

Today, ~ Bring To A Close.

In vv 9-12, ~ concludes ~ by dealing with the ~ inconsistency ~ of the tongue.

▶▶ In 9-10a, ~ the fact of inconsistency.

▷▷^{9a} With it ~ we bless our Lord and Father, ~ ~^{9b} and with it ~ we curse people ~ ~^{9c} who are made in the likeness of God. ~ ~^{10a} From the same mouth ~ come blessing and cursing.

▶▶ In 10b, ~ James expresses outrage ~ at the moral inconsistency he describes.

▷▷ My brothers*, ~ these things ought not to be so.

▶▶ Then in 11-12, ~ illustrates inconsistency ~ from natural examples.

▷▷¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening ~ both fresh and salt water? ¹² ~ ~
Can ~ a fig tree, ~ my brothers*, ~ bear olives, ~ or a grapevine ~ produce figs? ~ ~
Neither ~ can a salt pond ~ yield fresh water.

The Fact ~ Of The Inconsistency, ~ 9-10a.

^{9a} With it ~ we bless our Lord and Father, ~ ~^{9b} and with it ~ we curse people ~ ~^{9c} who are made in the likeness of God. ~ ~^{10a} From the same mouth ~ come blessing and cursing.

"With the tongue" ~ gives recognition to the fact ~ that the tongue ~ ¶¶

▶▶ is only ~ the instrument ~ that the speaker uses to express himself. 1/15

▶▶ This fact is underlined ~ by the repetition of the clause.

▶▶ While James has practically personified the tongue in this essay, ~ 77

▷▷ he is fully aware ~ of the person ~ behind the tongue.

▶▶ "With the tongue" ~ is a reminder ~ that the human tongue ~ is a tool.

▶▶ Remember, ~ it's the rider ~ who guides the horse.

▶▶ It's the pilot ~ who handles the rudder.

▶▶ And it's the person ~ who wields the tongue.

▷▷ Our tongues ~ do not act independently ~ of our minds.

▷▷ IOW, ~ if our tongues are out of control, ~ we are to blame, ~ not our tongues.

↪↪ Not, ~ "My tongue made me do it."

The pronoun ~ we ~ indicates ~ that this inconsistent use of the tongue ~ is characteristic ~ of people in general.

▶▶ And James acknowledges ~ that Christians ~ still have this nature.

▷▷ Even believers ~ may be guilty of duplicity.

▶▶ Never forget, ~ believers are new creations in Christ.

▷▷ But in this life, ~ we still have our sin nature. 2/15

And it is a constant, ~ daily battle between ~ our new and old natures.

▶▶ As many of us are aware, ~ Paul was painfully aware of this in his own life.

▷▷ Rom. 7:15-25

In this life, ~ we still have our old nature.

▶▶ So, ~ it is still possible ~ for believers ~ to allow ourselves ~ to be dominated ~ ¶¶

▷▷ by our sinful nature and its sinful desires ~ and to carry out those desires.

▶▶ And that means, ~ we are very capable ~ of blessing and cursing.

Moving on, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ the verb tense of the words for **bless** and **curse** ~ indicates that ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the tongue's ability to play the part ~ of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde ~ is not ~ an isolated occurrence.

▶▶ The tongue is used ~ for incompatible activities.

▷▷ On the one hand, ~ it is very godly.

↪↪ But, ~ on the other, ~ it can be most profane in daily life.

Verse 9a.

▶▶ With it ~ [i.e., ~ the tongue] ~ we bless our Lord and Father. 3/15

▶▶ The Grk vb translated ~ **bless** ~ when directed toward God ~ indicates ~ an expression of praise.

▷▷ Translated: ~ ~ ¶¶

↪↪ With the tongue ~ we praise ~ our Lord and Father.

▷▷ This states ~ the highest and noblest employment ~ of the human tongue.

▶▶ Both titles, ~ **Lord and Father** ~ are part of the biblical revelation of the nature of God.

▷▷ **Lord** ~ points ~ to God's rightful authority and sovereign power.

▷▷ **Father** ~ points ~ to his love and compassion.

