

The Tongue Is a Fire

3:1 ^aLET not many *of you* become teachers, ^bmy brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a ¹stricter judgment. 2 For we all ^astumble in many *ways*. ^bIf anyone does not stumble in ¹what he says, he is a ^cperfect man, able to ^dbridle the whole body as well. 3 Now ^aif we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they may obey us, we direct their entire body as well. 4 Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder, wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. 5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and *yet* it ^aboasts of great things. ^bBehold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! 6 And ^athe tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which ^bdefiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* ¹life, and is set on fire by ²^chell. 7 For every ¹species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by the human ¹race. 8 But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of ^adeadly poison. 9 With it we bless ^a*our* Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, ^bwho have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. 11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening *both* ¹fresh and bitter *water*? 12 ^aCan a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Neither *can* salt water produce ¹fresh.

Wisdom from Above

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? ^aLet him show by his ^bgood behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter ^ajealousy and ¹selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against ^bthe truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down ^afrom above, but is ^bearthly, ¹^cnatural, ^ddemonic. 16 For where ^ajealousy and ¹selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 17 But the wisdom ^afrom above is first ^bpure, then ^cpeaceable, ^dgentle, ¹reasonable, ^efull of mercy and good fruits, ^funwavering, without ^ghypocrisy. 18 And the ¹^aseed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace ²by those who make peace.

^a Matt. 23:8; Rom. 2:20f.; 1 Tim. 1:7

^b James 1:16; 3:10

¹ Or, *greater condemnation*

^a James 2:10

^b Matt. 12:34-37; James 3:2-12

¹ Lit., *word*

^c James 1:4

^d James 1:26

^a Ps. 32:9

^a Ps. 12:3f.; 73:8f.

^b Prov. 26:20f.

^a Ps. 120:2, 3; Prov. 16:27

^b Matt. 12:36f.; 15:11, 18f.

¹ Or, *existence, origin*

² Gr., *Gehenna*

^c Matt. 5:22

¹ Lit., *nature*

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^a Ps. 140:3; Eccl. 10:11; Rom. 3:13

^a James 1:27

^b Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 11:7

¹ Lit., *sweet*

^a Matt. 7:16

¹ V. 11, note 1

^a James 2:18

^b 1 Pet. 2:12

^a Rom. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:20; James 3:16

¹ Or, *strife*

^b 1 Tim. 2:4; James 1:18; 5:19

^a James 1:17

^b 1 Cor. 2:6; 3:19

¹ Or, *unspiritual*

^c 2 Cor. 1:12; Jude 19

^d 2 Thess. 2:9f.; 1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 2:24

^a Rom. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:20; James 3:14

¹ V. 14, note 1

^a James 1:17

^b 2 Cor. 7:11; James 4:8

^c Matt. 5:9; Heb. 12:11

^d Titus 3:2

¹ Or, *willing to yield*

^e Luke 6:36; James 2:13

^f James 2:4

^g Rom. 12:9; 2 Cor. 6:6

¹ Lit., *fruit of righteousness*

^a Prov. 11:18; Is. 32:17; Hos. 10:12; Amos 6:12; Gal. 6:8; Phil. 1:11

² Or, *for*

ⁱ *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.