

The Ways of Life and Death

Jacob's Explanation (2 Nephi 9)

Men and Women
Choose in Probation

Verses	Wicked Response in Probation	Righteous Response in Probation	Verses
27	transgressing commandments	righteousness	18
30, 34–37	despising poor, lying, murdering, committing whoredoms	enduring crosses and shame of world	18
33, 38	being uncircumcised of heart, dying in sins	having faith, repenting, being baptized, enduring	23–24
39	being carnally minded	being spiritually minded	39
40	reviling against the truth	loving the truth	40
27	wasting days of probation	following the straight and narrow course	41
28	knowing of themselves	knocking to approach God	42
30	setting hearts on treasures	letting hearts rejoice in righteousness	49, 52
28	hearkening not to counsels of God	feasting on that which perisheth not	51
31–32	neither hearing nor seeing	praying continually	52

Spiritual Death
Hell

Spiritual Life
Paradise

14	knowledge of guilt and uncleanness	perfect knowledge of righteousness	14
16	filthy still	clothed with purity	14
16, 46	misery and endless torment	fulness of joy	18
46	obtained by the devil	inherit kingdom of God	18
16	death/lake of fire and brimstone	life eternal	39

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Key Scripture 2 Nephi 9

Explanation In the blessing he received from his father Lehi, Jacob was told that “there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). Characteristic of his writing style, Jacob’s exposition in 2 Nephi 9 of the ways of life and death is an extensive meditation on the desires of men and women in mortality and how they lead to either spiritual life or death. As this chart shows, Jacob focuses on the inward state of the souls who choose either of these divergent paths. Jacob presents as options only paradise and endless torment as places where a soul may go after final judgment.

Source Mack C. Stirling, “The Way of Life and the Way of Death in the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997): 161–63.