

Those who are humble before the Lord, are those who will consequently be lifted up and honored by Him. In order to be humbled, though, Believers must know that whatever sin they have done is abhorrent in the eyes of God. It is imperative for a person to have godly sorrow for his or her sins, repent of them, and turn to the salvation available in Messiah Yeshua.

How much emphasis do we hear concerning this today among Believers? *How much emphasis do we hear about it in today's Messianic community?* There is a call going forth in much of the Messianic movement today that we must all return to the Torah. I fully endorse this. However, is this a call of turning from one's evil, sinful ways, and being fully reconciled and transformed by God—resulting in obedience? Or, has such a message largely been one to study the Torah which is resulting in being arrogant, obnoxious, and boastful toward non-Messianic Believers? How many who have adopted a lifestyle of Torah observance have truly humbled themselves in the presence of our Heavenly Father? These will be challenges that face us until the Messiah returns.

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

4:11 James writes some very spiritually and theologically probing remarks in v. 11. He says, “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. The one who speaks against a brother or judges a brother, speaks evil against the *Torah* and judges the *Torah*. But if you judge the *Torah*, you are not a doer of the *Torah*, but a judge” (TLV). The main thrust of this instruction is that Messiah followers are not to speak against one another, as the verb *katalaleō* (καταλάλέω) means, “to speak against one, to criminate, traduce” (Thayer).³⁹

Earlier in his letter, James has addressed the need to control the tongue (1:19; 3:2-8). Perhaps in v. 11, the type of ridicule in view is similar to that seen in Numbers 21:5: “The people spoke against God and Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.’” For certain, the Tanach is full of references against uncontrolled speech or slander against others:

“You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:16).

“You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state *the case* in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear *you* in pieces, and there will be none to deliver” (Psalm 50:20-22).

³⁹ Thayer, 332.

“Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; no one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure” (Psalm 101:5).

“The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body. *Like* an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross are burning lips and a wicked heart. He who hates disguises *it* with his lips, but he lays up deceit in his heart” (Proverbs 26:22-24).

Wisdom 1:11 in the Apocrypha further says, “Beware then of useless murmuring, and keep your tongue from slander; because no secret word is without result, and a lying mouth destroys the soul.”

James directs his audience that “The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law” (ESV). How can one be found to actually judge God’s Torah or Law? McKnight indicates, “Such a person is actually slandering and judging the Torah because he has usurped the role of God in the act of condemnation and has chosen to defy what God has said not to do. In this way, the slandering damner defies God and transfers authority from God’s Torah to himself.”⁴⁰ A person who thinks that he or she stands in obedience to the instructions of God’s Torah, yet who speaks harsh condemnation, can actually be regarded as one who stands as a human judge or evaluator of God’s perfect Instruction. Motyer further observes,

“Outwardly we speak against a brother and neighbour, actually we speak *evil against the law* (11). First, we break the law as a precept which we were meant to obey. It commands love; we respond with inflammatory talk. Secondly, we set ourselves up as knowing better than the law, we *judge the law*. In effect we say that the law is mistaken in commanding love. It ought rather to have commanded criticism—and if we were lawgivers it would do so. The law no longer expresses the highest values as far as we are concerned.”⁴¹

While many Christians and Messianic readers of v. 11 are inclined to recognize “law” here, as at least pertaining to the significant part of the Mosaic Instruction—its perceived ethical and moral commandments—it cannot go unnoticed that there is some debate as to what James refers to when he uses the term “law.” Moo rather generally concludes, “When James speaks of the law here...we are probably justified in thinking that he refers to the OT law insofar as it has been taken up into the ‘law of the kingdom’ that Jesus laid upon his followers.”⁴² Most of today’s Messianic Believers should have little problem recognizing “law” in James’ epistle as certainly involving the Messiah’s own interpretation and application of it. Yet, the view of “law” as being something a bit different, or more narrow than the Torah—such as it almost exclusively involving the instruction to love God and others (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; cf. Matthew 22:40)—can be found. Martin is one who comes quite close to this:

⁴⁰ McKnight, 363.

