

# A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

## Chapter 3

### Introduction

- 1) Our study of the **epistle of James** continues in seeking “the wisdom which is from above”
- 2) Chapters one and two emphasized:
  - a) Enduring trials and temptations to receive the crown of life (1:1-15)
  - b) Being doers of the word and not hearers only (1:16-27)
  - c) Avoiding the sin of partiality and a dead faith that does not have works (2:1-26)
- 3) Chapter three deals with controlling the tongue and using the wisdom which is from above

### I) **The Tongue and Its Dangers (3:1-12)**

- A) James warns his brethren that not many should become teachers (v. 1 “slow to speak”- 1:19)
  - 1) Will receive the stricter judgment (2:12) – how and what we teach is important to God
  - 2) Many are not ready or prepared to teach, but teachers are needed (2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 5:12)
  - 3) We all stumble in many things – need to be mature and control our body so we can speak and act as good teachers of righteousness (v. 2 “bridle” the whole body 1:26; Psa. 39:1)
- B) Big influence of little things (vv. 3-5)
  - 1) **Bit** in a horse’s mouth – influences a large and powerful animal
  - 2) **Rudder** on a large ship – directs a large ship’s movements
  - 3) **Tongue** in the body – boasts great things and kindles large fires
- C) Danger and destruction of an evil tongue (vv. 6-8)
  - 1) A fire, the world of iniquity, defiles whole body (Matt. 15:11) – cause terrible problems
  - 2) Sets fires in our life and is “set on fire” by hell [Gk. Gehenna] (Mk. 9:43)
  - 3) Man tames wild animals, but no man can tame the tongue – unruly evil, deadly poison
    - a) Gossip, pride, angry words, lies, profane and vulgar talk, etc.
- D) Good and evil cannot both proceed from the same mouth (vv. 9-12)
  - 1) Bless God and curse men [made in God’s image] – ought not to be (cf. 4:11; Matt. 6:24)
  - 2) Nature teaches that a source can only give one product according to its kind (Lk. 6:43-45)

### II) **The Nature of Wise Conduct (3:13-18)**

- A) Nature of our works show the motive behind those works (vv. 13-16)
  - 1) Good conduct = **meekness of wisdom from above** (humility cf. 1:5, 17, 21)
  - 2) Bitter envy, self-seeking = **earthly, unspiritual, of the devil** (carnal, evil 1 Cor. 3:1-3)
    - a) Results in confusion and evil – anger, wrath, malice, discord, strife, turmoil (Jas. 4:1-2)
- B) Nature of heavenly wisdom in our lives (v. 17)
  - 1) **Pure** (first and foremost quality 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:22; Matt. 5:8; 1 Jn. 3:3)
  - 2) **Peaceable** (not filled with strife; Num. 6:26; Jn. 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:6-7)
  - 3) **Gentle** (mild, courteous, reasonable, not harsh 1 Pet. 2:18; 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 3:2)
  - 4) **Willing to yield** (readily obedient, trusting, persuasible, submissive Heb. 5:8)
  - 5) **Full of mercy** (compassionate, helpful Jas. 5:11; Matt. 5:7; Jas. 2:13; Micah 6:8)
  - 6) **Full of good fruits** (acts of mercy, bearing burdens Jas. 2:15-16; Gal. 6:2)
  - 7) **Without partiality** (consistency, unwavering Jas. 1:6; 4:4)
  - 8) **Without hypocrisy** (straightforwardness, genuine Jas. 1:26; Rom. 12:9)
- C) Peaceful sowing expects peaceable fruit of righteousness (v. 18; opposite of v. 16; Heb. 12:11)
  - 1) Fruit of righteousness results from practicing the righteous will of God (1 Jn. 3:3-10)

### Conclusion

Controlling our tongue is a great challenge – begins with a wise and understanding heart. Seek the divine wisdom that is from above to guide your words and actions properly.