

CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS Lesson Eight (1 Clement 42-46)

Clement had seen the blessed apostles and conversed with them, their teaching was still ringing in his ears. (Irenaeus)

1 Clement 42: Hierarchy in the Assembly Christ is from God, and the apostles are from Christ.

Clement continues his illustrations of hierarchy in the body of Messiah. Cf. John 17:18: "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

Having therefore received their orders. The great commission and the commandment to testify to the resurrection.

The good news that the kingdom of God was about to come. I.e. the gospel message: "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Bishops. *Episkopos* (ἐπίσκοπος), an overseer, president, corresponding to the Hebrew *nasi* (נָשִׂי). In the assembly corresponding to the chief elder (*presbuteros*, πρεσβύτερος).

Deacons. *Diakonaos* (διάκονος), a servant. Cf. Philippians 1:1: "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the bishops and deacons" (Philippian 1:1).

I will appoint their bishops in righteousness. Isaiah 60:17: "And I will make peace your administrators and righteousness your overseers" (Isaiah 60:17), a passage the early believers applied to James the righteous. The LXX translates: "I will make your princes peaceful, and your bishops righteous." Clement's version inverts the bishops and princes and substitutes the word deacons.

1 Clement 43: Authority from Torah

The blessed Moses ... and the rest of the prophets followed him. Cf. m.Avot 1:1.

When jealousy arose concerning the priesthood. Clement's version of the blossoming of Aaron's staff contains significant apostolic embellishment. Cf. Numbers 17.

Table of God. Table of the bread of the presence.
He sealed the keys as well as the doors. Apostolic midrash alluding to the sealing of the Master's tomb. Cf. Matthew 27:66: "Along with the guard they set a seal on the stone"; Gospel of Peter 8: "They affixed seven seals."

The name of the true and only God ... to whom be the glory ... Fourth doxology.

1 Clement 44: Apostolic Succession

Our apostles likewise knew. Clement refers to an apostolic oral tradition of Yeshua "that there would be strife over the bishop's office."

A permanent character. A difficult Greek passage with several textual variants.

If they should die. The apostles left instructions for succession of elders. (Compare the Jerusalem bishopric. See note 109 in Lightfoot for various readings.)

We consider to be unjustly removed from their ministry. Clement presents the conclusion of his argument.

Blessed are those presbyters. Elders over the assembly at Corinth who have died.

1 Clement 45: Persecutors of the Righteous The righteous were persecuted... by the lawless.

Clement implies that the Corinthians have acted in concert with persecutors of the lawless.

Detestable and unrighteous jealousy. Envy and baseless hatred.

What shall we say, brothers? Introduction of a false premise.

Ananias, Azarias, and Mishael. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

To him be the glory. Fifth doxology.

But those who patiently endured. Clement 45:8 follows a doxology pattern: "Those who ... glory and honor ... exalted. Forever and ever. Amen."

Names recorded by God as their memorial. Inscription in the book of life. Cf. Exodus 17:14: "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it."

1 Clement 46: Damage from Schism

Follow the saints, for those who follow them will be sanctified. Unknown source, but a common Jewish sentiment.

With the innocent man you will be innocent. Psalm 18:25-26.

One God and one Christ and one Spirit of grace. Early pre-Trinitarian expression.

Members of Christ ... members of one another. Cf. Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12ff; Ephesians 5:30.

Woe to that man! Clement quotes a saying similar to Matthew 18:6-7; Luke 17:1-2. Cf. Matthew 26:24 for, "It would have been good for him if he had not been born."

Your schism has perverted many. Clement decries the disillusionment engendered by conflict among believers.