

James 3:1-12

Intro: • Read again James' previous references to speech in these verses:

- 1:19
- 1:26
- 2:3
- 2:14
- 2:18

- How does this passage (3:1-12) relate to the preceding section (2:14-26)?
- Is James addressing the issue of speech in an individual or collective sense?

Vs. 1 • Why is James cautioning his readers about becoming teachers?

- because teachers are susceptible to more criticism and scrutiny?
- because teachers are susceptible to pride, prestige, and power-hunger?
- because teachers are accountable for accurate information?
- because teachers are accountable to understand spiritual realities?
- because teachers are accountable to know who the real Teacher is?
(cf. (Jn 14:26; I John 2:27))
- because teachers are accountable to know the importance of representative character in Christian behavior? (cf. 2:14-26)

• Is the “judgment” that James refers to...

- the divine judgment of destiny? (cf. Jn. 3:17-19)
- the divine judgment of representative/misrepresentative behavior? (Matt. 12:36,37)
- the judgment of those who listen to the teacher?
- the critical judgment of the ecclesiastical community?

Vs. 2 • When James writes that “we all stumble...,” does he mean...

- that all Christians sin? (cf. I John 1:8)
- that all Christians misspeak at times?
- that all Christian teachers sometimes teach what is not accurate?
- that all Christian teachers sometimes misrepresent the character of God in their lives and in their speech?

• Is the reference to one who “does not stumble in word, being a perfect man,” referring to:

- a Christian who never misspeaks, and is therefore a perfect man?
- a Christian who keeps his tongue under control, and therefore exhibits Christian maturity?
- a Christian teacher who refrains from dogmatic and inaccurate instruction, thus being an excellent teacher?
- a Christian teacher who listens to the Spirit of God to know what to say, and thus fulfills God's objective of Christian teaching?

• Is James saying that...

- the Christian individual who can control his speech can control all of his physical behavior?
- the Christian teacher who speaks spiritual realities will cause the church-Body to be controlled by God?
- a good Christian teacher will be able to control the outcome of his audience?

Vss. 3 – 8

- What does James mean to convey in this series of illustrative analogies?

- Vs. 3** • When a rider puts a bridle in a horse's mouth he can control the horse's body and cause the animal to be obedient.
- if you control a man's mouth and you can control all of his behavior in obedience?
 - Christian teachers may be few in number, but they can have a great influence on the behavior of a congregation of Christians?
 - Christians teachers who are directed by the reins of God can thereby direct a church-Body in being obedient to God's direction?
- Vs. 4** • The pilot can control a large ship with a small rudder.
- a Christian who can control the small flapper of his tongue, will be able to control all his behavior.
 - a Christian teacher can steer a congregation in one way or another.
 - Christian teachers have a particular responsibility to seek God's direction of His church so that they are not tossed by the waves of false-teaching (cf. Eph. 4:14)
- Vss. 5,6** • A small fire can ignite an entire forest.
- a small misspoken word can create much havoc and destruction.
 - the little organ of the tongue can incite all kinds of trouble?
 - a boastful false-teacher can inflame destructive social action.
 - a teacher, the mouthpiece of a group, can orchestrate great activity, but a false-teacher sparked by Satan's garbage-dump can pollute the church-Body and inflame natural desires of iniquity in people.
- Vss. 7,8** • Men have tamed the animals, but men do not seem to be able to control their tongues.
- man is not capable of controlling his tongue and his speech?
 - the tongue of man is inherently evil and inevitably brings death?
 - false-teachers derive what they say from the Evil One (cf. II Cor. 13-15), and spread the poison of death by what they say?
 - only God can control the tongue of a teacher that he might share the "words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68)?
- Vss. 9,10** • By using the "blessing" / "cursing" contrast, is James trying to point out...
- the inconsistency and incompatibility of duplicitous speech?
 - that Christians should always "bless" others with good words, and leave the "cursing" to God? (cf. Lk. 6:28; Rom. 12:14)
 - that Christian teachers who minister the blessing of God in Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 1:3), should not denounce the inadequacies and performances of those who have been regenerated in the likeness of God (cf. Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24)?
 - that so-called Christian teachers who "bless the Lord" in worship, cannot be genuine if they are cursing God's people in derision and derogation.
- Vss. 11,12** • What do these contrastual analogies indicate?
- that the character of good and evil are mutually exclusive? (cf. Matt. 6:23,24)
 - that the source controls the product? (cf. Matt. 7:16-20)
 - that the fruit is derived from the root? (cf. Matt. 12:33-35)
 - that the diabolic will never be made godly?
- What is the purpose of James' use of these analogies?
- that a Christian should seek to develop consistent Christian behavior?
 - that a Christian should choose the source for the receptivity of the character of his/her behavior?
 - that a Christian teacher must derive all from Christ in order to allow God's intended end-objective to be produced in His church-Body?