

47. James's idiom is, "set on fire by hell." The Greek word for "hell" is the noun, **Γέεννα (Géhenna)**. There is a difference between the locations to be visited by the departed.
48. There are places of residence for those who die as unbelievers: (1) prior to the destruction of the universe (2 Peter 3:10–13), all unbelievers are incarcerated in the **βάσανος (Básanos)** or Torments compartment of **ᾗδης (Haídēs)** while (2) following the destruction of the universe all unbelievers are incarcerated in *Géhenna* or the Lake of Fire.
49. It is the latter term that is indicated by the word *Géhenna*. Here is a good synopsis of what James meant by his use of the word:

Not only does the tongue corrupt the whole person; it also "sets on fire," wreaks havoc, throughout one's life. But where does this enormously destructive potential come from? From hell, says James. "Hell" translates the Greek, Géhenna, which is a translation of two Hebrew words that mean "Valley of Hinnom." This valley, just outside Jerusalem, gained an evil reputation in the Old Testament and intertestamental period. Pagan child sacrifices were carried out there, and trash was often burned in it. Jesus used the word to refer to the place of ultimate condemnation. James again betrays his connection to Jesus, since only in the teachings of Jesus do we find this word elsewhere in the New Testament (11 times). The power of Satan himself, the chief denizen of hell, gives to the tongue its great destructive potential.

James does not elaborate the ways in which the destructive power of the tongue can make itself felt. But he undoubtedly would have thought of those sins of speech that are enumerated in Proverbs: thoughtless "chattering" (10:8 cf. 12:18; 29:20); lying (12:19); arrogant boasting (18:12); gossiping (10:18). Think what enormous, sometimes irreversible, harm can be caused to people by unsubstantiated, often false, rumors. Such a rumor can be harder to stop than any forest fire (v. 5).



We know from bitter experience that the childhood taunt, “Sticks and stone may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” reverses the truth of the matter. Far easier to heal are the wounds caused by sticks and stones than the damage caused by words.⁴

50. Solomon observed in Ecclesiastes 1:9 that whatever anyone experiences during the course of his life is typical of what everyone else encounters in theirs:

Ecclesiastes 1:9 That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun.

51. The phrase, “course of our life,” refers to the physical life of any individual. You live your life, everyone else lives theirs. Each person’s life is a journey whose exigencies occur due to several factors.
52. The factors which are common to all include the starting point of unbelief with their souls vacuous of divine viewpoint. They enjoy the Law of Liberty: freedom to make choices within the culture in which they live.
53. These choices are influenced by any number of factors, but which are common to human existence. However, the choices made are done independently by the person and retained by God in the divine decree.
54. Every person is responsible for his own decisions while God is inflexible regarding His divine righteousness. Thus, a person’s life is guided by his own volitional choices, but the results of those choices vary.
55. God’s righteousness approves of choices made under establishment viewpoint and biblical guidance while disapproving the opposites.
56. Although the ramifications for each person are particular to the individual, they are common to man. In James’s dissertation on the tongue, he illustrates the problems associated with its misuse by the phrase “contaminates the entire body.”
57. The next result is cited in the phrase, “it ignites on fire the course of life.” The noun “course” is the word **τροχός (trochós)** which refers to a track event.
58. Paul uses the synonym, **δρόμος (drómos)**, to refer to the same thing in 2 Timothy 4:7 above.

⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 159–160.



59. How a person runs his race is absolutely dependent upon the information that is resident in his soul's stream of consciousness. Poor decisions from an inventory of cosmic concepts is illustrated by James with the phrase, "is set on fire by *Géhenna*."
60. Since *Géhenna* refers to the Lake of Fire, which is located in the Third Heaven, how does it ignite a fire in this person's life? 'Tis a conundrum. But the secret lies in the tongue's impact on this entire process.
61. The final impact on the tongue concludes the verse which I introduce with apologies to Johnny Cash:

"My Tongue of Fire"

**My tongue's a burning thing
It makes a fiery ring
Bound by wild desire
My tongue's a thing of fire.**

**Yes, my tongue's a burning ring of fire
I went down, down, down
And the flames went higher
And it burns, burns, burns
My tongue of fire, my tongue of fire.**

1. *Géhenna* refers to the Valley of Hinnom situated below the southern walls of Jerusalem. Here is a brief synopsis:

The valley of the sons of Hinnom was near the walls of Jerusalem, The Valley Gate opened into it. The boundary between Judah and Benjamin ran along it (Joshua 15:8; 18:16). It was the scene of idolatrous practices in the days of Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:3) and of Manasseh, who "made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom (33:6). Into this valley dead bodies were probably cast to be consumed by the dogs, and fires were here kept burning to consume the rubbish of the city. Such associations led to the Ge-Hinnom (New Testament "Gehenna") becoming the "type of Hell." (p. 1493)



The *Wady er-Rababi* commences in a shallow, open valley due west of the Jaffa Gate; near the Jaffa Gate it turns south for about $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile, its course being dammed here to form a large pool.

