

James 2:8 If [protasis of a 1st-class condition: and it is true] you apply the Royal Law according to the Scripture, “You shall unconditionally love from personal integrity those you encounter,” [apodosis] honorably, you must keep on doing this. (EXT)

James 2:21 Abraham, the progenitor of our Jewish heritage, was he not vindicated by works when his volition consulted wisdom and knowledge from the working objects of the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant and from that inventory, from his own volition, offered up his only son, Isaac, on the altar? Yes, he was. (EXT)

26. What transpired in our studies following these two verses enabled us to interpret them from the source of two doctrines: (1) the integrity of God and its three composites which form the love of God and (2) the grammatical principle of transitive verbs which empowered Abraham to volitionally sacrifice his son, Isaac, on the alter atop Mount Moriah by means of the working objects of the Abrahamic Covenant.
27. Now we have made it to the last verse of James 3. Among the many commentaries I have consulted, most confess that it is a conundrum. The Colonel’s comments on it are minimal since he did not do an in–depth exegesis.
28. I decided to consult some of those books I had accumulated on James and voilà, I hit paydirt. That paydirt fit right into what we have already learned from our study of James. I will cite from a book written by a man from whom I have referenced numerous times: Spiros Zodhiates’s *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. What is excerpted below is from his book, *Faith, Love & Hope: An Exposition of the Epistle of James*:

And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.—James 3:18 [KJV]

In the sowing of the seed there is always the anticipation of the harvest. In the mind of the farmer the fruit is contained in the seed. Thus there is an unbreakable and inherent relation between the seed and the fruit. The farmer cannot get the fruit without the seed, and the seed is useless unless it produces good edible fruit.



If we are to understand at all, we must consider it in connection with the 16th verse where James is speaking of the result of wrong zeal, or jealousy, or envy, or strife, as being confusion and every evil work. Here also we have the relationship of the seed and the fruit, but it is evil seed that produces evil fruit. However, in the 18th verse, James speaks of the fruit of righteousness which must result from the seed of righteousness, which could be taken as another designation of divine wisdom [note “wisdom” which introduces v. 17]. Already James has told us in the 17th verse that the characteristics of this divine wisdom in the heart of many are purity, peace, gentleness, obedience, a demonstration of mercy and good works, impartiality and straightforwardness. Now he gives us another word, most important in the Scriptures, the word “righteousness.” If we understand the word “righteousness,” in this connection, then we shall understand the verse. (p. 402)

James tells us specifically that this fruit of which he wishes now to speak is righteousness. Righteousness, as we see in the Scriptures, is an essential attribute of the divine nature. When it comes to God and Jesus Christ His Son, righteousness is inherent. Man’ righteousness, however, is imputed through Jesus Christ who took upon Him our sin. When we accept Jesus Christ as the One who suffered in our stead an underserved death, His righteousness is transferred to us. God counts us as righteous, and thus we acquire this divine attribute of the nature of God, and we become righteous.

Righteous living is only possible if we have a righteous heart [καρδία (*kardía*): soul], and a righteous heart is only possible through the descent and acceptance of the wisdom from above, Jesus Christ, of which James has already spoken. If we claim to have wisdom from above, we must think and act righteously. (pp. 402–403)



Our modern civilized world has many law-abiding people, but few righteous. One of the characteristics of the Christian, of the wise Christian, is to be righteous. Interestingly, righteousness was formally known as “rightwiseness,” and a righteous man was a “rightwise” man. (p. 405)

The business of being righteous involves growth. “And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace,” says our verse. If we are to be visible fruits of righteousness before the world, we have to grow from the seed stage. Unfortunately, there are some who mistakenly believe that the moment they accept Jesus Christ they immediately become full-grown Christians. It is not necessarily so. There is a process of growth. (pp. 405–406)

The main lesson of our verse seems to be that we, who are the peacemakers, in our desire to see peace reign, should not forget that righteousness should not be sacrificed. In our social relations with others we should not seek peace at any price. For the sake of peace we should not sacrifice the defense of that which is right, especially in others. Justice stands over and above peace, but we should see to it that peace is the product of our rendering justice.

The moral of it is, in executing righteousness or justice, we should be sure to do it in a peaceable manner. If we cannot achieve peace, we are not to sacrifice that which is right for the cause of peace, but if we can achieve righteousness with peace as its concomitant, we should by all means do it—that is the Christian ideal.¹¹ (p. 406)

29. This is a forthright analysis which lines up with our studies so far and focuses light on the primary message of the two verses.
30. Based on our ongoing studies in the Epistle of James, we can now piece together an expanded translation of James 3:17–18.

