

James 1:18

An Original Translation from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised October 2016

1. FINISHED TRANSLATION:

James 1:18: Because of His plan, He gave birth to us by the message of truth, so that we would be a kind of first offering of His creatures.

2. THOUGHT-FLOW DIAGRAM:

- Because of His plan,
 - o He gave birth to us by the message of truth,
 - so that we would be a kind of first offering of His creatures.

3. DETAILED TRANSLATION NOTES:

βουληθεῖς	ἀπεκύησεν	ἡμᾶς	λόγῳ	ἀληθείας	εἰς	τὸ	εἶναι	ἡμᾶς
appnsm	3 rd ,s,aor,a,i	1 st ,pl,a	dsm	gsf	prep	asn	p,a,inf	1 st ,pl,a
He was planned, intended	He gave birth to	us	message	of truth	into	the	to be	we
Because it had been planned by Him, He gave birth to us by means of [the] message of truth in order [that] we would be								
Because of His plan, He gave birth to us by the message of truth, so that we would be								

βουληθεῖς:

- (1) **Classification** – an adverbial, causal participle,¹ modifying the verb ἀπεκύησε and explaining the reason for why God performed the action of the verb. He “gave birth to us” spiritually because of His sovereign plan, or perhaps better, His sovereign decree
- (2) **Voice** – a simple passive, but the construction is awkward to convey into English. I suppose you could do something like, “because it had been planned by Him, He gave birth to us . . .” A smoother, more colloquial rendering is “because of His plan . . .”
- (3) **Time** – theological context suggests a gnomic present, indicating a truth which lies outside time. Our individual election to salvation is not time-bound (cf. Eph 1:4-5).
- (4) **Case** – the nominative indicates the subject of the verb, God, is in view here

ἀπεκύησεν:

¹ See Christ A. Vlachos, *James*, in *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013; Kindle ed.), KL 1964-1967.

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- (1) **Voice** – a simple active, indicating God Himself performed the action of this “birth” to the Christians James was writing to.
- (2) **Time** – context suggests a constative aorist, indicating a historical event in the past
- (3) **Mood** – a declarative indicative.

ἡμᾶς:

- (1) **Classification** – a personal pronoun, in the first-person plural (“us”), whereby James includes the Christians he’s writing to *and* himself in this corporate group. By extension, *all* Christian are included in this “us,” as well.²
- (2) **Case** – an accusative of direct object of the verb ἀπεκύησεν.

λόγῳ:

- (1) **Case** – a dative of means, indicating the instrument by which God performed the action of “begetting” His children.³ That means is the *word or message of truth* (i.e. the Gospel of Jesus).

ἀληθείας:

- (1) **Case** – a genitive of communicative content.

εἰς:

- (1) **Classification** – the preposition is expressing the purpose of the verb. The construction εἰς + τὸ + infinitive commonly expresses purpose.

τὸ εἶναι:

- (1) **Classification** – an articular infinitive which expresses purpose.

ἡμᾶς:

- (1) **Case** – an accusative subject of the infinitive εἶναι.

ἀπαρχήν	τινα	τῶν	αὐτοῦ	κτισμάτων.
asf	asf	gpm	gsm	gpm
first offering	certain one	of the	his	creatures
a kind of first offering ⁴ of His creatures				
a kind of first offering of His creatures.				

ἀπαρχήν:

- (1) **Case** – an accusative of direct object. “The idea appears to be that believers are that section of creation harvested by God as part of the new creation.”⁵

² “The reference to Christians is entirely possible and makes a better connection with v. 19,” (James Ropes, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James*, in *International Critical Commentary* [Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1916], 166).

³ Vlachos, *James*, KL 1973-1974.

⁴ cf. BDAG “7377 τις,” 2.b.b.a

⁵ Vlachos, *James*, KL 1993-1994. See also James Burdick, *James*, in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 173. Ropes (*James*, 167-168) disagrees.

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Similarly, W.E. Oesterley remarked, “those men who are begotten λόγῳ ἀληθείας proclaim a new order of things in the world of spiritual growth; they are in advance of other men, in the same way that the firstfruits are in advance of the other fruits of the season.”⁶

τινα:

- (1) **Case** – an accusative of apposition

τῶν κτισμάτων:

- (1) **Case** – a partitive genitive.

αὐτοῦ:

- (1) **Case** – a possessive genitive. Those who are saved belong to God as His possession.

⁶ W.E. Oesterley, *The General Epistle of James*, in *Expositor's Greek Testament*, vol. 4 (New York, NY: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.), 431.