↪↪ It's likely that James used ~ **Father** ~ to emphasize ~ God's divine love for his children.

▶▶ Both titles speak to the contradictory use of our tongues.

▷▷ God's authority ~ shows that he has the right ~ ¶¶

↪↪ to declare this inconsistent tendency ~ sin ~ and ~ to command us not to engage in it.

▷▷ His sovereign power ~ reminds us that he, ~ and he alone, ~ can enable us ~ to control our tongues.

▷▷ And his divine love for us ~ is the model for us ~ in our relationships with our fellow believers. **4/15**

▷▷ Furthermore, ~ since ~ God so loved the world, ~ 77

↳↳ it serves as the model for us in relation ~ to unbelievers as well.

→→ We are to love ~ not curse ~ people.

▶▶ With the tongue ~ we praise ~ our Lord and Father, ~ James says.

▷▷ It was the devout practice among the Jews, ~ both in speaking and in writing, ~ 77

↳↳ to add ~ Blessed [be] He ~ after each utterance of the name of God.

▷▷ Again, ~ writing to Jewish Christians.

▷▷ No doubt, ~ they still continued this practice whenever God was mentioned.

▷▷ Such a practice of praising God ~ is worthy ~ of every Christian tongue.

▷▷ If our hearts are full of praise for God, ~ there will be little or no room ~ for cursing others.

↳↳ Or ~ for complaining, ~ for that matter.

If praising God ~ is the highest and noblest employment ~ of the human tongue, ~ 77

▶▶ cursing people ~ is the lowest and poorest employment.

▷▷ Vs 9b, ~ And with it ~ we curse people. 5/15

▶▶ In employing the Grk verb translated ~ curse, ~ James probably has in mind ~ 77

▷▷ a variety of verbal sins ~ that harm people.

↳↳ Such as, ~ slander, ~ false testimony, ~ gossip, ~ unsubstantiated rumors, ~ etc.

▶▶ The old adage, ~ 77

▷▷ "sticks & stones will break my bones, ~ but names will never hurt me", ~ is not true.

▷▷ Sticks, ~ stones, ~ and ~ words ~ will hurt people.

↳↳ Hurtful words ~ can pack quite a wallop!

▷▷ E.g., ~ think ~ what enormous, ~ sometimes irreversible, ~ 77

↳↳ harm can be caused to people ~ by unsubstantiated, ~ often false, ~ rumors.

→→ Such a rumor can be harder to stop ~ than any forest fire.

▷▷ Far easier to heal ~ are the wounds caused by sticks and stones ~ than the damage caused by words.

▶▶ Whatever ~ excuse or euphemism we might use ~ 77

▷▷ to soften the reality of our sinful words ~ such as, ~ "Sorry, ~ I'm just venting", ~ 77

↳↳ James accurately indicts sinful speech ~ for what it really is: ~ cursing. 6/15

▶▶ In truth, ~ with cursing, ~ we wish the harm of others, ~ 77

▷▷ and our ill speech ~ expresses that foul desire ~ and works to accomplish it.

In vs 9c, ~ James shows us that ~ 77

▶▶ invoking curses on fellow human beings is deplorable because ~ they are made in the likeness of God.

▶▶ The language of God's likeness ~ alludes to [Gen 1:26-27](#).

▷▷²⁶ Then God said, ~ "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. ~ And let them have dominion ~ over the fish of the sea ~ and over the birds of the heavens ~ and over the livestock ~ and over all the earth ~ and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ~²⁷ So God created man in his own image, ~ in the image of God he created him; ~ male and female ~ he created them.

▶▶ Humans, ~ unlike other living creatures, ~ are made in God's image.

▷▷ Scholars debate ~ what such "image" language asserts specifically about humans.

▷▷ But all agree ~ that it refers ~ to a unique way ~ in which humans reflect their Creator.

▷▷ And although marred by sin, ~ that image is still ~ very much a reality.

▶▶ Therefore, ~ every person, ~ believer and unbeliever, ~ is to be treated ~ with respect.

