

James 1:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Analysis

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. James traces the lifecycle of sin: desire conceives (syllabousa, συλλαβοῦσα), gives birth to sin (hamartian, ἀμαρτίαν), and sin when mature (apoteleisthēsa, ἀποτελεσθεῖσα) brings forth death (thanaton, θάνατον). The reproductive metaphor shows inevitability—unchecked lust inevitably kills. Sin is not an isolated act but a process culminating in spiritual death.

Historical Context

This imagery echoes wisdom literature like Proverbs 5-7, warning against seductress-like temptations. For persecuted believers, the temptation to compromise with worldly systems promised safety but ultimately produced death. Paul similarly describes the wages of sin as death (Romans 6:23), showing unity of apostolic doctrine.

James's congregation needed to see beyond momentary relief to the lethal trajectory of sin, strengthening their resolve to remain faithful.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Where do you see the conception-to-death pattern operating in your life?
2. What decisive step can you take today to interrupt sin's progression?
3. How does Christ's victory over death motivate you to pursue holiness?

Interlinear Text

εἴτα	ἡ	ἐπιθυμία	συλλαβοῦσα	τίκτει	ἀμαρτία	ἡ
Then	G3588	when lust	hath conceived	it bringeth forth	sin	G3588
G1534		G1939	G4815	G5088	G266	
δὲ	ἀμαρτία	ἀποτελεσθεῖσα	ἀποκύει	θάνατον		
and	sin	when it is finished	bringeth forth	death		
G1161	G266	G658	G616	G2288		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 7:14 (Sin): Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

Job 15:35 (Parallel theme): They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

Genesis 2:17 (Parallel theme): But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Isaiah 59:4 (Sin): None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

Genesis 3:6 (Parallel theme): And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one

wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

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