

"THE EPISTLE OF JAMES"

Chapter Three

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THE CHAPTER

- 1) To appreciate the power and danger of the tongue
- 2) To understand the difference between heavenly wisdom, and that which is earthly, sensual, and demonic

SUMMARY

James begins this chapter with a caution against many becoming teachers. In view of the stricter judgment that awaits teachers, one should be sure they possess the maturity and self-control necessary to control the tongue. James then provides a series of illustrations to demonstrate the power and danger of the tongue, and how we can easily be inconsistent in our use of it (1-12).

Perhaps some sought to be teachers so as to appear wise. Yet James writes that wisdom and understanding are to be shown by one's conduct, done in meekness. He then defines and contrasts the difference between two kinds of wisdom. There is wisdom which is earthly that causes confusion and every evil thing. On the other hand, there is wisdom which is heavenly that produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness (13-18).

OUTLINE

I. TRUE RELIGION CONTROLS THE TONGUE (1-12)

A. A CAUTION AGAINST BECOMING TEACHERS (1-2)

1. Teachers shall receive a stricter judgment
2. Maturity and self-control are required not to stumble in word

B. THE POWER OF THE TONGUE (3-4)

1. Like a bit which controls the horse
2. Like a small rudder which directs the ship

C. THE DANGER OF THE TONGUE (5-6)

1. A little member which boasts great things
2. Like a little fire which kindles a great forest fire
3. Indeed, the tongue can be a fire, a world of iniquity
 - a. Capable of defiling the whole body
 - b. Capable of setting on fire the course of nature, being set

on fire by hell

D. THE DIFFICULTY OF TAMING THE TONGUE (7-12)

1. Man can control creatures of land and sea, but not the tongue
2. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison
3. With it we bless God, and then curse man made in His image
 - a. Thus blessing and cursing proceed from the same mouth
 - b. Something which should not be so
 - 1) For no spring sends forth both fresh and salt water
 - 2) Neither does a fig tree bear olives, nor a grapevine bear figs

II. TRUE RELIGION DISPLAYS HEAVENLY WISDOM (13-18)

A. THE TRUE DISPLAY OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING (13)

1. To be seen in one's conduct
2. With works done in meekness

B. THE DISPLAY OF EARTHLY WISDOM (14-16)

1. Full of bitter envy, self-seeking, boasting and lying
2. A wisdom not from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic
3. Producing confusion and every evil thing

C. THE DISPLAY OF HEAVENLY WISDOM (17-18)

1. Wisdom from above is first pure, then it is...
 - a. Peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits
 - b. Without partiality and without hypocrisy
2. The fruit of righteousness is produced by peacemakers who sow in peace