

OTHER LETTERS

LETTER OF JAMES

Introduction

The heading is proper of a letter. It is sent by James, known as the brother of Lord (Mk 6:3; Gal 1:19), head of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13), one of the Twelve.

The letter resembles a wise writing, with ethical topics, and transferred to a Christian context.

1 ¹James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, sends greetings to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.

Partiality

2 ¹My brothers and sisters, if you truly believe in our glorified Lord, Jesus Christ, you will not discriminate between persons. ²Suppose a person enters the synagogue where you are assembled, dressed magnificently and wearing a gold ring; at the same time, a poor person enters dressed in rags. ³If you focus your attention on the well-dressed and say, ‘Come and sit in the best seat,’ while to the poor one you say, “Stay standing or else sit down at my feet,” ⁵Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters, did God not choose the poor of this world to receive the riches of faith and to inherit the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶Yet you despise them! Is it not the rich who are against you and drag you to court? ⁸If you keep the Law of the Kingdom, according to Scripture: *Love your neighbor as yourself*, you do well; ⁹but if you make distinctions between persons, you break the law and are condemned by the same law. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one aspect, is guilty of breaking it all.

Rich and satisfied

5 ¹So, now for what concerns the rich! Cry and weep for the misfortunes that are coming upon you. ²Your riches are rotting and your clothes eaten up by the moths. ³Your silver and gold have rusted and their rust grows into a witness against you. It will consume your flesh like fire, for having piled up riches in these the last days.

⁴You deceived the workers who harvested your fields but now their wages cry out to the heavens. The reapers’ complaints have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵You lived in luxury and pleasure in this world thus fattening yourselves for the day of slaughter. ⁶You have easily condemned and killed the innocent since they offered no resistance.

Patience and prayer

¹³Are any among you discouraged? They should pray. Are any of you happy? They should sing songs to God. ¹⁴If anyone is sick, let him call on the elders of the Church. They shall pray

for him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer said in faith will save the sick person; the Lord will raise him up and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶There will be healing if you confess your sins to one another and pray for each other. The prayer of the upright man has great power, provided he perseveres.

FIRST LETTER OF JOHN

Introduction

The authentic Christian is known by several signs: fulfills the commandments, avoid sins and practices justice, confesses Jesus as Messiah and, especially, loves neighbor. God is light, God is love.

The old tradition has attributed this letter to John, the author of the gospel. The similarity between these two writings is obvious.

1 ¹This is what has been from the beginning, and what we have heard and have seen with our own eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, I mean the *Word* who is Life...

²The *Life* made *itself* known, we have seen Eternal Life and we bear witness, and we are telling you of it. It was with the Father and made himself known to us.

³So we tell you what we have seen and heard, that you may be in fellowship with us, and us, with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

⁴And we write this that our joy may be complete.

Christians and the world

2 ¹²My dear children, I write this to you: you have already received the forgiveness of your sins through the Name of Jesus. ¹³Fathers, I write this to you: you know him who is from the beginning. Young men, I write this to you: you have overcome the Evil One. My dear children, I write to you because you already know the Father.

¹⁴Fathers, I write to you because you know him who is from the beginning. Young men, I write to you because you are strong and the Word of God lives in you who have indeed overcome the Evil One.

¹⁵Do not love the world or what is in it. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶For everything in the world
—the craving of the flesh,
the greed of eyes
and people boasting of their superiority—
all this belongs to the world, not to the Father.

¹⁷The world passes away with all its craving but those who do the will of God remain for ever.

The commandment of love

3 ¹¹For this is the message taught to you from the beginning: we must love one another. ¹³So, be not surprised, brothers if the world hates us; ¹⁴we love our brothers and sisters, and with this we know that we have passed from death to life. The one who does not love remains in death.

¹⁵The one who hates his brother is a murderer, and, as you know, eternal life does not remain in the murderer.

¹⁶This is how we have known what love is: he gave his life for us. We, too, ought to give our life for our brothers and sisters.

¹⁷If anyone enjoys the riches of this world, but closes his heart when he sees his brother or sister in need, how will the love of God remain in him? ¹⁸My dear children, let us love not only with words and with our lips, but in truth and in deed.

God is love

4 ⁷My dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Those who do not love have not known God, for God is love. ⁹How did the love of God appear among us? God sent his only Son into this world that we might have life through him.

¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God but that he first loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

¹⁹So let us love one another, since he loved us first.

²⁰If you say, 'I love God,' while you hate your brother or sister, you are a liar. How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your brother whom you see? ²¹We received from him this commandment: let those who love God also love their brothers.