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February 2019



Tony and Jane Derrick

Dear Ministry Partner,

Americans recently lost our 41<sup>st</sup> president, George H.W. Bush. The world watched as messages of comfort and signs of respect rolled in from both sides of Congress. Political adversaries gathered to commemorate a man who envisioned “a kinder, gentler nation.”

It’s been several years since I sat in my “Human Anatomy and Physiology” class. I don’t remember much from that time except that the adult human body has 206 bones and even more muscles. As you and I venture on in our study of the Book of James, let’s turn our attention to the two-ounce slab of muscle that James addresses in the first verses of chapter three. It is the control of that muscle that helps us become “a kinder and gentler” people. Though understanding these verses about the tongue may be difficult, it could prove to be the most rewarding in our walk of faith with Yeshua/Jesus.

Before considering what James says, let’s take a quick look at some other Bible verses that tell us how the tongue is used—for both good and bad. David tells us in Psalm 57:4, *“My soul is among lions; I lie among the sons of men who are set on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.”*

Solomon confirms that the tongue can have positive effects, as he writes in Proverbs 10:20, *“The tongue of the righteous is choice silver...”* And Paul warns us in Romans 3:13 that the tongue of the unrighteous (we all have been there) can be a poison: *“Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.”* The Bible makes clear that controlling that two-ounce muscle is an absolute necessity if we Believers are to make a difference in this world of deceitful practices.

With your favorite Bible in hand, walk with me through James chapter three. I believe that God will reward our efforts to embrace His wisdom!

### **FIRST WARNING: TO TEACHERS (3:1)**

James knew that leaders/teachers in New Testament times held places of high esteem and respect. Because of that, James realized that some would seek such positions for the wrong reason. He is correct in that those whom God chooses to teach the Scriptures should do so as Paul noted

*(over please)*

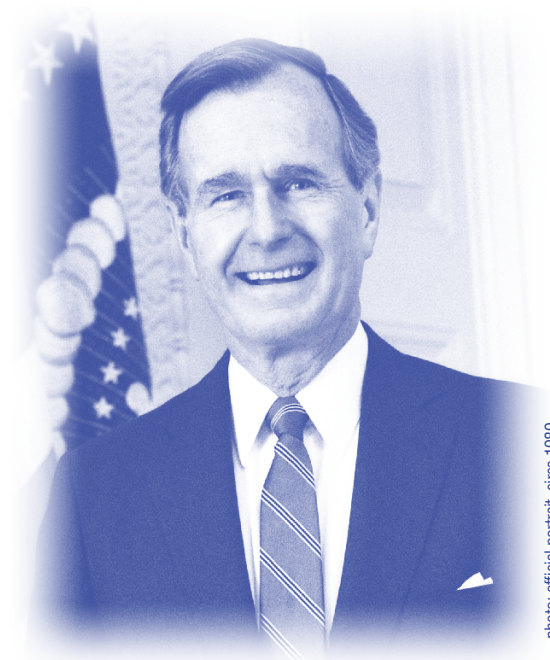


photo: official portrait, circa 1989

**GEORGE H.W. BUSH**  
1924–2018

in 1 Corinthians 2:3— *"I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling."* Paul was speaking of his opportunity to preach the Gospel. One of my professors in graduate studies would muse aloud that a lot of young men "feel" the call to ministry when the economy goes bad — wrong motive!

James wants his audience to know that the privileges of teachers may seem greater than most but that they will be judged at a higher standard. Any teacher who is well-studied and maintains a Godly character can have a lasting legacy!

Woe to teachers who haphazardly carry out their esteemed position. Yeshua spoke some of His harshest words against religious teachers in Matthew 23:3–4, 24. *"Therefore whatever they (scribes and Pharisees) tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. ... Blind guides, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!"*

