



“TONGUE REINS, TONGUES REIGN”

JAMES 3:1-12 BIBLE STUDY

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CONTEXT



- Understand this, my beloved brothers and sisters: every person must be **quick** to listen, **slow** to speak, and **slow** to anger. (Jas 1:19, AT)
 - If someone thinks [his/herself] to be religious and does not **bridle their tongue** but misleads their heart, this person's "religion" is worthless. (Jas 1:26, AT)
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JAMES 3:1 WORD OF CAUTION

- Do not become teachers, many of you – my fellow believers – because we know that we [who teach] will receive greater judgment (Jas 3:1, AT)
- 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church **first** of all apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are **all teachers**? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the **greater** gifts. (1 Cor 12:27-31, NIV; cf. Ac 13:1, Rom 12:7, Eph 4:11)



JAMES 3:1 GREAT POWER, GREAT ACCOUNTABILITY

- 47 “The servant who **knows** the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be **beaten with many blows**. 48 But the one who **does not know** and does things deserving punishment will be **beaten with few blows**. From everyone who has been **given much, much** will be **demanded**; and from the one who has been **entrusted with much, much** more will be **asked**. (Lk 12:47-48, NIV)
 - “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. (Mt 18:6, NIV)
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JAMES 3:2
BRIDLE THE TONGUE,
BRIDLE THE BODY

- For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in their words, this person is perfect – able to bridle the whole body (Jas 3:2, AT)
 - 2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 And let this perseverance bring about [its] **perfect** [τέλειος | *teleios*] work, so that you may be **perfect** [τέλειος | *teleios*] and complete – lacking in nothing. (Jas 1:2-4, AT)
 - You see that his faith was **working together** with his **works**, and **by his works** his faith was brought to **perfection** [τελειόω | *teleioō*] (James 2:22, AT)
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JAMES 3:2
BRIDLE THE TONGUE,
BRIDLE THE BODY



The wise in heart accept commands,

but a **chattering fool** comes to ruin. (Pr 10:8, NIV; cf. Pr 10:11, 16:27-

28, 18:7-8)

Those who **guard their lips** preserve their lives,

but those who **speak rashly** will come to ruin. (Pr 13:3, NIV)

The **mouths of fools** are their undoing,

and their **lips** are a snare to their very lives. (Pr 18:7, NIV)





JAMES 3:3
A SMALL BIT CAN
STEER SOMETHING BIG



- Now if we put bridles into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we also steer their whole body (Jas 3:3, AT)





JAMES 3:4
LOOSE LIPS
SINK SHIPS



- And consider: Ships, though being very large and being driven by strong winds, are steered by a very small rudder to wherever the one who guides [the boat] wishes (Jas 3:4, AT)





JAMES 3:5 TONGUE OF FIRE



- And, in the same way, the tongue is a small part [of the body] and yet it boasts of great things. Consider how small a fire sets ablaze how large a forest. (Jas 3:5, AT)

A scoundrel plots evil,

and on their lips it is like a **scorching fire** (Pr 16:27, NIV)





JAMES 3:6 TONGUE OF HELLFIRE

- And, the tongue is a fire. The tongue is presented [or presents itself] as the unrighteous world among our [body] parts. It is the one that stains [σπιλώω | *spiloō*] the whole body, and sets on fire the cycle of life, and is set on fire by Hell [Gehenna] (Jas 3:6, AT)
 - Pure and undefiled religion before [our] God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their hardship [and] to keep oneself **unstained** [ἄσπιλος, | *aspilos*] from the world (Jas 1:27, AT)
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JAMES 3:6 SPIRITUAL POLLUTION

- What goes **into** someone's mouth does **not defile** them, but what **comes out of their mouth**, that is what **defiles** them.” (Mt 15:11, NIV)
 - 17 “Don't you see that whatever **enters the mouth** goes into the stomach and then **out of the body**? 18 But the things that come **out of a person's mouth** come from the **heart**, and these **defile** them. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Mt 15:18-19, NIV)
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JAMES 3:6 HELLFIRE



- 4 “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into **hell [Gehenna]**. Yes, I tell you, fear him. (Lk 12:4-5, NIV)
- And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into **hell [Gehenna]**. (Mk 9:45, NIV)



