



10. January 2026

EPISTLE OF JAMES

“Exhortation to Perseverance”

James 5:7–12

Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble, brethren, against one another, that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the doors. As an example of suffering and patience, brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call those happy who were steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but let your yes be yes and your no be no, that you may not fall under condemnation.

When speaking of the “coming of the Lord,” James refers to Christ’s return at the end of time and points out that it is near. In retrospect, we can see that, according to our human criteria, a long time has passed since the Apostle wrote these words. However, the Second Coming of Christ, as announced by the angels to the disciples on the day of His Ascension (Acts 1:11), has not yet taken place. Does this mean that the early Church was wrong? Of course not, even if they assumed that the coming of the Lord was imminent. Rather, the Apostle James focuses on the attitude with which Christians should await this event. The community was to wait patiently and strengthen their hearts, with their eyes fixed on the Lord who will return. The Apostle was aware that suffering would befall the Christian community.

Today’s passage invites us to reflect precisely on how we should prepare for the Second Coming of Christ. Since we cannot know the day or the hour of His coming (Mt 24:36), it makes no sense to try to set a specific date, as has been done time and again throughout history. It will be our Father who determines the hour according to criteria known only to Him. However, although the exact moment has not been revealed to us, the “birth pangs” that must precede Christ’s return have been described to us, so we know enough to arouse our attention. The essential thing is the vigilance of the faithful! We must always be prepared for the Second Coming of the Lord by living a life worthy of Him. The same applies to our death.

The Scriptures explicitly warn us not to think that the Lord will be slow in coming (Mt 24:48–50), as such an attitude could cause us to let our guard down. Jesus Himself makes it clear: *“As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man. Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”* (Mt 24:37–39, 42)

Later He gives us another warning to wake us up: *“But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”* (vv. 43–44).

The imminent expectation of Christ’s Second Coming, if understood correctly and without falling into irrationality, helps us shake off all drowsiness and live with our eyes fixed on the Lord who is coming again. If we remember the parable of the virgins waiting for the arrival of the Bridegroom (Mt 25:1–12), we will know what we have to do: keep oil in reserve for our lamps. This means that we must do good works and, as the Apostle James says, not complain about one another. We could pause on this last point and emphasize that, in general, we should not speak ill of anyone, much less our brothers and sisters in Christ. If this bad habit were not combated and overcome, it would be very harmful to community life. Instead, we must support one another in following Christ and carry our crosses with the patience of the prophets and, we might add, with that of the saints.

By reminding us that *“the Lord is deeply compassionate and merciful,”* the Apostle James shows us how we should be, for the goal of Christian life is to become like Him. This is possible thanks to the Holy Spirit, who will also help us fulfill James’s final exhortation:

“Above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but let your yes be yes and your no be no, that you may not fall under condemnation.”

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2020/01/10/>