



James 3:1-12 New Revised Standard Version

Taming the Tongue

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters,^[a] for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. **2** For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. **3** If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. **4** Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. **5** So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! **6** And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature,^[b] and is itself set on fire by hell.^[c] **7** For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, **8** but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. **10** From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters,^[d] this ought not to be so. **11** Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? **12** Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters,^[e] yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Footnotes

- a. [James 3:1](#) Gk *brothers*
- b. [James 3:6](#) Or *wheel of birth*
- c. [James 3:6](#) Gk *Gehenna*
- d. [James 3:10](#) Gk *My brothers*
- e. [James 3:12](#) Gk *my brothers*

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