Below this it gradually curves to the east and rapidly descends between sides of bare rocky scarps ... before the valley joins the wide Kidron valley.⁵ (p 1494)

2. Since the Valley of Hinnom served as a garbage disposal area for centuries, its perpetual flames became recognized metaphorically as hell; the Hebrew term morphed into the Greek word Géhenna.
3. In the Book of The Revelation, the Apostle John refers to it as, **τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός** (*tén límnēn toú purós*): “the Lake of Fire.” Whereas the Valley of Hinnom or Géhenna seemingly burned incessantly, it only served as a constant reminder of the certain destiny reserved for those who rejected Messiah as Savior.
4. Whether the Valley of Hinnom is used metaphorically by the Jews for the eternal residence of the lost or John’s more vivid term, “the Lake of Fire,” it is not a place where believers are executed by fire.
5. This site is actually located somewhere in the Third Heaven, since the universe will be destroyed before anyone occupies it. We know this from John’s comments in:

Revelation 20:10 And the devil [Satan or Lucifer] who deceived them was thrown into the Lake of Fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

v. 11 Then I saw a Great White Throne and Him Who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. [See also **2 Peter 3:10–13**]

Revelation 20:15 If anyone’s name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.

⁵ E. W. G. Masterman, “Hinnom,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 3:1393–94.



6. Punishment in the Lake of Fire does not result in execution, but rather an eternal incarceration. Unbelievers have eternal life, indicated by the verses below, so that their punishment will have no end.
7. On this subject, Jesus Christ presented a synopsis of what would happen to Gentile unbelievers whose working object for their faith was not placed in Jesus Christ for salvation.
8. Matthew 25:31–46 is the Lord’s dissertation on the Baptism of Fire for Gentiles, indicated in verse 32 as “the nations.” The word “nations” translates the Greek noun, ἔθνος (*éthnos*) or the Hebrew noun גוֹיִם (*goyim*).
9. These unbelievers are being evaluated during our Lord’s preparation to allow only believers to enter into the millennial kingdom. Jesus’s testimony is prophetic for when He will sort out of those who will be allowed to enter the Millennium and those who will not.
10. The Lord distinguishes those who are believers as “sheep” assembled on His right and unbelievers as “goats” assembled on His left (v. 33). The Lord refers to this latter group in:

Matthew 25:41 “Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels [Revelation 20:10].’

Matthew 25:46a “These will go away into eternal punishment ...”

11. The sheep are Gentile believers who were saved during the Tribulation and are mentioned by our Lord as “the righteous, into eternal life (Matthew 25:46b).” Both saved Jews and Gentiles will be allowed to enter into the Millennium along with those who enter in resurrection bodies.
12. This brings us to a summary of James 3:6. The verse begins with the statement:
 - (1) “The tongue is a fire.”
 - (2) “Which functions “from the cosmic systems of arrogance and hatred.”
 - (3) “It is placed in the structure of our anatomy as that which contaminates the entire body.”
 - (4) “It ignites on fire the “course of life” [which we characterize as one’s facilitation of behavior patterns, character traits, and lifestyle to produce “wheel-tracks of wickedness”].
 - (5) “The tongue had its start when it was set on fire by hell: *Géhenna*, the Lake of Fire, to be ultimately occupied by fallen angels and unbelievers.”



13. Notice how the verse begins with the statement, “The tongue is a fire” and concludes with the summary, “The tongue had it's start when it was set on fire by Géhenna.”
14. The tongue is a part of the human anatomy and, because of sins of the tongue, it corrupts the entire body.
15. This has an ongoing impact from living in the cosmic systems in an environment of reversionism, maintained by the sin nature’s residence in every cell of the body in concert and enhanced by the believer’s matriculation in the Satanic Academy of Cosmic Didactics.
16. From this we are able to develop an expanded translation of:

James 3:6 The tongue is a fire, functioning from the cosmic systems of arrogance and hatred; the tongue is placed in the structure of our anatomy contaminating the entire body, and ignites on fire the course of life from facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness, set on fire by the influence of *Géhenna*. (EXT)

James 3:7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race (NASB)

1. It has been a long, hard row to hoe, but we have made it to document 80, page 258 with hopefully a clear understanding of the problems caused by the indiscriminate use of the tongue and the problem-solving devices available to bring this organ under control.
2. However, James is not going to slack off but instead gives illustrations that amplify what the first six verses introduced. In fact, verse 3 schooled us on how a small bit can control a horse. Verse 4 informed us about how a rudder has the power to steer a ship. Verses 5 related how a single flame could ignite a fire that would burn down an entire forest.
3. Verse 6 presented the tongue as a metaphor for its ability to turn the body into a fire that directs the course of a person’s life through the eight stages of reversionism.
4. In verses 7 and 8, James offers examples of how mankind is able to control, and ultimately tame wild animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures. He introduces this section with the plural noun, **φύσις (*phúsis*)**: “species.”
5. *Merriam-Webster’s* defines the word as, “An individual or kind belonging to a biological species.” James follows this by presenting four examples: “beasts [i.e., mammals], birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea.”



