

CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS Lesson Ten (1 Clement 53-58)

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

1 Clement 53: Example of Moses

Moses, Moses, Go down quickly. Exodus 32:7-8.

I have spoken to you time and again. Deuteronomy 9:12-14; Exodus 32:10.

May it not be so, Lord. Forgive this people their sin, or else wipe me also out of the book of the living. Exodus 32:32.

Mighty Love! Unsurpassable perfection! Clement sees Moses acting in a Messianic capacity and calls on his readers to demonstrate the same attitude.

1 Clement 54: Sacrifice for Peace

If it is my fault there are rebellion and strife and schisms, I retire. Clement calls upon the schismatists to voluntarily step down and leave the community if necessary.

Duly appointed presbyters. Elders appointed through apostolic succession.

The earth is the LORD's. Psalm 24:1.

Citizens of the commonwealth of God. Clement contrasts the kingdom of heaven “the commonwealth of God,” against this current world and its ambitions. Citizens of the kingdom behave with humility and sacrifice for the common good.

1 Clement 55: Examples of Self-Sacrifice

Some examples of Gentiles. I.e. “nations,” *ethnos*, non-Jews.

Prompted by some oracle. Clement appeals to Roman and Greek mythology and political history.

Imprisoned that they might ransom others. Reference to the Domitian persecution. In some cases, Roman law allowed hostages to substitute for people under suspicion.

Sold themselves into slavery. A destitute person could opt to sell himself as a slave.

The Blessed Judith. Clement tells the story of Judith as found in the Greek Apocrypha.

Esther, who was perfect in faith. Esther risked her life to intercede for the Jewish people.

1 Clement 56: Accepting Discipline

Intercede for those who are involved in some transgression. Clement calls upon his readers to take action against schismatic leaders.

The Lord has indeed disciplined me but he has not given me over to death. Psalm 118.

Whom the Lord loves he disciplines. Proverbs 3:12, cf. Hebrews 12:6.

The righteous will discipline me. Psalm 141:5 LXX.

Blessed is the man whom the Lord has reproved. Job 5:17-26.

1 Clement 57: Call to the Leaders to Repent

Submit to the presbyters. I.e. the legitimate eldership.

Learn how to subordinate yourselves. Clement tells the schismatics to learn humility and subject themselves to the authority of the elders.

Better to be found small. Cf. Matthew 18:1-3. Yeshua referred to his disciples as “little ones” and “children” in reference to their humility.

All Virtuous Wisdom. The personification of Wisdom, understood by the early believers as the Spirit of Messiah. Clement quotes Proverbs 1:23–33.

1 Clement 58: Confession of Sin

Obey His Most Holy and Glorious Name. I.e. obey Yeshua. Circumlocutions for HaShem.

Dwell safely, trusting in his most holy and majestic name. Trusting in the merit and virtue of the name of Yeshua.

For as God lives, and as the Lord Jesus Christ lives. Clement invokes a vow formula common in the Old Testament.

Enrolled and included among the number of those who are saved. Clement’s formula for salvation calls upon believers to keep “the ordinances and commandments given by God.”

Through whom is the glory to him forever and ever. Seventh doxology.