⁴¹ Motyer, 159.

⁴² Moo, 198.

“[T]he law (νόμος) may be the Mosaic law but an earlier reference to the law (2:8) suggests that what James means is the epitome of the teaching of Jesus, which is summed up by the exhortation ‘to love one another as yourself’ (cf. Gal. 6:2).”⁴³

Bo Ivar Reicke, however, is one who disregards the Torah of Moses as having a place in one’s view of “law” in v. 11, and exclusively concludes that it involves the gospel message of salvation in Yeshua:

“To malign and judge one’s brother is tantamount to maligning and rejecting the law. As above in i 25, ii 8-12, ‘the law’ here denotes the word, or the gospel. Since the gospel is directed to all people and invites all all into the fellowship of the church without distinction, whether the person is Jewish or Greek, clean or unclean, rich or poor, wise or ignorant, rejection and condemnation of a brother is contradiction of the gospel.”⁴⁴

The unfortunate predicament for some interpreters of James’ letter is not the high value that they place on loving God and people, showing value to those of more lowly status, or wanting to demonstrate good works of service to those in need. The unfortunate predicament for some interpreters of James’ letter is that while not necessarily speaking ill of others, they can haphazardly think that the “law” addressed in v. 11 has little to do with the Torah of Moses. Do they, just as the slanderer who thinks that he or she is superior to God’s Torah, also think that they are superior to God’s Torah? Or are such people who have a rather narrow view of “law” for v. 11 just limited in how they approach James’ direction? It would be best advised that contemporary Messianics who have a fuller view of “law” for v. 11 leave any judging for God alone. We need to seek the Lord, and allow Him to give each of us the wisdom and discernment to ask the necessary questions and inquiries when limited views of “law” present themselves, particularly as Messianics do place a high value on Torah practices such as the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat*, appointed times of Leviticus 23, and the kosher dietary laws.

As the Messianic movement grows and expands, there are many sectors of people who are adopting a lifestyle of so-called “Torah observance,” and whether they realize it or not are casting aside the Torah’s ethical standards as they relate to slander and speaking against others. Certainly, the sin of slander and insult is an evil to always be on guard against, but there is slander of a particular kind that must be avoided. James specifically warns, “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters” (NRSV). Sadly, various sectors of the Messianic community have not become known for being beacons of genuine truth, insight, and spiritual maturity—but rather have become infamous for the rhetoric they speak against our Christian brothers and sisters. Rather than taking the Torah’s admonitions seriously, about how we must not slander others, many presumed “Torah obedient Messianics” *will*—without any second thoughts or feelings of conviction that it is wrong.⁴⁵

⁴³ Martin, 163.

⁴⁴ Reicke, 47.

⁴⁵ Concurrent with this is a growing tide of resentment and unpleasantness directed by many Messianic Jewish leaders toward non-Jewish Believers in their midst. Rather than widely welcome them into their congregations and fellowships, they are patronized and spurned, and hence many are turned away into independent Messianic Hebrew/Hebraic Roots home groups.

These are the kinds of people, as James talks about, who would find themselves to be judges of God's Torah. Those who speak against others often do so to lift themselves up because they have no internal spiritual assurance or confidence that truly comes from a viable relationship with the Lord. *If you put others down and slander them, then in light of James' words here you should be worried.* You need to seek the Lord and ask Him to convict you of what needs to change in your life and how you can find more constructive and spiritually edifying ways of relating to others. You need to pray that you can be a *proper example to them*—not an example that casts aside the morality of God contained in the Torah.

