

THE FATE OF THE WICKED RICH **(James 5:1-6)**

I. James reveals their fate.

- A. James tells them that there are miseries that await them.
 - 1. This seems to point to a time ahead.
 - 2. While some think it is the destruction of Jerusalem, it is more likely the day of Judgment.
- B. The people that lived in this manner then and do now, are going to be eternally lost.
- C. James even describes their future fate:
 - 1. Their flesh shall be eaten as with fire.
 - 2. This sounds a lot like the teachings of Jesus about the fate of those who will be lost in hell.
- D. The thought of such should cause these people to weep and howl.
 - 1. When thinking about the misery that awaits them, they should be devastated.
 - 2. Sobbing and shrieking is the idea.
- E. This is not a fate anyone would willingly choose.
 - 1. Yet, by living this way that is exactly what they were doing.
 - 2. Their lives were going to be overtaken by what could be called overwhelming trouble and we would never knowingly choose that.
- F. When we live lives that depend on things or money for happiness then we face this fate.

II. James reveals their state.

- A. When one wears fine clothing, we feel differently don't we?
 - 1. Think about how you feel when you put something new on that is nice, not just a new t-shirt.
 - 2. While clothes don't make the man, they do make the man feel better.
- B. James lets the wicked rich know the true state of their wealth.
- C. Those things, in the eyes of God, are corrupted.
 - 1. They aren't worth anything to God.
 - 2. The clothes are moth eaten in His eyes.
- D. When we place our trust in wealth and goods, we go around parading them as if they are beautiful and fine looking.
 - 1. God doesn't view them that way.
 - 2. He views them as corrupt and rags.
 - 3. Any money is viewed as vile and completely worthless.
- E. The old saying is you can put lipstick on a pig and it is still a pig.
- F. You can put fine clothing and lots of money on a sinner and he or she is still a sinner.
- G. Br. Black wrote a book entitled, "Rust As A Witness."
 - 1. The way we use our money will be judged by God.
 - 2. The trust we place in riches will be held against us and condemn us in the end if such is the case.

III. James reveals their way of life.

- A. Notice how they obtained their wealth:
 - 1. They obtained it by fraud and deception.
 - 2. They hired people to do work and deceived them into thinking they would make a certain amount.
 - 3. When it came time to pay, they defrauded them.
- B. Notice as well, that they did such with the thought they would get away with it.
- C. They never took into account an all-knowing God.
 - 1. James tells us that the cries of the defrauded came into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.
 - 2. Sabaoth simply means hosts.
 - 3. God is the God of all men and knows all things.
 - 4. These wicked rich believed they were above all and picking on those who had no one to represent them.
 - 5. God is the God of the poor as well and He is ready, willing and able to take up their cause.
- D. They lived how they wanted to live.
 - 1. They lived for their own pleasure, indulging in fleshly things.
 - 2. They lived wastefully, in a way that used their goods for themselves and not for the true purpose God gives us good gifts: for His glorification.
- E. Finally, James accuses this group of putting to death the just.
 - 1. This is interesting in the way that it is written.
 - 2. It literally says the just one.
 - 3. We know there is only one who is truly just and that is God.
- F. James seems to be accusing this group of people of killing Jesus.
 - 1. More than likely, James is referring to this overall type of people and not these people specifically.
 - 2. It was this type of person, living for self, wasteful of the blessings of God and users of their fellow Jews who killed Jesus.
- G. We see how God views the type of person who lives in this manner.
 - 1. He views him or her as the type of person who put Jesus to death.
 - 2. This is the type of person that killed God's only begotten Son.
- H. This should show us how God truly views this person.