## SECOND WARNING: THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THE TONGUE (3:2–5)

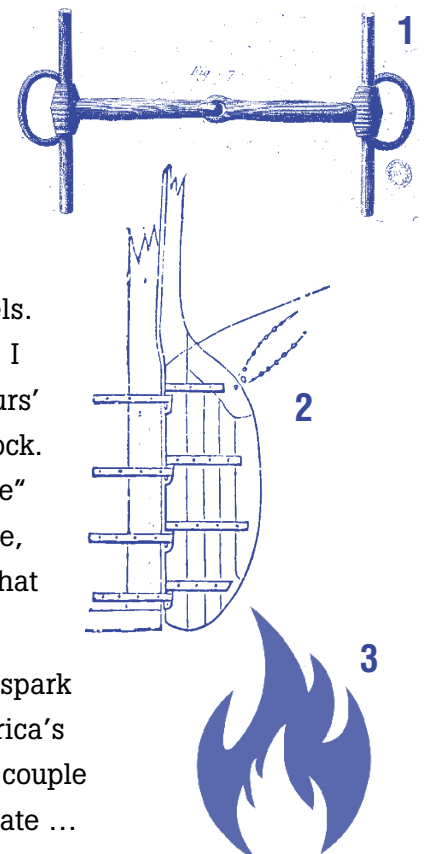
James is upfront with his warning that we **all** stumble; but if a man can gain mastery over his tongue, then he can master his entire body. James uses three words for illustration:

**1. Bits** in a horse's mouth — The application references what James meant in regard to mastery of the entire body. The bit in a horse's mouth attached to a bridle can turn the horse's full body with a corrective position. It's remarkable to watch a bridled horse in action. It also is extraordinary to be in the presence of a bridled Believer\* who offers an encouraging word no matter the circumstances of life.

**2. Rudders** on ships, despite being relatively small, turn massive vessels. If you have ever been on a cruise ship, you understand this illustration. I had the privilege of joining the captain on the bridge of one of Zola Tours' Greek Isle cruises as he maneuvered the ship between two outcrops of rock. It was fascinating that the entire ship turned by means of a "toggle handle" much like video gamers use. (Secret: It was actually linked to a satellite, and a computer directed us through the strait). But, the captain oversaw that every maneuver occurred with precision.

**3. Fire** — a bit different from the other illustrations. It takes only a small spark or cinder to ignite a horrendous forest fire. Ask most anyone from America's West Coast about the devastating fires they have experienced in the past couple of years. Well, the tongue can light fires of deceit, violence, distrust, and hate ... and crush the human spirit.

Consider the following quote of Adolf Hitler cited by Spiros Zodhiates in *The Behavior of Belief* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959, p. 115).



1. Horse's bit  
(*Encyclopedie* vol. 3-034)
2. Rudder (*Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 1890–1907)
3. Flame

\* "Believers" is short for "believers in Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah."

*Nothing will prevent me from tearing up Christianity, root and branch... We are not out against a hundred-and-one different kinds of Christianity but against Christianity itself. All people who profess creeds...are traitors to the people. Even those Christians who really want to serve the people...we have to suppress. I myself am a heathen to the core.*

### **THIRD WARNING: THE VICIOUS AND DESTRUCTIVE NATURE OF THE TONGUE (3:6–8)**

James hones in on just how destructive the tongue can be if not kept bridled! Again his analogy uses fire that brings devastation to many people. But fire under control, of course, can be useful. It heats our homes, cooks our meals, and drives the engines of industry. Out of control, it leaves wreckage that cannot be recovered.

He really drives the message home when he notes that the tongue “is set on fire from hell” (3:6). That statement, Dear Reader, should put all of us on our knees to ask for control of this small muscle that, if left unruly, can defile our whole body.

Before we leave the illustration of fire, let’s remember that fire can also purge and purify. Take a quick look at Isaiah 6:6–7.

*Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.”*

After fire purged Isaiah of his sin, he answered God’s call and enthusiastically declared at the end of verse 8, *“Here am I! Send me.”*



*Isaiah, Providence Lithograph Company, 1904*

### **CONCLUSION: HOW FICKLE THE TONGUE CAN BE (3:9–12)**

James concludes that our tongue is unruly and cannot be tamed. He seems to have given up! We bless God and we curse men, who, remember, are created in the image of God. James relates to his readers that he has heard both blessing and cursing coming from the same mouth, and states that we shouldn’t be that way. He leaves us with two illustrations:

- 1.** Can a spring of water bring forth both fresh water and saltwater from the same opening?  
The obvious answer: it cannot!
- 2.** Can a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Again, the obvious answer: they cannot!

James closes by stating that if his conclusions are accurate, then the bridled, Godly tongue of the Believer cannot produce both blessing and cursing. If it does, then that’s a symptom of needing more Bible reading and/or prayer.