12 There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

4:12 Rather than letting any of his audience think that they can judge the Torah, via disregarding some of its instructions on slander (v. 11), James makes some very candid statements about the origin of the Torah. He says, "There is only one judge, the One who gave the Law, to whom belongs absolute power of life and death. How can you then be your neighbor's judge?" (Phillips New Testament). James identifies that only God Himself is the valid Giver of the Torah or Lawgiver. As the Supreme Creator, He is the only One who gets to decree what human beings are to do, as opposed to sinful persons who might decide that "this" or "that" does not apply to them. There is a likely connection between v. 12 and Deuteronomy 32:39: "See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; it is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand." A later statement seen in the Mishnah remarks, "Do not serve as a judge by yourself, for there is only One who serves as a judge all alone" (m.*Avot* 4:8).⁴⁶

James employs an important Greek term for "Lawgiver," *nomothetēs* (νομοθέτης), which has a background in classicism predating the composition of the Apostolic Scriptures. The figure of the lawgiver came to prominence as the Greek city states of the Seventh-Sixth Centuries B.C.E. emerged out of anarchy and began to establish a proper code of conduct for their people. Historian Oswyn Murray describes, "The figure of the lawgiver (*nomothetēs*) is a response to [the] double need to curb the power of the aristocracy and maintain the force of customary law. The lawgiver was chosen from among the class of experts, and could therefore be given absolute power to establish a written code...He was regarded much as the founder of a colony, for he too was a semi-divine hero whose authority validated the institutions of the city."⁴⁷ *LS* indicates, that "at Athens, the *Nomothetae* were a committee of the dicasts charged with the revision of the laws."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Neusner, *Mishnah*, 682.

⁴⁷ Oswyn Murray, *Ancient Greece*, second edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp 181-182.

⁴⁸ *LS*, 535.

James' usage of a classical term like *nomothetēs* should be taken as an indication that his audience was both Jewish *and* non-Jewish. There is no disputing the fact that when James admonishes people for failing to follow the Torah on the issue of slander, that it was something that any person could violate. If Jewish members of James' audience were annulling Torah commandments about morality by their actions, then it would reflect badly on them as those who had been born into and reared in an environment where God's Law was known and regularly taught. Yet at the same time, any Greek or Roman members of James' audience, too, needed to be sure to look to Israel's God as the only viable source of direction.

James emphasizes that the Lord, and Him alone, has the right to issue Law to the people, just as a *nomothetēs* in Ancient Greece was the only one with the authority to determine the law for society. This is the same Supreme God who has absolute control over human history and destiny.

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, *you ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to one who knows *the* right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

4:13-15 The instruction of James 4:13-15 is obviously important as it concerns developing a Biblical view of business ethics. James the Just should not be read from the perspective of him being opposed to people making money, but he is definitely one who stood against inappropriate attitudes concerning wealth and the misuse of wealth. There is an arrogant financial planning for one's future—obviously without the blessing or guidance of God—which James undeniably condemns. James 4:13-15 could be said to be a paraphrase of Proverbs 27:1: "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth." Witherington directs our attention,

"James is thinking of a person who runs his own business, sets his own agenda and salary and travels to many different places throughout the Roman Empire. Those who could afford it could travel with some speed on land by horse or horsedrawn carriage or in the Mediterranean by boat. Between the 10% of the population that were rich and the 10% that were absolutely poor lay everyone else, including most of the merchant class, though some of them became rich."⁴⁹

4:13 The breadth of James' audience is realized as he switches some of his attention to those who engage in business. He says, "Now look here, you people who say, "Today, or tomorrow, we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, and trade, and make some money'" (Kingdom New Testament). With the theme of business and making money in

⁴⁹ Witherington, pp 520-521.

view, it is not at all inappropriate to be reminded of Yeshua's statement, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Davids is entirely right to assert, "What bothers James is simply the presumption that one could so determine his future and the fact that these plans move on an entirely worldly plane in which the chief value is financial profit."⁵⁰

V. 13 is likely, mainly focused on traveling Jewish merchants, who would be transient among potential clients in the First Century Mediterranean.⁵¹ Some have taken historical issues with this, as Josephus said that the Jews of this period largely did not desire to go outside the borders of Israel: "As for ourselves...we neither inhabit a maritime country, nor do we delight in merchandise...but the cities we dwell in are remote from the sea" (*Against Apion* 1.60).⁵² Aside from this, however, there is internal Biblical evidence that the Apostles did encounter traveling Jewish merchants in their journeys, notably the tent-makers Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2, 18; Romans 16:3). While it is likely that these people were born and raised in the Diaspora, James' words about people engaging in business and profit remain true to all people of all dispositions.

