

# **The Letter of James**

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## **4. Conclusion (5:19 - 20)**

## James 4:17 -

**Failure to act on the truth is a sin of omission. (Scott Hahn)**

### THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF SINS

**1853** Sins can be distinguished according to their objects, as can every human act; or according to the virtues they oppose, by excess or defect; or according to the commandments they violate. They can also be classed according to whether they concern God, neighbor, or oneself; they can be divided into spiritual and carnal sins, or again as sins in thought, word, deed, or omission. The root of sin is in the heart of man, in his free will, according to the teaching of the Lord: "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man." (*Mt 15:19-20.*) But in the heart also resides charity, the source of the good and pure works, which sin wounds.

## James 5:3 - The Church's ultimate trial

**675** Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. (Cf. *Lk 18:8; Mt 24:12*) The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth (Cf. *Lk 21:12; Jn 15:19-20*). will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh. (Cf. *2 Thess 2:4-12; 1 Thess 5:2-3; 2 Jn 7; 1 Jn 2:18,22.*)

**676** The Antichrist's deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgment. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism, especially the "intrinsically perverse" political form of a secular messianism.

**677** The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. (Cf. *Rev 19:1-9.*) The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven. (Cf. *Rev 13:8; 20:7-10; 21:2-4.*) God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world. (Cf. *Rev 20:12 2 Pet 3:12-13.*)

## James 5:4 - THE PROLIFERATION OF SIN

**1867** The catechetical tradition also recalls that there are "*sins that cry to heaven*": the blood of Abel, the sin of the Sodomites, the cry of the people oppressed in Egypt, the cry of the foreigner, the widow, and the orphan, injustice to the wage earner.

**2434** A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. "Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good." Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages.

## James 5:6 - Just wages

**2446** St. John Chrysostom vigorously recalls this: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." "The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity":

When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice. (St. Gregory the Great)

## **James 5:12 - TAKING THE NAME OF THE LORD IN VAIN**

**2153** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained the second commandment: "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all. . . . Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one." Jesus teaches that every oath involves a reference to God and that God's presence and his truth must be honored in all speech. Discretion in calling upon God is allied with a respectful awareness of his presence, which all our assertions either witness to or mock.

**2154** Following St. Paul, the tradition of the Church has understood Jesus' words as not excluding oaths made for grave and right reasons (for example, in court). "An oath, that is the invocation of the divine name as a witness to truth, cannot be taken unless in truth, in judgment, and in justice."

**2155** The holiness of the divine name demands that we neither use it for trivial matters, nor take an oath which on the basis of the circumstances could be interpreted as approval of an authority unjustly requiring it. When an oath is required by illegitimate civil authorities, it may be refused. It must be refused when it is required for purposes contrary to the dignity of persons or to ecclesial communion.

## **James 5:14 - In the person of Christ the Head . . .**

**1551** This priesthood is ministerial. "That office . . . which the Lord committed to the pastors of his people, is in the strict sense of the term a service." It is entirely related to Christ and to men. It depends entirely on Christ and on his unique priesthood; it has been instituted for the good of men and the communion of the Church. The sacrament of Holy Orders communicates a "sacred power" which is none other than that of Christ. The exercise of this authority must therefore be measured against the model of Christ, who by love made himself the least and the servant of all. "The Lord said clearly that concern for his flock was proof of love for him."