

A Study of the General Epistles

(NT Survey Lesson 193--James 3)

Introduction: Apparently among the Christians to whom James writes there was strife and contention about who should teach. Their desire to teach grew out of jealousy and selfish ambition to be preeminent rather than out of a humble desire to serve God. It led to ill will and strife. As James corrects these errors, he points out the qualities of an ideal teacher of God's word.

Lesson aim: To help us know the qualities of an ideal gospel teacher of God's word.

The serious responsibility of teachers--Jas. 3:1-2

1. Read the first verse and then the last verse of this chapter. What do both verses discuss?
2. What does a discussion of the tongue (v. 2-12) and wisdom (v. 13-17) have to do with teaching?
3. Why does James warn his readers "not to be many masters" (teachers)? How is this so?

The dangers of misusing the tongue--Jas. 3:3-12

1. Did James believe that Christians never sinned? (v. 2) In what area did James see special danger? (v. 3) If one can control the tongue, what kind of man is he?
2. How is the tongue like the bit on a bridle and the rudder on a ship? (v. 3-4)
3. How does James describe the tongue's potential for wickedness and destruction? (v. 5-6)

4. Can the tongue be tamed? (v. 7) What did James say about it? (v. 8)
5. How might the tongue be inconsistently used? (v. 9) What did James use to illustrate the inconsistency of using the tongue for both evil and good purposes? (v. 11-12)

The features of wisdom from above--Jas. 3:13-18

1. How does a person prove that he has the wisdom to teach others? (v. 13)
2. Those who are not wise have what instead in their hearts? (v. 14) What are the results of these attitudes? (v. 16).
3. Describe the wisdom that does not come from above (v. 15).
4. Define each of the terms describing the "wisdom from above" (v. 17).
5. In v. 18 what is the seed? What is the fruit? Who sows the seed? How does he sow it?