6. James's first genera is "beasts," the plural noun, **θηρίον** (*thērion*). This is a collective term for "wild animals" primarily ones who live on land. These include examples that ordinarily one might expect to be untamable.
7. Some of these beasts would include, for example, in Africa, the Big Five, the most difficult animals to hunt on foot: lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and Cape buffalo. These are species of five genera of animals.
8. There are about seven or eight generally accepted species of tiger. Of these, the Javan tiger, Bali tiger, and Caspian tiger are believed to be extinct; the Chinese tiger is near extinction; and the Sumatran, Siberian, and Indian subspecies are endangered. The Bengal tiger and those of the islands of Southeast Asia are bright reddish tan, beautifully marked with dark, transverse stripes.⁶
9. It is sometimes asserted that each of these wild beasts have not been tamed. However, the NASB clearly claims they have. The Greek text also agrees. In the middle of verse 7 we read every species, "is tamed and has been tamed."
10. The verb "tamed" is the perfect passive indicative of **δαμάζω** (*damázō*): "to reduce from an uncontrolled to a controlled state, *subdue, tame, control* of persons and animals."⁷
11. The present tense is customary which describes an event that occurs regularly but not without interruption. This means that animals can be subdued and controlled but not on a consistent basis. The indicative mood indicates the action is presented as a certainty.
12. The structure of this verb presents the subduing of animals does occur from time to time, but it is intermittent and therefore rare. The point is, animals can be subdued and controlled, but it takes a great deal of patience on the part of the trainer to get the animal to that point.
13. Animals can be controlled as noted, but this can also occur with birds indicated by the Greek noun **πετεινόν** (*peteinón*): "birds." You may have seen and heard some birds mimic human speech, such as parrots (Amazon and Grey), parakeets (monk and rose-ringed), and corvids (crows and ravens).
14. Next up on James's list of examples is reptiles, the Greek noun, **έρπετόν** (*herpetón*): "to creep," specifically, "reptiles" These include frogs, snakes, alligators, crocodiles, lizards, and turtles.

⁶ "Tiger," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (2010), 11:766.

⁷ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 211.



15. Each of these may be controlled to a certain degree and all are considered by some to be pets. I worked for several years with a man from Vero Beach, Florida. He once told me that he used to win money by wrestling alligators.
16. As is the case with all adversaries, one must “know the enemy.” And one very important thing to know about alligators is when they open their mouths the downward strength of their jaws is tremendously powerful. But once their mouths are closed, they have no strength to open it if you hold it shut. One other factor is critical: alligators use their tails to whip their adversaries, so there is danger on both ends of this reptile.
17. In the snake category, many of its ilk can be kept as pets although most avoid the ones with venom. There are two categories of venomous snakes. The vipers are referred to as Viperidae and include rattlesnakes, cottonmouths, and copperheads. The Viper strikes, inserts venom, and withdraws.
18. The second category of venomous snakes is the Elapid and referred to as Elapidae and include Black Mamba, Coral, King Cobra, and Death Adder. Elapids have fixed front fangs while vipers have moveable front fangs. When Elapids strike, they bite and chew inserting more venom than do vipers.
19. Cobras do not see very well although an 18-foot cobra can look a six-foot man straight in the eyes yet vaguely. Hold both arms at length to the sides. If he strikes at your left arm, rapidly grab him behind the head with your right arm and hold on, literally for dear life.
20. There are some far less dangerous snakes that one might choose as a pet than vipers and Elapids.
21. The fourth category that James cites is ichthyology which he describes as “creatures of the sea.” This branch of zoology deals with fishes. The Greek word for this category is **ἐνάλιος (enálíos)**.
22. These include an overwhelming number of critters that range from the whale shark which can weigh as much as forty tons to the Dwarf Pygmy Goby when full grown measures 1.1 centimeters (0.39 inch).
23. By the way a whale is not a fish but a mammal. It breathes air, is warm-blooded, gives live birth, suckles its young on milk, and has hair although entirely aquatic. The blue whale is the largest at 97 feet.
24. Several smaller whales include the dolphin, porpoise, and orca. The dolphin is especially adaptable to captivity and is very gregarious with humans.

(End JAS3-26. See JAS3-27 for continuation of study at p. 261.)

