

# Catholic Epistles

- James
- Jude
- 1&2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2&3 John

# James

## Objective:

- Trials vs Temptations
- Partiality
- Faith and works
- The Tongue
- Heavenly wisdom
- Lustful desires
- Worldly richness

## Resources:

- Fr Tadros Y Malaty Commentary
- Catena Bible Commentary
- HEMY
- Fr Dawoud Lamie Bible study (Arabic)

## Reading:

- James 1
- James 2
- James 3
- James 4
- James 5

## Key verse(s):

"Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" James 2:18

## Comments:

- The Catholic Epistles are Seven
- Catholic = Universal
- The Catholic Epistles differ from the Pauline Epistles as they were not sent to specific persons (Timothy - Titus) or Churches (Galatians - Romans) but sent to Christians in the world
- The Author:
  - He is James, the son of Alphaeus

- One of the twelve disciples
- He is the brother Jude/Thaddaeus/Lebbaeus (Author of the other epistle)
- He was known as the Lord's brother as his mother was a sister to St. Mary the Virgin, the wife of Clopas, which means Alphaeus in Aramaic
- The first Bishop of Jerusalem (Acts 15)
- He headed the Council of Jerusalem in 51 AD (Acts 15)
- He was ascetic and used to kneel during prayer until his knees became like those of a camel
- The epistle is written to the Christians all over the world to encourage them to endure trials and to offer practical spiritual applications
- Ch. 1:
  - V.1-2: We should be joyful when we are facing trials because these are our crowns in heaven
  - V.3: Trials produce patience and strength in life
  - V.5: Asking God for wisdom will definitely be accepted by Him as He loves these requests and will provide "Liberally"
    - Bad requests: money, revenge, power
    - Good requests: wisdom, love, patience
  - V.9-10: God will reward the poor. As they suffered on earth, they will be rewarded in Heaven
  - V.11: If the rich do not depend on God and do not endure trials happily, they will perish like grass burned by the sun
  - V.12-13: Sometimes we may think that God makes us fall into sin (Why did God put this person in my day to make me lust or get angry?)
    - St. James is explaining that these thoughts are false and the sins are coming from our bad feelings/thoughts
      - Hate -> Getting angry at someone
      - Lustful thoughts -> lead to sin
  - V.14-15: Progression of sin
  - V.19: We should be fast to hear the word of God and slow to speak lest we sin
  - V.22-24: Man should be a doer of the word. If a man knows that he is struggling with a certain sin and hears God's word without doing an action, he is alike a person looking at the mirror without fixing himself.
- Ch. 2:
  - V.1-13: At this time, people were under persecution. Some used to honor the rich more in Church so they could protect them if they were persecuted. St. James is encouraging them to honor the poor and rich equally and to rely on God. The poor are rich in spirit and faith.
  - V.14-26: Faith without works is dead
    - Faith and works are equally important, and BOTH are required to enter the Kingdom
    - We can't do good works without believing in God and His commandments
    - We can't say we believe in God and His commandments without doing His works and showing our faith in action
- Ch. 3:

- V. 1-11: St. James provides simple and practical examples to show much power is in the tongue
- V. 13-18: Heavenly vs Earthly wisdom
  - Characteristics of each type
- Ch. 4:
  - V. 1-6: Personal pride produces wars and hatred between people
  - V. 7-10: Humility cures all prideful wars and hatred
  - V. 11-12: Judging one another is a spiritual war
  - V. 13-17: We should plan our lives and seek work and success. But we have to understand that all of this is through God's will. We can't guarantee that we will be living and that all our lives and plans will be completed exactly as we planned.
- Ch. 5:
  - V. 1-6: Rich people are not hated by God, and being rich is not a bad or sinful thing. But we have to understand that riches come from God for the rich to enjoy their hard work and God's blessing. The rich shall use what God gave them and give to those in need. Richness is bad when it makes the person rely on it and not God
  - V. 7-12: Patience and perseverance.
    - V.12: The importance of not cursing and being honest and confident in your words
  - V. 13: The importance of spiritual rejoicing in the Lord
  - V. 14: Sacrament of the unction of the sick. "Elders" is not an accurate translation, and it means "Priests - Presveteros"
  - V.16: Sacrament of repentance of confession.
    - Both sacraments go hand in hand - We pray for the healing of our spiritual and physical sicknesses
    - Confess to one another: Does not mean to confess to regular people but to the priests (from V.14)
  - V. 17: He wanted to comfort us by telling us that the great Elijah was also a human and felt weak at some point. But Elijah was a man of prayer and fasting.

### **Review/recap questions:**

*\*\*Servant may add more questions*

1. Will God ignore our prayers when we doubt?
2. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Does this mean wrath is acceptable? Explain.
3. What's the difference between good Christians who believe that there is one God and the demons who also believe that there is one God?
4. Some other Christian denominations believe that all you need to be saved is faith. How can you use this chapter to respond to this belief?
5. How does St. James describe the tongue?
6. If the tongue cannot be tamed why try?
7. What counsel does St. James give to those tempted by the world?

8. What does the phrase "friend of the world" mean and how can that cause an enmity with God?
9. Identify verses in this chapter that talk about sacraments of the Church.
10. Does anointing with oil guarantees healing?

