

THE BEREAN

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

TWO DESTINIES

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART EIGHT OF SIXTY FOUR*

Vividly portrayed by James are the two possible destinies of people accountable to God. "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). "Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15).

The life promised to those who are approved of God is eternal. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Life is promised only to those who are approved of God. God has given us the Scriptures that we might, by study and application of His revealed will, present ourselves "approved unto God" (II Timothy 2:15).

The alternative is "death." A person who lives in sin is spiritually dead separated from God (Ephesians 2:1). If one dies physically in this condition, he will spend eternity separated from God. This is "the second death" (Revelation 20:14). The second death involves not only eternal separation from God "in outer darkness" (Matthew 25:30), but also "eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). Death is the consequence of yielding to the lust of the flesh, of the eyes, and to pride of life. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Once sin is started in us, it grows. Unless effort is put forth to break the growth process, it will mature. When it is fullgrown, it results in eternal death. Thanks be to God that a means of stopping its growth is available in Christ. "And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof" (Galatians 5:24). By believing in Christ (John 8:24), repenting of our sins (Acts 17:30), confessing His name among men (Romans 10:9,10), and being baptized for forgiveness (Acts 22:16), we break the process of growth. "Being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18).

What destiny awaits you? Do you let sin rule in your mortal body? "And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46).

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