*(continued p. 4)*

Some Believers might gather from this passage by James that sometimes the best bridle for the tongue is a piece of duct tape! 😊

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.” — Winston Churchill



Standing firm with Israel and ZLM,

*Tony*  
Tony

**P.S.** The warning that James gives regarding controlling our tongues should not deter us from embracing Peter’s challenging admonition:

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. (1 Peter 3:15–16) ★*

## Hear Israel Calling to You?



Stories of how people came to sign up for Zola Tours pilgrimages never cease to amaze us. A study tour of the Holy Land is much more than a pleasant overseas vacation. While Israel is an incredible place to visit, we believe that the Holy Spirit beckons Believers to experience His land *and* His people. Whether you heard about our ministry from a friend, watched us on Daystar and ABC Family/Freeform for decades, or only read our news magazines, God finds ways to invite you to the land where He Himself chose to live. God desires to speak to you in a new and fresh way in Israel. Most Believers find themselves incredibly blessed after our Bible study tours.

Zola Tours offers two opportunities each year to visit Israel and Petra. The Fall Tour adds the Apostle Paul’s travels in Greece, Turkey, and even the cave where John experienced the Revelation! Greece is a magnificent and Biblical bucket list destination. Leave all the arrangements to us—you simply prepare for the trip of a lifetime. Please contact our tour manager Sandra at **214-696-9760**, email her at [travel@levitt.com](mailto:travel@levitt.com), or visit [levitt.com/tours](http://levitt.com/tours) to explore the following options:

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*Prices include tips, taxes, & fuel surcharge (subject to change).*

## A Note from David and Kirsten Hart

Thank you, Tony, for your timely study on James. We've always told our two sons to speak words of life to each other and to others. Watching what we say isn't always easy. As a ministry that iterates weekly the request to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem," we believe that a spoken prayer for Jerusalem (and all of Israel) does and *will* make a difference, even retroactively. For our God isn't constrained by time. He created time and exists outside of it. Our spoken (positive) words of prayer can change the world — past, present, and future.

Speaking of changing the world, your financial support of this ministry is helping us broadcast the good news of Yeshua's Gospel to countries around the world — via television and [www.levitt.tv](http://www.levitt.tv). *Toda rabah!* (Thank you very much!) Since we became the studio hosts of *Zola Levitt Presents*, many viewers tell us they "just happened to" turn on the TV and there we were, talking about Israel. Channel hoppers linger to learn faith-enhancing insights about the Jewish roots of Christianity. We want casual observers not only to learn about Israel but also to come to a saving knowledge of their Jewish Savior! Your faithful prayers and contributions are bringing hungry souls into the Kingdom.

Our ministry has planned some remarkable television series for you throughout 2019, including the refreshed *Esther* programs, an updated *Psalms of Ascent* series, and an all-new *Divine Deliverance: From Avraham to Yeshua*. You may recall that airtime costs remain our most formidable challenge. Would it make sense to increase your contribution to offset our rising television production, airtime, printing and mailing costs, as well as overhead?

We'd love to hear from you, our faithful supporter, what *ZLP* has meant to you over the years. Was there a particular TV series that spoke to you in a life-changing way? Is there an uplifting teaching from Zola or one of our other Messianic teachers that still guides you? Would you send us a letter or email telling us how the program has ministered to you? We always appreciate constructive feedback. Beginning with the September 2018 *Personal Letter*, Tony has taught us from James about the power of our words. Now please let your words explain how this ministry has touched your life!

### Zola Levitt Presents Programs in February

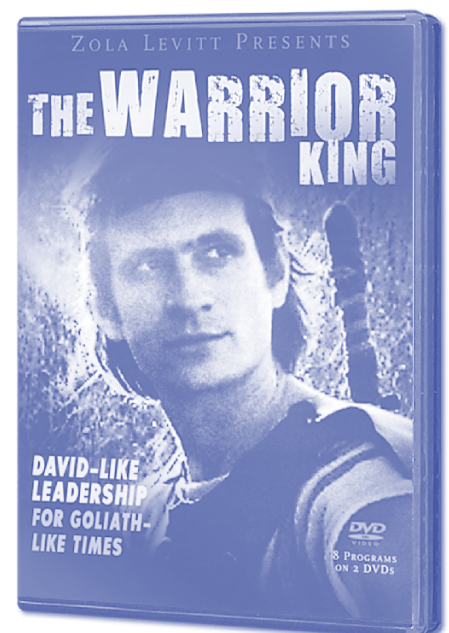
Our ministry has scheduled some exciting, new programs this year. In February, *The Warrior King: David-like Leadership for Goliath-like Times* explains how the lessons from King David's life are profitable for Believers today.