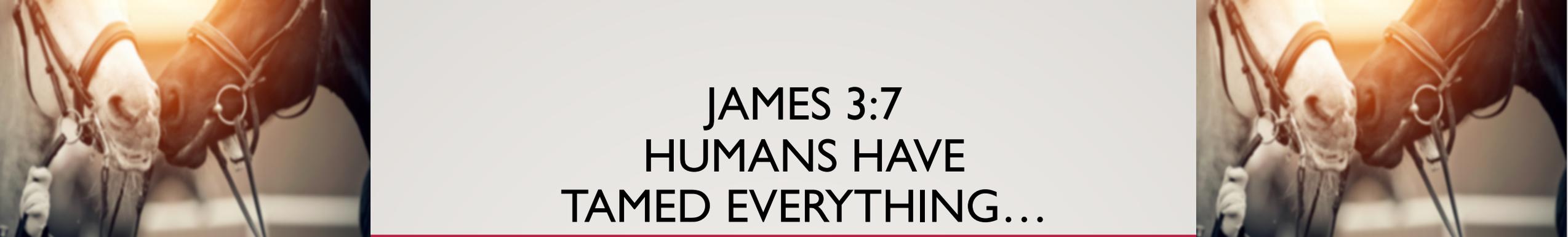


JAMES 3:6
USE WORDS WISELY



The words of the reckless **pierce like swords,**
but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Pr 12:18, NIV)





JAMES 3:7
HUMANS HAVE
TAMED EVERYTHING...

- For every species of **beasts** and **birds**, of **reptiles** and **sea creatures**, are being tamed and have been tamed by the species of mankind (Jas 3:7, AT)
 - 26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may **rule** over the **fish** in the sea and the **birds** in the sky, over the **livestock** and all the **wild** animals, and over all the **creatures that move along the ground.**” (Gen 1:26, NIV)
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JAMES 3:7
HUMANS HAVE
TAMED EVERYTHING...

- 4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? 5 You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. 6 You made them **rulers** over the works of your hands; you put everything **under their feet**: 7 all **flocks and herds**, and the **animals of the wild**, 8 the **birds in the sky**, and the **fish in the sea**, all that swim the paths of the seas.
(Ps 8:4-8, NIV)
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JAMES 3:8
...EXCEPT THE
HUMAN TONGUE

- But no human is able to tame the tongue – an unstable [ἀκατάστατος | *akatastatos*] evil full of deadly poison (Jas 3:8, AT)
 - 6 But they must ask in faith, not wavering in doubt. For the one who doubts is like a surge of waves on the sea, being blown by the wind and tossed back and forth. 7 That person must not expect that they will receive anything from the Lord 8 – a double-minded individual, **unstable** [ἀκατάστατος | *akatastatos*] in all their ways. (Jas 1:6-8, AT)
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JAMES 3:8
VENOMOUS
VITRIOL



They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent's;
the **poison of vipers** is on their **lips**. (Ps 140:3, NIV)





JAMES 3:9 BLESSING AND CURSING



- With it we bless the Lord and Father and with it we curse humans, who have been made in the likeness of God (Jas 3:9, AT)

Bless the LORD, O my soul:

And all that is within me, **bless** his holy name. (Ps 103:1, KJV cf. LXX)

- **bless** those who **curse** you, pray for those who mistreat you (Lk 6:28, NIV)
- **Bless** those who persecute you; **bless** and do not **curse** (Rom 12:14, NIV)





JAMES 3:10
DOUBLE-TONGUED



- Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, it ought not be this way (Jas 3:10, AT)





JAMES 3:11
UNNATURAL SPRINGS



- A spring can't pour out fresh [water] and bitter [water] out of the same hole can it? (Jas 3:11, AT)





JAMES 3:12 UNNATURAL PRODUCE

- My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree make olives or a grapevine make figs? Neither can a salty [spring] make fresh water. (Jas 3:12, AT)
 - 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick **grapes** from thornbushes, or **figs** from thistles? 17 Likewise, every **good tree** bears **good fruit**, but a **bad tree** bears **bad fruit**. 18 A **good tree** cannot bear **bad fruit**, and a **bad tree** cannot bear **good fruit**. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the **fire**. 20 **Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.** (Mt 7:16-20, NIV)
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