That there were other traveling merchants in the Mediterranean, to whom James' admonition of vs. 13-15 can be applied, is certain—especially as the good news would impact Jews, Greeks, and Romans across the ancient social spectrum. Those whose lives can be consumed by their work or business, need to decisively have their attention refocused on their Creator. Witherington further observes,

"Traveling merchants were plentiful enough during the imperial age, and since the Pax Romana was generally in place they could go to most places throughout the empire and sell their wares...James has precisely these kinds of persons in mind: people with relative high status, business capital and a business plan. The problem is, they did not factor God or mortality into the equation—two not inconsequential factors!"⁵³

4:14 The futility of the traveling merchant planning for the next year is noticed by James, as he poignantly states, "Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (NIV). The limited and transitory nature of human beings, in contrast to an Eternal God, is certainly witnessed. James' statement is definitely rooted within various thoughts expressed in the Tanach:

"As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes" (Psalm 103:15).

"For who knows what is good for a man during *his* lifetime, *during* the few years of his futile life? He will spend them like a shadow. For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?" (Ecclesiastes 6:12).

⁵⁰ Davids, 172.

⁵¹ Cf. Moo, 202.

⁵² *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, 777.

⁵³ Witherington, pp 518-519.

“When a cloud vanishes, it is gone, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up” (Job 7:9).

In comparison to God, human beings may simply be regarded as just a passing mist or vapor. A person who puts too much of his trust in his business, finances, or ability to make money—is not only going to find himself committing much of his energy to things that will decisively pass away—but is probably going to be sorely disappointed when things do not take place as planned. Warnings against putting too much faith in one’s ability to control the future are common throughout both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and Mishnah acknowledge the primacy of God in one’s plan for life and livelihood:

“Surely a man’s way is not his own; neither can any person firm his own step. Surely justification is of God; by His power is the way made perfect. All that shall be, He foreknows, all that is, His plans establish; apart from Him is nothing done” (1QS 11.10-11).⁵⁴

“R. Yose says, ‘Let your fellow’s money be as precious to you as your own. And get yourself ready to learn Torah, for it does not come as an inheritance to you. And may everything you do be for the sake of Heaven’” (m.*Avot* 2:12).⁵⁵

“Everything is foreseen, and free choice is given. In godness the world is judged. And all is in accord with the abundance of deed[s]” (m.*Avot* 3:15).⁵⁶

The moralist Epictetus emphasized the need to consult higher powers in all human activities, stating, “no one sails from a harbor without sacrificing to the gods, and imploring their assistance; nor do men sow without first invoking Demeter. And shall anyone who has undertaken so great a work undertake it safely without the aid of the gods?” (*Discourses* 3.21.12).⁵⁷

When one today sees what James says, we should not conclude that God does not want us to have any life dreams or aspirations or desire to achieve great things. James spoke against traveling merchants trying to pre-plan their business activities, likely in micro-managed terms, and without even the hint of trying to seek God’s will or favor. Proverbs 16:9 states, “The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.” Each one of us has various life plans and dreams we would like to see fulfilled, and some of them are perfectly normal of men and women of God who have preceded us, such as having a spouse and children. *Yet none of us are to so pre-plan our lives, at the expense of letting God sovereignly move.* Many of us have planned for things, and then the Lord has interjected Himself and altered things (quite) a bit, **most often for our protection.** While in the short

⁵⁴ Wise, Abegg, and Cook, 143.

