

James 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

Analysis

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. James warns: be not many teachers (didaskaloi, διδάσκαλοι), knowing we shall receive greater judgment (krima meizon, κρίμα μέζον). Teaching carries weight because words shape souls. The warning underscores accountability for speech.

Reformed churches value teaching offices, yet James tempers ambition with sobriety. The gospel sweetly invites ministry but warns against careless tongues in pulpits.

Historical Context

In synagogue-style gatherings, many desired to teach, especially Jewish men trained in Torah. Some may have leveraged teaching for status. James, overseeing doctrine in Jerusalem, cautions against untested teachers, echoing Paul's requirements in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Persecution also made teachers targets; James ensures only the mature step into that role.",

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why do you desire or avoid teaching, and are your motives pure?
2. How can you support teachers to maintain integrity of speech?
3. What practices keep you mindful of stricter judgment for influencers?

Interlinear Text

Μὴ	πολλοὶ	διδάσκαλοι	γίνεσθε	ἀδελφοί	μου	εἰδότες	ὅτι
not	many	masters	be	brethren	My	knowing	that
G3361	G4183	G1320	G1096	G80	G3450	G1492	G3754
μεῖζον	κρίμα	ληψόμεθα					
G3173	condemnation	we shall receive					
	G2917	G2983					

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 1:7 (Parallel theme): Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

1 Peter 5:3 (Parallel theme): Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

1 Corinthians 12:28 (Parallel theme): And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Matthew 23:13 (Parallel theme): But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

1 Timothy 2:7 (Parallel theme): Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (Parallel theme): For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Ephesians 4:11 (Parallel theme): And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Leviticus 10:3 (Parallel theme): Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Hebrews 13:17 (Parallel theme): Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Matthew 10:24 (Parallel theme): The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.