

James 2

2:1-4

Evil thoughts?

Tax collector and Pharisee

Luke 18:9-14 – See others the way God sees them. It'll transform how you treat people into how God wants us to treat them.

Luke 14:7-11 – don't show partiality and don't receive it either

and **14:12-14** – True and perfect religion of **James 1:27**

To not see the equality that the cross brings is evil (**Galatians 3:26-28**)

Partiality is based on works; God's favor is based on grace

This attitude can have you miss grace when it is offered to you

Luke 14:15-24

When you miss grace, it sounds like this...

Matthew 23

Matthew 7:21-23 Is what neglecting the weightier matters of the law looks like.

2:5-7

Proverbs 3:34 – "Surely, He scorns the scornful; but gives grace to the humble."

2:8-13

The seriousness of partiality exposed.

We might think it is a little thing, but here James shows us how all sin is the same in that every one of them makes us a lawbreaker.

2:14-17

This is not a teaching on works-based salvation.

It is teaching the same thing as **Ephesians 2:8-10** and **Philippians 2:12,13**

Let's look at it together.

2:18-25

:18

Works as a visible demonstration of authentic faith

:19

Faith without works as seen in the previous verse, is the same type of faith of demons

:20,21

Here is a demonstration: Abraham

Justified here means verified or proven. We know this because we know precisely when

Abraham was justified salvifically.

Genesis 15 Abraham is credited with righteousness

Genesis 22 is when he was asked to sacrifice Isaac

Genesis 17 is circumcision

Rahab salvation seen in **Joshua 2:11**; justifying work seen in **2:16**

James 2:26

Good trees bear good fruit

Bad trees bear bad fruit

The fruit justifies the type of tree it is.

You will know who are Mine by their fruit

Matthew 7:15-20

James 3

3:1

It is easy to take the position of teacher lightly in the church, without considering its cost in terms of accountability. Jesus warned *to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.* ([Luke 12:48](#))

ii. The words of Jesus and James remind us that being among the **teachers** in God's church is more than a matter of having natural or even spiritual gifts; there is an additional dimension of appropriate character and right living. "James found that this department of church-work had become extremely popular. Hence his warning about its serious responsibilities. God will judge us on the last day **with special strictness** on account of our influence over others." (Moffatt)

iii. Therefore, **teachers** were both tested more and would be judged more strictly. "Their case is awful; *they shall receive greater condemnation* than common sinners; they have not only sinned in thrusting themselves into that office to which God has never called them, but through their *insufficiency* the flocks over whom they have assumed the *mastery* perish for lack of knowledge, and their blood will God require at the watchman's hand." (Clarke)

iv. "The comparative adjective *greater* [**stricter**] implies degrees of treatment at the judgment seat." (Hiebert)

Ezekiel 33:1-11

How teachers should talk

3:2

Here, James includes himself in the difficulties of taming the tongue. We all stumble in it. Stumble here means to fall but with the likelihood of recovery.

I believe 'perfect man' here means that he has done the tougher thing, taming the tongue. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume he will be able to rightly tame the other parts of the body. His mouth will expose his heart. As Jesus said in **Matthew 12:34-37**

3:3-5a

If the tongue is so dangerous, then do the monks have it right that they take vows of silence?
No.

The tongue has been designed by God to bring forth great things, including the gospel. Praise should be free-flowing from our tongues.

We can make or break someone's entire day by how we decide we will use our tongues.

You don't keep a horse in the barn or a ship tied to the dock because they can potentially go out of control.

They were created and designed for greater things, and it would be awful if they were not used for them.

But they need bits and rudders to achieve their glorious purposes.

2

3:5b,6

Proverbs 10:19-21; 12:25; 16:24; 18:21

- a. the tongue is a fire, a fire which nothing stops its ragings until there is great destruction.
- b. The tongue has the unique ability to defile the whole body, since the sin that comes out of it originates in the heart (soul).
- c. The origin of the fire is nowhere less than hell itself.

3:7

James here recognizes and acknowledges man's rule over every living creature on earth and that we can bring them into subjection to us.

But our tongue appears to be a very small thing, easily dismissed as being 'not a big deal'.

3:8

- i. "The poison of the tongue is no less deadly, it murders men's reputations by the slanders it utters, their souls by the lusts and passions it stirs up in them, and many times their bodies too by the contentions and quarrels it raiseth against men." (Poole)

ii. A woman once came to John Wesley and said she knew what her talent was and she said, "I think my talent from God is to speak my mind." Wesley replied, "I don't think God would mind if you buried that talent." Speaking forth everything that comes to mind is unwise, poisonous speech.

James would have us mindful that every time we open our mouths to say something, we may be unleashing what the holy Scriptures call "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison".

This goes as well for our social media posts. Are you prepared... at this moment, and at every moment... to present your social media comments to Jesus Christ for review on your day of judgment?

3:9

Every foul word we speak to another was spoken to a being in the similitude of God. For this alone, they deserve our careful choices of words we use towards them.

3:10-12

To have both blessing and cursing come from the same mouth misses the understanding that the blessings from our mouth praise God and the cursings curse those who are His similitude. That lack of understanding produces hypocrisy in us.

Jesus has much to say about the hypocrite

Matthew 23:13-34 and back to **Matthew 12:33-37**

3

How teachers should live

3:13

The word wise here, (Sophia), was a word used for teachers, or rabbis. This is pointing us back to **3:1**.

It is not enough to be in a position of teacher, or rabbi, one must live out his own teachings. The fruit of his life will bear on the authenticity of his teaching.

If the works done by the teacher are congruent with his teaching, then the teacher shows he is wise.

This wisdom will come in the form of meekness, because a part of wisdom is to not take credit where credit is not due. Worldly wisdom puffs up, but wisdom from God is such that is described below.

3:14

This is exactly what the Pharisees were guilty of. They had a wisdom, but they also had bitter envy towards Jesus because the attention given to Jesus interfered with the self-seeking ambitions of the Pharisees.

3:15

Earthly – Shortsighted. Never considers judgment day.

Sensual – Appetitive. Responds to our desires like an animal.

Demonic – It is against God

3:16

These things so go against God, who is the Truth, that confusion ensues. With confusion comes evil since clarity would have us run from evil.

Clarity comes from Truth, so confusion comes from sin since sin is against truth.

3:17

This is a description of the meekness of wisdom.

Pure – not meaning sexual purity, but free from the stain of bitter envy and self-seeking.

Peaceable – With reason to fight, finds a way forward without doing so.

Gentle – Hard to translate Greek word (epieikes), but “a sweet reasonableness” was one suggestion.

Willing to yield – hears all sides before condemning any

Full of mercy – Understands he is a recipient of unending mercy (**Matthew 7:2**), so extends it to others.

Full of good fruits – Not just in words, but with deeds to back it up.

4

Without partiality – does not consider the position of anyone while considering everyone

Without hypocrisy – Speaking in half-truths to obtain a desired result rather than the truth.

3:18

This wisdom is altogether a practical wisdom. There are feet to this faith.

Messianic wisdom is transformational, beyond that of merely Solomonic wisdom.