⁵⁵ Neusner, *Neusner*, 677.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 680-681.

⁵⁷ Epictetus: *The Discourses*, ed. Christopher Gill (London: Everyman, 1995), 188.

term, many of us have had our plans changed and it has upset us—in the longer term we tend to be the more grateful for it.

4:15 James does not prohibit anyone from planning for the future, including those in business, but he does say, “Your remarks should be prefaced with, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we shall still be alive and will do so-and-so’” (Phillips New Testament). Martin notes, “The idea that what takes place in this life is in the hands of divine power is found in pagan...as well as Jewish...and Christian thought.”⁵⁸ James could be relying on a variety of ancient thoughts, to get the point across that people cannot meticulously manage their futures without the God of Israel having some part to play. In spite of the fact that limited human beings have tried to control their destinies, there is often still enough of a spiritual component within them that tries to implore Divine intervention in all endeavors.

God’s awesome majesty and eternity, compared to humans’ limited corporeal existence, is what requires people to beseech Him and seek His will in all things. While specifically applied in James’ context to people traveling and doing business, the same is true of all things that people do. The Apostle Paul prayed for God’s will to be done in his ministry endeavors:

“[B]ut taking leave of them and saying, ‘I will return to you again if God wills,’ he set sail from Ephesus” (Acts 18:21).

“But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power” (1 Corinthians 4:19).

Concurrent with this, is Yeshua’s parable of the rich man who built new barns. The rich man spent so much of his time focusing on the accumulation of his own wealth, that he forgot about his spiritual well being. When the time came for him to be held spiritually accountable, he was found wanting:

“And He told them a parable, saying, ‘The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.’” But God said to him, “You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?” So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:16-21).

The issue of people devoting their time and resources to something that causes them to forget God and their spiritual condition is not something new. *James attests to the fact that it was going on in the First Century.* And, it can more easily happen today in our fast-paced, industrialized, highly mobile and technologically advanced Twenty-First Century world. So, how much more so must we heed James’ warnings?

⁵⁸ Martin, 167.

Please keep in mind the fact that James the Just is not speaking against people making money. Every person must earn a living, after all. James rebukes those who place their confidence in their ability to make money and who make their business endeavors the prime element in their lives, when in fact each one of us could die in the next minute. James emphasizes the fact that one's limited human existence is absolutely nothing in the face of who God is. People must consider the Lord's will in everything that they do, so that if they operate a business, He might guide them to opportunities that will help advance His Kingdom. Moo makes the valid remark, "we should guard here against another kind of misinterpretation: the idea that James is forbidding [Believers] from all forms of planning for the future...What James rebukes here, as v. 16 [will make] clear, is any kind of planning for the future that stems from human arrogance in our ability to determine the course of future events."⁵⁹

In an interesting twist, some in the Messianic community today, while probably not preoccupied as traveling merchants who forget or marginalize their relationship with God, do get preoccupied with things that focus less on their relationship with Him. There are many today in our faith community, who in their pursuit of the Torah or Torah study—have focused so much on the Torah and in "falling in love with Torah"—that they have minimized Yeshua, who He is, and His atoning work. Like the businessman who is so caught up in selling a product to make a profit, these people are so focused on Torah study, that they easily forget who the Messiah should be in their lives, and they forget other parts of the Bible outside of the Pentateuch. When you see these people, you wonder whether or not they truly know Yeshua as their Personal Savior, otherwise they would have a more balanced faith of Torah study and insight, coupled with a strong relationship with the Father through His Son. *That is the challenge for us spiritually today.* How do we remain pursuing the deep and forgotten truths of the Torah, while doing everything to imitate our Lord and Savior?

