

Pure Doctrine for Holy Living

A Study of the Epistle of James

Wisdom from Above

Lesson 4

James 3

Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
January 27, 2019

The Message of James

- ▶ Becoming perfect and complete, lacking nothing – by faith (1:4)
- ▶ Receiving the crown of life (1:12)
- ▶ Being the first fruits among His creatures (1:18)
- ▶ Achieving the salvation of your souls (1:21) – see also 2:14; 5:15; 5:20
- ▶ Being blessed (1:25)
- ▶ Being religious (1:26)
- ▶ Pure and undefiled religion (1:27)
- ▶ Having saving faith (2:14, 22, 24)
- ▶ Being perfect or complete (3:2)

The Work of Salvation is by Faith

- ▶ Initiated by the new birth – an act of God’s grace (1:8)
- ▶ The means of salvation is by faith – tested/proven by trials (1:3-4)
- ▶ A necessary provision: wisdom (1:5)
- ▶ True saving faith works
- ▶ The Law of Moses v. the Law of Liberty (Royal Law or Law of the King)
- ▶ Faith is: assurance of things hoped for; conviction of things not seen
- ▶ Works are not added to faith but a part of saving faith (AND v. WITH)
- ▶ Faith without works is dead or useless (2:17, 20)

“But this James does no more than drive to the law and its works, and in a disorderly way throws one thing into another, so that I imagine it was some good pious man or other who took up a few statements from the disciples of the apostles and so threw them on paper, or perhaps out of his sermon the thing was composed by another.”

MARTIN LUTHER

James

- ▶ Part 1: Doctrine of the Christian Life – Saving Faith (1-3)
- ▶ Part 2: Practical Teaching on the Christian Life (4-5)
- ▶ James 3
 - The power of the tongue (3:1-12)
 - Wisdom from above (3:13-18)

A Message to Teachers (3:1-2)

- ▶ Why address teachers?
- ▶ The Great Commission:
 - Go into all the world . . . make disciples . . . baptize . . . teach
 - Teach them to observe all things that I command you (Matt 28:19-20)
- ▶ The failure of Judaism aided by false teachers (Matt 15:7-11)
- ▶ A warning to false teachers is a lesson to true teachers
- ▶ The problem of stumbling – in many ways
- ▶ Stumbling in words is turning from the truth (Matt 18:1-9)
- ▶ If anyone does not stumble in words, he is able to bridle the body

The Power of the Tongue (3:3-5)

- ▶ The horse is controlled by the bit
- ▶ The ship is controlled by the rudder
- ▶ The forest is destroyed by the spark
- ▶ The tongue is a very small organ with great impact on the body
- ▶ The emphasis now is on the great damage it causes

The Tongue is a Fire (3:6-8)

- ▶ A world of iniquity
- ▶ Defiles the entire body
- ▶ Sets on fire “the wheel of existence” – the course of life
- ▶ Set on fire by Gehenna
- ▶ No one can tame the tongue – “a restless evil and full of deadly poison”

Double-minded and Unstable (3:9-12)

- ▶ The tongue is a source of blessing and cursing
- ▶ This ought not to be!
 - A fountain with sweet and bitter water
 - A fig tree with figs and olives
 - A vine (fruitless) with figs
 - Fresh water from salt water
- ▶ An insolvable problem? No parallel in all of creation
- ▶ Our incomplete salvation - how can the teacher bridle his body (1:4)?

Wisdom from Above (3:13-18)

- ▶ The necessity of bridling the tongue (1:26; 3:2)
- ▶ Two natures in the believer revealed by the tongue
- ▶ An incomplete salvation (1 John 3:1-3) – written 50 years later
- ▶ The requirement of wisdom and understanding for good behavior
- ▶ The competition: earthly, natural, demonic – from the fires of Gehenna
- ▶ Bitter jealousy – selfishness and empty deceit (Phil 2:3-4)
- ▶ Selfish ambition – unspiritual desires
- ▶ Lie against the truth
- ▶ Disorder and every evil thing

Wisdom from Above (3:13-18)

- ▶ Pure – unmixed with human wisdom
- ▶ Peaceable – arises from peace with God
- ▶ Gentle – forbearance; tolerance in the face of provocation
- ▶ Reasonable – ready to obey (submit)
- ▶ Full of mercy and good fruits – benevolence toward the needy
- ▶ Unwavering – without uncertainty or variance
- ▶ Without hypocrisy – sincere and genuine
- ▶ Wisdom from above – the application of the knowledge of God to daily life
- ▶ Seed (Word of Truth) – sown in peace and produces righteousness

Teach them to observe all things . . .

- ▶ The just shall live by faith
- ▶ Challenges to our faith
 - Trials
 - Indwelling sin
- ▶ God's provision
 - The new birth – the divine nature (Christ in you)
 - The implanted Word and the Holy Spirit
 - The written Word – the wisdom of God