



The General Epistle of James

The Call to Peace

James 3:1-18

- I. THE DETRIMENT OF THE MOUTH (James 3:1-12)
 - A. The Danger for Teachers (James 3:1-2)
 - 1. The weight of greater condemnation (James 3:1)
 - a. The warning of seeking authority
 - (1) The indications of the title
 - a) Physical authority (see Genesis 24:9-65)—designated by the master/servant relationship
 - b) Spiritual or intellectual authority (Malachi 2:12; see also 1 Chronicles 25:8; Matthew 10:24-25; John 3:10)—designated by the master/scholar relationship
 - (2) The warning from James—"be not many masters." Note: Apparently, there was a strong desire among the Jews to be teachers (Romans 2:17-24; 1 Timothy 1:5-7).
 - b. The warning of greater condemnation
 - (1) Far too many people focus on the "glory" of leadership but fail to recognize the tremendous responsibility and accountability that comes with leadership. Ministry should only be entered by those called of God (1 Timothy 1:12).
 - (2) Leadership brings accountability (Ezekiel 3:17-18; see Acts 20:26-27; Hebrews 13:17).
 - (3) Moses is the perfect example (Numbers 20:1-13).
 - (4) Paul spoke of the perils of being a master (Galatians 4:19).
 - (5) John warned that those to whom he ministered could affect his reward (2 John 1:8).
 - 2. The need for perfection (James 3:2)
 - a. The ease of offence
 - (1) In *many* things
 - (2) We offend *all*. Note: Before we can fully grasp the meaning of this statement, we need to understand that *offend* means to strike against and cause to stumble (see Romans 14:19-21; 1 Corinthians 8:13).
 - b. The indication of perfection
 - (1) If any man offend not in word (2 Corinthians 6:3)
 - (2) The same is a perfect man.
 - a) The word *perfect* suggests that a man is complete, mature, or not lacking.
 - b) A man who communicates truth without offence is mature.
 - (3) He is able to bridle the whole body.

**B. The Lessons of Nature (James 3:3-8)**

1. The first lesson—the tongue controls the body (James 3:3-6).
 - a. The teachers (James 3:3-4)
 - (1) A submitted horse (James 3:3)
 - a) The expectation—“that they may obey us”
 - b) The effort—“we put bits in the horses’ mouths.”
 - c) The end—“we turn about their whole body.”
 - (2) A submitted ship (James 3:4)
 - a) The expectation—the governor’s will
 - b) The effort—“though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm.”
 - c) The end—“whithersoever the governor listeth”
 - b. The lesson (James 3:5-6)
 - (1) The tongue is a little member (James 3:5).
 - a) Like a bit
 - b) Like a helm
 - (2) The tongue has great power (James 3:5).
 - a) It boasteth great things.
 - b) It controls a great matter.
 - (3) The tongue dictates the whole body (James 3:6).
 - a) It is a fire and a world of iniquity.
 - b) It defileth the whole body.
 - c) It setteth on fire and is set on fire.
2. The second lesson—the tongue of man is more dangerous than the fiercest of animals (James 3:7-8).
 - a. Submitted animals (James 3:7)
 - (1) The animals
 - a) Every kind of beasts
 - b) Of birds
 - c) Of serpents
 - d) Of things in the sea
 - (2) The end
 - a) Is tamed
 - b) Hath been tamed of mankind
 - b. The lesson (James 3:8)
 - (1) The tongue can no man tame.
 - a) It is a scourge (Job 5:21).
 - b) It is a sharp razor (Psalm 52:2).
 - c) It is a sharp sword (Psalm 57:4; Psalm 64:3).
 - d) It is as the tongue of a serpent (Psalm 140:3).
 - e) It is as a weapon (Isaiah 54:17).
 - f) It is a bow and arrow (Jeremiah 9:3, 8).
 - g) It is a fire (James 3:6).
 - (2) It is an unruly evil.
 - (3) It is full of deadly poison.



C. The Contradiction of the Tongue (James 3:9-12)

1. The description of the contradiction (James 3:9-10)
 - a. The content of the contradiction (James 3:9)
 - (1) The source of the contradiction—"Therewith"
 - a) Referring back to the tongue (see James 3:8)
 - b) The contradictions of the tongue
 - i) It can contradict itself.
 - ii) It can temporarily contradict the heart (see Matthew 15:18).
 - iii) It will eventually unveil the heart (Luke 6:45).
 - (2) The nature of the contradiction
 - a) The identification of the contradiction
 - i) Therewith **ble^ss** we **God**, even the Father
 - ii) Therewith **cur^se** we **men**, which are made after the similitude of God
 - b) The confusion of the contradiction
 - i) Distinctions made by man
 - (a) Secular and spiritual (bless versus curse)
 - (b) Relationship with God and relationship with man (God versus men)
 - ii) The scriptural truth
 - (a) The Christian walk is done in the world and is a result of what is done in private before the Lord.
 - (b) A man's fellowship with his brethren is only as strong as his fellowship with the Lord (1 John 2:9-11; 1 John 3:10-16; 1 John 4:7).
 - (c) A man may, for a time, hypocritically walk a good walk in the world or maintain seemingly good relationships with others, but he cannot fake a good relationship with the Lord. Eventually, a poor relationship with the Lord will show itself in a man's dealings with others.
 - (d) God puts great stock in our treatment of others, because mankind was created by God and after the similitude of God (James 3:9; with Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 9:6; and 1 John 3:15).
 - (i) Unforgiveness
 - (ii) Hatred
 - (iii) Forsaking
 - b. The condemnation of the contradiction (James 3:10)
 - (1) The place of the contradiction—"Out of the same mouth"
 - (2) The product of the contradiction—"proceedeth blessing and cursing"
 - (3) The people of the contradiction—"My brethren"
 - (4) The contempt of the contradiction—"these things ought not so to be."