4:16 In spite of James' emphasis that the traveling merchants in his audience (v. 13) need to focus on God's will for their lives, he is forced to tell them, "As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil" (TNIV). Rendered as "arrogance" is the noun *alazoneia* (ἀλαζονεία), with a related term for an "arrogant person" being *alazōn* (ἀλαζών), "one who makes more of himself than reality justifies,' or 'promises more than he can perform,' often used of orators, philosophers, doctors, cooks, and officials" (TDNT).⁶⁰ This kind of boasting is considered by James to be evil, because those who think they can "make it big" in their traveling mercantile industries, really cannot. Wisdom 5:7-10 in the Apocrypha sums it up well:

"We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What has our arrogance profited us? And what good has our boasted wealth brought us? All those things have vanished like a shadow, and like a rumor that passes by; like a ship that sails through the billowy water, and when it has passed no trace can be found, nor track of its keel in the waves."

⁵⁹ Moo, pp 202-203.

⁶⁰ G. Dellling, "*alazōn, alazoneia*," in TDNT, 36.

Paul A. Cedar makes the interesting remark, on how the arrogant person in view may be compared to “the characteristic of a wandering quack which was not unlike the medicine man of the frontier days in America. This quack offered cures which were not cures; he boasted of things which he was unable to do.”⁶¹ Certainly from a spiritual standpoint, there have been many religious figures over the centuries who have claimed to have “the answers,” and have offered quick fixes to the ills of society. The Pentecostal and charismatic movements, in particular, have been riddled with these types of individuals, who through their use, or perhaps manipulation of the Holy Spirit, have been able to get people to believe things that may not necessarily be so.⁶² Consider all of the various televangelists who claim that people are physically healed of diseases and debilitating ailments at their crusades, when in actuality nothing happens and such claims are proven fraudulent.

If Christianity has had individuals making great spiritual boasts, which ultimately have no substance, we can be rest assured that the Messianic movement today likewise will probably have the same. Do we not have those in the Messianic community who claim to have “cutting-edge teachings,” which no one, save themselves, have heard before? Are there not those who claim that, after centuries of (so-called) “gross misunderstanding of Scripture” by the Church, that now they have all the answers? Are there those in our midst who are making the same mistakes as those who made great prideful boasts about what they can do, when in actuality there is no spiritual or practical substance in what they say? We need to heed James’ warnings!

4:17 James’ statement in v. 17, “Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin” (NRSV), in view of his immediate admonitions to traveling merchants, would necessarily concern their lack of soliciting Divine favor for their activities. If they fail to seek God’s assistance and direction for what they do (v. 15), remaining arrogant about it (v. 16), then they are to be regarded as sinners. An important thought seen in the Pseudepigrapha, which may to a degree be the position of James here, states, “See, I have told you everything, so that I might be exonerated with regard to your sin” (*Testament of Simeon* 6:1).⁶³ James, having just issued some important instruction on the right thing to do, to those in error, is not going to be held responsible by God for those who fail to make the appropriate changes.

While James’ specific word in v. 17 concerns what he has said about traveling merchants, the remark “if anyone knows the right thing to do, but doesn’t do it, it becomes sin for them” (Kingdom New Testament), can be applied across the board to just about any situation where a teacher or leader has had to issue correction to those needing to change their behavior and attitudes. Consistent with this, the Apostle Paul would say in Galatians 6:9-10, “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

⁶¹ Cedar, 87.

⁶² For a useful, general review, consult Wayne A. Grudem, gen. ed., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

⁶³ Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, 787.

There were likely many traveling merchants among the First Century Believers, who upon encountering James' words in vs. 13-16, changed some of their attitudes and orientations in their business dealings. There were likely many others who did not. While those who did not seek the Lord's favor and direction for what they did, would be regarded as sinners—it would be no fault of James. Similarly, into whatever circumstances any of us may have to speak a word of godly admonition or stern correction—if people do not listen to what we have to say, and continue on a path of error, they should be regarded as the Lord's problem. In remembering that human beings are but a mist or vapor (v. 14), He is the Supreme Judge and Lawgiver (v. 12) who makes the final determination. So, in those circumstances where some of us may have to be firm, may we also be a bit tempered and restrained, knowing our human boundaries.