

The Epistle of St. Ignatus to Polycarp



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THE EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO POLYCARP (often abbreviated Ign. Poly.) is an epistle attributed to Ignatius of Antioch, a second-century bishop of Antioch, and addressed to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna. It was written during Ignatius' transport from Antioch to his execution in Rome.

Composition

See also: Ignatius of Antioch § Epistles

To Polycarp is one of seven epistles attributed to Ignatius that are generally accepted as authentic. In 5th century, this collection was enlarged by spurious letters.

It is clear that To Polycarp was written soon before the martyrdom of Ignatius, but it is uncertain when precisely this martyrdom occurred. Tradition places the martyrdom of Ignatius in the reign of Trajan, who was emperor of Rome from 98 to 117 AD. While many scholars accept the traditional dating of Ignatius' martyrdom under Trajan, others have argued for a somewhat later date. Richard Pervo dated Ignatius' death to 135-140 AD, and British classicist Timothy Barnes has argued for a date some time in the 140's AD.

The Epistle of St. Ignatius to Polycarp Apostolic Fathers (Lightfoot)

1:1 Ignatius who is also Theophorus, unto Polycarp who is bishop of the church of the Smyrnaeans or rather who hath for his bishop God the Father and Jesus Christ, abundant greeting.

1:2 Welcoming thy godly mind which is grounded as it were on an immovable rock, I give exceeding glory that it hath been vouchsafed me to see thy blameless face, whereof I would fain have joy in God.

1:3 I exhort thee in the grace wherewith thou art clothed to press forward in thy course and to exhort all men that they may be saved.

1:4 Vindicate thine office in all diligence of flesh and of spirit.

1:5 Have a care for union, than which there is nothing better.

1:6 Bear all men, as the Lord also beareth thee.

1:7 Suffer all men in love, as also thou doest.

1:8 Give thyself to unceasing prayers.

1:9 Ask for larger wisdom than thou hast.

1:10 Be watchful, and keep thy spirit from slumbering.

1:11 Speak to each man severally after the manner of God.

1:12 Bear the maladies of all, as a perfect athlete.

1:13 Where there is more toil, there is much gain.

2:1 If thou lovest good scholars, this is not thankworthy in thee.

2:2 Rather bring the more pestilent to submission by gentleness.

2:3 All wounds are not healed by the same salve.

2:4 Allay sharp pains by fomentations.

2:5 {Be thou prudent as the serpent} in all things {and guileless} always {as the dove.

2:6 } Therefore art thou made of flesh and spirit, that thou mayest humour the things which appear before thine eyes;

2:7 and as for the invisible things, pray thou that they may be revealed unto thee;

2:8 that thou mayest be lacking in nothing, but mayest abound in every spiritual gift.

2:9 The season requireth thee, as pilots require winds or as a storm-tossed mariner a haven, that it may attain unto God.

2:10 Be sober, as God's athlete.

2:11 The prize is incorruption and life eternal, concerning which thou also art persuaded.

2:12 In all things I am devoted to thee I and my bonds which thou didst cherish.

3:1 Let not those that seem to be plausible and yet teach strange doctrine dismay thee.

3:2 Stand thou firm, as an anvil when it is smitten.

3:3 It is the part of a great athlete to receive blows and be victorious.

3:4 But especially must we for God's sake endure all things, that He also may endure us.

3:5 Be thou more diligent than thou art.

3:6 Mark the seasons.

3:7 Await Him that is above every season, the Eternal, the Invisible, who became visible for our sake, the Impalpable, the Impassible, who suffered for our sake, who endured in all ways for our sake.

4:1 Let not widows be neglected.

4:2 After the Lord be thou their protector.

4:3 Let nothing be done without thy consent;

4:4 neither do thou anything without the consent of God, as indeed thou doest not.

4:5 Be stedfast.

4:6 Let meetings be held more frequently.

4:7 Seek out all men by name.

4:8 Despise not slaves, whether men or women.

4:9 Yet let not these again be puffed up, but let them serve the more faithfully to the glory of God, that they may obtain a better freedom from God.

4:10 Let them not desire to be set free at the public cost, lest they be found slaves of lust.

5:1 Flee evil arts, or rather hold thou discourse about these.

5:2 Tell my sisters to love the Lord and to be content with their husbands in flesh and in spirit.

5:3 In like manner also charge my brothers in the name of Jesus Christ to love their wives, as the Lord loved the Church.

5:4 If any one is able to abide in chastity to the honour of the flesh of the Lord, let him so abide without boasting.

5:5 If he boast, he is lost;

5:6 and if it be known beyond the bishop, he is polluted.

5:7 It becometh men and women too, when they marry, to unite themselves

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with the consent of the bishop, that the marriage may be after the Lord and not after concupiscence.

5:8 Let all things be done to the honour of God.

6:1 Give ye heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you.

6:2 I am devoted to those who are subject to the bishop, the presbyters, the deacons.