**Homework:**

*\*\*Servant may add more questions*

1. CHAPTER 1

1. My brethren, count it all \_\_\_\_\_ - when you fall into various \_\_\_\_\_, knowing that the testing of your faith produces \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The apostle says that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from \_\_\_\_\_." a) our parents b) the Father of lights c) the Pharisees

2. CHAPTER 2

1. When a poor man comes to our church we should:  
a) treat him as a servant b) ignore him and pay attention to the rich people c) treat him well because he is also loved by God
2. Who is called "friend of God"?  
a) any Christian b) the Lord Jesus Christ c) Abraham d) Rahab

3. CHAPTER 3

1. 1. Out of the same \_\_\_\_\_ proceed \_\_\_\_\_ and cursing.
2. 2. Heavenly wisdom is characterized by:  
a) envy and self-seeking b) confusion and evil c) purity, peace and gentleness

4. CHAPTER 4

1. 1. "God resists the \_\_\_\_\_, but gives grace to the \_\_\_\_\_."
2. 2. Therefore, to him who knows to do \_\_\_\_\_ and does not \_\_\_\_\_ it, to him it is \_\_\_\_\_.

5. CHAPTER 5

1. 1. But let your "Yes," be \_\_\_\_\_ and your \_\_\_\_\_ "No," lest you fall into \_\_\_\_\_.
2. 2. Is anyone among you \_\_\_\_\_? Let him call for the elders of the \_\_\_\_\_ and let them pray over him, anointing him with \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of the \_\_\_\_\_.

# Jude

## Objective:

- Greetings to the Called
- Contend for the Faith
- Old and New Apostates
- Apostates Depraved and Judged
- Maintain Your Life with God

## Resources:

- Fr Tadros Y Malaty Commentary
- Catena Bible Commentary
- HEMY
- Fr Dawoud Lamie Bible study (Arabic)

## Reading:

- Jude 1

## Key verse(s):

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life"  
Jude 21

## Comments:

- The Catholic Epistles are Seven
- Catholic = Universal
- The Catholic Epistles differ from the Pauline Epistles as they were not sent to specific persons (Timothy - Titus) or Churches (Galatians - Romans) but sent to Christians in the world
- The Author:
  - He is Jude, also known as Thaddeus or Lebbeus
    - He is not the same as Judas Iscariot, as we know that he ended his life
    - He is the brother of St. James the Lesser, the bishop of Jerusalem
    - Both are known to be the sons of Alphaeus, and they were cousins of our Lord
      - Their mother (Mary the Lesser) was the younger sister of St. Mary

- The Author shows a great knowledge of Old Testament and Holy Tradition
- V.1: He identified himself as the brother of James, as James was more known as the bishop of Jerusalem
  - He was the cousin of our Lord, but he did not boast about this and identified himself as a "bondservant."
- V.3: "Common salvation" is common to the Jews and Gentiles. We are all one in Christ.
  - "The faith which was once for all delivered." Christ died only once, and the faith is the same and does not change over time. Those who claim new ideas or "faith" are heretics. Faith was delivered to the saints and does not change or alter over time
- V.4: Heretics "creep" their way into the Church. They don't publicly announce different ideas, but quietly change or alter the faith. For example, Arius believed that Christ is God the Logos, but the hidden idea was not calling him "equal to the Father."
  - We have to be aware of those who change little things, "even if it is one letter," and do not change the faith and deliver it exactly as we received it
- V.5: The older generation who crossed the sea was destroyed and did not enter the promised land because of all the complaining and lack of faith they showed towards God and Moses
  - Being Christians and Baptised do not just save us from eternal death, but we have to show our faith with works and live a constant life of repentance
- V.6: Even angels who were prideful received everlasting death - Isaiah 14
- V.8: Dreamers = dream about false teaching and heresies and think they are right, deceiving themselves and others
- V.9: This story is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but the author quoted it from Tradition
  - This story is the source for most Archangel Michael icons
  - This shows the importance of the Holy Tradition and not relying solely on what's in the Bible
    - For example, in our Church, we rely primarily on the Bible as our #1 resource, but we do not discard the sayings and teachings of the Church Fathers, as they explained to us the Bible and the Faith.
- V.11: Heretics and those who leave the faith go through different levels:
  - Drifting away from God's way and hating others - Cain
  - Fall into sexual lusts and desires, love of money, and pride - Balaam
    - Balaam, for money, suggested to the king of Moab to make the Israelites fall into adultery to defeat them (Numbers 22)
  - They perish without repentance - Korah
    - Korah was one of the people who went against Moses and Aaron, and the earth opened and swallowed them (Numbers 16)
- V.12: These heretics are like small "spots" that no one sees or pays attention to. Spots mean hidden reefs. These hidden reefs are not noticed until they destroy a big ship.
  - Heresies and heresies are not noticed sometimes until they destroy a large number of people/churches
  - Heretics are deceivers. Clouds without water. Trees without fruit. The outside is different without real fruit inside

- Heretics have no stability or peace as they are away from God. They are like "raging waves of the sea"
- Heretics come up bright, but they quickly die. Like stars or celestial masses that burn for a moment before completely dying - "wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever"
- V.14: This prophecy by Enoch was not mentioned anywhere in the Bible. Also shows the importance of Holy Tradition. He prophesied against heretics and sinners.
- V.16-19: Characteristics of the ungodly people. We should watch our conduct lest we fall into similar things.
- V.20-22: How to maintain life with God

### **Review/recap questions:**

*\*\*Servant may add more questions*

1. What did the ungodly men do?
2. What does St Jude urge us to do?
3. Why were false prophets called dreamers?
4. They are like clouds without water. Explain.

### **Homework:**

*\*\*Servant may add more questions*

1. St Jude was eager to write about:
  - a) the Holy Bible b) salvation c) the Jews d) the Romans
2. Keep yourselves in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, looking for the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus Christ unto \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What was St. Jude eager to write about?
4. What did the Lord do to those who did not believe?

# 1&2 Peter

# 1 John

2&3 John