

## Apostle James

I want you to be aware, brethren, that there are two kinds of temptation. I am not, however, referring here to the fact that temptations befall us through pleasure or pain, health or sickness, honour or dishonor, riches or poverty, of which by far the worst are those associated with pleasure, health, honour and riches. Although this is so, these are not the two categories of temptations of which I am now speaking. What is it I am trying to convey to you? Listen and learn. The great James, who is called the Lord's brother in the flesh, because the Lord's Virgin Mother was betrothed to Joseph according to the divine plan for our salvation, said, "Rejoice when ye fall into divers temptations" (cf. Jas. 1:2), and "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for he shall receive the crown of life" (cf. Jas. 1:12). But then, as though someone had asked him, "Are there not some people who blaspheme when tempted, or who fall into complete despair, or others who hang themselves? If the temptation is an inborn or physical one, perhaps anger or desire, are there not some who commit murder or others who surrender to immorality? So how can temptation result in crowns from God?" James defended himself from such objections by going on to say, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (Jas. 1:13). Temptation in this context means the evil and sin into which we fall, and by which Christ is untouched, even though He was tempted in another sense. "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted", it says, "he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). After He had been baptized in the Jordan, He went up the mountain to be tempted of the devil, according to the Gospel account (Matt. 4:1-11).

Troubles that befall people from without, bodily afflictions and the assaults of the enemy, even if they involve no guilt at all, are all called temptations. The devil even attacked the Lord, tempting Him. But the same word also refers to those sins by which each one is tempted when, as the same James says, "He is drawn away for his own lust, and entice. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:14-15). What sort of death? Eternal death, the departure of God from the soul on account of sin.

St. Gregory Palamas Homily Thirty-two

If you are disheartened, pray, as the Apostle says (cf. [Jas. 5: 13](#)). Pray with fear, trembling, effort, with inner watchfulness and vigilance. To pray in this manner is especially necessary because the enemies are so malignant. For it is just when they see us at prayer that they come and stand beside us, ready to attack, suggesting to our intellect the very things we should not think about when praying; in this way they try to take our intellect captive and to make our prayer and supplication vain and useless. For prayer is truly vain and useless when not performed with fear and trembling, with inner watchfulness and vigilance. Evagrius the Solitary v. 1 p. 38