

CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS

Lesson Three (1 Clement 9-14)

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

1 Clement 9: Enoch and Noah

The Jealousy that leads to death. Clement uses the word “jealousy (*zelos*, ζήλος)” to indicate envy and baseless hatred, like that of the Zealot party which lead to the destruction of the Temple. Cf. James 3:14–16. Compare: ““Why was the second Sanctuary destroyed despite the fact that people occupied themselves with Torah, commandments, and charity? Because baseless hatred prevailed within it. This teaches you that baseless hatred is considered more serious than idolatry, sexual immorality, and bloodshed together” (b.Yoma 9b).

Enoch ... was taken up and did not experience death. Cf. Genesis 5:24 Hebrews 11:5; 1 Enoch. The Greek word *metatithemi* (μετατίθημι) refers to an ascension, such as that of Elijah. In apostolic lore, Enoch remains alive, like Elijah, until the end of the age when the two witnesses will face the Antichrist. See *Apocalypse of Elijah*.

Noah proclaimed a second birth. An allusion to the world to come: “Noah saw a new world” (*Midrash Rabbah*). Noah did not abandon the world to its fate. According to apostolic tradition, Noah was a “preacher of repentance” (2 Peter 2:5) who tried to convince his generation to turn from their sinful ways. Simon Peter taught that “the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark” (1 Peter 3:20). For a whole one hundred and twenty years Noah planted cedars and cut them down (for the construction of the ark). When they asked him, “Why are you doing this?”, he replied, “The Master of the universe has warned me that He will bring a flood on the world.” They replied, “If a flood does come, it will only come on you and your father’s household” (*Genesis Rabbah* 30:7). “Noah took fifty-two years to make the ark so that they would repent of their ways. But they did not repent” (*Pirkei deRebbi Eliezer* 23).

Clement 10: Abraham

Called “the Friend.” Cf. 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23. See also John 15:15: “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

Found Faithful in that he became obedient. In keeping with James, Clement emphasizes the faithfulness of Abraham rather than the faith of Abraham.

An Insignificant House. Clement contrasts Abraham’s home and family against the extraordinary promises of God. Abraham’s family and house are insubstantial only in comparison to the riches of the God’s promises.

Because of his faith and hospitality. In Jewish tradition, Abraham is famous for his hospitality. Clement teaches that he received the blessing of the birth announcement of Isaac as a reward for his hospitality. Cf. Genesis 18; Matthew 10:41: “He who receives a prophet in *the* name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.”

1 Clement 11: Lot

Because of his hospitality and godliness. Eusebius dates Paul's death to 67 CE, the year that Nero was out of the city. Paul would have stood trial before the magistrates such as the Praetorian Prefect Tigellinus. Cf. 2 Timothy 4.

He does not forsake those who trust in him. Cf. 1 Peter 2:7-10

Those who turn aside. The wicked. Clement uses Lot's wife as an example. Cf. Luke 17:32-33: "Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it."

She changed her mind and no longer agreed. Clement's explanation of the passage reflects midrashic development of the story in Genesis 18.

Pillar of salt to this day. A salt formation near the Dead Sea had the reputation of being "Lot's wife."

1 Clement 12: Rahab

Because of her faith and hospitality. See Joshua 2. Cf.

Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25 and Matthew 1:5.

The hospitable Rahab, however, took them in. Clement paraphrases the story from Joshua 2.

She should hang from her house something scarlet.

Clement's messianic interpretation of the scarlet thread appears elsewhere. Joshua 2:12, "Give me a sign of truth, (*ot emet*, אמת אמת)." The spies asked her to tie "this cord (*tikvat*, תקות) of scarlet thread in the window" as a sign. The Hebrew word translated here as "cord" looks identical to the word for hope, as if the spies asked her to tie "the hope of this scarlet thread."

"The spies were hinting to Rahab, 'By joining us you have hope of attaining the true, everlasting life of the world to come.' Thus the twine symbolized Rahab's 'lifeline,' her connection to Hashem's people, whose glorious future she would now share" (Rokeach).

And as the blood of the Passover [upon the doorposts] saved those in Egypt, so too the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed ... [Through this sign, God] announced the future salvation of humanity by the blood of Christ ahead of time. Also, the spies sent to Jericho by Joshua, son of [Nun] gave Rahab the prostitute the sign of the scarlet cord, and they told her to tie it in the window through which she lowered them to escape from their enemies, symbolically illustrating the blood of Christ, by which those who were formerly prostitutes and unrighteous men from all nations are being saved, receiving forgiveness for sins, and continuing no longer in sin. (Justin Martyr)

Rahab the prostitute, condemned herself in that she was a Gentile, guilty of all sins. Nevertheless, she welcomed the [two] spies who were spying out all the land, and hid them at her home ... And at the time the seven trumpets sounded and the entire city in which she lived collapsed into ruin, after everything was over, Rahab the prostitute was saved, together with everyone in her house, through faith in the scarlet sign ... which symbolized the Passover and the redemption and the Exodus of the people from Egypt. (Irenaeus)

Not only faith, but prophecy. In Jewish tradition, Rahab converts, marries Joshua, and becomes a mother to a line of priests and prophets. Cf. *Ruth Rabbah* 2:1; *b.Megillah* 14b.