▷▷ We should not use ~ any word or name ~ that reduces them ~ 77

↪↪ to anything less ~ than their full stature as God's created beings. 7/15

▶▶ Additionally, ~ what James may be communicating here is simply ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that acting against people who resemble God ~ is the same as acting against God, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ who created those people.

▷▷ It is logically inconsistent ~ to pretend to bless God ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and then to curse the representation of God, ~ human beings.

▷▷ IOW, ~ cursing other human beings ~ is in effect ~ cursing God, ~ who created them.

▷▷ That takes how we talk about other people to a whole new level, ~ doesn't it?

Vs 10a ~ summarizes ~ vs 9.

▶▶ From the same mouth ~ come blessing and cursing.

▷▷ This summary ~ drives home the inconsistency.

▶▶ A person who ~ can praise God ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and then turn around and curse those whom the Father loves ~ shows a fundamental inconsistency.

↳↳ It doesn't fit!

▶▶ Similar to the forked tongue of a snake, ~ a person's uncontrolled tongue ~ ¶¶

▷▷ both ~ emits praise ~ and spews out curses. 8/15

▶▶Peter said to Jesus, ~ Even if I must die with you, ~ I will not deny you!

▷▷And that very same mouth of his ~ denied Jesus ~ with oaths and curses.

▶▶The John who said: ~ Beloved, ~ let us love one another, ~ was the same John ~ ¶¶

▷▷who had once wanted to call down fire from heaven ~ in order ~ to destroy a Samaritan village.

▶▶Even the mouths of the apostles ~ could say very different things.

▶▶It has not been unknown ~ for someone ~ to speak godly on Sunday ~ and to curse a team of workers on Monday.

▷▷It has not been unknown ~ for someone ~ ¶¶

↳↳to utter the most moral sentiments one day ~ and to repeat the most questionable stories the next.

▷▷It has not been unknown ~ ¶¶

↳↳for someone to speak with sweet graciousness at church ~ ¶¶

→→and then to go outside ~ to destroy another person's reputation with a malicious tongue.

From the same mouth ~ come blessing and cursing, ~ James says.

▶▶This fact, ~ coupled with the fact ~ that we cannot tame our tongues, ~ emphasizes ~ ¶¶

▷▷our need for the Lord's help ~ in the matter of our speech habits. 9/15

▶▶ We are terribly inconsistent.

▶▶ But the good news is ~ our God, ~ the true and only God, ~ is not inconsistent in any ~ way ~ shape, ~ or form.

▶▶ Not even ~ a microscopic amount ~ of inconsistency ~ is found in him.

▷▷ Jesus Christ is the same ~ yesterday ~ and today ~ and forever.

▶▶ We can trust him always ~ to help us speak in a godly manner.

▶▶ And ~ we can trust him always ~ to never lead us ~ into ungodly speaking.

▶▶ So let's turn our mouths, ~ minds, ~ and hearts over to him, ~ and let him guide our speech.

▷▷ We'll never go wrong doing that.

In 10b, ~ James Expresses Outrage ~ At The Moral Inconsistency He Describes.

My brothers*, ~ these things ought not to be so.

▶▶ This is not right!

▶▶ James is speaking ~ not merely about the cursing ~ but about the sorry fact ~ 77

▷▷ that both blessing and cursing ~ flow from the same source.

↪↪ For a Christian, ~ this should not happen. 10/15

▶▶ Some medications ~ are both ~ poisons and cures.

▷▷ They are benefits to a patient ~ when wisely controlled by a doctor, ~~ but harmful ~ when used unwisely.

▷▷ The tongue can ~ bless or curse.

▷▷ It can ~ wound or soothe.

▷▷ It can ~ speak the pleasing or the foulest things.

▷▷ It is one of life's hardest and plainest duties ~ to see ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that the tongue does not contradict itself ~ ¶¶

→→ but speaks only such words ~ as we would want God to hear.

▶▶ Important, ~~ Looking for consistency of behavior, ~ not perfection (see 3:2).

▶▶ The NT has much to say ~ about our speech.

▷▷ E.g., ~ Lk. 6:28a, ~ Bless those who curse you.

↳↳ Paul echoes Jesus' words in Rom. 12:14, ↳↳ Bless ~ those who persecute you; ~~ bless ~ and do not curse them.