¹¹ Spiros Zodhiates, *Faith, Hope & Love: An Exposition of the Epistle of James* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1997), 402–403, 405–406.



31. James begins verse 17 with the noun **σοφία (sophía)**: “wisdom.” This is the summum bonum of the believer’s spiritual advance all the way to spiritual maturity and the execution of the sophisticated spiritual life.
32. James then states that this wisdom’s resource is, “from above,” and is acquired from continued study, retention, facilitation, and application of the doctrine resident in the soul’s *kardía*.
33. Since wisdom’s lone resource is from the mind of God, James declares it to be “pure,” **ἄγνός (hagnós)**: “perfect, flawless, immutable,” which we have shortened to “unalloyed.”
34. Since wisdom’s source is divine perfection, then its possession and application by the believer may be described with descriptive adjectives of which James has selected six which are reviewed on page 521 above.
35. These composites are to be retained and applied from the soul of the believer while “avoiding hypocrisy”: **ἀνυπόκριτος (anupókritos)**.
36. Verse 18 picks up on the description of wisdom in verse 17 with the phrase “the fruit of righteousness.” The noun “fruit” is **καρπός (karpós)** which is a correct translation.
37. However, we have established that its use by James references back to verse 17 whose adjectives describe the ingredients of wisdom that produce “good fruits.”
38. The better translation is not “fruits” but rather the overall “harvest” that wisdom produces by means of these six doctrinal composites.
39. That harvest leads off verse 18, “whose harvest is righteousness” the noun, **δικαιοσύνη (dikaiosúnē)**. This word is the key to understanding verses 17 and 18, so we give the word its due in this context:

The word for righteousness, *dikaiosúnē*, is one of the most significant words in the New Testament; it means much more than simply “righteousness.” It is a second-stage development in the Greek language in that it comes from two older words, the noun *δίκη (díkē)* and the adjective *δίκαιος (díkaios)*. The difference between *dikaiosúnē* and its two predecessors is the suffix *σύνη (súnē)*, and that suffix makes all the difference. (p. 28)



Dikaiosúnē was first used in the fifth century B.C.; the historian Herodotus [hi-räd'-a-tas] used it in telling the story of Solon [sō-lon], the farseeing statesman whose laws had saved Athens more than a hundred years before.

In Solon's day, the government leaders had woven a web of decrees that tyrannized and exploited the citizens of Attica. Solon witnessed this abuse of authority. He eventually became the *archon*,¹² and while serving his term, he persuaded the Athenians to adopt a new code. The old tyranny was set aside. Solon's new system guaranteed freedom for every citizen. (p. 29)

Solon was very confident. He convinced the Athenians to pass one final statute decreeing that no one could add to or subtract from the law—except Solon himself. He immediately set out on a ten-year sabbatical and simply left the Athenians to live by the excellent laws already in force.

With Solon absent, his laws could not be expanded or rescinded; the people of Athens had to adjust to what he had left them. Under this system of law, Herodotus first coined *dikaiosúnē* as a legal term, meaning “the thinking of a judge in allotting to each one what is due him,” in other words, good, clear, objective thinking that gives everyone a fair shake before the law.

Dikaiosúnē therefore means “adjustment to the law,” and that is the sense in which “righteousness” is a correct translation; but justice” is an equally accurate rendition.

In 280 B.C., over a century after the Golden Age of Greece, the Old Testament Scriptures were translated from Hebrew into Greek by seventy-two scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. In their amazingly accurate version called the Septuagint, *dikaiosúnē* stood for the Hebrew words קִדְּוָה (*tsedeq*) and תְּדַאָּה (*tsedaqah*), which can mean either righteousness or justice. The concepts are so interrelated that sometimes they cannot be distinguished, and the Hebrew does not attempt to separate them. Whenever God's justice or righteousness is mentioned in the Old Testament, *dikaiosúnē* appears in the Septuagint. (p. 30)

¹² A chief magistrate of ancient Athens. A ruler or presiding officer.



God, instead of Solon, becomes the norm and believers, instead of the citizens of Attica, are called *dikaiosúnē* when they observe the will of God—that is, when they have adjusted to the justice of God.

Dikaiosúnē means “justice” as a characteristic of a judge, as the legal thinking of a judge, as the professional integrity of a judge. It means “righteousness,” not merely in the sense of being good, but as a principle leading to correct thought and action. It means “to be fair and equitable in dealing with others”; it means “virtue, justice”—integrity.

