-21.
- Mere *hearers* of the word do not allow it to become *implanted* because they never allow it to be that which ***dictates their actions, or lack thereof***, vv.23-24!
- But *doers* are exactly the opposite. They allow the *word* to become *implanted* by so ordering their lives around it. The word of God is that which determines the entire course of their existence, vv.25-27. For this to occur, the word has to be at the center- it must be allowed to become ***implanted*** in the very core of their being, in the heart!
- What’s with the *tongue*? Why is it singled-out as a rebellious body member? Likely because it is the truest representation/manifestation of the heart, cf. Matt.15:18.

IV. Conclusion

Is your life just *first fruits* (by initial obedience, v.18); or,

Does it contain *second fruits* because the word of God has become *implanted* in your heart to the degree that it dictates your every thought, emotion, and action, v.21?

I am afraid that James’ point is that unless the word truly becomes *implanted* to the degree that we’ve discussed, then we are *deceiving our own hearts*, and *our religion is worthless*, v.26!