↳↳ To bless ~ means that one asks God ~ to confer physical and spiritual well-being on another.

→→ Retaliation ~ is ruled out. 11/15

▷▷ And Eph. 5:4.

↳↳ Let there be ~ no filthiness ~ nor foolish talk ~ nor crude joking, ~ which are out of place, ~ but instead ~ let there be thanksgiving.

↳↳ Rather than cursing, ~ our speech is much better employed ~ in thanking God ~ ¶¶

→→ for what He has done for and given us.

And Then In 11-12, ~ He Illustrates The Inconsistency ~ From Natural Examples.

Two rhetorical questions ~ and then a categorical assertion.

¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ^{12a} Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? ^{12b} Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

1st, ~ ¹¹ Does a spring ~ pour forth from the same opening ~ both fresh and salt water?

▶▶ The question ~ calls for ~ a strong negative reply.

▷▷ Surely, ~ both fresh and salt water do not pour forth from the same spring, ~ do they?

▷▷ Implies ~ that the universally known facts ~ leave no doubt ~ what the answer must be.

↳↳ Of course not!

▷▷ The same spring ~ marks that ~ the consistency of the material creation ~ condemns ~ peoples' glaring inconsistency. 12/15

▷▷ The spring ~ does not display the inconsistency ~ revealed by the human mouth ~ in giving utterance to blessing and cursing.

▶▶ The importance of a spring of water ~ would be assumed ~ by all the readers familiar with conditions in dry Palestine.

▷▷ The existence of many of its villages ~ depended on the availability of such a source for its water.

▷▷ It was important ~ that the water from it ~ continued to be fresh and usable.

▷▷ A resident of the village coming for water ~ does not expect ~ ↴↴

↳↳ that it will alternate in providing ~ clear, ~ drinkable water, ~ and salty, ~ undrinkable water, ~ from the same spring.

▷▷ No spring ~ is so inconsistent.

2nd, 12^a Can a fig tree, ~ my brothers*, ~ bear olives, ~ or a grapevine produce figs?

▶▶ Calls for ~ a ringing ~ no answer.

▷▷ Orchard and vineyard likewise ~ cannot be so inconsistent.

▷▷ It is a standing impossibility for ~ a fig tree to produce olives ~ or a vine figs.

▷▷ Each ~ produces in harmony ~ with its own nature.

▶▶ Phrase, ~ my brothers and sisters ~ marks James's affectionate concern ~

to drive home this point for fellow believers. 13/15

▷▷ Again, ~ and can't stress this enough, ~ he wants what's spiritually best for us.

And 3rd, ~ James concludes ~ with a clear-cut assertion.

▶▶^{12b} Neither ~ can a salt pond ~ yield fresh water.

God Has Set In Place ~ Consistency In Nature.

I.e., ~ things yield ~ whatever is consistent ~ with its nature.

▶▶ God expects his children ~ to be consistent as well.

▶▶ It is actually unnatural ~ for a child of God ~ to issue forth ~ both blessing and cursing.

My . . . , ~ we are new creations in Christ.

▶▶ And we ~ are to produce what is in harmony ~ with that new nature.

▶▶ Paul calls us to this ~ in his exhortation in Eph. 4:1.

▷▷ I therefore, ~ a prisoner for the Lord, ~ urge you to walk in a manner ~ worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

▷▷ Briefly put, my . . . , ~ as a result of what God has done for and given us, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ spelled out in the first 3 chapters of Eph. ~ ¶¶

→→ we are to honor and glorify Him ~ in our thoughts, ~ words, ~ & behavior. 14/15

▶▶ Again, ~ James is looking ~ for consistency of behavior, ~ not perfection.

▷▷ Just as one can depend ~ on a fig tree to grow figs ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and on a fresh-water spring to pour forth fresh water, ~ ¶¶

→→ the maturing believer ~ should increasingly converse ~ constructively ~ rather than ~ destructively.

In The Final Analysis, ~ And We'll End With This, ~ ¶¶

consistently pure speech ~ is to be the product ~ of the renewed heart. 15/15