

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

THE CROWN OF LIFE *A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES* *PART SEVEN OF SIXTY FOUR*

In athletics a contestant may receive a crown for his accomplishments, but it is corruptible and soon fades. To the child of God who runs the race (Hebrews 12:1), God has promised a crown of life that is incorruptible. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

That which Jesus promises to the tested and true is deathlessness or eternal life. Those who endure temptation and abide in Christ shall ever be with the Lord. Theirs is a crown consisting of life eternal from which they can never pass by death and which will never wither, "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (I Peter 1:4).

The Lord promised such a crown to them that love Him (Mark 10:30). The fact that it is promised by the Lord makes it certain. We need never fear that He will not keep His word. If we love Him, we will receive the crown. What greater incentive could be conceived for living for Christ. Paul faced death with great assurance because of this promise. "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (II Timothy 4:8).

We show our love by obedience to Him. "If you love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Hence, receiving the crown is conditioned on our faithfulness to God. It takes effort to run the race to the finish. "For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

My friend, is this hope yours? Do you have hope of never ending life free from trials and tribulations? Can you face death saying, "I know whom I have believed"? If not, obey the Lord.

(B. G. Echols)

CHURCH OF CHRIST

412 East King Street
Shippensburg, Pa. 17257