Jeff Seif

With challenges larger than Goliath all around us, today's world *needs* Bible-based

*(continued p. 6)*



leadership more than ever. **Dr. Jeffrey Seif** taught this eight-part series in Israel. David and Kirsten Hart join Jeff in the studio for up-to-date analyses of each program's teachings. We also get location reports from **Chaim Malespin** and hear music composed by Zola Levitt. Originally produced in 2009, this series delivers a timeless message that will inspire you and many others to confront your daily trials, knowing that God's purpose outweighs our difficulties.



Chaim Malespin

**David and Saul** — Unfair trials often checker the road to success. We explore David's abuse at the hands of King Saul, and his bond with the king's son Jonathan. Then we evaluate Saul's death and David's gracious response.

**Family** — This program looks at David's marriage and family intrigue.

**Wars** — David was a warrior — a spiritual role model for us all! We discuss David's wars with modern-day applications.

**Celebrated Warrior King** — Though anointed by God for kingship, David spent 13 years running from Saul before ascending to the throne himself. (**Note:** during the Zola Tours Petra extensions, we visit Ein Gedi, the hidden desert oasis where David hid from King Saul.)

**A Messianic Prototype** — The New Testament refers to Jesus as the "Son of David" with good reason. We examine the Old Testament's prediction of a coming Davidic Son.

This series' DVDs would make an edifying addition to your church's library, men's ministry, or small group. It is worthy of repeated viewings, which is precisely why we feel compelled to bring it back to the forefront. Happy viewing!



In His service,

*David & Kirsten*

David & Kirsten

**P.S.** Thanks so much for staying loyal to fostering our Biblical mission. And, please, *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim!* — *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!* — Psalm 122:6 ★



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**Out of Eden** Adam and Eve's sin led not only to man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden but, more importantly, to the loss of personal fellowship with the Lord. To bridge this relationship gap, God instituted the sacrificial system.

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**Eden and Old Testament History** The Lord wants to restore fellowship with His creation and is rebuilding us and making us a testimony to His faithfulness.

**Eden and New Testament Prophecy** Sin leads to loss, and rebuilding can take generations. In the end, the Lord will renew His relationship with His people and dwell with them forever.

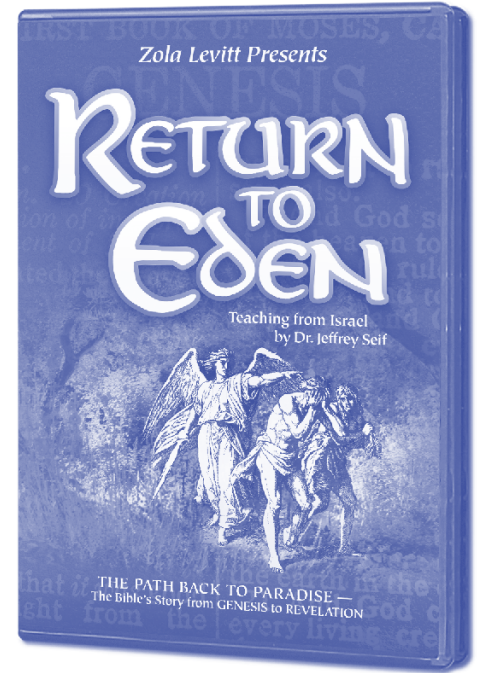
**Eden and Israel** Solomon's Temple was a reconstitution of the Garden of Eden. Today, the Lord is bringing the Jewish people back to their ancestral homeland.

**Jesus and the Return to Eden** When Messiah returns, New Jerusalem itself will be the Temple of God.

**Paradise Restored** Adam and Eve started in the Garden of Eden paradise. Believers will spend eternity with the Divine in a similar paradise. The choice one makes now to accept Jesus or not dictates where one will spend eternity.

**Bonus Interviews – Part 1** Extended interviews with: Doron Keidar, Cry for Zion; Dr. Seth Postell, academic dean of Israel College of the Bible in Netanya; and Guy Erlich, owner/director of Balm of Gilead Farm.

**Bonus Interviews – Part 2** Extended interviews with: David Parsons, vice-president of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem; singer Pat Boone; and Yehuda Glick, member of Israel's Knesset.



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1902

Dear Tony,

(please check appropriate boxes)

- All Believers in Yeshua should speak the truth with boldness, yet meekness, bridling our tongues as we reach out to those who are yet to believe.
- Here is my February donation. I look forward to your ministry's Bible teaching via *Zola Levitt Presents* on TV, your monthly news magazines, and levitt.com.
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