

THE BEREAN

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

THE TESTIMONY OF RUST

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART FIFTY THREE OF SIXTY FOUR*

Wealth, in whatever form it is counted, has ever been a substitute for God. "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God" (I Timothy 6:17). In James' day wealth was measured in garments, property, and metal coins. Although we may count ours in other ways, the lessons he seeks to impress on the minds of his readers are still applicable. The stewardship of our possessions is a concern of God. We are accountable for their use.

Some hoard their wealth choosing to see it accumulate rather than use it in worthwhile activities. "Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire" (James 5:3). If we do not use certain items, they corrode. James says that "rust" becomes the proof of our sins; the evidence of our failure to use our blessings in God's service. This testimony of rust will bring us to God's destruction.

What are we doing with the blessings God has showered on us? Are we lolling in a lap of luxury while God's work goes begging? We cannot give God a token while using most for our own ease and comfort. We will give account to God. What testimony will our wealth bear

before God's judgment? The application is not just for those we deem wealthy. "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much" (Luke 16:10). Much that we put aside for "a rainy day" will go to the state in taxes or to our ungrateful heirs. Why not use it for God and see its fruit, in your lifetime? Don't make the mistake of applying this only to what you have in the bank. How much wealth do you have tied up in houses, furnishings, cars, clothes, and unnecessary trappings?

"It is the inveterate tendency of human nature; the possession of wealth tends to luxury, to take the life clear away from simplicity into self-indulgence, and self-indulgence invariably hardens and materializes the heart. Nobody is more selfish, more brutally callous to the claims, needs, and sufferings of others than the self-indulgent man." (Brown)

It will be sad to think hereafter that so much of our wealth was hoarded in selfish possessions to become fire in our hearts. Part of hell's torment will be the consciousness of the squandered opportunities of life; a despairing remorse to look back upon the circumstances of our own guilt.

(B. G. Echols)

CHURCH OF CHRIST

412 East King Street
Shippensburg, Pa. 17257