In Scripture, “the *dikaiosúnē* of God” means one of three things: (1) the overall “integrity” of God, (2) His “righteousness” as the principle of His integrity, or (3) His “justice” as the function of His integrity.¹³ (p. 31)

40. This commentary on the word, **δικαιοσύνη** (*dikaiosúnē*), helps us understand its use in James 3:18 which is the integrity of God. These two attributes plus omniscience collectively become the composites of the love of God.
41. In verse 18, its best translation is, “whose harvest is the integrity of God.” The verse continues with the phrase “is sown in peace.”
42. The verb “sown” is the present passive indicative of **σπείρω** (*speírō*). Its present tense is static whose condition is assumed as perpetually existing, or to be taken for granted as a fact.
43. The sewing process which produces the integrity of God is in the passive voice indicating this sewing refers to the habitual process of consistently scheduling time to study the Word in order to acquire wisdom produced by the six composites mentioned in verse 17.
44. The passive voice of *speírō* refers to the subject, the “harvest of integrity,” which is acted upon by consistent inculcation of Bible doctrine.
45. This process is said to occur “in peace,” the noun **εἰρήνη** (*eirēnē*). The better words to translate this noun are “tranquility” and “harmony” These words better define the status quo of the soul that is functioning from an inventory of biblical absolutes that have advanced to the stage of wisdom.

¹³ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Integrity of God*, 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2005), 28–31.



46. Once such an inventory is attained, then the believer functions from a soul that has advanced to the high ground of spiritual maturity. This is accomplished when his inventory of biblical ideas has maxed out in wisdom.
47. This wisdom is described by six composites that define it. This results in a soul that is in harmony with the integrity of God.
48. The harmony is described by the verbs, “sown” and “make.” The first is “sown in harmony” while the latter is the verb, **ποιέω (poiéō)**: “to produce” harmony.
49. From the analysis above we are able to pull together a summary of James: Chapter Three:
 1. The central theme of the chapter has to do with the sinful use of the tongue. In paragraph 1, James presents three illustrations that provide examples of their destructive use and impact.
 2. In verses 1–5 James gives examples of how one ought and ought not to conduct himself with emphasis on the use of one’s tongue.
 3. Three illustrations of the boastful tongue are: **(1)** the bits of horses, **(2)** the rudder of ships, and **(3)** the flame that ignites a forest fire.
 4. Verse 6 notes that although the tongue is a relatively small member of the body it is capable of defiling the entire body by its use.
 5. The four genera of the animal kingdom’s taxonomy are given as examples of how mankind has been able to tame many of these creatures but is unable to do so with his tongue in verses 7 and 8.
 6. James uses the dichotomy of blessing God and cursing man in verses 9 and 10 followed by four rhetorical questions to illustrate from nature how ridiculous they are in verses 11 and 12.
 7. The second paragraph begins in verse 13a with the rhetorical question, “Who among you is wise and understanding?”



8. Those who consider themselves to be wise are commanded in imperative mood #25 to demonstrate his honorable manner of life in verse 13 and commanded in imperative mood #26 to not arrogantly boast and in imperative mood #27 not to lie against the truth in verse 14.
9. Such categories of wisdom are the opposite of that which is commanded by Scripture, but instead are common to the cosmic systems in verse 15.
10. These deviations into darkness are categorized by the mental-attitude sin of envy, scheming, and intrigue that result in instability, rebelliousness, and evil deeds and actions in verse 16.
11. Verse 17 is introduced by the contrastive, or adversative, conjunction, **δέ (dé)**: “but.” It is in opposition to the opposing thought or idea to which it is connected and refers to verses 14–16.
12. What follows is the James’s peroration¹⁴ of chapter 3, the expanded translation of verses 17 and 18:

James 3:17 But wisdom which contains divine viewpoint is from above which keeps on being first and foremost unalloyed, and includes the composites of (1) inner tranquility of the soul, (2) equitable, (3) affable, (4) compassionate, (5) productive, and (6) unbiased, with authenticity. [See analysis on p. 521.]

v. 18 And whose habitual harvest is the integrity of God which is consistently planted in harmony by those who produce harmony by means of the six composites of unalloyed wisdom. (EXT)

NOTE: See JAS3-54 for the expanded translation of *James: Chapter Three*.

(End JAS3-53 and the study of *James: Chapter Three*.
See JAS4-01 for continuation of the study at *James: Chapter Four*, p. 1.)

¹⁴ “The concluding part of an oration, speech, or written discourse, in which the speaker or writer sums up and commends to his audience with force or earnestness the matter which he has placed before them” (*The Oxford English Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), s.v. “peroration.”)