6:3 May it be granted me to have my portion with them in the presence of God.

6:4 Toil together one with another, struggle together, run together, suffer together, lie down together, rise up together, as God's stewards and assessors and ministers.

6:5 Please the Captain in whose army ye serve, from whom also ye will receive your pay.

6:6 Let none of you be found a deserter.

6:7 Let your baptism abide with you as your shield;

6:8 your faith as your helmet;

6:9 your love as your spear;

6:10 your patience as your body armour.

6:11 Let your works be your deposits, that ye may receive your assets due to you.

6:12 Be ye therefore long-suffering one with another in gentleness, as God is with you.

6:13 May I have joy of you always.

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7:1 Seeing that the church which is in Antioch of Syria hath peace, as it hath been reported to me, through your prayers, I myself also have been the more comforted since God hath banished my care;

7:2 if so be I may through suffering attain unto God, that I may be found a disciple through your intercession.

7:3 It becometh thee, most blessed Polycarp, to call together a godly council and to elect some one among you who is very dear to you and zealous also,

7:4 who shall be fit to bear the name of God's courier-to appoint him, I say, that he may go to Syria and glorify your zealous love unto the glory of God.

7:5 A Christian hath no authority over himself, but giveth his time to God.

7:6 This is God's work, and yours also, when ye shall complete it:

7:7 for I trust in the Divine grace, that ye are ready for an act of well-doing which is meet for God.

7:8 Knowing the fervour of your sincerity, I have exhorted you in a short letter.

8:1 Since I have not been able to write to all the churches, by reason of my sailing suddenly from Troas to Neapolis,

8:2 as the Divine will enjoineth, thou shalt write to the churches in front,

8:3 as one possessing the mind of God, to the intent that they also may do this same thing-let those who are able send messengers,

8:4 and the rest letters by the persons who are sent by thee, that ye may be glorified by an ever memorable deed-for this is worthy of thee.

8:5 I salute all by name, and especially the wife of Eпитropus with her whole household and her children's.

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8:6 I salute Attalus my beloved.

8:7 I salute him that shall be appointed to go to Syria.

8:8 Grace shall be with him always, and with Polycarp who sendeth him.

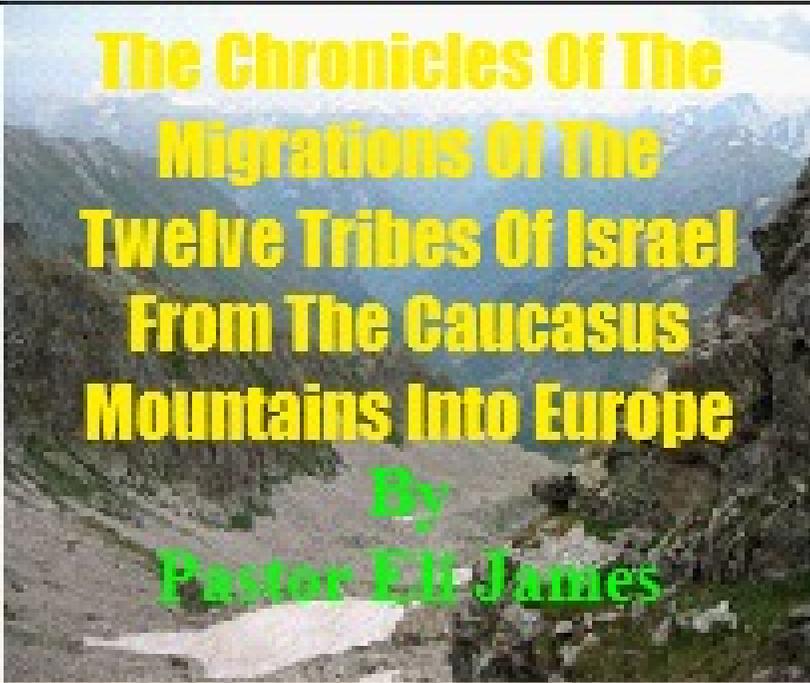


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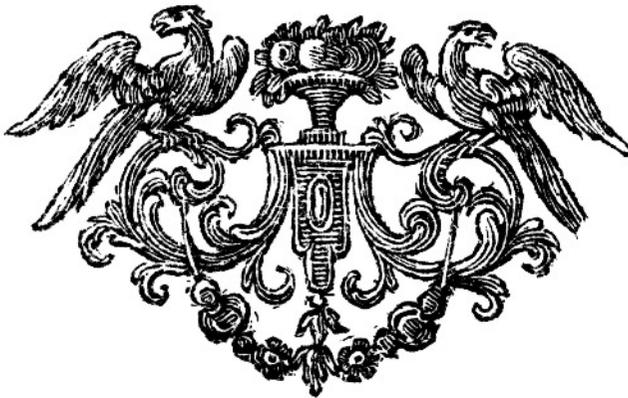
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